



Alumni Spotlight

Dr. Chad Kimmel '96

October 2018

From Sociology to Cider

The clinking of glasses, audience applause and the murmur of students are all familiar sounds to Chad Kimmel '96. Kimmel is both a sociology professor at Shippensburg University and together with his wife, Andrea, the proud owner of Grand Illusion Hard Cider in Carlisle, PA. Their signature cider, Blue Illusion, a blueberry lavender blend, made its Millersville debut during MU Homecoming 2018 in the Alumni & Friends Tent Party. The cider was a huge hit, and guests were thrilled that the beverage was the product of a proud Marauder! But the cider wouldn't exist without Kimmel's love of community, which began at The 'Ville more than 20 years ago.



Kimmel came to Millersville in 1992 as a first generation college student from Levittown, PA. He sought a high quality, yet affordable education in business. However, his focus shifted during his freshman year. He recalled, "A sociology instructor named Janet Heinsler taught criminology. She added anyone to the class if you could find a seat. So, in those days, if you saw kids walking across campus carrying folding lawn chairs, you knew they were taking her class. Because of her, I transferred from business to sociology. She made the material matter; she made it cool."

As with many students pursuing an undergraduate degree, learning about their field isn't the only growth experienced. "I was still trying to figure out who I was and what I wanted to do with my life. I leaned on my professors for advice and guidance and began to carve out some experiences that would set me up to be successful in graduate school," said Kimmel. "And there was one professor who topped them all – Dr. George Stine. His style and personality just clicked with me. His humor was intentional and always welcomed, and in many cases, anticipated. He made you laugh, but he also had a way of making you feel important. He respected you by asking a lot of questions. And the more we talked, the more I began to find my own voice."

Today Kimmel's voice resonates with students seeking more than traditional lectures. He sees incredible value in the role of advising and mentorship outside of the classroom and advocates a community-minded approach to supporting young learners. Working within the PASSHE system for more than 16 years, Kimmel recognizes both the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead, and the role alumni play to garner future success. "Even though the state system still offers an affordable option, they

get less and less money from the state, which affects the ability to sustain programs and services. Alumni support, however, can help ease the pressures that universities face,” Kimmel remarked. “Outside of large donations to the University, alumni can also make smaller contributions to their departments to help fund student research projects and club activities. Alumni can serve as mentors and advisors in the workplace by providing guest lectures or acting as supervisors for off-site internships. There's so much we can do.”



Beyond of the classroom, Kimmel’s newest endeavor brings magic to the local community. Grand Illusion is known as an urban cidery. The cider house not only features original recipes in food and beverage, but they also offer the very popular “Magic Mondays” when house magician Kyle Purnell performs up-close magic for guests. Keeping in theme, Purnell brought his entertaining sleight of hand to the alumni tent, giving guests an even better taste of what they’ll find at Grand Illusion. Kimmel said the cider house provides a wonderful creative outlet for him and his wife. And while the venue is relatively new, the couple has a clear vision for growth. “Our immediate goal is to make the Grand Illusion brand a respected force in the craft hard cider scene throughout the region. And by doing so, make a significant contribution to the revitalization of Carlisle. As one grows, so does the other.”

Learn more about the Kimmels’ dream and Grand Illusion Hard Cider! [Click here to read their feature in The Burg.](#)