



# Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

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## Creating a Safer World: NU Women in Criminal Justice

Criminal Justice, the most popular major at Norwich today, prepares students to lead and serve at every level of law, law enforcement, federal security, and corrections. Hundreds of women have graduated from the program since its inception, bringing the knowledge and training from their time on the Hill to positions on local, state and national levels. Here are a few of their stories.



Sandra J. Merolla '83

### **Sandra Merolla '83 — US Army Military Police**

Following in the footsteps of her grandfather, NU Class of 1922, and great uncle, Class of 1923, Sandy Merolla entered Norwich in 1979 and set her sights on becoming the best possible leader. Among her many activities were Mountain Cold Weather and Fire Brigade. She was the first female cadet to earn the M/SGT Clement J. Confessore Trophy, awarded to the “Cadet who demonstrated the best leadership skills as a First Sergeant in the Corps of Cadets.” Senior year, Sandy was a finalist for regimental commander, ultimately becoming the second female battalion commander in Norwich’s history.

Norwich leadership skills prepared Sandy for a life of service. One of ten female graduates from the Corps of Cadets in 1983, she was commissioned in the U.S. Army Military Police Corps. While serving in the Rhode Island Army National Guard (RIARNG), Sandy earned her master’s degree at Springfield College. Subsequent assignments included 8th Army HQ in Seoul, Korea and the National Guard Bureau, Pentagon. She was also an instructor in the West Point Department of Physical Education. After leaving active duty, Sandy completed her army career as the RIARNG state headquarters company commander and 43rd MP Brigade operations officer (S-3).

Following Army service, Sandy worked on local and statewide political campaigns, served on the Glastonbury (CT) Education Foundation Board, and was twice recognized by the Glastonbury school district for outstanding contributions. Sandy is Chair of the NU Women Kicking Glass Fundraising Committee and a new member of the NU Alumni Association Board of Directors.



Kellie A. Barhight '00

### **Kellie Barhight '00 — Massachusetts Police Lieutenant**

Entering the Vermont Police Academy at age 20, Kellie Barhight juggled a career in law enforcement with being a student at Norwich. She graduated in 2000 with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and earned a master's in public administration in 2019.

Kellie worked for several agencies in Vermont before moving to Massachusetts and joining the Town of Ayer Police Department. For much of her 17 years there, she worked for victims of sexual assault, sexual exploitation, and domestic violence.

Kellie is currently Lieutenant of Operations for Stow (MA) Police Department. She is an instructor for the Massachusetts Police Training Committee where she advocates for sexual assault victims by writing curriculum for police officer response to victim crimes. Kellie is also an officer wellness advocate and a motivational speaker for women in leadership. She is the recipient of three lifesaving awards and FBI-Law Enforcement Executive Development Association recognition. She has been recognized for creating the "Bring Me Home" Campaign to register children and adults with cognitive disabilities at their local police departments.



Julie C. Scribner '15 & M'19

### **Julie Scribner '15 & M'19 — Vermont State Police**

When Julie Scribner was six years old, she was walking to a neighbor's house when a man pulled up, tried to coax her into his car and exposed himself to her. Scared and embarrassed to recount the event to a male police officer, a seed was planted in her mind that there should be more women in law enforcement. To reach her goal, Julie entered NU in 1989 as a criminal justice major but had to leave due to family and life commitments.

Julie ultimately became a Vermont State Trooper and over the next 25 years served as a Road Trooper and then as a Detective Trooper, primarily investigating crimes against children. She was promoted to Sergeant in 2010. In 2014, Julie transferred back to the Criminal Division as a Detective Sergeant, focusing on death investigations and major crimes.

Twenty-five years after first arriving at Norwich, Julie decided to finish what she started by completing her bachelor's degree online, graduating in 2015. She then went on to earn her master's degree from NU in 2019.

In 2021 [USA Today named Julie Woman of the Year for Vermont](#) for bringing the [30x30 Initiative](#) to the Vermont State Police, a national program to advance women in law enforcement by 30% by 2030. In doing this, she was able to make Vermont State Police a better place for women to work, have families, and rise through the ranks.



Jennifer D. Zarycki '20 & M'22

### **Jennifer Zarycki '20 & M'22 – US Department of Homeland Security**

As a high school junior aspiring to a career in law enforcement, Jenn Zarycki chose Norwich to shape her confidence and determination. She says her experience instilled the importance of selfless service and desire to “be the change.” She initiated the “Love Your Melon Campus Crew Program” at Norwich, now known as the Pinky Swear Pack, raising awareness of pediatric cancer and its implications on those it affects. Though the COVID-19 pandemic abruptly ended her senior year in 2020, Jenn continued her association with the university by enrolling in the master’s program and joining the NU Alumni Association Board of Directors. She enjoys networking with students and alumni to improve the Norwich Forever experience.

On the day she graduated from Norwich’s Master’s program in 2022, Jen received a job offer as a law enforcement officer with the Department of Homeland Security. She now works in the job she aspired to, helping to ensure the security and safety of the nation.

The leadership training and skills of Norwich’s criminal justice graduates are in high demand. From private industry to government, law enforcement, the military, and corrections, NU alumnae are on the front lines, serving and protecting our citizens and our nation.

*Records documenting women’s history and experience at Norwich are available through the University Archives. <https://archives.norwich.edu/>*

### **Attend the Homecoming Women Kicking Glass Gala!**

Friday, September 20, 2024 - [Women Kicking Glass Gala](#), Plumley Armory,  
Norwich

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### **Limited Edition Women Kicking Glass Merchandise Available**

Treat yourself and others to these custom [Women Kicking Glass wines, apparel and gifts](#) to mark 50 years of trailblazing women.

### **Women Kicking Glass Oral History Book**

Stories and photos from 500 NU and Vermont College women spanning



six decades of Norwich history. [See more.](#)

[Pre-order your book now](#) for delivery in August 2024.



**Just Added: Glass Ceiling Brooch by California artist Vivian Shimoyama**

Each one-of-a-kind brooch is handmade with clear iridescent glass and 14K gold trim. [See more.](#) | [Order here.](#)

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