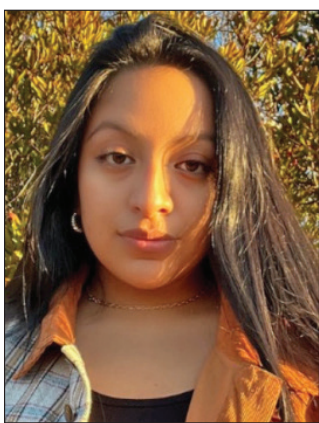


# Local woman nominated for College Television Awards

Cape May resident, LCMRHS graduate helped shoot 'Arizona Stories' through Montclair State

By **CRAIG D. SCHENCK**  
Cape May Star and Wave



**AYLIN ALVAREZ SANTIAGO**

CAPE MAY — A drive to succeed despite the hurdles in her way is one of the defining characteristics of Aylin Alvarez Santiago, a Cape May resident who is part of a group that has been nominated for the Television Academy Foundation's 44th College Television Awards.

According to a news release, the foundation's annual awards show recognizes excellence in student-produced programs from colleges across the country.

Alvarez Santiago was nominated, along with 15 classmates, in the news category for her work as a director, producer and writer on "Arizona Stories: Border, Water and Politics" while attending Montclair State University.

"Being nominated is an incredible honor that validates the hard work and dedication my team and I poured into this project," she said. "It symbolizes the importance of telling stories that matter. Winning would be a dream come true."

The 23-year-old attended Cape May City Elementary School and Richard M. Teitelman Middle School before Lower Cape May Regional High School.

The 2019 graduate was a fringe player on the Caper Tigers girls soccer team until her desire to play a greater role prompted her to get a personal trainer. Her senior year, she was named captain and played every game, further demonstrating her commitment

to success.

"When I really put my mind to something, I get it done," she told the Star and Wave.

Alvarez Santiago completed an associate degree in communications at Atlantic Cape Community College, graduating in May 2022. During her time there, she was recognized as the Communication Major of the Year for 2021-22.

She then transferred to Montclair, where she pursued a bachelor's degree in Film and Television, graduating in May 2024.

Alvarez Santiago was interested in film from a young age, and joined Cape May Film Camp at 11 years old.

"You had to be 13 and wanted to be part of it so bad that I wrote the corniest little 11-year-old letter begging to get in, and I did it until 18," she said. "I loved it and made so many connections with local film directors."

She said she likes the fast pace of being behind the

camera. While at Atlantic Cape, she met professor Keith Forest, who helped guide her to Montclair.

### 'On the Road'

Alvarez Santiago traveled to Arizona to work on the project as part of an "On the Road: Reporting From the Field" class for Montclair News Lab.

She said professor Steve McCarthy organized the trip and held a seminar that she attended. Each student pitched ideas in December for the spring class.

The program aired in May 2024 on Montclair Township's Local Access Channel 34 and covered a wide range of topics in Arizona, including immigration, homelessness, drought and the environmental effect of millions of visitors to the Grand Canyon.

"When we got there, people wanted to do stories about the border, the Grand Canyon, Native Americans, the water crisis on the Gila River," she said.

For seven days, the class split into two groups and pursued their individual projects.

"We all helped out each other and got really close," she said, noting they filmed 10 to 12 stories, only six of which were broadcast in Arizona.

Alvarez Santiago said the year prior, students had gone to New Orleans and their production won its category, increasing the pressure on her group to win.

She said she loves documentary work, noting that one her films was shown at

the Montclair Film Festival. Her package from the Arizona piece was about a cowboy college in Scottsdale.

During another journalism class, she filmed a piece about the birthday party of school mascot Rocky the Redhawk. (A little-known fact is that she was one of four students donning the Rocky costume.)

### Full-circle moment

Completing college is a daunting task, one that proves even more difficult without guidance from someone who had made the journey.

"As a first-generation college graduate, navigating higher education was a significant challenge," she said. "Balancing cultural expectations while pursuing my passion for storytelling often felt overwhelming. Financial barriers and self-doubt also tested my perseverance, but they ultimately shaped my determination and drive to amplify under-represented voices through my work."

Alvarez Santiago said graduating from college was one of the proudest days of her life, for both her and her parents.

"It felt surreal — people talk about how their wedding day goes fast, I wish I could go back," she said.

Graduates are placed with others from their discipline, and Alvarez Santiago said the group that had been in Arizona became very close and were all smiling, laughing, crying together.

"It was the best feeling in the world," she said.



Provided

Aylin Alvarez Santiago, a 2019 graduate of Lower Cape May Regional High School, works on location in Arizona.

"Seeing my parents' faces — they've been to soccer games, high school graduation, but this was different. Their emotions were so different, seeing my Mom screaming and my Dad trying to get on a higher seat so he could see. It's an insane feeling that I will never feel again. I'm so glad to have experienced that."

Being at the southern border in Arizona was special for Alvarez Santiago in

many ways. "I'm a child of immigrants, so just having to go to the border and getting that full-circle moment, it definitely made graduation worth more than anything," she said.

Winners in the competition will be announced by television stars during the red carpet awards ceremony April 5 at the Television Academy in North Hollywood, Calif.

# King's Ice Cream Parlour approved for new outdoor seating

By **JULIA DIGERONIMO**  
For the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — King's Ice Cream Parlour on Lafayette Street is moving forward with a new outdoor seating spot where customers can enjoy their frozen treats this summer.

King's is one of the newest ice cream shops in Cape May, owned by city residents Mickey and Kate Chew, who also own Big Wave Burrito and Aloha Smoothies.

The Chews received approval to add outdoor seating and rearrange parking, with a goal of completing the project by spring.

"We are looking forward to creating an inviting and safer outdoor ice cream-eating experience at King's,"

Kate Chew said.

Last month the Chews requested an amendment to their original site plan from 2019 to add more outdoor seating. After some safety suggestions, the owners and Bruce Conwall from Cafiero Law appeared before the Planning Board Jan. 14 with an adjusted site plan.

In response to first application, the Cape May Police Department raised concerns about a safety hazard due to people pulling out of the business' handicap spot directly onto Lafayette Street. The board engineer suggested the Chews resolve the safety concern before moving on with their application.

They took the suggestion into consideration and sub-

mitted a revised site plan with a solution. The new plan proposes removing the seventh spot in the lot and turning the sixth spot into the handicap position.

In turn, the Chews would use the newly open space from the seventh parking spot for their outdoor seating.

"We were here last month and there was a suggestion to move the seventh parking space toward Jackson Street and use the drop-off area to have the outdoor seating in this area," said Brian Murphy, the applicant's engineer. "In summary, we've moved the handicap parking over, defined a place for outdoor seating, removed the seats on the Jackson side and added bollards around

the front of the building and the defined seating area."

There are two more required variances that come with these changes. One is to decrease the required number of parking spaces from seven to six, and a variance for the tables, which can be no more than 10 feet from the building.

"Having on-site seating is an advantage for pedestrian safety in this area," Murphy said. "This started as a result to increase the safety concerns by the police chief and has extended itself to increase safety with seating."

The meeting ended with a motion to approve the preliminary and final site plan to configure King's approved seating plan.

"I think it's a really great

project and a lot safer with more seating," Cape May Mayor Zachary Mullock said. "You took a bit of an

eyesore in town and made it one of the nicest newer buildings in town. I vote yes."

# Mullock sworn in to fifth term as mayor

By **JULIA DIGERONIMO**  
For the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Joined by his wife and three children, Mayor Zack Mullock was sworn in for his fifth term as Cape May City Council convened Jan. 22 for its reorganization meeting.

"It is an honor and a privilege to stand before you today to deliver my fifth State of the City address," Mullock said. "I first must express my gratitude to all the wonderful citizens of Cape May who've entrusted me to be their mayor."

Newly elected council-

man Steve Bodnard was sworn in for his first term. His wife, sister and mother joined him.

"I'm very grateful for the opportunity to serve on Cape May City Council," Bodnard said. "I want to thank the people who've supported me in the election. I thank you for trusting me with the responsibility of serving on the Cape May City Council. Cape May is such a unique and special city with our history, our architecture and most importantly, with the character and fabric of our people. It's humbling to sit in this position and

serve on the City Council."

Maureen McDade was sworn in for her first term as deputy mayor. Previous deputy mayor Lorraine Baldwin had nominated McDade to succeed her.

The reorganization meeting concluded with Mullock's State of the City Address.

During the regular council meeting that followed, Carolyn Zebrowski, treasurer of the Washington Street Mall Management Board of Trustees, presented the board's budget. Council passed the motion to approve it.

The trustees are an-

ticipating an assessment revenue of about \$71,000. They will be collecting a special assessment to fund a security camera project, which will increase the revenue by \$43,500.

They're leaving \$10,000 for administrative and professional items, \$1,000 for memberships, \$143,500 toward enhancement projects, \$55,00 for decor and maintenance, \$116,00 for brick installation, \$7,000 for advertising, \$13,000 toward events, \$8,000 for website and social media, \$2,000 for uncollected assessments, and \$61,900 for future projects.

# Sabo seeks seat

Continued from Page A1

munity that people want to make their home," she said.

Sabo said West Cape May has changed a lot since she moved there in 1987, especially in the recent past.

"We have seen a lot of changes in demographics in the past 10 years. The diverse working-class community that moved into the borough in the 1980s is not here anymore," she said, adding that it's an issue of affordability.

She stated that many factors went into her decision.

"The biggest factor for me was, if not now, when?" she stated. "I believe in New Jersey. I believe in creating a sustainable community which addresses the needs of its residents. I believe in strong public schools, reproductive freedom, health care for all and equal rights for all citizens."

"I believe in a society that is free from harassment, intimidation and bullying. I believe in community and sustaining the most vulnerable around us," Sabo wrote. In describing her philoso-

phy, she quoted chef Jose Andres.

"It's time to build longer tables, not higher walls," she said.

Sabo said she is still organizing key staff positions, focusing on everybody who has offered support and delegating responsibilities, noting that she needs to spend time in Cumberland County where she is not well known. Sabo is the third Democratic candidate to announce

their run for office. She joins Carolyn Rush of Sea Isle City and fourth-generation U.S. Coast Guard veteran Brandon Saffold.

The filing deadline for the primary election is March 24 and the election is scheduled for June 10.

The two primary winners will face off against incumbent Republicans Erik Simonsen of Lower Township and Antwan McClellan of Ocean City in the heavily

Republican District 1, which includes all of Cape May and Cumberland counties and part of Atlantic County.

Democrats hold a 50-28 advantage in the Assembly with two vacancies.

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