



**PHILADELPHIA**  
UNIVERSITY

## News

Contact:  
**Debbie Goldberg**  
Director of Public Relations  
[GoldbergD@philau.edu](mailto:GoldbergD@philau.edu)  
215.951.2851

### Innovative Leaders Honored at Verizon Philadelphia University Celebration of Innovation

**PHILADELPHIA, May 11, 2015** – Philadelphia University honored four accomplished leaders and recognized the year’s best student innovations at the annual Verizon Philadelphia University Celebration of Innovation benefit held May 9 at the Hyatt at The Bellevue.

The four outstanding organizations and individuals honored with the prestigious Leader of Innovation Medal were the Maguire Foundation, Janice R. Maiden ’81, Chris Rondeau and Anthony S. Volpe ’72.

At the event, President Stephen Spinelli Jr. also surprised awardee Rondeau, CEO of Planet Fitness, with the news that generous donors had established a new scholarship program in his honor that currently totals more than \$1 million. The scholarship will give priority to the families of Planet Fitness franchisees, employees and vendors in obtaining a PhilaU education.

“The generosity of your colleagues, Chris, is a real testament to your leadership, innovative spirit, dedication to your partners and commitment to education,” Spinelli said on announcing the Chris Rondeau Scholars program to a clearly moved Rondeau.

“Thank you,” said Rondeau, recognizing the many supporters at the event who were cheering the announcement. “Donors, franchisees, friends, this is amazing. Thank you for this opportunity.”

The Verizon Philadelphia University Celebration of Innovation, hosted by Emmy Award-winning fashion celebrity and PhilaU Trustee Carson Kressley, is the University’s largest annual scholarship fundraiser to support PhilaU students and enable them to benefit from a world-class education and become leaders in their fields in a competitive 21st-century workplace.

The evening began with a showcase of student innovation work featuring transdisciplinary collaborations and real-world industry engagement projects with such top companies as Verizon Communications, Federal-Mogul Powertrain, Johnson & Johnson and the National Constitution Center. The exhibition highlighted such impressive student work as a

wearable UV ray detection device to help prevent skin cancer; a unique double-sided rocker designed to encourage social interaction; and a jacket designed to be easy for patients with limited mobility to put on or remove while in a wheelchair.

Attendees later were asked to select their favorite student project and, after electronic balloting, a sleek laptop case called Envelop was voted the fan favorite. The case was designed for a Federal-Mogul Powertrain innovation project this semester that challenged students to find a new application for QuietShield®, its unique material currently used for automotive purposes.

“Our students – with the support and guidance of dedicated and talented faculty – are the critical doers who are creating some of the most innovative work anywhere in higher education,” said Eileen Martinson, chair of the Philadelphia University board of trustees. “That’s the strength of the PhilaU Nexus Learning approach to education – an approach that enables our students to learn and work together and with numerous industry education partners in a way that has them achieving innovation right from their freshman year.”

Fran Shammo ’83, CFO of Verizon Communications and PhilaU trustee, spoke about the Verizon Nexus Learning challenge that included some 70 students in 18 academic programs; the top three projects were on display. “If there’s one belief we have at Verizon that we share with Philadelphia University, it’s that great technology combined with great imagination really can change the world,” he said.

The Leader of Innovation Medals were presented to four accomplished leaders or organizations that have made significant contributions across many fields that better society and shine a light on the impact of innovation all around us.

- ***The Maguire Foundation*** is a non-profit organization led by Mr. and Mrs. James J. Maguire committed to investing in education and art appreciation. The Foundation implements its mission through the Maguire Scholars program, a philanthropic enterprise that provides scholarship support to students from elementary school age through college.
- ***Janice R. Maiden ’81*** is senior vice president and general manager at Federal-Mogul Powertrain, a division of Federal-Mogul that designs and manufactures powertrain components and systems protection products for automotive, heavy-duty, industrial and transport applications. Maiden is a graduate of Philadelphia University’s textile engineering program.
- ***Chris Rondeau*** has served as CEO of Planet Fitness since 2013 and chief operating officer prior to that. Rondeau, an entrepreneur, joined Planet Fitness in 1993 and has been a driving force behind the health club’s revolutionary approach that combines low-cost with a non-intimidating environment aimed at the casual gym user.
- ***Anthony S. Volpe ’72*** is a shareholder and co-founder of Volpe and Koenig, P.C., an intellectual property law firm. Volpe has extensive corporate and private practice experience in all aspects of intellectual property rights. He has been recognized as a “Leader in the Field” by Chambers USA, which ranks national law firms.

Megan Maguire Nicoletti accepted the award on behalf of the Maguire Foundation. “Through the partnership with Philadelphia University and the vision of President Spinelli, the Maguire

Scholars program has flourished here,” she said. “We are grateful for the opportunity to work with truly dedicated and innovative people to make the mission of our foundation a reality.”

Upon receiving his medal, Rondeau offered advice to students: “Challenge the status quo. Do things differently and think the opposite. The only bad idea is the one you didn’t even try.”

PhilaU alumnus Anthony S. Volpe ’72 acknowledged the University’s innovative spirit. “The faculty here are really instilling the spirit of innovation in these students to do something great,” he said.

“These esteemed recipients,” Spinelli said, “are individuals whose creativity and professional acumen underscore the importance of innovation to all of us.”

*Philadelphia University, founded in 1884, is a private university with 3,700 students enrolled in more than 70 undergraduate and graduate programs. As the model for professional university education, the University, through its award-winning Nexus Learning approach, prepares students to be leaders in their professions in an active, collaborative and real-world learning environment infused with the liberal arts. Philadelphia University includes the innovative Kanbar College of Design, Engineering and Commerce; the College of Architecture and the Built Environment; and the College of Science, Health and the Liberal Arts. For more information, go to [www.PhilaU.edu](http://www.PhilaU.edu).*