

COLLEGIAN

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES MAGAZINE | FALL 2016



THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA®



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College of
Arts & Sciences



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To Our Living Legends

An update on College happenings and an invitation to connect

WE AT THE COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES are extremely proud of our alumni. And proud we should be, as our alumni include Tony- and Emmy-Award winners; Pulitzer Prize-winning authors; accomplished doctors, lawyers, educators, and public servants; leading researchers; renowned journalists; owners of major corporations; and countless others who are leaving their marks on the world in ways large and small.

In thinking about the impact of our 50,000-plus alumni, we paused over the summer to consider how we, as your primary connection to The University of Alabama, are helping to keep you informed and make you feel involved with the day-to-day happenings of your alma mater. We sampled a small group of our alumni to ask this very question, and with the results, we've already started to make changes.

One of those changes is in your hands: As you've likely noticed, we traded in the *Collegian's* former broadsheet for a magazine format in celebration of our 30th edition. This new format is more conducive for keeping the latest issue on your coffee table or sharing it with your friends, and with increased stories inside, there is much for you to peruse.

Of course, you'll still find stories featuring our students' accomplishments and faculty's groundbreaking research and innovative teaching, but we're also sharing more about you and your peers. According to our survey, the vast majority of alumni want to read stories about their fellow alumni more than they want to read anything else. As a result, in this issue you'll also find articles like "Tiny Giant," an alumni feature highlighting one of the first female lawyers



Dean Robert F. Olin

The University of Alabama's legacy? Tell us. We want to hear from you, and so do your fellow alumni. Share your stories with us by mail, email, or give us a call. We want to hear from you, and we want you to hear from us.

To help with this endeavor, we have created a new website, as.ua.edu/alumni, where you can share your stories, update your contact information, browse exclusive content, connect with us on social media, provide feedback, and find anything else related to UA that you may need. It is your one-stop-shop for alumni news and resources.

And as much as we want to be a part of your growth—hearing about your changes, successes, and updates—we also want you to know about ours. Most recently, at the beginning of the fall semester, we opened a new wing at the Frank Moody Music Building to house the Million Dollar Band, which has not had a designated indoor space since the mid-1980s. The renovation added a 25,000-square-foot wing with two new band halls, locker-room space, and practice

rooms to support the growth of the music program. We have one of the premier marching bands in the nation, and we are thrilled to have a space that meets their needs.

Two other important changes, though seemingly small, are the name changes for two programs that have seen significant growth in recent years, the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice and the Blount Scholars Program. The former Department of Criminal Justice has grown tremendously over the last 15 years. In fact, since 2001, the number of majors in the department has increased

Our alumni are scattered across the globe, living in all 50 U.S. states and in 64 foreign countries, so we must rely on you to share your stories with us.

to work at Shell, and "Racing in Rio," an article about one recent graduate who left behind the gangs of Los Angeles in order to pursue a promising future in track. Additionally, you can learn how theatre students are transitioning to the professional world after graduation and read about the social and literary impact of Harper Lee.

We hope to include more stories like these—stories of our living legends and legends-in-the-making—in future issues of the *Collegian*, but to do that, we need your help. Our alumni are scattered across the globe, living in all 50 U.S. states and in 64 foreign countries, so we must rely on you to share your stories with us. What have you accomplished? What impact have you made? How are you helping to build

300 percent. In order to increase the prominence of the department within the discipline, we felt it important to differentiate between criminal justice, the study of legal institutional infrastructure, and criminology, the social and behavioral study of what causes crime. Renaming the department better reflects the scholarship being produced by our faculty, which includes cutting-edge research on the behavioral aspects of cyber attacks, and the state of the field today.

The former Blount Undergraduate Initiative has become the Blount Scholars Program for two reasons: First, the phrase "Undergraduate Initiative" was originally used because the program was an attempt to initiate a change in the intellectual culture at the Univer-



In fall 2016, 25,000 square feet were added to the Frank Moody Music Building. The new wing, pictured here, contains two band halls, locker rooms, and practice rooms.

sity. It's been 17 years since that "initiation," and the now established program serves intellectually-oriented students from all over the country. Secondly, fall 2016 enrolled one of the largest class of Blount scholars, 104, in the program's history. In the continued recruiting of such students, we want

them to know that we have an established tradition of attracting and graduating the best and brightest.

I appreciate all that you are doing to help us build our legacy. Please connect with us so that we can continue to build The University of Alabama's legacy together. ■

FALL 2016
COLLEGIAN
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES MAGAZINE

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TOGETHER WITH TONY AWARD-WINNING PRODUCER Margot Astrachan and a team of professional actors, dancers, directors, and choreographers, UA students and faculty premiered Broadway-bound musical *The Countess of Storyville* in February at the Marian Gallaway Theatre. The production, a historic retelling of life in New Orleans' red light district during the early 1900s, was one of the first professional shows to premiere on a university stage, and according to Astrachan, it has the professional theatre world talking.

"The theatre community is pricking up their ears," Astrachan said, "because this is a wonderful way to develop new work. Everybody is saying, 'The University of Alabama, really? It's not just football.'"

Porfirio Solorzano



Ancient Artifact

WHEN A TORAH SCROLL SALVAGED FROM THE HOLOCAUST came to the Temple Emanu-El, located just west of the Frank Moody Music Building, Drs. Paul Aharon and Steven Jacobs—both UA professors and members of the local Jewish congregation—wanted to know more about the scroll and when it was created.

With the permission of the Westminster Synagogue in London, which had permanently loaned the Torah to the Tuscaloosa temple, their congregation decided to have the scroll radiocarbon-dated. Aharon, a professor in the Department of Geological Sciences, spearheaded the project.

“This exercise of dating the scroll would not have been possible 20 years ago,” Aharon said. “Twenty years ago you needed about 300 grams of material in order to do a proper date. We only used 10 milligrams.”

Aharon and Jacobs, careful not to contaminate the samples or to take any more parchment than necessary from the scroll, snipped two small samples from the beginning and the end of the scroll in order to compare the samples and confirm that they were from the same period.

“Nobody had ever done this before at Westminster,” Jacobs said. “And the nice thing is that we guessed wrong on the dates—way wrong.”

Having looked at plenty of old scrolls, Jacobs, a professor in the Department of Religious Studies, had guessed the scroll originated in the mid- to late-1800s at the earliest, but when the radiocarbon tests came back, they conclusively revealed that the scroll wasn't 250 years old; it was approximately 750 years old—making it the second-oldest,



FROM TOP: Drs. Paul Aharon, left, and Steven Jacobs, right, examine a Torah scroll they radiocarbon-dated. They found the scroll to be 750 years old, making it the second-oldest, complete Torah recorded. The Torah scroll is housed at the Temple Emanu-El.

complete Torah scroll on record.

“When Paul came back with the results, we were in shock,” Jacobs said. “But we, in Tuscaloosa, feel deeply honored to house this scroll.” ■

Faculty Highlights

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION

Dr. Michael Bowman, a professor in the Department of Chemistry, was awarded the International Zavoisky Award, which recognizes outstanding development and applications of paramagnetic resonance.

DISTINGUISHED FACULTY AWARD

Dr. Arunava Gupta, a professor in the Department of Chemistry, received the Burnum Distinguished Faculty Award. The award is given annually at the University to recognize and promote excellence in research, scholarship, and teaching.

LEGENDARY GEOSCIENTIST MEDAL

Professor emeritus **Dr. Ernest A. Mancini** is the 2016 recipient of the American Geological Institute Marcus Milling Legendary Geoscientist Medal. The medal is given to a senior scientist who has long-lasting, historical contributions to the field of Earth sciences.

MARK TWAIN AWARD

Michael Martone, a professor of English and creative writing, was selected

as the winner of the 2016 Mark Twain Award for Distinguished Contributions to Midwestern Literature.

NIH INVESTIGATOR HONORS

Dr. Ian McDonough, an assistant professor of psychology, was named a winner of the Matilda White Riley Early Stage Investigator Honors, a paper competition of the National Institutes of Health.

SEC FACULTY ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Seth Panitch, a professor in the Department of Theatre and Dance, was chosen as the 2016 Southeastern Conference Faculty Achievement Award winner for The University of Alabama. The award provides a \$5,000 honorarium to professors who excel in their teaching and are nationally or internationally recognized for their scholarship.

TRAVELING TO RUSSIA

Dr. Diane Boyd Schultz, a professor of flute in the School of Music, traveled to Russia to perform with acclaimed Russian flutist Maxim Rubtsov in an ongoing col-

laboration between UA and the Russian National Orchestra.

BUFORD PEACE AWARD

Dr. Ellen Griffith Spears, an associate professor in New College and the Department of American Studies, is the 2016 winner of the Buford Peace Award. The award is given each year to a UA faculty member who has been highly involved in mediating human disputes, helping overcome prejudice, promoting justice, and establishing peace.

NSF SENIOR AWARD

Dr. Jo Weaver, a professor in the Department of Anthropology, received a \$100,000 National Science Foundation Senior Award to study food insecurity and its connection to mental health in Brazil, Ethiopia, and Haiti.

WOODY GUTHRIE BOOK PRIZE

Dr. Eric Weisbard, a professor of American studies, was awarded the Woody Guthrie Book Prize for the most outstanding book in popular music for his book *Top 40 Democracy: The Rival Mainstreams of American Music*.

Police and the Polls

Student receives Brown University's pre-doctoral fellowship

BRANDON DAVIS, a doctoral student in the Department of Political Science, recently received a paid pre-doctoral fellowship from Brown University to study how negative experiences with the criminal justice system keep people from voting—and hinder political involvement in general.

While research has shown how incarceration negatively impacts political participation, Davis looks more closely at how second-tier experiences with the police—like getting pulled over, being verbally or physically harassed, or having a family member go to jail—also impact political involvement.

Davis initially became interested in the topic in 2014 after he read the U.S. Department of Justice report on the Ferguson, Missouri, police department shootings.

“I was looking at their city demographics and the makeup of the elected officials,” Davis said, “and I started to wonder how a city that was 67 percent black could have an almost entirely white mayoral office and municipal court.”

He hypothesized that negative interactions with an aggressive police force, which, in Ferguson, seemed to disproportionately target African Americans, caused the minority populations of the community to lose trust in the system and feel like their votes didn't matter.

As he continues to analyze data from federal government surveys, he expects to see that minority communities, which statistically have more contact with the criminal justice system, will show less desire to have any contact with the state—from voting to volunteering.

Davis is the first pre-doctoral student Brown has accepted into its program, and he has been offered a position as a post-doc fellow once his dissertation is complete.

“This is a great mentoring experience for Brandon,” Dr. Richard Fording, Davis's UA doctoral advisor, said. “He will benefit a lot—and so will our department by having him represent our graduate program while he is there.” ■



Brandon Davis, a doctoral student, studies how people's negative interactions with the police can diminish political and community involvement.

The Great Pringles Challenge

WHAT IS THE SHAPE OF A PRINGLES POTATO CHIP? According to UA professor and chair of the Department of Mathematics, Dr. David Cruz-Uribe, it looks like a hyperbolic paraboloid. In fact the two look so similar that many math professors refer to the chip when describing a hyperbolic paraboloid to their students, but Cruz-Uribe says no one has gone to the trouble of actually proving it.

Consequently, he turned the question over to his honors calculus III class and asked his students to create a mathematical description and a graphic model of the chip to either prove or disprove the theory.

Cruz-Uribe gave the students six weeks and no help.

“The project required very careful measurement of something that is difficult to measure,” Cruz-Uribe said. “They had to go

from the physical object to a mathematical description, and then they had to convert that description into graphical imagery.”

In the end, he was impressed. Nearly a dozen students submitted their work, and four went as far as to create a model of their mathematical descriptions using the University’s 3D printers.

“Pringles were designed so that they would nest perfectly on top of each other in the can,” Cruz-Uribe said while placing one of the 3D models on top of a real Pringles chip. “So, if the models are the real shape, then I should be able to stick an actual chip on top of the model, and they will fit perfectly together.”

A few of the models came pretty close. Cruz-Uribe hopes to turn the one-off, extra-credit project into a future research opportunity for his students and unveil, once and for all, the shape of the Pringle. ■

Bon Voyage

These College of Arts and Sciences faculty members retired during the 2015–2016 academic year. Collectively, they gave more than 230 years of service to the University.

Paul Aharon, Geological Sciences

Stan Brodsky, Psychology

Barbara Godorecci, Italian

Maurizio Godorecci, Italian

Wei-Shen Hsia, Math

Michael Murphy, Anthropology

George Rable, History

Bev Thorn, Psychology



THE \$3 MILLION BREAKTHROUGH PRIZE in fundamental physics for 2016 was divided between five international teams—including the Japan-based KamLAND team, which Drs. Andreas Piepke and Jerry Busenitz, UA professors of physics, collaborate with. The prize celebrates a series of experiments demonstrating that neutrinos—neutral subatomic particles and fundamental constituents of matter—have mass and that they change character as they travel through space. Before this work, neutrinos were believed to be massless. Pictured is the neutrino detector in Kamioka, Japan.

KamLAND



THE BIENNIAL FACULTY ART EXHIBIT this past spring showcased the work of 12 of the College's art and art history faculty members. More than three dozen works, including sculptures, photographs, paintings, and more, were featured.

"Art on display is like a book being opened and read," assistant professor Giang Pham said. "With the wide array of different research topics, this particular faculty exhibit was like a library, rich with content."

ABOVE: Chris Jordan, *Red, Among Others*, 2015, archival pigment print from the photograph, 24 x 16 inches. RIGHT: Giang Pham, *(ant)Umbra*, 2016, incense, porcelain bowls, sweet rice, and sumi ink on rice paper, 72 x 45 x 54 inches.



FACULTY ART

Student Highlights

FULBRIGHT SCHOLARS

Brandon Hooks, a graduate in international studies and economics; **Perrin Lowrey**, a graduate in psychology and German; and **Abigail Thompson**, a graduate in applied economics and political science, each received grants from the highly competitive Fulbright U.S. Student Program to teach and research abroad in Spain, Germany, and Russia respectively. **Pandora White**, a doctoral student in chemistry, received a Fulbright research award to investigate insulin signaling in rats in Poznan, Poland.

TRUMAN SCHOLARS

Dana Sweeney, a senior studying English, Mandarin Chinese, and social innovation and leadership, and **Ciara Malaugh**, a junior studying political science, French,

and psychology, received two of the 54 Truman Scholarships given nationwide. The scholars receive up to \$30,000 for graduate study and are given priority admission and financial aid to premier graduate institutions.

HOLLINGS SCHOLARS

Blair Morrison, a junior studying marine science-biology, and **Kathryn Shay**, a junior studying environmental science, each received Ernest F. Hollings Undergraduate Scholarships, which provide \$9,500 a year for two years of full-time study and \$7,000 for a 10-week internship with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

PARKINSON'S FELLOWSHIP

Samuel Stanley, a senior majoring in

microbiology, was awarded a highly competitive \$5,000 fellowship from the Parkinson's Disease Foundation and American Parkinson Disease Association. The funds supported Stanley's summer research and provided for his travel to present his findings at a conference.

GOOGLE FELLOWSHIP

Jessica Mendoza, a graduate student in psychology, received a highly competitive Google Policy Fellowship to work with the iKeep Safe organization over the summer. The \$7,500 fellowship allows university students who are interested in Internet and technology policy to work at a host organization and contribute to dialogue on copyright, broadband, consumer privacy, government surveillance, data security, and more.

From Space to Surgery

Student revamps NASA technology for cardiologists

NASA'S HIGH-TECH INVENTIONS aren't just for outer space. Through the NASA Technology Transfer Competition, UA students are able to take NASA patents and re-envision them for use on earth.

Virginia Morgan, a senior studying neuroscience in New College, re-envisioned a panoramic lens—which NASA designed to measure heat distribution efficiency in rocket engines—and retooled it to improve heart surgery.

"When doctors perform heart surgery, they often try to look at the walls of a heart valve, but their cameras only look straight ahead," Morgan said. "It's like sticking an ordinary lens into a garden hose and trying to get a good image of the hose walls; it's hard to get the lens at the right angle."

But with a panoramic lens, getting that image becomes a lot easier.

Morgan's project initially began as an assignment for one of her classes that al-

lows her to pursue a bachelor's degree in science, technology, engineering, or math while earning a master's degree in business administration. In the class, she was paired with three other students to create a business proposal, which she presented first to the class and then to representatives from NASA.

The group went on to win the NASA Technology Transfer Competition, and following the win, Morgan and one of her partners, Cory Efirid, a senior studying mechanical engineering, followed through on their design and decided to pursue a licensing and patent agreement with NASA. The students' design also came in third place at UA's annual Edward K. Aldag Jr. Business Plan Competition, which was held earlier this year. As a part of that competition, they received specialized consulting in business development and \$2,000 to create a prototype.

"I've been talking to cardiologists to see if it's something that they would actually use or like," Morgan said. "So far they are really interested—which is exciting because, for a lot of physicians, once they have been trained to use a certain tool, going back to learn something new can be really difficult."

Dr. Rob Morgan, the executive director of UA's STEM path to the MBA program, says that while he doesn't expect all of the students to become entrepreneurs, he does hope that they all come away from the experience better prepared to create innovative products.

"Ginger's team saw a lens for a camera that would allow you to take pictures of a 360-degree panorama and wondered how that concept could be applied in the world to solve a problem," he said. "Using the lens, after miniaturizing it, to view the inside of a cardiac vessel was a brilliant leap." ■

KAYAKING THE BLACK WARRIOR

Marine science student joins alum to raise awareness of aquatic ecosystems

AT 5:30 EVERY MORNING for more than two weeks, senior Collin Williams and environmental science alumnus Chris Cochrane woke up, disassembled their camp, and kayaked into the Black Warrior River. Their goal? Raise awareness of Alabama's aquatic ecosystems by getting from Tuscaloosa to Mobile entirely on the strength of the current and their ability to paddle 341 miles.

"I'm really passionate about aquatic ecosystems," Williams said, "and this trip was an attention-grabber. I thought it would be a great way to promote awareness and get people talking about water quality and the environment."

On the duo's Go Fund Me website, which has now raised more than \$1,000 for water conservation efforts, there is a list of facts about Alabama's ecosystem. Some are fun, stating that Alabama has the most freshwater aquatic species in the country, but others warn of the loss of those species. For instance, Alabama also ranks number two in the nation for most species lost to extinction.

"In the end, our goal was to touch one person," Williams said. "Even if our only accomplishment was to help one more person see the importance of water quality and aquatic ecosystems, that would have been enough. The donations were an added bonus."

Williams champions awareness because he believes that prevention is the key to a healthy environment.

"We have millions of gallons of water in our backyard, and I think it's important to protect those resources before something goes wrong," Williams said. "On the news we hear about the droughts out West and the water crisis in Flint, Michigan, and it seems that we often wait to start talking about a problem until it's a major issue. But it's a lot easier to maintain clean water than to fix polluted water."

On May 27, after storms, heat, a lot of camping, and even detangling a pelican from a fishing lure, Williams and Cochrane finally landed in Mobile Bay.

"I'm a marine science and biology double major with a minor in geology—and I have learned a lot in my classes," Williams said. "But some things are hard to truly understand until you get outside and really check it out. Now I know firsthand how animals interact and how water flows through systems. The lightbulb has switched on."

Williams graduates from the University in fall 2016, after which he



ABOVE: Collin Williams stands with his canoe on the bank of the Black Warrior River. **BELOW:** While paddling the 341 miles to his destination in Mobile, Williams said he began to understand principles of biology and geology.



will move to Alaska to work with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration as a national fisheries observer in Dutch Harbor. In that position he will record the catch and species types of the fish that are caught in commercial vessels.

"Ultimately, my professional goal is to work as a state fisheries biologist or as the lead scientist of a marine protected area," Williams said. "Both would allow me to have influence on the sustainable management of ecosystems and the establishment of regulations that protect them." ■

Without the help of UA's Cartographic Research Lab, Williams' trip would not have been possible. Craig Remington, the director of the lab, helped Williams design and print custom topographic maps of the river from Tuscaloosa to Mobile.



Bringing Math Education Home

First-generation college student sets eye on giving back to hometown of Bayou La Batre

IN HIGH SCHOOL, David Dai finished every math test first—or pretty close to it. He was the salutatorian and president of his senior class, and academia just came easy. But that didn't mean that paying for college would be as simple.

"My parents shuck oysters for a living," Dai said. "They usually work from 4 a.m. to 2 p.m., but after the BP oil spill in 2010, their work has been inconsistent at best because of the damage done to the oyster beds."

Knowing that he couldn't rely on his parents to send him to school, Dai, a first-generation college student, realized that he would have to find scholarships instead—and he did. Now, Dai is working on his master's degree in math education, but as an undergraduate, he received five scholarships that enabled him to pursue his dreams.

"In my senior year of high school, I actually set the school record for scholarship

offers," Dai said. "It was over \$1 million—unfortunately I couldn't keep it all."

Despite the fact that Dai's parents couldn't help him pay for college, they have spent their whole lives trying to give Dai and his siblings a better life, and for that, Dai wants to give back—to them and to the small fishing community of Bayou La Batre, near Mobile, where he grew up.

"I want to go back to my hometown to teach math," he said. "The community there isn't the most affluent, but I believe the potential is there, and I just want to give back to that community."

Specifically, Dai hopes to help the large Asian population in the town. As a son of Vietnamese immigrants, Dai grew up translating for his parents in his home and at school.

"It can be a bit awkward, especially at parent-teacher conferences," he said. "But I

feel like I can be a bridge for Asian families in the Mobile County education system."

While at UA, Dai has volunteered for Habitat for Humanity and the St. Margaret Catholic Church; participated in Freshman Forum; worked with Relay for Life; and interned with UA's Noyce Scholars Program, which urges science, technology, engineering, and mathematics majors to consider careers in education. He also worked over the summer with Tuscaloosa City Schools helping students with credit recovery and remedial math.

"It is really rewarding to see students succeed and be able to move on—or in some cases receive that final math credit and finally be able to graduate," Dai said. "I don't need them to succeed in upper-level mathematics, but I want them to be able to do the things that will be required of them in their careers." ■

RACING IN RIO

Graduate competes in 2016 Olympics

WHEN FIRST-TIME OLYMPIAN and recent graduate Alex Amankwah moved to the United State as an eight-year-old, he said that he expected to see futuristic marvels like flying cars and hoverboards. He had grown up in a poor part of Ghana, and his mother brought him to Los Angeles, California, so he and his family could have a better life. But in L.A., Amankwah didn't find the high-tech fantasy he'd dreamed of. Instead, he found a poor neighborhood full of gangs and violence.

"For a while, I thought being in a gang and being tough was really cool," Amankwah said. "I thought it was what I wanted. But then I went to high school and began playing sports—and I saw a new path for my life."

That new path led Amankwah from the basketball court to the track, where he smashed a UA school record, became a first-team All American, qualified for the world championships, and, most recently, competed at the 2016 summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

"When I was in high school, I actually thought track was for losers," Amankwah said. "To me, it was the sport people did when they couldn't play basketball, soccer, or football."

But after his high-school basketball coach encouraged him to join the track team, Amankwah realized that he was fast. Really fast. He learned to love the gasps of fans seeing him break records, and he loved seeing how hard work could push him to be a little faster each year.

Within three months of his first race, Amankwah was the fastest 800-meter runner in California. He went to junior college and then transferred to The University of Alabama, where he simultaneously shattered the school's 11-year-old record and became Ghana's fastest ever 800-meter indoor runner.

I THOUGHT BEING IN A GANG AND BEING TOUGH WAS REALLY COOL. BUT THEN I WENT TO HIGH SCHOOL AND BEGAN PLAYING SPORTS—AND I SAW A NEW PATH FOR MY LIFE.

"The 800 is a special race because you need speed and endurance," Amankwah said. "And it is often hard to get those two in sync."

Consequently, Amankwah trains in both long distance running and in sprinting—putting in more than 40 miles each week. Still, when the Olympic trials opened May 1, 2015, Amankwah wasn't ready.

He had 422 days to meet the qualifying time for the 800-meter dash, which was 1:46.00. But he'd never gone that fast before. Thinking that his qualifying run was still months away, Amankwah was surprised when only a day after the trials opened, he ran a personal best of 1:45.91 in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

He had made it. And when he got the call from Ghana that he was on the team, he was overjoyed.

"If had run that time even two days before, it never would have counted," Amankwah said. "I was so lucky."



Middle-distance runner Alex Amankwah broke an 11-year school record at UA before competing in the 2016 Rio Olympics.

In the time between the Olympic trials and the Olympics, however, Amankwah's luck hit a dry spell. He fractured his fibula just three months before the Rio games, and as a result he wasn't able to run for a month. He substituted his regular workout routine for biking exercises, but his muscles atrophied, and when he arrived in Rio, his fibula was still fractured.

He still ran, but he wasn't pleased with his time. In the first qualifying heat, he was eliminated with a time of 1:50.33. Following the race, Amankwah went to the doctor and finally rested his leg, putting it in a boot and giving it time to heal properly.

"Going to the Olympics, I knew it was going to be a stretch for me to do well," Amankwah said. "But I will be back, and next time I am going to redeem myself because I believe I am one of the top athletes in the world."

Between now and the next Olympics, Amankwah is going to train harder than ever before, but he says he also wants to put his psychology degree to good use.

"I want to start a program where I can counsel kids in poor communities," Amankwah said. "If it weren't for my involvement in athletics, I would still be interested in gangs and believe that getting a high school diploma was good enough. I want kids in poor communities to know that they can dream big dreams and that those dreams can come true—like mine did." ■



Volcanic Ashfall

Geologist receives NSF grant to study volcanic lightning

WHEN VOLCANOES ERUPT, molten rock called magma is ejected into the air where it cools and becomes volcanic ash—bits of jagged rock and glass sometimes no bigger than a few micrometers in diameter. But this ash isn't like the ash leftover in a charcoal grill or a campfire; it's hard, and depending on where and how it falls, it can be deadly.

According to Dr. Kim Genareau, a professor in the Department of Geological Sciences, airplane pilots can't see fine ash on radar, so they can fly through an ash cloud without knowing it.

"And when the ash gets into the engine, it can melt and cause the engine to shut down," she said.

The models used to predict where and how ash will fall are determined in part by the size and shape of ash, and Genareau recently hypothesized that lightning changes both.

To learn more about the relationship between volcanic ash and lightning, a phenomenon that has only recently been studied in detail, the National Science Foundation awarded Genareau more than \$600,000 through three grants, including a CAREER award.

Typically, ash particles are jagged and have unusual shapes, but in an article published last year in *Geology*, Genareau discusses a few microscopic sphere-shaped ash particles that showed up in samples she took from the 2010 eruption of Iceland's Eyjafjalajökull volcano.

She hypothesized that these spheres were created when lightning struck the ash cloud and instantaneously melted the glass

portions of the ash. Then, as the liquefied glass fell through the air, she theorized that it morphed into the sphere-like shapes.

In order to test that hypothesis, Genareau will use a portion of her grant money to artificially strike volcanic ash with lightning to see if she can recreate the spheres.

"We will put the samples in a PVC pipe, connect it to a wire, and launch that wire into a thunderstorm," Genareau said.

When the lightning travels back down the wire and strikes the samples, Genareau expects to see changes in the ash shape.

Genareau's research is still so new that she doesn't know whether it will allow pilots to anticipate changes in ash travel—as very little of the ash may be affected—but her research will allow future scholars to trace volcanic lightning in the geologic record for the first time. They will be able to look at ash samples from unobserved volcanic eruptions and know that lightning occurred.

In addition to her research, the grant also funds an outreach component, allowing Genareau to develop a local grade-school curricula on natural hazards, such as flooding and tornados.

She also hopes to involve local high school students in her research by having them help run the triggered lightning experiments.

"Even if they don't go on to study volcanoes or rocks, these students will have experience using analytical instruments," she said, "which will help them in any field." ■

TEACHING UNDERGRADS TO PUBLISH

Peer-reviewed journal publishes UA student essays written for class

THE VISION OF DR. JOLENE HUBBS' 400-LEVEL WRITING COURSE is to take students from all kinds of majors, and, in 15 weeks, give them a pretty good shot at being published.

"Students always tell me that they've gotten good at 'fluff' and filling the pages," Hubbs said. "But my goal has been to get them to purge the fluff because no matter what they go on to do, even if it's not writing literary criticism, their readers will want clear, concise writing."

Knowing that models are effective tools for students, Hubbs, a professor in the Department of American Studies, sought out a journal that the students could use as a guideline for their work. The short, 1,100-word essays from the peer-reviewed *Explicator* fit the scope of her class perfectly. All of the essays are close readings, which analyze a canonized text by looking at the details of the text itself.

In just five semesters, seven of her students have gone on to publish their own close readings in the very journal they modeled after.

At first, the students struggled to adapt to the new, shorter style. Will Flowers, the most recent student to have an essay accepted for publication by *The Explicator*, said that he received a D on the first of his three essays because he didn't have a handle on how to write in the new format.

"I totally bombed it," Flowers said. "And I don't bomb things very often, but she wanted us to read small and write small—and that was something that I'd never really done. I'd only written papers for length."

But for the second paper, Flowers buckled down.

"I'd write a draft of the paper, and I was consistently 200 or 300 words over the limit," Flowers said. "So I'd have to rework it and cut it back. I learned to read closer, and that definitely helped my writing—both for the course and for my business classes."

Flowers' second essay, written about *Jonah's Gourd Vine* by Zora Neale Hurston, was in response to one of the articles he had read in class—a close reading by Shahrar'ova Dente, one of Hubbs' former students, who had published the essay in *The Explicator* years earlier. Flowers expanded on Dente's analysis, and the resulting essay was accepted for publication earlier this year.

"Nearly half of our course reader is made of my former students' work," Hubbs said, "and some day it will be filled entirely with University of Alabama essays." ■



Dr. Jolene Hubbs teaches her students how to be concise but clear with their writing, and as a result seven of her students, many of them undergraduates, are already being published in an academic journal.

I LEARNED TO READ CLOSER, AND THAT DEFINITELY HELPED MY WRITING— BOTH FOR THE COURSE AND FOR MY BUSINESS CLASSES.

The Next Generation of Scientists

Hands-on outreach encourages middle-school students to consider careers in science

WHEN DR. LAURA REED PASSED AROUND TWO DOZEN PHOTOS of racially and gender diverse UA students to a classroom of seventh graders, she asked them to choose which ones were scientists and which ones weren't.

The kids responded with comments like, "This person is wearing big earrings, so she couldn't possibly be a scientist," but, in reality, each photo was of a member of Reed's biology lab.

"I wanted the students to recognize and address some of their potential stereotypes," said Reed, an assistant professor in the Department of Biological Sciences. "Anyone can be a scientist, but studies have demonstrated that when kids don't see people who look like them in a given role or career, it is harder for them to envision themselves in those roles."

For the last two years, Reed's mission has been to encourage middle-school students—particularly girls and minority students—to pursue careers in STEM fields, or careers in science, technology, engineering, and math. This is why every two weeks, she takes a team of UA students over to Tuscaloosa Magnet School to conduct experiments with two seventh-grade biology classes.

"Research has shown that middle school is the time when girls and minority students start to lose confidence in their abilities to do math and science," Reed said. "But most outreach programs that I'm aware of target ele-

mentary or high school students."

Together with her team, Reed has not only increased students' confidence in the sciences, but she has also helped the students understand how various aspects of biological processes fit together.

"In my own experience in middle school, I learned about DNA at one point and the cell at another point and ecology at another point, but I didn't understand how they fit together until much later," Reed said. "I wanted to make those connections more apparent to these students."

Consequently, Reed uses her own research organism—the fruit fly—in almost every lesson. For the ecology component of the curriculum, students collected wild fruit flies; for the genetics portion, they predicted the traits of the organism using Punnett squares; and in a lesson on DNA, they were asked to solve the mystery of which fruit fly stole a banana. Reed had "DNA evidence" of the culprit fly on the banana, and the students were tasked with matching the evidence to the appropriate suspect.

"They extracted DNA from six different species, and they did some basic analyses and matched the DNA sequences to the right fly," she said.

"Students don't respond well to memorization. And ultimately that's not what science is anyway. Science is a process of question-



STUDENTS DON'T RESPOND WELL TO MEMORIZATION, AND ULTIMATELY THAT'S NOT WHAT SCIENCE IS ANYWAY. SCIENCE IS A PROCESS OF QUESTIONING AND BEING CURIOUS.



ing and being curious. It is not the regurgitation of facts—at least it shouldn't be.”

Growing up in a family of scientists, Reed was always curious about the world around her. In second grade, she gave a report about the reproduction of blackberries. In sixth grade, she categorized every plant that she could find on her family’s property just to know which ones were native and which were invasive. In high school, she took a scientific illustration class that allowed her to study animals in detail in order to recreate them on paper.

Not every child gets such a rich upbringing in the sciences, so her hope has been to cultivate that hands-on experience in the classroom.

“It’s hard to be curious about something that you’re not exposed to,” she said. “But most of what I do doesn’t cost that much, and anyone could do it. Just put a piece of rotting fruit in a Coke bottle and let it sit out overnight. Fruit flies will come, and you can identify what species of fruit fly are in the area.”

In addition to increasing the students’ exposure to science in the classroom, Reed is also invested in helping young students “see themselves” at a university.

Earlier this year, Reed invited the classes to tour UA’s campus on a field trip, during which they visited Reed’s research lab and were able

to see the equipment she uses. They also toured a microscope facility, a fish room, the Alabama Museum of Natural History, and campus.

“Despite living physically close to the University, many of them have not had a reason to actually be on campus unless it’s for a football game,” she said. “They don’t really understand what else happens here.”

After the field trip, many of the students wrote notes to Reed, thanking her not only for the exposure to campus but for her time in their classroom as well.

One student wrote, “When you came to our school and taught us about fruit flies, I thought I wouldn’t like it, but in the end, I ended up having a blast.”

Another student said, “Thank you for bringing the actual flies for us to study. ... I might look into a career that has science in it now that I know it’s not only about space and the human body.”

The students’ positive feedback was verified when, at the end of the school year, Reed had the class take an exit survey to see how their interest in science had changed.

While 18 percent of students wanted to be scientists at the beginning of the year, that percent doubled to 36 percent by the end of May.

Reed is excited by her initial success and says she will sustain and enhance the program as long as she has the energy to do so. ■



Improving Veteran Life

Psychologist's emotional healthcare measure goes national

OVER THE LAST TWENTY YEARS, the quality of nursing-home care across the nation has changed dramatically. Residents have more choices over their accommodations, their food, and their schedules than ever before; but when Dr. Lynn Snow, an associate professor in the Department of Psychology at UA and clinical research psychologist at the Tuscaloosa Veterans Affairs Medical Center, visited nursing homes throughout the country, she noticed the care was somewhat one-sided—focusing more on physical well-being than emotional well-being.

“We can count the number of pressure ulcers or the number of falls, and we can monitor weight and diet,” Snow said. “But it is harder to measure the psycho-social side of life.”

Wanting to create a way for busy nurses and staff to measure the emotional welfare of their residents without taking too much of their already limited time, Snow and her colleagues came up with a program that anyone could learn—and use—in just five minutes. And with the support of various grants from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, she is now helping the nation's largest integrated health care system to enhance the emotional health of veterans living in these facilities.

The program relies on all personnel at the nursing home—from the nursing assistants to nurses, recreational therapists, and physicians—and each are asked to assess and record the frequency and quality of resident engagement in five-minute snapshots.

“In each snapshot, the staff member goes into an area, and, working left to right, rates each person's engagement,” Snow said. “If the resident is just watching something, we call that receiving only. If the resident is actually involved, then that is considered active engagement, and if they are staring into space, sleeping, or have their eyes closed, then they are not engaged.”

The staff record their findings, and then they regularly come together for short “huddles” to discuss what they saw. They focus on the positive by pinpointing when residents are most engaged and then try to replicate those scenarios.

“We call this the bright-spots approach,” Snow said. “People don't solve problems by focusing on failure. They develop solutions when they recognize and then reproduce what has gone well.”

One thing Snow hopes to see as the program rolls out is that staff members, who often cannot take an hour to sit and talk with

MY DREAM WAS TO CONDUCT RESEARCH THAT DIRECTLY INFLUENCES AND INFORMS ACTUAL CARE, AND NOW I AM.

residents about their life stories, will begin to utilize the time they already have with the residents to engage and grow their relationships—talking to them when they are moving them or helping them eat. She says this is often done silently, not because staff members don't care about the residents, but because their focus on physical health and safety indicators sometimes causes them to overlook how relationships and emotional health are absolutely necessary for physical health.

Snow hopes that as staff members realize that residents' quality of life can be increased through these small but frequent moments, they will begin to take advantage of these opportunities.

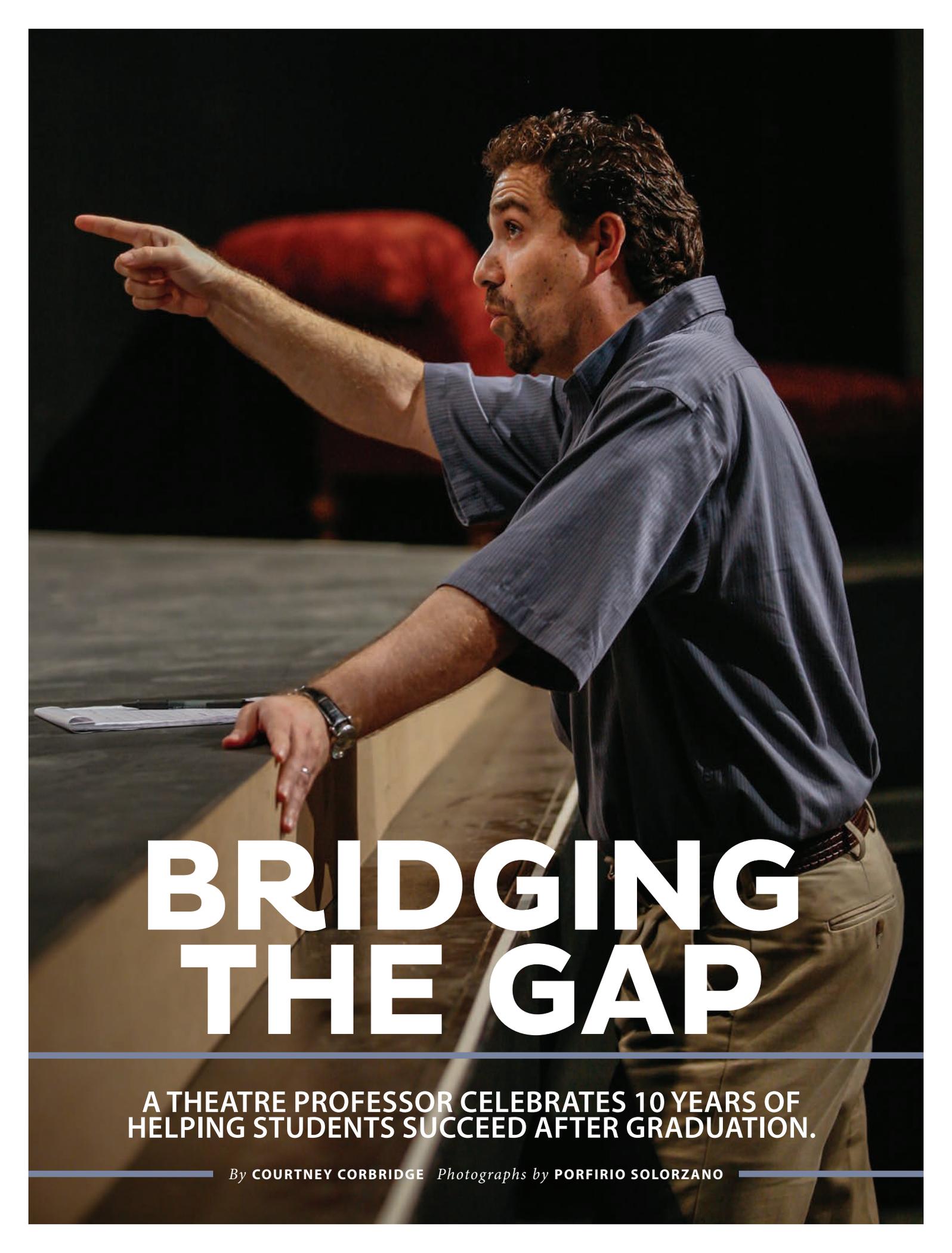
“It's a low-level goal to shoot for,” she said. “But we think it will make a difference without singling people out and will start a cascade of bigger changes over time.”

Reflecting the national scope of the VA, Dr. Snow partners with Dr. Christine Hartmann, a social work professor at the VA in Bedford, Massachusetts, and a large interdisciplinary team separated geographically but connected by teleconferences, the VA system, and the University's Alabama Research Institute on Aging. Snow particularly cherishes her team's close relationships with nursing staff at the VAs in which they have worked.

“Nurses are the only people who are at the nursing home, on the floor, 24/7, 365 days a year,” she said. “They carry a special responsibility and deserve much more recognition and support.”

Snow and her team originally tested their new method in six nursing homes across the nation and saw positive results. Over the summer they created implementation guides, training videos, and other training materials in preparation for an anticipated national roll-out to all 135 VA community living centers in the United States. The materials were also tested at an additional eight nursing homes to assure they met the needs of staff.

“My dream was to conduct research that directly influences and informs actual care,” Snow said. “And now I am.” ■

A man with dark, curly hair and a beard, wearing a blue short-sleeved button-down shirt and khaki pants, is shown in profile from the waist up. He is pointing his right hand towards the left side of the frame. His left hand rests on a clipboard on a surface. The background is dark with a blurred red object. The overall scene appears to be a stage or rehearsal space.

BRIDGING THE GAP

A THEATRE PROFESSOR CELEBRATES 10 YEARS OF
HELPING STUDENTS SUCCEED AFTER GRADUATION.

By COURTNEY CORBRIDGE Photographs by PORFIRIO SOLORZANO

GROWING UP, SETH PANITCH thought he would be a doctor like his father. He dreamed of going to medical school and was familiar with the apprenticeship-like process of residency that allows young professionals to apply their academic training in the real world. But when Panitch, now the director of UA's acting programs, pursued theatre instead of medicine, he was on his own. Despite the classical training he received at the University of Washington, the professional theatre world was uncharted territory for Panitch. Two years went by before he made his big break in New York.

"After graduate school, most theatre students are sort of dumped out into the world," Panitch said. "In some respects actors pop out of the womb too early, and what they need is a bridge to connect them professionally and get them on their feet. I didn't have that."

Learning from his own experience and wanting to provide better opportunities for his students at UA, Panitch created the Bridge Project in 2006. The premise of the project is to give students the opportunity to be in a professional production with professional actors in a big city, so they can learn the ropes and make the connections they need to be successful after graduation.

In the 10 years that the program has been operating, Panitch has already seen dozens of students succeed. Some have gone on to perform in Broadway and off-Broadway hits like *Hamilton*, *Kinky Boots*, and *Wicked*; others have made their names in television and film. The common thread, however, is that they all participated in the Bridge Project.



Seth Panitch, right, directs a student during rehearsal for *The Heiress*.



In some respects actors pop out of the what they need is a bridge to connect and get them on their feet. I did not

"All of our successful students have participated in this program," Panitch said. "And though it's not the only reason they are successful, it is certainly a part of their success because actors need to be seen in New York. They need to connect with other actors, directors, reviewers, and playwrights—and this project makes that possible."

Panitch's concern for others, however, extends beyond his current acting students. The Bridge Project invites students from across the Department of Theatre and Dance to receive opportunities to put their training to the test. For each production, Panitch brings a team of UA costume, set, and lighting designers—and he invites

alumni to participate as well.

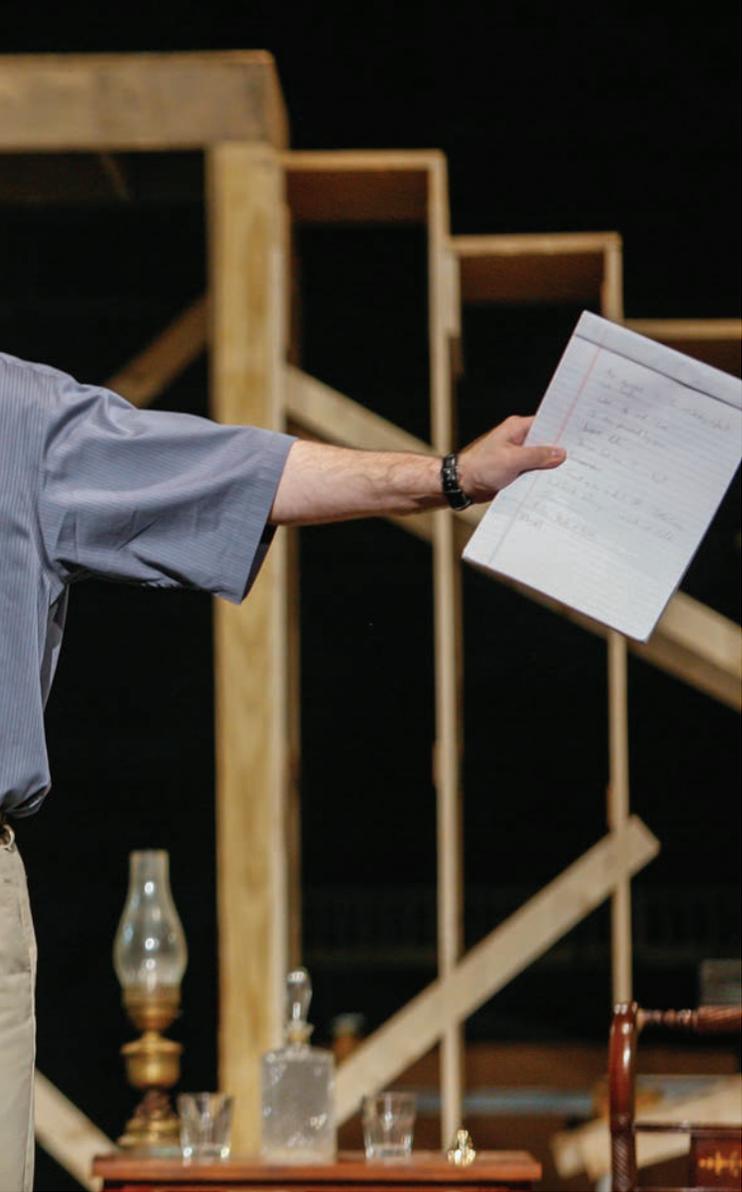
"We don't forget about our students once they graduate," Panitch said. "No other program does that. No other program allows alumni to take advantage of these opportunities. We do because we want to help those who have been in the industry for a few years get the extra push they need to get their careers going."

Alumnus Matt Lewis, who played in two Bridge Project premieres after graduating in 2012, has since played in network television shows like Fox's *Sleepy Hollow* and ABC's *Resurrection*. Currently, he also plays in roughly five shows a season in many of Atlanta's respected theatres.

"It is unquestionable that my professional

opportunities arose because of the skill set I acquired studying under Professor Panitch and performing in Bridge Project productions," Lewis said. "The fact that UA is willing and able to support something like the Bridge Project is astoundingly rare. Most universities don't—or can't—provide the amount of financial and professional resources required. All involved in the continued support of the Bridge Project should be applauded."

Panitch says that it takes an army to make a program like this work, and he attributes so much of the program's success to the support that the University has given the arts. The Bridge Project received its initial funding from UA's Research Advisory Committee and



womb too early, and them professionally have that.” —Seth Panitch

the College of Arts and Sciences Leadership Board. Additionally, *Service to Man*, the only Bridge Project film which won best film at the American Black Film Festival this year, was made possible because of support from the president’s office, the provost’s office, the College of Arts and Sciences, the Department of Theatre and Dance, and many other organizations across campus.

“My film was the only University-supported film at the American Black Film Festival,” Panitch said. “It’s unheard of, but it happens because this University has an artistic vision that other schools don’t.”

Panitch, who has written six of the 11 Bridge Project productions, isn’t stopping either. He plans to bring another Bridge Project production, *Separate and Equal*, to the stage in 2018. That show, he hopes, will run for an entire month in New York.

“We want our graduate students to put Alabama’s name out in the lights on Broadway or Hollywood or wherever else our graduates go,” Panitch said, “so we’ll keep going and growing.” ■

FROM BRIDGE PROJECT TO BROADWAY

THE UA BRIDGE PROJECT LEADS ITS STUDENTS TO SUCCESS. BELOW ARE JUST A FEW ALUMNI WHO HAVE MADE IT BIG.



Within a year of performing in Panitch’s *Alcestis Ascending*, **NICK BURROUGHS** was recruited as the understudy for Tony Award-winning Billy Porter in Broadway’s *Kinky Boots*. He also starred as Judas in *Jesus Christ Superstar* at Birmingham’s Virginia Samford Theatre and won the Broadway World Award for best local actor in a musical.



JAKE BOYD was back in Alabama this summer, playing Fiyero in the Birmingham production of *Wicked* for the national tour. Before that he debuted on Broadway in *Rock of Ages* and also performed in *The Sound of Music Live!* with Carrie Underwood—among other productions. His kick start, however, came through his appearance in the Bridge Project production of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.



Since her time in Panitch’s *Hell: Paradise Found*, **ALEXANDRA FICKEN** has played in TV series like *The Vampire Diaries* spin-off, *The Originals*, and the HBO series *Vice Principals*. She has also worked in multiple regional

theatres like Georgia’s Alliance and Horizon theatres.



MATT LEWIS, who performed in two of Panitch’s creations for the Bridge Project—*Hell: Paradise Found* and *Here I Sit, Brokenhearted*—now has a steady professional life in Atlanta’s well-regarded theatres. He has also performed regularly in the Texas Shakespeare Festival.

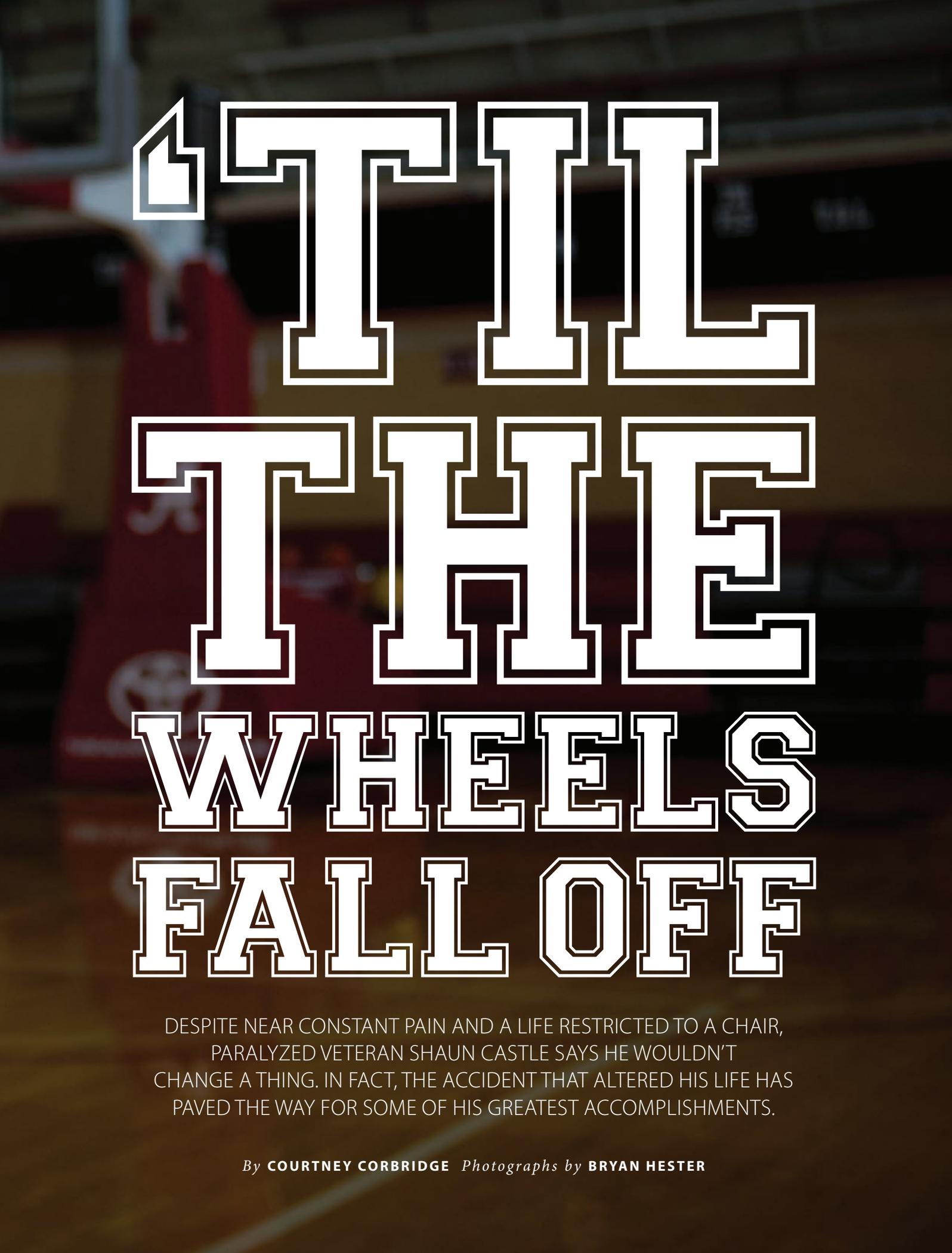


THADDEUS FITZPATRICK has taken his theatrical skills across the Northeast, performing in Philadelphia, New York, and Washington D.C. His first show in New York, however, was Panitch’s *Alcestis Ascending*.



MICHAEL LUWOYE didn’t just make it to Broadway; he’s playing the lead role in *Hamilton*—the new musical sensation that *The New York Times* says “is on track to become one of the biggest critical and commercial hits in Broadway history.” Prior to making it big, however, he first played in the Bridge Project production *Beyond Therapy*.

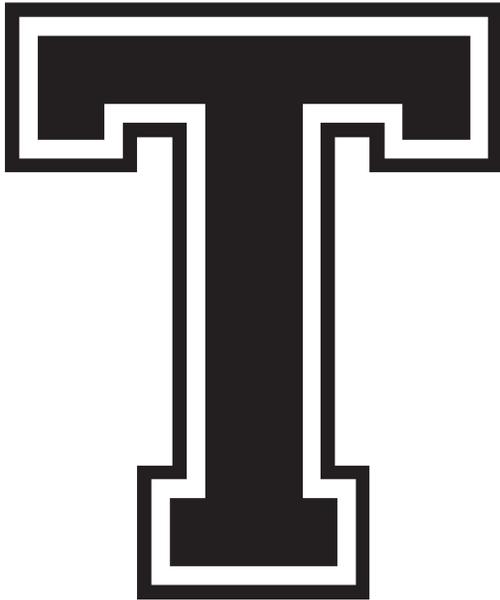




'TIL THE WHEELS FALL OFF

DESPITE NEAR CONSTANT PAIN AND A LIFE RESTRICTED TO A CHAIR, PARALYZED VETERAN SHAUN CASTLE SAYS HE WOULDN'T CHANGE A THING. IN FACT, THE ACCIDENT THAT ALTERED HIS LIFE HAS PAVED THE WAY FOR SOME OF HIS GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

By **COURTNEY CORBRIDGE** Photographs by **BRYAN HESTER**



TWENTY-TWO YEAR OLD U.S. Army Sgt. Shaun Castle was on a training mission in Germany when the pulsing rounds of a Mark 19 automatic grenade launcher rang out unexpectedly and drastically changed the course of his life.

He had been teaching a soldier how to use the weapon, which was mounted on the top of a Humvee, but the soldier fired prematurely. The Humvee recoiled, and, in an instant, the brush guard of the vehicle slammed into Castle's lower back—cracking two vertebrae, herniating three discs, and sending bone into his spinal cord.

Castle was paralyzed. But far from ruining his life, paralysis has actually paved the way for some of his greatest accomplishments—playing collegiate wheelchair basketball at The University of Alabama, meeting President George W. Bush, hosting a Fox Sports radio show in Los Angeles, starring in a Randy Houser music video, and so much more.

"Of course I wish I could have my body back," Castle said. "But these are the steps that got me here, and I wouldn't change it."

COMING TO ALABAMA

Sixteen years before Castle, a New College LifeTrack senior, came to UA to play adaptive sports, he dreamed of playing basketball at the collegiate level. He even had scholarships. But he also had consistent knee problems, which lost him his spot on the court and sent him into the family business, the military, instead.

Castle's father served in Vietnam. His grandfathers served in World War II at Normandy and Bastogne. His sister, cousins, and uncles also served.

"I was 18 when I signed my contract," he said. "So I was still really young, but I'm in a military family; that's what we do."

In his first year of service, the New York native met Thomas Robertson—a homegrown Alabama boy, who gave Castle his first taste of the Alabama-Auburn rivalry.

"Rob is a huge Auburn fan," Castle said. "So the first year we met, I bought an Alabama hat and shirt just to mess with him."

That year, UA won the Iron Bowl, and Castle

cheered Alabama on the whole way. He never expected to wind up in the South—let alone be a part of the Crimson Tide. But when Castle was injured in 2004, his doctors told him that he would need to move somewhere warm to help keep the titanium in his spine, which was holding his spinal discs in place, at body temperature.

Castle called up Robertson, who was home from the Iraq War as well, and decided to visit Alabama for the first time. He fell in love with the state and has been here for the last 12 years.

FULFILLING HIS BASKETBALL DREAM

Castle did not immediately come to UA, however. Just a few years after moving to Alabama, Castle found himself back in the hospital.

He was 30 and in good health, but unexpectedly, his organs began to shut down. He went to the Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Birmingham, and for a while he was in danger of losing his life. No one seemed to know what was causing the shutdown until the doctors realized that Castle had developed an allergic reaction to pain medication—everything except Tylenol.

For years, pain had been a daily struggle for Castle. Without medication, he could only be in his wheelchair for two to three hours at a time before he had to lie completely flat.

"Whenever I play basketball, train, work out, or even move around, I feel brutal shots of pain down my right leg," he said. "It's not fun going without

pain medicine, but it's actually better; my mind is clear at all times, and I'm able to feel everything—the highs and the lows. It reminds me that I'm alive."

While at the hospital recuperating, Castle met a recreational therapist who told him about adaptive sports for the first time. She explained that at the Lakeshore Foundation in Birmingham, he could play basketball, swim, play tennis, and do just about everything that he used to love to do athletically. He decided to try it out, and he fell in love instantly.

"I remember rolling into the field house and seeing the Olympic rings," he said. "It clicked, and I knew that's what I wanted."

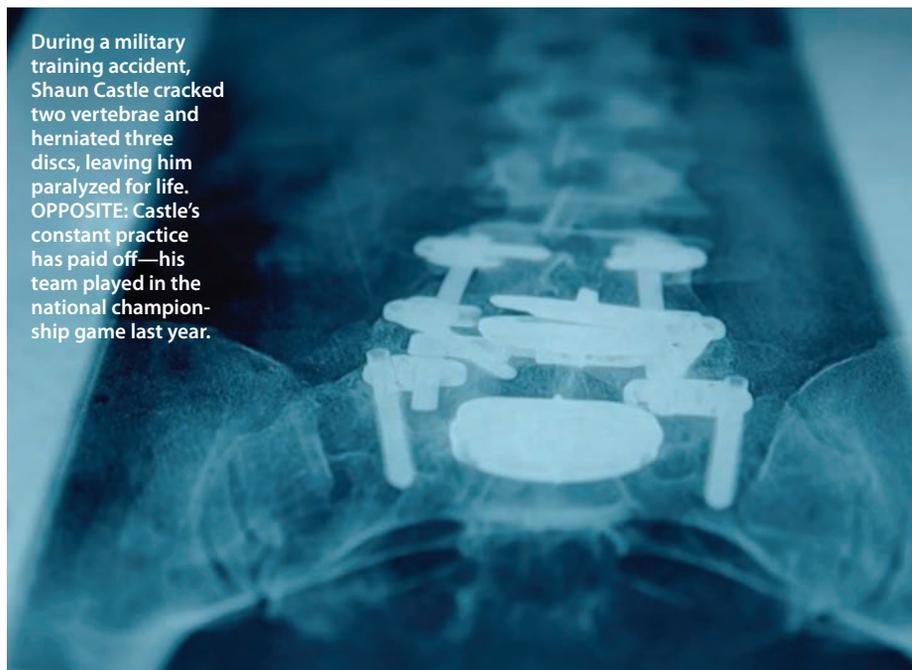
From that day onward, Castle spent six days a week—five to six hours a day—training at Lakeshore. He got better, grew stronger, and eventually joined the Lakeshore basketball team, which led to him earning a spot on an international team based in Leone, France.

"I'm a veteran, but sports have taken me around the world," Castle said.

In total, he's been to 37 countries.

However, Castle put his world travels on hold when Ford Burtram, a friend from his days at Lakeshore, was appointed head coach of the men's wheelchair basketball team at UA. Years earlier the two had joked that if Burtram ever became head coach, Castle would come to play for him, so when Burtram called and offered him a spot on the team, Castle decided to leave France and return to Alabama.

During a military training accident, Shaun Castle cracked two vertebrae and herniated three discs, leaving him paralyzed for life. OPPOSITE: Castle's constant practice has paid off—his team played in the national championship game last year.





He joined the men's wheelchair basketball team, and began, for the first time, to live his collegiate dream.

"Shaun brings a unique perspective to the team with his background as a soldier and the life experience that he has accumulated," Burttram said. "He has blossomed as a basketball player ... and he is an asset for the Alabama family."

Castle is now in his final year at the University, and though he has accomplished much, he says he is most proud of what he has achieved at UA. He loves being in New College studying presidential leadership, and he has loved playing adaptive sports in Foster Auditorium. Last year, the men's team finished second nationwide, and Castle fully intends to come away victorious in his final season.

"When I do walk away—or more appropriately roll away—with my ring next year, I will be so unbelievably proud because I will know how far I have come and how hard I have had

to work to attain not only my athletics, but my academics," Castle said.

AFTER UA

For the last 16 years, Castle's life has been anything but predictable, and his future looks no different. When asked where he sees himself in the next 10 years, he gave a firm, "I have no idea."

Currently he has a job offer in Los Angeles to be a radio show host; some people have talked to him about becoming an actor; others have suggested that he become a congressman; he would love to go to the 2020 Paralympic Games; and his dream is to be president of Paralyzed Veterans of America. No matter the path he takes, he says he will keep going.

"My motto is 'til the wheels fall off,'" Castle said. "I'm just going to keep going as long as I can, as hard as I can, and as fast as I can until the wheels fall off." ■



A LIFE OF SERVICE

SHAUN CASTLE NOT ONLY SERVED in the United States Army for four years as a soldier and sergeant; he also has made a life of service.

Castle is the face of the National Veteran's Wheelchair Games, an annual event where veterans compete in 18 wheelchair sports; he volunteers with the Make a Wish Foundation; he helps in any way he can with Paralyzed Veterans of America; and he sponsors children to play sports who wouldn't be able to afford it otherwise, buying their equipment and paying for their entrance fees.

Last year, Castle also introduced UA alumni Mike and Kathy Mouron to the needs of the University's Adapted Athletics program, which eventually led to a \$3 million gift commitment toward UA's new Adapted Athletics facility.

"Mike Mouron and I were developing some promotional materials for the cottages he donates to Lakeshore Veterans, when he offered to pay for the rest of my schooling," Castle said. "I was so grateful to him because the VA can only pay for some things, but I also wanted to help out the boys on the team, so I asked him if I could talk to him about something else as well."

After discussing the needs of Adapted Athletics with Castle, Mike and Kathy decided it was a program they wanted to support.

"Six months after that conversation, I learned that a new arena would be built," Castle said. "And that means that my university will be the first university in the country to have an adapted sports arena. Young students will be able to come here and be true athletes, which they deserve because they—and we—are true athletes."

The new facility, which will include a regulation-size basketball court, workout equipment, and a study area for the athletes, is expected to be complete in 2018.



FREEDOM AND FIRE!

***** A CIVIL WAR STORY *****

*CRAFTED BY UA PROFESSORS, PERFORMED BY UA OPERA STUDENTS,
AND DEPICTING A PORTION OF UA'S MILITARY HISTORY, FREEDOM AND
FIRE! A CIVIL WAR STORY IS A FULLY HOMEGROWN PRODUCTION THAT
DRAMATIZES THE FINAL DAYS OF THE CIVIL WAR IN TUSCALOOSA.*

WHEN COLONEL THOMAS M. JOHNSTON and the Second Michigan Cavalry arrived in Tuscaloosa in 1865, they carried with them orders to destroy The University of Alabama—the Confederacy's makeshift West Point at the time. The war was nearly over—Johnston arrived only five days before the surrender at Appomattox—and professors like Andre DeLoffré pleaded for campus, especially the library, to be spared. But the order to burn everything remained.

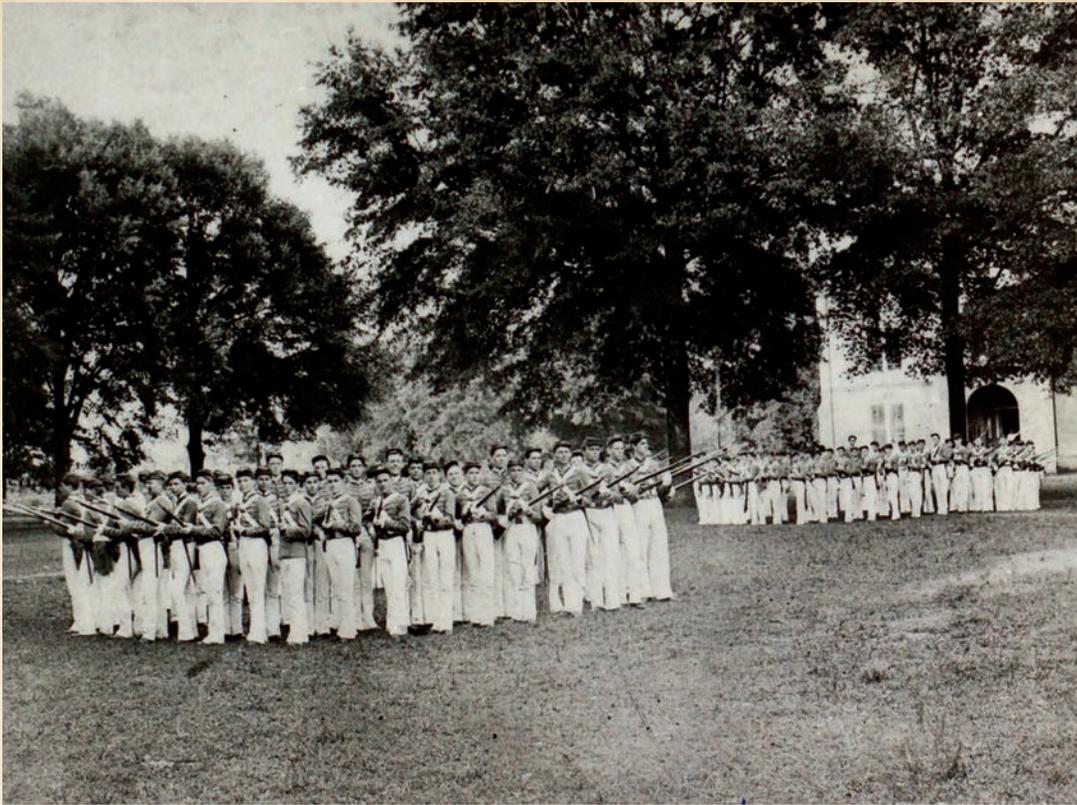
Still, some structures including the President's Mansion were preserved. The president's

wife, Louisa Frances Garland, and her story of bravery, riding on horseback to the rescue of her beloved mansion, would make University history. This September, the story of the old campus came to life in the chamber opera *Freedom and Fire! A Civil War Story*, created by UA professors and performed by UA students.

The opera was born in part thanks to Dr. Paul Houghtaling, director of UA's Opera Theatre who fell in love with Mrs. Garland's story the first time he heard it.

"I envisioned a type of *Gone with the Wind*

By **COURTNEY CORBRIDGE**



TOP: Campus became a target during the Civil War because, in addition to being a scholastic academy, it was also a military training facility. Depicted above are young cadets on the Quad. **BOTTOM:** Due to the courage of Louisa Frances Garland, the University president's wife, the President's Mansion was saved from being burned. **OPPOSITE:** The rotunda, pictured here, housed the majority of the University's books before it was destroyed.

"I envisioned a type of Gone with the Wind scene with a sweeping down this house; this is where I raised my children; it is my



ABOVE: Only four structures from UA's original campus can still be seen today—the President's Mansion; the Gorgas House, pictured above; the Little Round House; and the Astronomy Observatory. **LEFT:** Green Marshall Labuzan in uniform in 1864. The University's original students and cadets were often young, sometimes no older than 14 years of age.



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scene with a sweeping aria and soaring music while a woman sang, 'Please, don't burn down this house; this is where I raised my children; it is my home and my hearth,' Houghtaling said.

But when Houghtaling commissioned Professor Robin Behn, poet and director of UA's graduate program in creative writing, to write the libretto and Dr. Amir Zaheri, assistant professor in the School of Music, to compose the music, the team's vision for the production began to change.

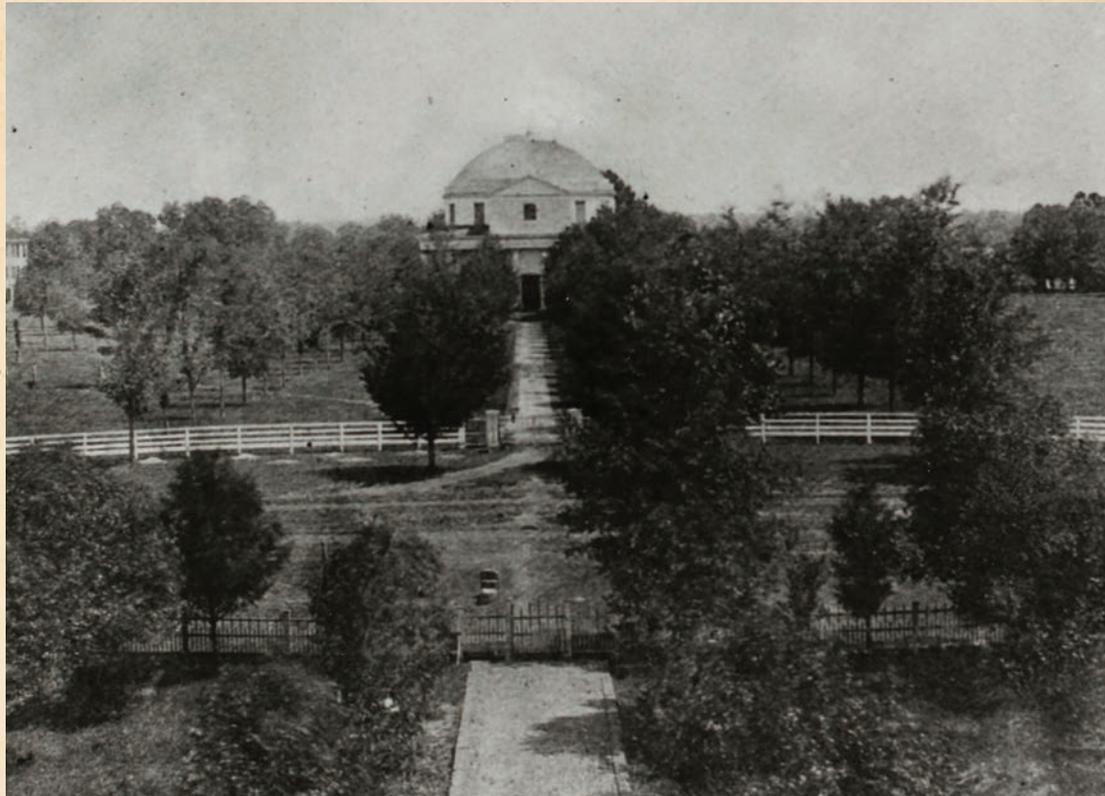
"We decided, through our research, that we needed to include all the lives that were affected by the events in those last few days of the war," Behn said. "For example, we

chose to show that the drum and bugle corps at the University was composed of musicians who were enslaved."

Additionally, Mrs. Garland's aria, in which she implores the Union soldiers not to burn down the mansion, became a duet sung in part by Mrs. Garland and in part by her enslaved servant—each of them describing what their life was like in the mansion.

Wanting to emphasize the ways these people not only co-existed but also impacted each other's lives, Zaheri utilized a composition technique called counterpoint within the score. For each character or group of characters, he wrote a musical theme that could stand alone, but could

aria and soaring music while a woman sang, 'Please, don't burn home and my hearth.' —Dr. Paul Houghtaling, director of UA's Opera Theatre



ABOVE: Taken in 1859, this photo shows campus as seen from the President's Mansion just before the start of the Civil War. **RIGHT:** Professor Andre DeLoffré taught French and Spanish at the University, and when the Union soldiers threatened to burn the library, he pled to save it. The only book saved from the fire was a copy of the Quran.

also intricately harmonize with and change the emotional tone of other characters' themes.

"Counterpoint is such an important part of this production," Zaheri said. "It allows you to see one person's perspective juxtaposed with another person's perspective."

In total, the chamber opera took nearly two years to be completed. Its final form, a series of vignettes, tells the stories not just of Mrs. Garland, but also of young, 14-year-old students transformed into soldiers; a Union soldier who allowed the University librarian to save a single book from the flames; and a wedding amidst it all. As Behn said, "It dramatizes the complexity of the many lives caught up in the

last days of the Civil War."

Houghtaling directed and produced the program from scratch, organizing the costume design, set design, casting, and performance. Every aspect utilized UA talent and showcased students of the UA opera program.

"Everything that I do is for the students," Houghtaling said. "It's all about their experience, what they're going to learn, and what they are going to gain from it. I think the experience of bringing a brand-new piece of work to life has been a great opportunity for them because they've had to use their own skill and their own musicianship to create the story from the ground up." ■



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MIRRORS AND



MANGROVES

A photograph of a mangrove swamp. In the foreground, a mangrove tree with large, green, oval-shaped leaves is prominent. The tree's roots are visible, extending into a body of water. The water reflects the sky and the surrounding greenery. In the background, there is a dense line of mangrove trees under a blue sky with some white clouds. A thin, brown branch or log runs diagonally across the upper part of the image, partially overlapping the title.

To better understand human aggression, Dr. Ryan Earley studies a tiny fish native to coastal mangroves. Recently, he began using mirrors in novel ways in his experiments, changing the way that scientists understand the field.

By COURTNEY CORBRIDGE *Photographs by* JEFF HANSON



T

HOUGH DR. RYAN EARLEY has flown to coasts off the Caribbean Sea every year for the last seven years, his meccas are not the places most tourists want to

see. Instead of lying out on luxurious sandy beaches and swimming in crystal clear water, Earley spends his time knee-deep in the dark sulfured sludge of coastal mangroves—looking for a tiny fighting fish.

According to Earley, the fish, known as the mangrove rivulus, holds some of the keys to understanding variation in individual human aggression and violence—one of society’s greatest mysteries. And with a groundbreaking mirror system that Earley and his doctoral student Cheng-Yu Li developed, the team is equipped better than ever to know what makes humans want to fight.

“Things like fish—organisms that we don’t normally think of as being relevant to humans—are actually critical because we can do some things experimentally with these animals that we cannot do with humans,” Earley said. “They allow us to probe a little further into the mechanisms of aggression.”

The mangrove rivulus is a particularly special fish because, as the only self-fertilizing, hermaphroditic vertebrate, it essentially makes clones of itself when it reproduces. Consequently, instead of having 100 indi-

vidual fish to test, Earley has 100 copies of a single individual—allowing him to place “one” fish in 100 different environments at the same time to see how its surroundings influence its aggression.

the fish’s responses to mirrors really tell us something about aggression or not,” Earley said. In an article published in *Animal Behavior*, Earley debunked the decades-old, single-mirror method, showing various ways that such experiments were not representative of a real fight. Other researchers have done the same. In one study conducted by researchers at Stanford, experiments showed that mirrored fights actually trigger fear centers of the brain instead of aggression centers.

“People have called into question the validity of the mirror image for more than 30 years,” Earley said. “But they still haven’t stopped using it.”

Wanting to fix the problem, rather than simply identify it, Earley set out to create a new research design—and over winter break last year, he and his graduate student Cheng-Yu Li hit the mark.

They realized that when they arranged two mirrors at a 90-degree angle, the resulting image, looking directly into the corner where the two mirrors met, was a reflection of a reflection—positioning the fish and its mirrored partner head to tail instead of head to head.

“Physics tells you that if you align mirrors at a 90-degree angle, you will see a different image than you would looking into a single mirror, but applying that concept to an animal behavior question just hasn’t been done,” Earley said.

When they tested the new mirror system

“THINGS LIKE FISH—ORGANISMS THAT WE DON’T NORMALLY THINK OF AS BEING RELEVANT TO HUMANS—ARE ACTUALLY CRITICAL BECAUSE WE CAN DO SOME THINGS EXPERIMENTALLY WITH THESE ANIMALS THAT WE CANNOT DO WITH HUMANS.”

ABOVE: In real life, fish fight head to tail, chasing each other in circles. Dr. Ryan Earley developed a new system, seen immediately above, for mimicking this behavior in experiments, changing 60 years of research. **OPPOSITE:** Graduate student Cheng-Yu Li records the behavior of the fish when they are placed in these two experimental tanks. On the left, fish respond to their reflections in a traditional mirror.

On the right, fish see a reverse image of themselves in the apex of 90-degree-angled mirrors. **TOP RIGHT:** Earley’s fish lab is filled with hundreds of containers each housing a clone of the mangrove rivulus. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Earley’s fish of choice lives in the dirty waters of coastal mangroves, where the upended roots of waterlogged trees make it difficult to traverse.

On the right, fish see a reverse image of themselves in the apex of 90-degree-angled mirrors. **TOP RIGHT:** Earley’s fish lab is filled with hundreds of containers each housing a clone of the mangrove rivulus. **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Earley’s fish of choice lives in the dirty waters of coastal mangroves, where the upended roots of waterlogged trees make it difficult to traverse.

When two fish fight each other in real life, they fight head to tail—chasing each other in circles. But in a reflection, the fish are always head to head. “That raised the question of whether

in the lab, they were pleased to find that fish reacted naturally. Their gills flared up, and instead of repositioning repeatedly, trying to attack the tail, they immediately engaged in motor patterns of a traditional fight.

“It works,” Earley said. “And it will be a huge change for the field.”

Though Earley’s experiments with the new mirror system have focused on observational behavior thus far, he and his students plan to study the fishes’ neurological and hormonal reactions in the future.

“With just one little tweak, we will be able to see, accurately, what goes on in the brain as it relates to aggressive behavior,” Earley said. “Whether that research will link directly to the human brain or not is unclear, but it provides us with a platform—or better yet a trampoline—for further research.” ■

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A TINY GIANT

By **STEPHANIE KIRKLAND** *Photographs by* **MATTHEW WOOD**

THERE ARE THREE THINGS always at the tip of Pam McCollough's tongue—The University of Alabama, adversity, and her mom.

In the fall, especially, the University rolls off her tongue like drumsticks on a snare beginning the national anthem, and rightfully so. Since 1984, the year she graduated from law school, it's been her tradition to attend nearly every home football game, trekking from Houston and further to Alabama to cheer on her alma mater. The most home games she's missed were those played during her two-and-a-half-year stint in London. And even then, she made it to a few.

Adversity, for the 1979 graduate, has come mostly through her profession, practicing intellectual property law for a Fortune 500 oil company. Though she talks of adversity that happens to everybody—not getting the job you want, losing parents and grandparents, biting off more than you can chew—she also talks of working in an industry in which less than a quarter of her colleagues are women and, one of her biggest obstacles, losing her father as a 15-year-old, high school sophomore. She and her mom had always been close, but her father's death made them best friends.

McCollough is what some might call a tiny giant—a 5-foot-2 woman with an unassuming stature but immense tenacity and grit. As a senior attorney, she has survived numerous recessions and more layoffs than she can count, all while working for one of the world's largest oil companies in the fourth-largest U.S. city. In her 32 years at Shell, not once has the company been sued for an agreement she was responsible for.

THE BEGINNING OF TRADITION

But she hasn't always been in the hustle and bustle of the city. The southeast Alabama native grew up in Enterprise, a town of about 15,000. Her dad, Joe, was the assistant county engineer for Coffee County, where both sides of the family had lived for five generations;

her mother, Doris, worked in the business office of Alabama Power.

Some of McCollough's fondest and earliest memories involve high school football.

"I remember taking naps when I was in kindergarten so I could go to the Friday night high school football games with my parents and sister," McCollough said. She also remembers her dad coming home after work on Fridays and roasting peanuts for everyone to take to the game that night.

McCollough's older sister, now Brenda Dickinson, began marching in the Enterprise High School band when McCollough was in the third grade. Although McCollough would become involved with a variety of school and community organizations, that she would follow her sister's lead and march in the band was never a question.

McCollough's love for the University also began early. Just as she entered elementary school, her cousin, Gaylon, began playing football at The University of Alabama; cheering for the Crimson Tide came natural.

By the time she lost her dad, McCollough was in high school playing flute and marching in the band. What her sister will tell you—but what McCollough won't—is that their father died on a Thursday in October, and McCollough marched with the band at an away game the next evening.

"They had to stop the bus on the way there because she got sick," Dickinson said. "But it was one of those things where you just keep going. You don't give up."

McCollough, when talking about resilience in the face of adversity, references Alabama head football coach Nick Saban.

"Coach Saban talks about it all the time," she said. "You have to be resilient because things aren't always going to go well. Adversity is going to come, and it's going to come in all kinds of ways. You have to face it."

Often, McCollough faced adversity through her faith and determination. She double majored in English and chemistry at The University of Alabama, where she also marched in the Million Dollar Band. Then she put herself through night law school at the University of Houston while working full-time as a chemist at Texaco.

Soon after McCollough finished law school, an opportunity arose with UA that she couldn't turn down—a new program, now called Tide Pride, which would guarantee her seats at Alabama home football games every year. Part of her motivation was to support the University; her other motive, though, was to have an opportunity to spend more time with her mom. She bought two tickets and started flying to Alabama to see her mom and attend Alabama's home football games nearly every weekend in the fall.

"It gave me a chance to see my mom and to take both of us out of our worlds to do something that we both enjoyed doing," says the charter Tide Pride member.

But she rarely flew to the games' nearest airport; rather, she often flew to Dothan, nearly four hours away, so that she could meet her mom and drive with her to and from the games. She didn't want her mom to have to drive too far by herself.

With the exception of a handful of games, McCollough has been to nearly every home game since she bought her first set of tickets.

"I often tell people that I remember the 4-and-7 season," she said. "I attended the games then just like I do now. I wasn't coming because we won all the time—or even most of the time."

When her mom died in 2006, she began inviting her sister, niece, nephews, and friends to attend the games with her, but not without carefully considering who her guests might root for.

"She doesn't want anyone sitting in her

an Alabama-Aggie game, so she'll take my son-in-law, who went to Texas Tech, or my daughter, who went to Lipscomb," Dickinson said. "She is a very, very loyal Alabama fan."

WORKING AT SHELL

Shell hired McCollough in 1984 several weeks before she learned that she had passed the bar exam.

"In those days it took months to get your bar exam results," she said. "You took the bar exam in July, and you didn't find out until late October whether or not you passed. I sweated bullets for about two to three weeks wondering what would happen with my new job if I didn't pass the bar exam, but I did."

At the beginning of her career, McCollough primarily secured U.S. patents on chemical inventions made by Shell's researchers inside and outside the United States. Her role soon expanded to drafting and negotiating intellectual property-related agreements, advising on disputes, and giving intellectual property legal opinions in support of various Shell businesses.

While McCollough doesn't work in a courtroom, she often helps determine Shell's response when the company becomes involved in an intellectual property-related legal dispute.

What McCollough enjoys most is providing legal advice that helps Shell succeed.

"My client is the corporation, not the individual sitting across the table from me," she said. "People don't always appreciate that, but at the end of the day, I'm there to try to make sure that Shell accomplishes its business goals and avoids unnecessary lawsuits."

But that has also been hard at times—dealing with people who are more concerned about their short-term goals than they are about the future of the company.

"It's my job to give good legal advice," she said. "It's about doing and encouraging

course I'm not physically imposing," she says with a laugh. In fact, on interview day at Shell, she was asked the question: Do you think you're tough enough to do this job?

"My answer to the question on interview day is the same one I'd give today," she said. "I want to be tough enough to accomplish the task at hand, but hopefully not tougher than I need to be.

"As a female, if you show passion about your work and the advice you are giving, it just comes across differently. It has gotten better with time, so I don't think about it much anymore unless someone asks me about it. It's another of those things that you just deal with and move on."

LIFE IN HOUSTON

Today, in Houston, McCollough lives just a few miles away from her sister and brother-in-law and spends much of her time with the Dickinsons and their three children and five grandchildren. Dickinson said Aunt Pam is always doing something special for her four great nieces and her great nephew.

"My granddaughter has started playing soccer this year, and my grandson plays t-ball, coach-pitch baseball, and flag football," she said. "And Aunt Pam makes it to their games if she's in town."

The sisters, when they don't see each other at church or ball games, meet for breakfast, shop, and accompany one another to wedding and baby showers and other church activities.

Despite having won several company recognition awards for projects she's worked on, McCollough says one of her greatest accomplishments was working with a team that sold 40 percent of Shell's chemicals businesses a number of years ago.

"That was such a large project, and we were able to minimize intellectual property-related legal disputes through our work," she said.

When she's not spending time with family or providing legal counsel at Shell, she volunteers her time at her church, with civic organizations, and at The University of Alabama, serving in leadership positions on boards that help raise funds for her alma mater. She has also honored her parents by establishing the Doris and Joe McCollough Endowed Scholarship in the College of Arts and Sciences.

"It's fantastic to be able to do that," she said. "I am so thankful that I can even just give back a little bit because were it not for The University of Alabama, I couldn't do what I do today. I'll be forever thankful for that. I have been tremendously well blessed, and I want to be a blessing to other people." ■

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Alabama seats who is not pulling for Alabama," said Dickinson, who attended graduate school at Auburn. "I go with her to a lot of games, but if I want to go to an Auburn game, I'm on my own."

The same is true for Dickinson's two sons, who graduated from Texas A&M.

"She's very strict about that—she will not let my boys or their wives go with her to

others to do the right thing for Shell, regardless of the circumstances."

Being a woman has been equally tough. When she started at Shell, there were very few women in her department.

"When I was in my mid-20s, it seemed as if no one wanted to listen to my advice because they thought, 'Who is this woman and why should I listen to her?' And of



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In Kelsei Coleman's second semester at the Capstone, her grandmother, who raised her, realized they couldn't afford the cost of three more years of school. Coleman, a political science major, was able to stay at UA after receiving two scholarships that were established through gifts made to the College of Arts and Sciences. *Read Kelsei's story at www.as.ua.edu/alumni/kelsei.*

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John Davis Diaz says scholarships are helping him achieve his dream of becoming a dentist. "The average dental school graduate comes out with approximately \$250,000 of debt—and that isn't a pretty number," Diaz said. "Being able to knock back as much undergrad debt as I can now has been so helpful." [Read John Davis's story at www.as.ua.edu/alumni/john-davis.](http://www.as.ua.edu/alumni/john-davis)

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Scholarship recipient Hudson Kelley's dream is to work in humanitarian aid. "I don't want to work for a salary," Kelley said. "I want to work to change something." [Read Hudson's story at www.as.ua.edu/alumni/hudson.](http://www.as.ua.edu/alumni/hudson)

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Dale Kennington ('56), University Gallery, February 2016

1950s

Dr. Michael B.A. Oldstone (Class of '54, biology) presented a lecture at UA on the Zika virus. Oldstone, a UA visiting professor since 2009, is a National Academy of Sciences member and a professor and head of the viral-immunobiology laboratory at the Scripps Research Institute in La Jolla, California.

Dale Kennington (Class of '56, art history and design) exhibited a selection of her paintings at The University of Alabama Gallery in downtown Tuscaloosa during February and March. Kennington, a contemporary realist, returned to UA for the exhibit's opening.

1960s

Mary Jane Pickens Skinner (Class of '63, MA, history) gifted a piano in memory of Lista Eddins, a piano and vocal instructor at UA, to the School of Music. The piano is a 1905 Mehlin grand. Mary lives in Daphne with her husband, Donald (Class of '57, chemistry).

Carroll Watson (Class of '65, geography) was elected president of the Alabama Chapter of the Appraisal Institute for 2016. She was appointed to the Alabama Real Estate Appraisers Board last year.

1970s

Gary Blume (Class of '74, biology) received the Roderick Beddow Lifetime Award from the Alabama Criminal Defense Lawyers Association for lifetime achievement in the field of criminal defense. He continues to practice law in Northport, Alabama, with his wife, Nettie Cohen Blume.

Robert Abernathy (Class of '76, chemistry) presented the 2015 Helen Crow Mills ('59) and John Carroll Mills ('55) Lecture on campus. Robert is chairman of the board and chief executive officer of Halyard Health Inc.

Debra Bowling (Class of '77, MS, criminal justice) received the 2015 Georgia Author of the Year Award for first novels for her book *The Memory of Flight*. The award is given annually by the Georgia Writers Association.

Donald McCants (Class of '76, history) is actively involved in singing with the Over the Mountain Festival Choir and continues to make good use of the choral musical skills he learned as a member of The University of Alabama Choral Union.

1980s

Dr. Winifred Bragg (Class of '80, microbiology) released a new book, *KnockOutPain Secrets to Maintain a Healthy Back*.

Kimberly Denham-Huddleston (Class of '81, psychology), an alumni Crimsonette, retired from Honda in 2014. Her daughter, Erica, graduated cum laude from Jacksonville State University and recently got married. Erica won Miss Congeniality at the 2013 Miss Alabama United States pageant as Miss Etowah County. Kimberly lives in Glencoe with her husband, Tommy.

F. Shelton Waldrep Jr. (Class of '82, English, class of '87 MFA, creative writing) published his book *Future Nostalgia: Performing David Bowie*. It was favorably reviewed by the *Los Angeles Review of Books* and others.

1990s

Robert Owen Riggs Jr. (Class of '93, history) is the chief of staff for Hawaii State Senator Mike Gabbard. He lives in Oahu, Hawaii, with his wife, Ali, and their three daughters.

2000s

Gregory Powell (Class of '04, MFA, creative writing) wrote a new play, *Ruby's Harmonicas and Pianos, Incorporated*. A stage reading of the play was held at the Theatre Downtown in Birmingham in April. This is the first of a cycle of seven plays he is writing that address voting rights, civil rights, unions, religious lethargy, and reconciliation in the 20th century. He just started writing the fourth, *Fire in My Bones*, which addresses the genesis of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee. His first

collection of poetry was also published in April.

Dr. Angela Jill Cooley (Class of '05/'11, MA/PhD, history) is a finalist for the Scholarship and Reference Award, given by the James Beard Foundation, for her book *To Live and Dine in Dixie: The Evolution of Urban Food Culture in the Jim Crow South*, published by the University of Georgia Press in 2015.

2010s

Dr. Ismenia Sales de Souza (Class of '07, PhD, Spanish) is an associate professor of Spanish and Portuguese and director of research at the United States Air Force Academy. She is the recipient of several awards including the Air Force Academy Outstanding Academy Educator Award, the Robert F. McDermott Award for Research Excellence, Civilian of the Quarter, and others.

Leinda Royals (Class of '11, biology) is the owner and editor of *DA-SH Magazine*, a Christian lifestyle magazine that publishes testimonies and true stories.

Carley Fernandez (Class of '13, political science), **Ryan Jones** (Class of '14, biology), and **Margaret Holland** (Class of '15, psychology) were selected as National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellows. They were among 2,000 fellows selected from nearly 17,000 applicants. Fellowships include a three-year annual stipend of \$34,000 along with a \$12,000 cost-of-education allowance for the pursuit of research-based master's or doctoral degrees.

Alumni

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Remembering Harper Lee



IN THE WAKE OF ROSA PARKS' FAMOUS BUS RIDE and the landmark Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education*, young Harper Lee wrote the first iteration of *To Kill a Mockingbird*—an unforgettable story of racial injustice loosely based on Lee's Alabama hometown and the 1930s Scottsboro rape trials.

Though the events of *Mockingbird* preceded the Civil Rights Movement by 30 years, readers and critics alike saw the parallels to their current social climate, and they loved it. Overnight it became a public and critical success, winning the Pulitzer Prize, ranking in best-seller lists, and eventually earning Lee the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Though Lee never graduated from UA officially, the former law student (1945–1949) and *Rammer Jammer* editor received an honorary doctorate from the College of Arts and Sciences in 1990 because of the great impact of *Mockingbird*.

It was her greatest work—and for 55 years it was her only published novel. Fans didn't expect to hear from Lee again, so when she released *Go Set a Watchman* in 2015, just seven months before she died, they panicked.

"There was this tremendous anxiety that *Watchman* wouldn't be as good as *Mockingbird* and that it would tarnish Harper Lee's literary reputation," said Dr. Andy Crank, an assistant professor in the Department of English.

Some speculated that Lee had been manipulated into publishing *Watchman*. Others suspected that in her old age she was no longer in control of her assets. Crank hypothesizes it is just as possible that Lee—who had spoken out in one of the nation's most critical moments through *Mockingbird*—was speaking out again to say that, in the pursuit of civil justice, the nation had a long way to go. Crank details his argument in "Unkillable *Mockingbird*," recently published in the *Los Angeles Review of Books*.

To prove his point, Crank turned to the age-old character Atticus Finch. In *Mockingbird*, Finch is the quintessential champion for civil rights and justice as he defends Tom Robinson, a black man falsely accused of raping a white woman, in court. For decades, Finch was the poster child, Crank argues, for what white America saw itself becoming, a nation moving from racism to equality. Atticus was what Crank calls the white savior or the superman.

However, in *Watchman*, Finch falls off of his pedestal. Instead of standing strong in the defense of justice and human rights, he

champions segregation and crushes the childhood hero his daughter Jean Louise "Scout"—and contemporary readers alike—envisioned him to be.

"For a large part of her life, Lee probably saw *Watchman* as just a first draft of *Mockingbird*," Crank said. "But in 2014 and 2015, an era of social movements like Black Lives Matter and I Can't Breathe—an era when black teens are senselessly shot in the street—*Watchman* suddenly became important again.

"It was the right historical moment to show America that our post-racial fantasy was bankrupt."

Crank suggests that the release of *Go Set a Watchman* was Lee's way of telling the world that we have not evolved past prejudice and racism. The novel is an invitation to go back and re-read *Mockingbird* and see that its message still has relevance today.

For local alumna and teacher Billy Jo Kennedy, who teaches English at Central High School, *Mockingbird's* social relevance to her students is one of the reasons she enjoys teaching it year after year.

"Even though Tom Robinson is an older character, he still dealt with some of the same issues—like profiling and injustice—my students experience or see in our society today," Kennedy said.

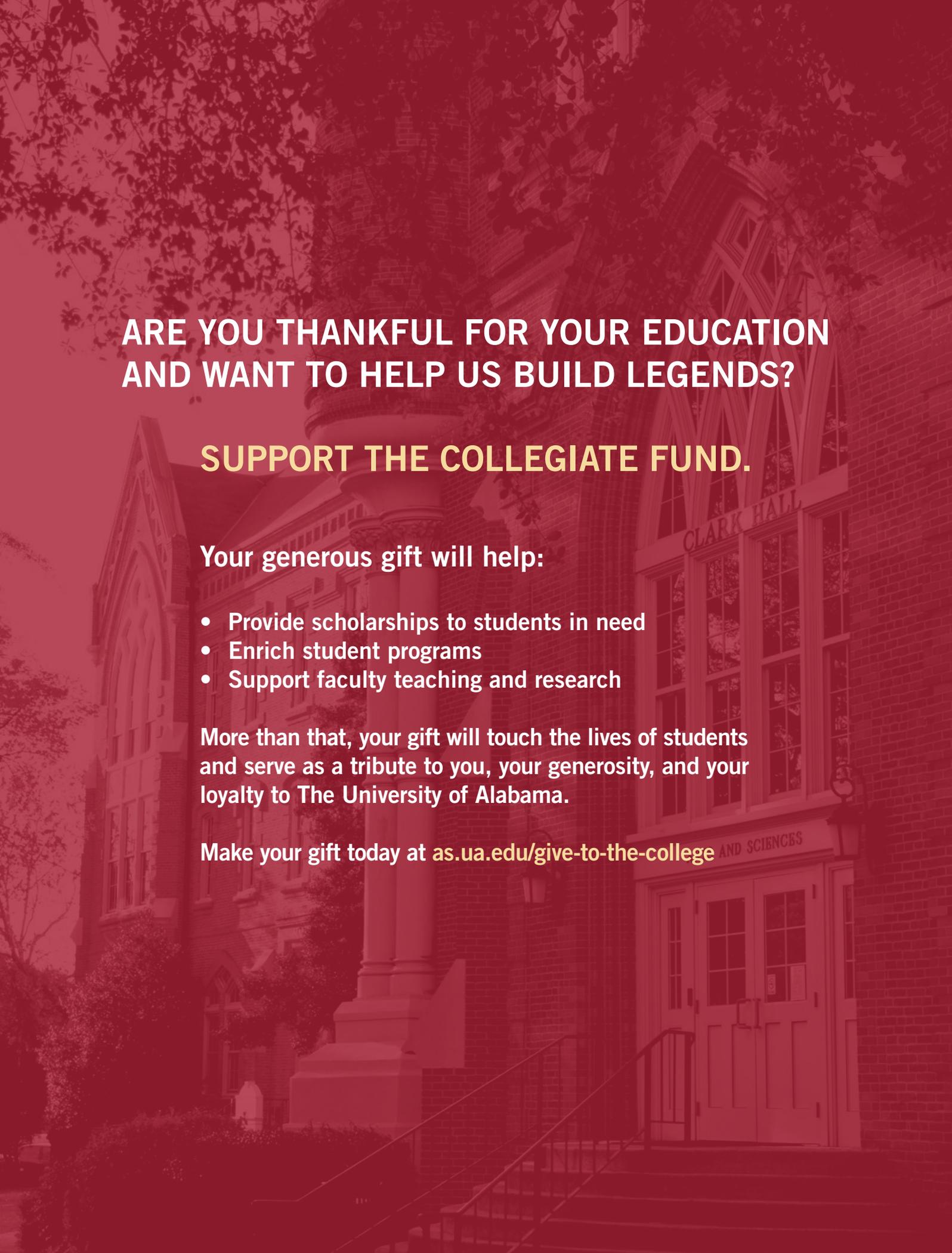
In fact, in 2012, after 17-year-old Trayvon Martin was shot in Sanford, Florida, Kennedy used *Mockingbird* to talk to her students, who are predominantly African-American, about the current social climate.

Although Kennedy and Crank acknowledge that *Mockingbird* isn't just about race—noting that it captures the essence of childhood and relationships equally poignantly—the racial component is perhaps what Lee is most famous for.

It is her legacy—a legacy, Crank says, she purposefully chose to revisit just a year before her death.

As Crank wrote, "The most fitting result of all the controversy over *Watchman* is that Harper Lee is back where she belongs, prompting a painful but needed national conversation." ■

Have a memory that you'd like to submit? Mail entries to The University of Alabama, College Relations, Box 870268, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487 or email entries to courtney.a.corbridge@ua.edu.



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The Frank Moody Music Building, which houses The University of Alabama School of Music and one of its premier ensembles, the Million Dollar Band, was renovated over the summer. The renovation added 25,000 square feet for two new band halls, locker-room space, and practice rooms to support the growth of the music program. Below, appearing from left to right, Dr. Ken Ozzello, Dean Robert Olin, President Stuart Bell, Barbara Stone ('70), Ann Jones ('62), Charles "Skip" Snead, and Pam McCollough ('79) cut the ribbon at the wing's opening reception.

