



# Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

AUGUST 31, 2024

NU WKG, ISSUE #47

## Uncharted Waters: Norwich Women in the Navy and Coast Guard

A mathematics major from Queens, NY, **Joan (Boyce) Jamrog '88** attended Norwich on a Naval ROTC Scholarship. While a member of the Corps of Cadets she participated in several extracurricular activities, including as a four-year member of the Regimental Drill Team and on the women's soccer team.



Joan (Boyce) Jamrog '88

In the spring of 1988, Cadet Boyce became Ensign Boyce, Norwich's first female Naval ROTC graduate and the first to complete the four-year program at the university. This also made her the first Black woman to accept a commission from any branch at Norwich. The June 1988 issue of the Norwich Record said, "Norwich, the Navy and Joan Boyce--it's a winning combination!"

Following graduation, Joan completed tours of duty aboard the USS Sylvania during Operation Desert Storm and the USS Ainsworth, stationed at Norfolk, VA. After the Navy, Joan began a career in Information Technology, first with HAECO Americas (formerly TIMCO Aviation Services) and then with IBM, serving as the Information Technology Team Lead. She is now the Technical Services Team Lead at Kyndryl in Pelham, NC.



Shanti Sethi '93

**Shanti Sethi '93** was another trailblazer on the high seas. When she joined the Navy in 1993, the combat exclusion law was still in effect, limiting her options. However, the Exclusion Act was lifted by the time she became an officer. In 2010, she took command of the guided-missile destroyer, USS Decatur, becoming the only Indian-American woman and 15th female officer to command a major U.S. combat warship. She was also the first female commander of a U.S. naval vessel to visit India.

Being in the Navy taught Shanti not to sell herself short or disguise her ambition. “You can’t be what somebody else thinks you should be,” Shanti says. “You really have to become comfortable in yourself and say, “This is who I am, and I can succeed as who I am. I don’t have to pretend or try to be someone else.”

Shanti served as Vice President Kamala Harris’ Executive Secretary in 2022 and Director for Talent Management and Recruiting for the National Security Council in 2023. She now does executive coaching, helping leaders navigate work and life transitions.



Jennifer (Cummings) Ledbetter '88

When **Jennifer (Cummings) Ledbetter '88** graduated from Norwich in 1988, the university did not offer a program for Coast Guard commissions. As a result, she had to attend Direct Commission Officer Training School. In August 1990, Jennifer became the first Norwich woman to be commissioned in the USCG.

In 2021, Norwich adopted the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary University Program (AUP) to prepare Corps and Civilian students for careers in the Coast Guard. Upwards of 70% of graduates of the program are nationally commissioned into the U.S. Coast Guard. **Hannah Shaner '24** became the first Norwich woman to graduate from the program and commission.



Hannah Shaner '24

As a Criminal Justice major, Hannah not only achieved her MCV designation but was also honored with The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War award. This accolade was bestowed for her exceptional display of patriotism and remarkable service to the community. Hannah was also a stand-out in the athletic realm. She capped her Norwich swimming career as the conference champion in the 200 IM and was a driving force behind the team’s back-to-back conference championships.

For more than 200 years, Norwich University graduates have safeguarded our citizens and

allies on the land and sea, at home, and abroad. Since 1985, Norwich women have made their mark in history, shattering barriers in the U.S. Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard.

To read previous posts on women in the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, see [Semper Fi on the Hill](#), profiling Margaret “Meg” Reardon '85 and Adrienne Evertson '90, the first Norwich women to commission in the U.S. Marine Corps, and [First in Combat](#), spotlighting Jana (Hurst) Raymond '90, Norwich’s first female Naval Aviator.

*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

---

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

Treat yourself and others to these custom [Women Kicking Glass items 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.](#) | [Order now](#)

(copies will also be available for sale at Norwich Homecoming)



### **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.](#)

**[See more Women Kicking Glass items](#)**