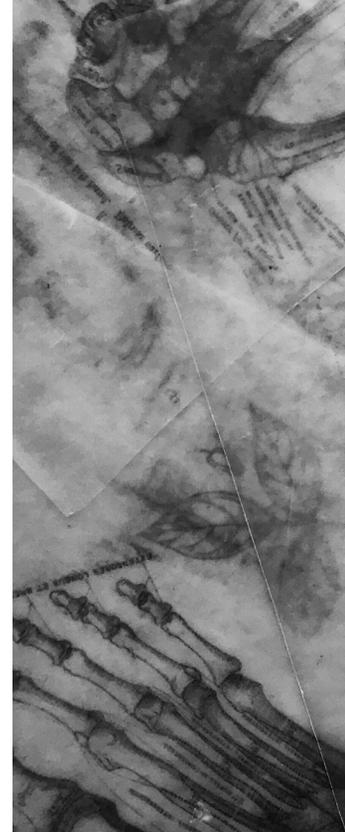


COLLEGIAN

WINTER 2020



THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES MAGAZINE



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College of
Arts & Sciences

Published by the College of Arts and Sciences at
The University of Alabama.

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA®
PART OF THE  University of Alabama System

WINTER 2020
COLLEGIAN
COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES MAGAZINE

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Collegian is published each year by the
College of Arts and Sciences at The University
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A Year of Resilience

Highlights from an unprecedented year

What a year it has been for the College of Arts and Sciences.

Never could I have expected that my first year as dean would have included a global pandemic changing the landscape of so much of what we do.

The last several months have certainly looked different—with research operations limited and class sizes reduced, and alumni and donor interactions moved online. Through all of this, the College of Arts and Sciences has so much to be grateful for, especially during this year unlike all others, and we thank you for your unending support.

In your hands is a group of stories that we are so fortunate and glad to share with you. Included are stories about our amazing 2020 graduates, whose senior years were turned upside down, but whose accomplishments shine brighter than ever; stories about faculty whose work is having positive ripple effects in the community in a variety of ways; and, one of my personal favorites, a story about how students and faculty adapted to this unusual year.

As one of our professors Lawrence Jackson said, “This is certainly not how our students envisioned their academic year unfolding. However, they soon began to problem solve and think of ways they could still produce work during the pandemic. The faculty remain amazed at their levels of ingenuity and fortitude.”

We are so proud of both our students and faculty for their resilience and flexibility during this year.

Last but certainly not least, we are proud and thankful to have had a record-breaking fundraising year. The need for student and faculty support is greater than ever, and through the gifts of alumni and supporters like yourselves, the College raised over \$12 million in 2019-2020. What an amazing accomplishment and a testament to the generosity of our community.

We also recently reached our \$15 million goal for the Performing Arts Academic Center, which you can read about on page 24. We are excited to see the progress of this state-of-the-art facility continue to unfold, and we cannot wait to share it with you.

To our alumni and friends, thank you, from the bottom of our hearts, for all of the ways that you have supported the College of Arts and Sciences and The University of Alabama this year. The need for educating our future leaders and expanding opportunity through our research, service, and philanthropy has never been greater, and the College of Arts and Sciences stands strong and ready to heed the call.

We wish you and your family the very best, and Roll Tide! ■

Dean Joseph Messina



CAMPUS NEWS

Making a **Polar Impact**



While completing her research on the Thwaites Glacier in Antarctica, Asmara Lehrmann, a PhD student in geology at UA, learned about Polar Impact, a grassroots network of polar researchers aiming to increase diversity in their field.

One of Lehrmann's foci is including historic BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color) in features on the group's social media to challenge

the idea that Antarctic researchers and explorers are only white males.

"I want to show that in history, these BIPOC people—even though their voices were overshadowed by others leading expeditions—they did have influence in polar research, especially the Indigenous folks in the Arctic," Lehrmann said.

The volunteer-run organization is quickly expanding. The team recently built a resource package for National Minorities Mental Health Month, and they are working on National Geographic Kids-inspired features on polar researchers for K-12 teachers to print and distribute to their students.

"Diverse backgrounds are really essential for studying global climate change to have different perspectives," Lehrmann said. "I hope Polar Impact can become a safe space for people of color to come together." ■

UA Professor Training Psychologists to **Combat Opioid Crisis**



UA psychology professor Dr. Rebecca S. Allen is working to train a new generation of psychologists to help combat the opioid crisis in the rural South.

"We know that Alabama has some of the most prevalent opioid use problems in the nation," Allen said. "So this is something we should target, and something we should train our students for."

The project, a three-year Graduate Psychology Education Program grant of over \$1 million funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration, will take 12 psychology graduate students to clinics around the state. Within these clinics, the students will receive hands-on training from an interdisciplinary group of experts in identifying those who need opioid treatment, creating treatment plans specific to each patient, and treating patients directly.

Above all, Allen's goal is to help people who are struggling with opioid use disorder find ways to cope with pain and stop their dependence on opioids. "The goal is to actually improve people's lives," Allen said. "We want to teach them new skills to deal with pain, both physical and mental pain, so they don't rely on prescriptions. We do all of these assessments and provide these different treatments so that in three years, when our grant is up for renewal, the people who have participated in our project are better than they were when we first met." ■

UA Professor Wins **International Classics Award**

Dr. Kelly Shannon-Henderson, an associate professor in the Department of Modern Languages and Classics, was recently awarded the C.J. Goodwin Award of Merit for outstanding publications for her book *Religion and Memory in Tacitus' Annals*.

The award comes from the Society for Classical Studies, an international organization dedicated to the research of Greek and Roman antiquity. The society grants three Goodwin Awards of Merit annually, each going to a distinguished publication appearing within the previous three years.

Shannon-Henderson's book explores the complicated history of Tacitus, a historian and politician in the Roman empire active in the 100s AD. Tacitus is best known for his critiques of previous dynasties of emperors and for detailing their reigns in his works, the *Annals* and the *Histories*. In her book, Shannon-Henderson explores a lesser-studied aspect of Tacitus: his use of religious material. ■

UA's Vote Everywhere Wins Chapter of the Year

The UA chapter of Vote Everywhere was recently awarded Chapter of the Year by the group's parent organization, the Andrew Goodman Foundation, which advocates for young people to vote and be civically engaged with their communities.

"Our youth should not disqualify us from making our voices heard," Ben Leonard, the 2019-2020 team lead, said. "Certain issues—like student loan debt, access to healthcare, a living wage, and climate change—will uniquely affect our generation, and we should make our opinions known at the ballot box."

UA's chapter of Vote Everywhere was established in 2015, focusing on increasing the voter turnout by registering students to vote and making absentee ballots more accessible.

"Upwards of 80 percent of students are registered, but there's a huge gap between who's registered and who actually votes," Samuel Reece, the 2020-2021 team leader, said. "A goal for us this year was to see if we could close the gap between theoretical and actual voters."

The team implemented several measures to increase voter turnout, such as persuading UA to purchase TurboVote for myBama. Here, students can register to vote, look at candidates and issues on their election ballots, request absentee ballots, and more.

While the primary goal of Vote Everywhere is to increase voter turnout, the team also strives to get UA students more



involved in government, whether in Tuscaloosa or in their hometowns.

"The goal is not just voting for voting's sake—it's also to get students more involved in politics," Dr. Richard Fording, UA political science professor and Vote Everywhere faculty adviser, said. "Voting is the primary way that we express our opinions. In the process of getting students to vote, we want to get students paying attention and making informed decisions, as well." ■

(The photo above was taken prior to COVID-19 precaution.)

UA Establishes Center for Innovative Autism Research

UA's newly-established Center for Innovative Research in Autism, or CIRA, has already begun to make an impact in the realm of research on autism spectrum disorders.

CIRA, which was formally created in April, strives to change the way medical professionals identify and treat individuals with autism through collaborative and cutting-edge research. The center currently connects 20 faculty members, with specialties ranging from neuroscience to special education to communicative disorders. This interdisciplinary model, according to psychology professor and CIRA director Dr. Rajesh Kana, is what allows the center to be successful.

Currently, CIRA has over a dozen projects in progress, including studies involving reading comprehension, driving skills, theatre intervention for developing social skills, socioemotional development in children, language

development, stress in autism families, and family-centered social communication interventions. And while each project has a different focus, Kana says that the goals driving the center are the same—creating ways to more accurately and quickly diagnose autism, and developing new ways to help individuals and their families intervene and cope with the disorder.

For CIRA, this isn't just a chance to provide new and innovative research to the world—it's an opportunity to give back to members of the community in Tuscaloosa and the rest of the state of Alabama and help those in the region better cope and live with the disorder.

"We want to build a better and reciprocal relationship with the community, and give them more access to facilities for diagnosis and intervention," Kana said. ■

Art Professors Win UA's **First Kress Grant** for Digital Art History

University of Alabama art history faculty members Drs. Tanja Jones and Doris Sung were awarded the Capstone's first Digital Art History Grant from the Samuel H. Kress Foundation.

The professors received the two-year award to fund their project, "Global Makers: Women Artists in the Early Modern Courts," a digital database that will serve as a tool for art historians who focus on women artists who created art for royal courts during the early modern period, as well as for the general public.

Jones said the database will allow art historians around the world to work collaboratively.

"I've long been interested in the work of early modern women artists, specifically in Italy between 1400-1700," Jones said. "We know a lot about men who worked in the courts, but not much about women, and what we do know is scattered, making it difficult to form a picture of women artists' experiences there."

The Kress grant provides funding to develop both the database and a network visualization tool for the site, making visible the connections between the women artists and their patrons. This is being developed via a partnership with Dr. Xiaoyan Hong of UA's computer science department and the Alabama Digital Humanities Center at Gorgas Library. ■

Anthropology Professor Receives Seed Fun for **Research on Doula Care**

Dr. Holly Horan, an assistant professor of anthropology at UA, was recently awarded a seed fund from the Excellence in Community Engagement Awards for her work on measuring the impact of community doula care in central Alabama.

Horan and her research partners, Dalia Abrams and Susan Petrus from the Birthwell Community Doula Project and Dr. Lydia Thurston from Samford University, are creating a data collection system for doulas, who work alongside expecting mothers and provide physical, mental and emotional support, as well as non-clinical resources and services before and after birth.

"We want to actively track their services as they're providing them, prior to labor and delivery, and prior to any labor and delivery outcomes," Horan said. "Many community doula programs collect data, but for practical and logistical reasons they submit it after all the care has been provided, which is fine if you're just tracking the number of services and things like that. But if we want to make a connection between the provision of doula care and its influence on outcomes, we have to be able to collect that data in real time as the doulas are providing services." ■



UA Professor Awarded **NASA Planetary Science Early Career Award**



Dr. Alain Plattner, an assistant professor in UA's Department of Geological Sciences, was recently awarded a NASA Planetary Science Early Career Award. Plattner is one of only six researchers receiving this award, which is given to exemplary planetary scientists who have finished their Ph.D. within the past decade and have already been awarded another NASA grant.

While this distinction is important for Plattner, he made it clear that the money accompanying the award would fund the work of Alyssa Mills, a master's student at UA, who is studying the magnetic field of Ganymede, one of Jupiter's moons.

"The research that's being funded is Alyssa Mills' idea, and that's how I presented it in the application," Plattner said. "I said, 'If you fund me, this money will go directly to the next generation of really talented planetary scientists to pursue their own research ideas.'"

Since his arrival at UA in 2018, Plattner has been recruiting bright minds from throughout the Alabama/Mississippi area, the United States, and the world to participate in various research projects. His research looks at the magnetic fields of different planets and moons, studying the internal structure and geologic history of these planets and moons. ■

Department of Gender and Race Studies Recognized for **Graduate Student Food Bank** During COVID-19



When COVID-19 hit the United States and temporarily closed many restaurants, bars, and stores in March, Dr. Utz McKnight realized that many graduate students in the UA community would lose their main source of income. Because of this, he wanted to find a way for faculty to give back to the graduate student community.

“The project was created around an idea to try and commit faculty and staff at UA to the graduate students,” said McKnight, chair of UA’s Department of Gender and Race Studies. “I wanted us to build a new kind of relationship. People needed to feel that they were contributing to their broader community.”

After going through a number of ideas, McKnight and his colleagues decided that the most effective way to help their graduate students was through the formation of a food bank. Graduate students could request certain foods, and faculty members could donate money to pay for the food, or shop for and deliver food to the students.

“We needed to provide basic food aid to help students who were really struggling,” McKnight said. “By helping students pay for food, it freed up money to pay for rent and utilities. It was one less thing for them to worry about during this time.”

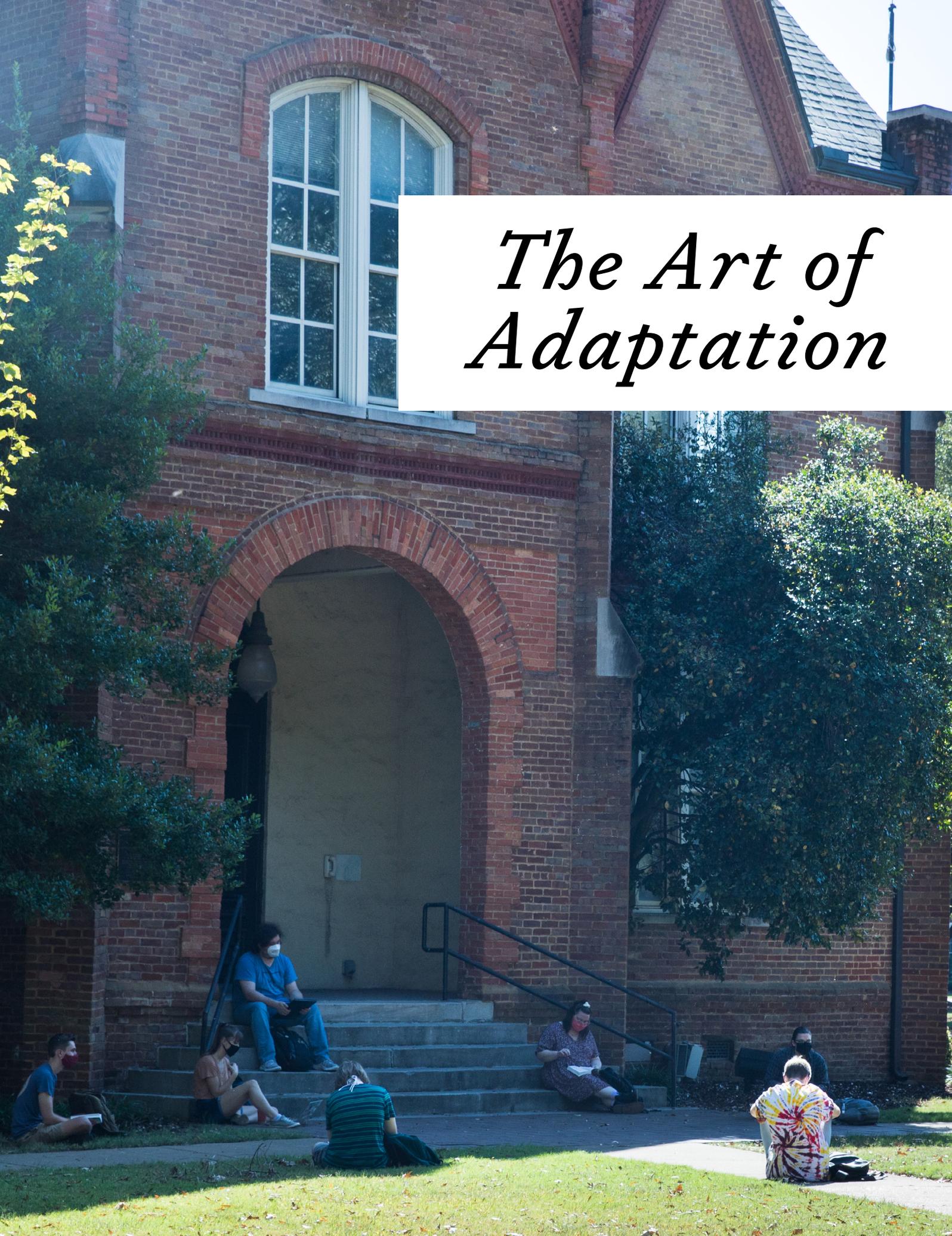
Each department in the College of Arts and Sciences was invited to make requests for food, and McKnight would

match students with anonymous shoppers. He said the most enlightening part was seeing what students needed, whether it was a vegan student who needed vegetables and grains, a student stocking up on meat products to have in the coming weeks, or a student providing for their children while schools were virtual.

Over the next few months, McKnight and the participating faculty helped dozens of students obtain healthy food. Throughout that time, 30 students requested some sort of food aid.

“Of the 30 students we had at one point, I would say about 15 were women of color,” McKnight said. “We also helped students who were putting food on the table for their children or grandchildren. So to be able to reach out to such a diverse group of people like that... I would say we were really successful.”

Because of his efforts aiding graduate students in the College of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Utz McKnight and the Department of Gender and Race studies were awarded this year’s Departmental Diversity Award. The award goes to departments determined to make the campus and its faculty, staff, and students more diverse and inclusive. McKnight plans to put the \$5,000 award back into the food bank so that it can impact even more graduate students. ■



*The Art of
Adaptation*

This year has been one for the books. As COVID-19 changed major aspects of everyday life, faculty were faced with a unique challenge: how to adapt their classes to maximize safety and educational experience.

“It was kind of an interesting intellectual challenge,” said Dr. William Keel, an astronomy professor at UA. “We had to think through the logistics: How do we do this? How do we preserve the core of the experience for students with all of these constraints?”

Keel, who has taught a popular observational astronomy course for years, accepted the challenge head on, spending the summer months contemplating the processes of his course. In the past, students took turns observing the stars through telescopes on the roof of Gallalee Hall. Keel adjusted this process by cleaning machinery after each use, allowing students to sign up for observation times, and spacing students out on the roof.

Although students could safely observe in person, Keel decided it would be beneficial to allow students to observe from their homes whenever possible. Keel planned to use live Zoom observations using the digital tools on UA’s telescope or telescopes from around the world. This way, students could collect data from their own homes, and Keel could control the telescope to point out the important stars, planets, and other celestial objects on the screen.

“While remotely operating the observatory telescope, they’ve already compiled time-lapse videos of Jupiter rotating and their first color images of deep-sky things like nebulae and star clusters,” Keel said. “Students do find that the remote-operation mode improves time management, since we can schedule observing blocks and they only have to connect for their time slot on a given night.”

Like Keel, first-year writing instructors adapted their courses to fit a myriad of students’ needs while keeping their students engaged. Each

instructor was given creative freedom within their instruction type: an in-person and online hybrid, an audio/visual layout, and an online-only format.

These instructors ran with it, creating Zoom breakout rooms to brainstorm writing prompt ideas, allowing students to do in-person class one day a week and then virtually the next—even using karaoke microphones for students to share their responses while having a socially-distanced class outdoors. To first-year writing director Dr. Luke Niiler, this has been incredibly successful for both instructors and students.

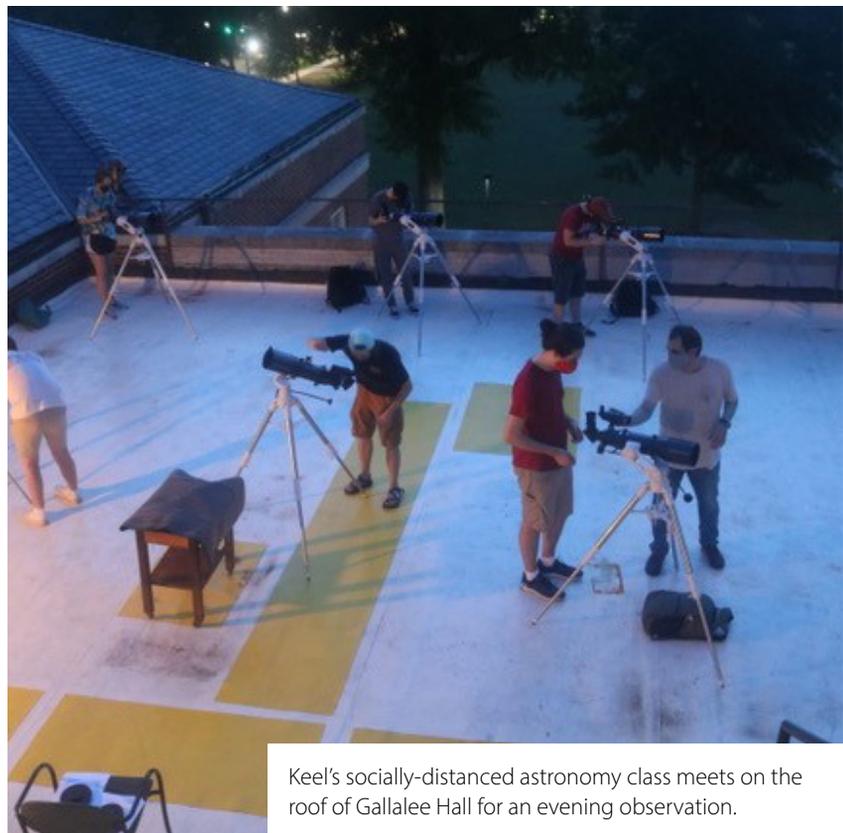
“In the hybrid model, what I find is that our teachers are endlessly creative. They’re resourceful. They’re innovative,” Niiler said. “Many teachers tell me their students are actually writing more. And they’re writing with greater focus and purpose and intention, because many of them are alone in their dorms. So writing for them becomes a way of connecting

with their teacher and with their classmates.”

For political science assistant professor Dr. Elif Kalaycioglu, finding a way to keep students invested in their assignments and reading throughout the semester was imperative. To keep energy levels high and students involved in discussions, she decided to have her students act out class readings, ranging from empirical case studies to UN meeting minutes.

“The pandemic means that many of the interactional elements of the classroom are limited,” Kalaycioglu said. “These exercises bring some of that interaction back in as students engage each other, even if they do so by play-acting characters.”

For each reading, Kalaycioglu assigned students different characters in advance, giving them time to get into character before class began. The scene could take place in a variety of situations—anything from high-ranking employees of a major company planning international strategy to UN



Keel’s socially-distanced astronomy class meets on the roof of Gallalee Hall for an evening observation.

officials discussing world affairs to activists talking about global issues. Because it takes time and effort for students to put together a character and create robust arguments to defend their character's stance, Kalaycioglu believes this helps the students better understand all sides of the situation.

"The personification and performance lift the issues off of the page and make them real-life and three-dimensional," Kalaycioglu said. "The students find themselves amidst the debates. It allows them to get a sense of the issues, the multiple perspectives, power, and hierarchies at play. They might find themselves articulating a

perspective they do not necessarily agree with. This compels them to learn about other perspectives."

Like Kalaycioglu, associate chair of dance Lawrence Jackson is teaching his students to perform and collaborate virtually. This year, the Department of Theatre and Dance decided to have a virtual season, meaning all shows and performances would be viewed by audiences online.

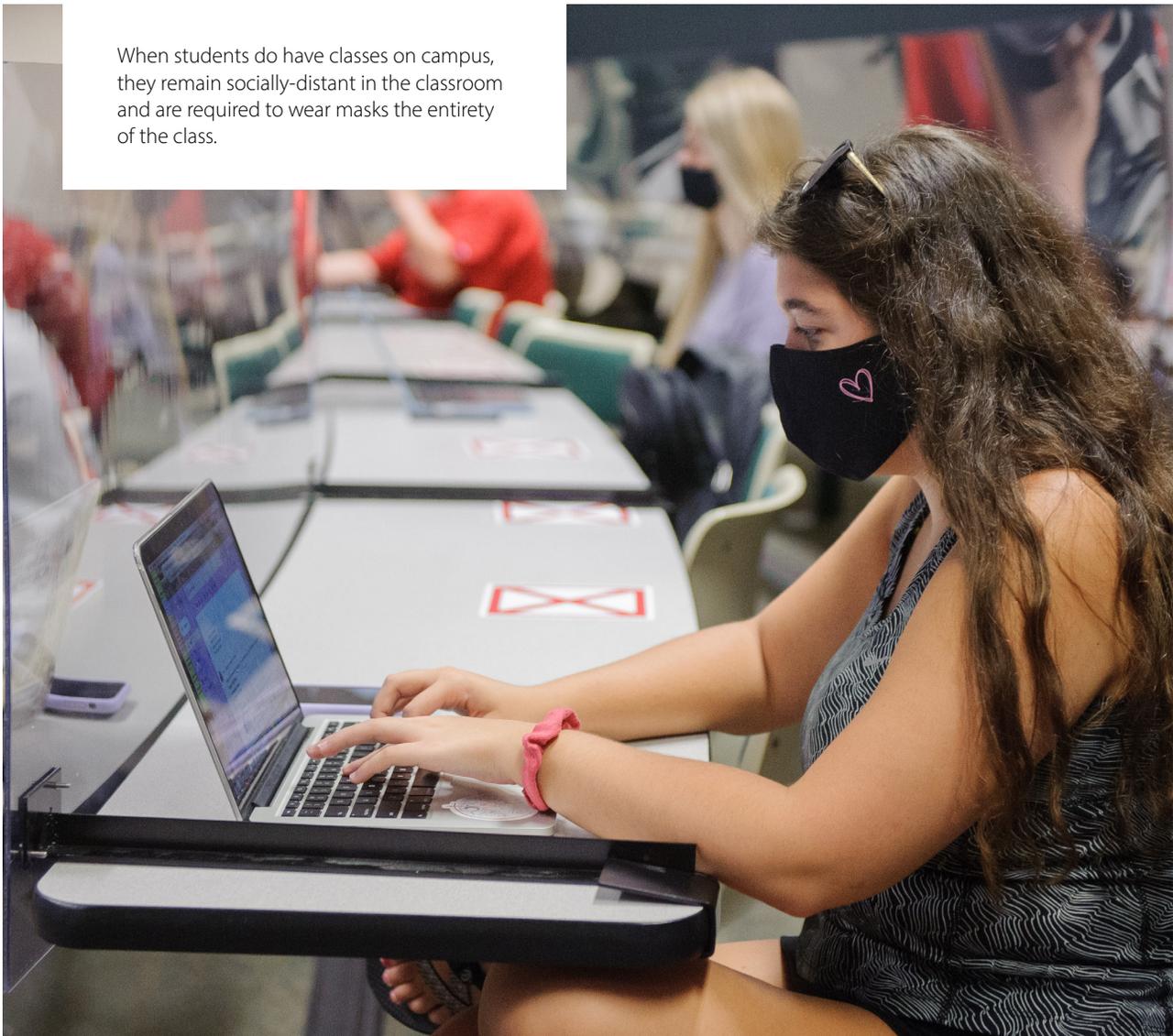
In addition to performing virtually, dance students and their choreographers face another challenge: rehearsing virtually.

"This year, rehearsals for our concerts occur remotely, so dancers

are learning choreography in various locations (home, studio, outside, etc.) via Zoom," Jackson said. "During those rehearsals, choreographers teach choreography or lead the dancers through guided improvisational exercises designed to generate movement vocabulary that will be used within the work."

Jackson and professor of dance Sarah Barry, chair of the department, agree that while this new platform can be difficult at times, they hope it allows students to showcase their talent, determination, and ingenuity to audiences all over the world.

When students do have classes on campus, they remain socially-distant in the classroom and are required to wear masks the entirety of the class.



“This could lead to additional connections with communities we’ve never reached before, which could serve as an excellent recruiting tool, build deeper communal appreciation of the arts, and serve as a pathway to support underserved communities with artistic programming,” Barry said.

What is most impressive to Jackson is the resilience of his students throughout this process. Like students in every department and program in the College of Arts and Sciences, Jackson said their creativity and determination to succeed has been outstanding.

“This is certainly not how our students envisioned their academic year unfolding,” Jackson said.

“However, they soon began to problem solve and think of ways they could still produce work during the pandemic. They have offered ideas about ways to rehearse and present their work safely while adhering to both the CDC and University safety protocols. The faculty remain amazed at their levels of ingenuity and fortitude.” ■



A HISTORY



OF US.

ALABAMA'S FIRST HIGH SCHOOL AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY CLASS IS CHANGING WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE TO BE A HISTORIAN.

On a January morning, 18 Central High School students sat around a circle of tables in their first period class. It's silent, but it's not tense—there's an air of thoughtfulness, of students searching to find their answer to the question posed moments before. One by one, the students begin to raise their hands, looking at the professor leading the class.

The question? "How does mass incarceration affect you personally?"

Dr. John Giggie, a history professor at UA, calls on one of these high schoolers to begin, motioning that they'll go around in a circle to discuss. The students don't have to answer if they don't want to, but almost every student in the class does in some form or fashion.

The 18 students in the circle make up History of Us, the first high school African American history class in Alabama. Here, students learn about Black history on the local, state, and national levels, tying each unit together with research, social media, discussion, and personal reflection.

Giggie, who teaches classes about lynching, civil rights, and African American history to undergraduate students at UA, is hoping that this class will bring about a new generation of young historians—a generation whose desire to learn the truth about their communities will allow them to bring voices to those who were powerless in the past.

"One goal of this class is to create a new generation of young intellectuals, and also create a generation of engaged citizens," Giggie said. "History isn't artificial; it isn't something stuck between two covers in a book and put on the shelf. Rather, the ideas and experiences of the past deeply affect how we live today. And conversely, often the struggle we experience on a daily basis has historical backgrounds. People made decisions decades ago,

generations ago, that impact people today. I want these students to see that."

Each student was hand-selected for the class by a committee of Giggie, the school principal, and teachers at Central after a rigorous application process. The students were selected because of their dedication to and interest in learning about African American history.

**"HISTORY ISN'T
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TODAY."**

"The class, in general, is really different from any other history class I've taken," Alex Barnes, a junior in the class, said. "We hit points that you don't normally hit in an American history class. We don't just talk about the Civil Rights movement—it's more than that. We've talked about slavery and lynching, and also police brutality and mass incarceration. It's a lot, but it's been really interesting."

Giggie, history graduate student Margaret Lawson, and Central High School teacher Jesse Chadwick worked together to create a curriculum that

exposes students to African American history both locally and nationally. The team hopes that this method of learning will allow students to think about broader issues and localize them, making it concrete.

"Every unit we've done has been framed within Tuscaloosa in a very specific way," Giggie said. "When we studied slavery, we looked at runaway slaves from Tuscaloosa. When we studied the Civil War, we looked at Civil War issues in Tuscaloosa. We studied ideas of African American history that tend to be left out in American history. When you continually frame issues in a Tuscaloosa or a personal manner, the students' own lives become fodder for conversation and personal analysis."

While studying different eras of African American history, the students learned how to conduct in-depth research about local history. During the unit on lynching in the United States, Giggie gave the students the task of choosing a victim of lynching in Tuscaloosa County and finding out their story.

"These students have looked at the history of lynching, and I want to teach them that, as students of African American history, they have a moral obligation to recapture stories that were intentionally meant to be forgotten, and recognize that part of their role right now is to recover history in a very intimate way," Giggie said. "They're figuring out why the lynchings happened, but they're also finding the victims' humanity: who they loved, where they worked, who they left behind. In researching these lynching victims locally, the students become a voice for these forgotten men."

Many students voiced their support of the localization of these broad topics, and felt that studying a particular victim of lynching made it feel more personal and real.



Above: History of Us students recreate one of the Equal Justice Initiative's statues with their shadows.

First page: History of Us students at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice at the Equal Justice Initiative.

“After taking the class and doing the research, I can walk around Tuscaloosa and be like, well, somebody was lynched here,” Jashon Griffin, a junior at Central High, said. “It makes it more realistic, more lasting. You can see how recent lynching and slavery occurred, because it wasn’t that long ago. You can see in your everyday life that it was there.”

During this research project, the Central High students partnered with UA

history majors, using online databases to find whatever they could on the lynching victims they researched. The class also took a trip to Montgomery, where they visited the Equal Justice Initiative. Here, they walked through exhibits about lynching, slavery, and racism in the United States.

As the year progressed, Giggie and Lawson began to incorporate more reflection into the course. The goal was to

get students to think about how history affects them today. Leading up to the conversation about mass incarceration, the team assigned students online blogs, short papers, and small group discussions about current social issues.

As the students began to answer the question about incarceration, students brought up familial experiences, being stopped by police, and stories their parents had told them about the criminal justice

system. The students shared their own histories, adding them to the collective knowledge of the class and leaving a lasting impression on each other's understanding of mass incarceration.

To Giggie, sharing these experiences is one of the most important aspects of the class. As a white professor, he recognizes that his experiences are quite different from his students', and African American history is theirs to tell.

"I believe deeply that personal experience is an essential part of how we understand history and how we live in the world," Giggie said. "And as a white professor, there are certain things that I can't teach them about African American history. There are certain experiences they've had that I'm never going to have. So I'm in this class, in part, to learn from them. What does it mean to be a young, Black intellectual who's having to experience mass incarceration? What is it like being a young, Black intellectual who is in a school that is 98 percent African American? I can't experience that, but I can learn from these students. And because the conversation we have will integrate their experiences and knowledge with my experience and knowledge, it promises to be a richer experience for all of us."

After spending every day in class with the students, Giggie hopes they have learned the integral parts they play in the shaping of history, whether they're recovering lost voices or adding their own. And the students hope the class makes a way for more students to learn about their communities.

"History affects all of us," Iyana Dixon, a senior in the class, said. "African American history affects all of us. I hope that this class will not only open up Tuscaloosa to have a discussion about it, but other cities and counties. Learning about your history does genuinely affect you as a person. It shapes your mind as an individual, whether you take a course about it or learn about it on your own."

"Every day, Ms. Lawson calls us historians, and I think that's important," Barnes said. "Now, I could tell someone how slavery and lynching directly affected me. You can see how it personally affected your daily life, and how it affected you as a person—not just how it played a major role in the way we live today, but how it affected you personally. I feel more confident when talking about my personal testimony because of this class." ■

CLASS DISMISSED: UPDATES FROM HISTORY OF US

Since the end of the 2019-2020 school year, several developments have occurred within the class. The course is being taught at Central High School again, with two teachers teaching the course and Giggie serving in an advisory role. These classes will serve as a blueprint for other schools in Tuscaloosa County for future History of Us classes.

Giggie presented professional development workshops for teachers around the state to adopt the curriculum for their classrooms. One teacher in Decatur will be offering a version of History of Us to eighth graders next year. Giggie also gave five presentations about the class, most recently to the National Conference on Citizenship. Two alumnae of the class, Noa Jordan and Delphia McGraw, also joined in the presentation.

Several students participated in and led marches this summer in the wake of George Floyd's death, calling for an end to police brutality and a national reflection on racism.

To Giggie, the most important development in the course is a recent collaboration with Rev. Tyshawn Gardner, Vice President of Student Development at Stillman and Pastor of Plum Grove Baptist Church, to found the West Side Scholars Academy. The academy will use the curriculum developed for History of Us as the basis for creating a summer enrichment academy for middle schoolers from Tuscaloosa's West Side. It will launch during the summer of 2021, asking students to participate every day during the summer and two Saturdays every month during the academic year.



Left: Students in front of the memorial at the Equal Justice Initiative.



The Curious Case of DP Lyle

DP Lyle isn't a man who makes decisions lightly. But when a decision is made, he doesn't think twice about it—he sticks to it, and lets it shape the course of his life.

While growing up in Huntsville, Alabama, Lyle says he was always working towards one thing: going to medical school. He's known since a young age that he was destined to do medical work, but not because it's what his family did, or because he admired doctors. He says he just knew.

"I saw a documentary in the mid-1950s on what's known as the blue baby surgery," Lyle said. "It was the first surgery to operate on the heart of a child with congenital heart disease. I remember seeing it on TV and saying, 'That's what I want to do.' I not only knew I'd go to medical school, I knew I was going into cardiology."

From the moment he saw that documentary, every decision Lyle made was to help him become a cardiologist. After graduating from UA with a chemistry degree on the pre-med track, he moved to Birmingham, where he completed medical school, and then to Texas. But after visiting a friend in California, he decided that's where he would practice. He's lived there since.

Throughout his career, Lyle has been recognized for his work as a cardiologist. For 33 years, he has worked as a partner at the South Orange County Cardiology Group, and served in almost every position in his local chapter of the American Heart Association. He credits much of his success to his ability to stick to a decision and let it drive him.

When he's not practicing medicine, Lyle writes novels about mysteries, murder, and the American South. He credits this love of telling stories to how he was raised.

"I used to have these stories in my head," Lyle said. "People say that, if you can't tell a story in the South, they won't feed you. And there's some truth to that. So I used to make up stories in my head when I would run. A little over 20 years ago, I decided I wasn't going to retire soon, so if I was going to write, I had to

do it then. So I took a couple of writing classes at the University of California at Irvine, joined some writers' groups, and started writing."

Since then, Lyle has written over 20 books, including the *Jake Longly* series, detailing the adventures of an ex-baseball player who is unwillingly dragged into his father's private investigation business; the *Sam Cody* series, which follows an ex-cop who moonlights as a professional boxer; the *Dub Walker* thriller series set in his hometown of Huntsville, and the *Cain/Harper* series, which features a pair of non-biological siblings who were raised by nomads, trained by the military, and now fix the unfixable. For each of these novels, Lyle has employed his creative thinking with his knowledge and skills as a physician, painting a realistic portrait of crimes and mysteries.

When Lyle began attending writers' conventions to get feedback on his books, other thriller and mystery novelists were excited to find out he was a physician. They started to ask him questions about anything and everything related to his career in order to make their books more realistic.

"When writers figure out that you're a physician, they want to know about everything," Lyle said. "They want to know about knives, gunshots, DNA, poisons, and more. So I started helping writers with the science aspects of their books, and then later the forensic science aspects after I educated myself more on that subject."

From there, his writing colleagues recommended that, because he lived close to Hollywood, he start consulting for movies and television shows. Because he had the knowledge, he decided to pursue that path, and has served as a consultant for writers on over a dozen shows, including *Monk*, *House*, *Pretty Little Liars*, and *Law and Order*.

After decades in his cardiology, writing, and consulting careers, Lyle has shifted his focus to sharing his knowledge while maintaining his other interests. Lyle has written several

books about forensic science and mystery writing, including *Forensics for Dummies*. He also hosts the podcast "Criminal Mischief: The Art and Science of Crime Fiction," a blog titled "The Crime Fiction Writer's Blog," and co-hosts the radio show "Crime and Science Radio." He has also led classes on crime fiction writing at The Learning Tree University and the UCLA Extension Writing Program.

"Teaching just seems like a natural extension of what I do," Lyle said. "I love to teach. I don't get paid for it. I do it for free because I love working with writers. They're the storytellers. That's what I like. And so I help teach them how to understand science and how it works in their stories."

Though he never expected to become a writer, Lyle wouldn't trade it for anything. He gives much of the credit for turning his two passions, science and writing, into sustainable careers to his determination. For him, it wasn't ever a question of if he was going to do something, but when and how.

"When you figure out you want to do something, you need to deconstruct the steps," Lyle said. "It's like working a chemistry problem. You don't just start throwing things against the wall—you figure out what you need to do to reach your goal, break it down into achievable steps, and follow that path." ■

Below: two of Lyle's several dozen books.



HATS OFF TO THE GRADUATES



We are so proud of all of our incredible 2020 Arts and Sciences graduates. To celebrate their resilience, ingenuity, and dedication to their education, we want to highlight a few of our newest alumni. Join us in congratulating the Class of 2020!



Lota Erinne English and Finance

My Post-Graduate Plans: I'm currently proofreading for Grammarly and participating in a book editing mentorship, and next year I'll be working as a Fulbright English Teaching Assistant in La Rioja, Spain.

One Thing Every Student Should Do: Every student needs to climb to the top floor of the art building on a clear, quiet day and just look out over Tuscaloosa for a little bit. My friends and I spent a lot of time up there freshman year, and it was one of the last things I did before moving out of town.

My Path at UA: Some Fulbright alumnae came to talk to one of my Spanish classes in my sophomore year. It seemed like something I would be super interested in, and between the other informational sessions I attended and all the help from our amazing Fulbright advisor Dr. Beverly Hawk, the whole process was really intuitive and uncomplicated. I also attended workshops about getting published and working as a literary agent, which were informative and have helped me plan what I want to do once my time in Spain is done.

My Favorite Class: Fiction Tour (EN 301) with Dr. Wendy Rawlings was the best class I took at UA, without a doubt. Dr. Rawlings is such a great professor, and she fostered a warm, collaborative environment where my classmates and I gave each other the perfect balance of positive feedback and constructive criticism. I learned so much more in that single semester than I ever thought possible. Additionally, my classmates were just a great group of people who I'm so glad I got to hang out with every week, and people brought their dogs in every now and then. So that was also a plus.

My Favorite Memory: My favorite memory from UA has to be one of the many times my best friends and I spent exploring campus at night, wandering through the historic district, or walking home down University Boulevard after a football game. Tuscaloosa is so full of excitement and interesting people, and I always had the best time just being in the middle of it all.



Anna Thigpen

Communicative Disorders and French

My Post-Graduate Plans: I started graduate school at UA this August pursuing my master's in speech language pathology.

My Path at UA: My time at UA has absolutely shaped me into who I am today, and helped me pursue my next steps. The Capstone provided me with valuable knowledge, leadership opportunities, research experiences, and the most amazing community that built me up and pushed me forward. I am now a graduate student at UA—I just couldn't get enough!

My Favorite Class: For my communicative disorders courses, I really enjoyed Speech Disorders 1 (pediatric disorders) and Speech Disorders 2 (adult disorders). These two courses provided the foundational knowledge about populations I will be working with (and am currently working with) in my profession. They really applied what we were learning to real experiences, and this made the lessons more valuable. In my French courses, I enjoyed Cultures and Conversations. I feel like this class really allowed me the space to practice my conversational French, and prepared me to use my French language skills when I studied abroad.

One Thing Every Student Should Do: One thing every student should do before they graduate is go have a picnic in Woods Quad! It is beautiful and tucked away—I just love it!

Malik R. Seals Biological Sciences

My Post-Graduate Plans: I am currently completing a Master of Science in Multidisciplinary Biomedical Science at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) specializing in immunology and infectious diseases. Following my graduate work at UAB, I intend to complete my doctoral work in neuroimmunology, a field that bridges my two interests. Ultimately, I hope to translate discoveries in basic science to clinical applications for patients living with autoimmune diseases, like my mother.

My Path at UA: My time at the University was very beneficial in both the conventional academic sense, but also in facilitating personal growth. I was able to take a diverse range of courses, including biology, foreign languages, political science and philosophy. This flexibility in my coursework allowed me to appreciate the interconnectedness of my studies in science and policy to public health. It was precisely this love for interdisciplinary studies that I gained during my undergraduate tenure that fueled my desire to complete a Ph.D. in my chosen field. Lastly, my work as a student leader allowed me to see the importance of strong communication skills, both orally and written. Being able to give speeches in front of hundreds to thousands of incoming students and their parents allowed me to gain confidence in my public speaking; it's a skill I don't use quite as much as I used to, but it's an invaluable skill to gain.



My Favorite Class: Surprisingly, some of my favorite classes weren't science, as they allowed me to think differently than science courses required. My favorite class was Civil Leadership Dialogues, taught by Lane McLelland. Her class was profoundly influential in shaping how I viewed ordinary conversations on, honestly, incredibly challenging topics that we should be conversing about more. Further, the class taught me how to navigate these difficult topics in an ever-increasing partisan climate with a sense of humility and desire to understand rather than respond.

My Favorite Memory: One of my fondest memories was being "tapped" in Jasons, the men's senior honorary, honoring 40 of the, supposedly, most influential men on the university's campus. I felt that it was an incredible honor at the time and served as the perfect culmination to the end of my undergraduate tenure.

Natasha Burrell

Microbiology

My Post-Graduate Plans: I am currently enrolled in the biology medical sciences master's program at Mississippi College in Clinton, Mississippi. I intend to apply to medical school in the summer of 2021.

One Thing Every Student Should Do: Students should attend at least one event in the arts, whether it be a jazz concert in the Moody Music Building, a play in Rowand-Johnson Hall, or a student-choreographed performance with Dance Alabama! It constantly amazes me the talent that my peers have, and I know that it means the world to them to have our support.

My Favorite Memory: My favorite memory at UA was participating at ONYX my senior year. ONYX is an exhibition put on by the Black Student Union in partnership with University Programs to highlight minority-centered student organizations. At this event, I was able to tell my peers about the Women of Excellence, an organization that I served as president, which is committed to uplifting and empowering minority women of campus. I had the opportunity to spread the word about a fairly new auxiliary style dance team that I was proud to be a part of. I also had the chance to perform a routine that I helped choreograph with my sorority, Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Needless to say, this event allowed me to admire the hard work of myself and my peers to make the University a welcoming environment for minorities. I was truly in awe that night.

My Path at UA: For me, UA was what every college experience should be. My time here helped me grow and mature into the person I am today. In four years, I learned so much about myself, my strengths, my weaknesses, and, honestly, how to have fun and enjoy life. What I value the most is the exposure I got to a diverse student and faculty body, to various events that, on one hand, kept me involved in my community, and on the other, taught me how to be comfortable in formal situations. One of the biggest lessons I've learned at UA is to take advantage of the resources given to me. I came into college as a "do it on my own" person, but UA taught me that no person can do anything alone. That is one lesson that I know has helped me and will continue to help me.





Sean Drummond

Biological Sciences

My Post-Graduate Plans: I'm attending medical school at The University of Alabama at Birmingham.

My Path at UA: The classes, experiences, and relationships among professors and students that UA provided was unmatched in preparing me for my first year in medical school. A great example is the Pharmacology class I took my senior year that was taught by Dr. Luke Ciesla. I am currently in my Pharmacology block for medical school and feel very confident after being exposed to the information at such a high level in undergrad.

My Favorite Class: My favorite class was my organic chemistry lab. This was because I had an incredible TA, and a lot of friends that I got to know my first two years of school in the lab with me. Sometimes, we were able to finish the experiments early and grab breakfast on the quad in our extra free time. These were unexpectedly sweet memories from a class that proved to be challenging but exciting.

One Thing Every Student Should Do: Every student should get to know the faculty and staff in Clark Hall. They are some of the kindest and most genuine people you can meet, and they really do care about each student in the College and their future. ■



PROGRESS ON THE
**PERFORMING ARTS
ACADEMIC CENTER**

This year, the College of Arts and Sciences reached its \$15 million fundraising goal to support construction of the new Performing Arts Academic Center.

The PAAC, along with a fully restored Bryce Main building, will provide dance and theatre students with world-class venues and advanced equipment to hone their skills.

“We agreed to chair the Campaign for the Performing Arts because we have always recognized the importance of the arts to society,” said Bill Battle, campaign co-chair. “When we saw the scope of the Performing Arts Academic Center combined with the restoration of Bryce Main, we knew it was something we had to be involved in.”

This landmark facility will showcase the exceptional talent of UA students and attract larger audiences to enjoy performances. The 130,000 square foot facility will include four performance theatres — a black box theatre with flexible seating for 175 to 275 attendees, a 350-seat proscenium style theatre, a 450-seat venue specifically designed for dance, and a dance studio theatre with flexible space for rehearsals, recitals and smaller performances.

“The new facility will enhance our collaborative, instructional, and creative research capabilities by joining the department into one location, whereas currently we are spread across seven buildings on and off campus,” said Sarah Barry, chair of the Department of Theatre and Dance. “Additional classroom spaces for specialized needs for design, construction, projection, automation, lighting, and sound, will allow for innovative teaching. The facility will also enhance our connections with and ability to offer programming to the community. We’ll have the capability to host conferences or festivals related to the performing

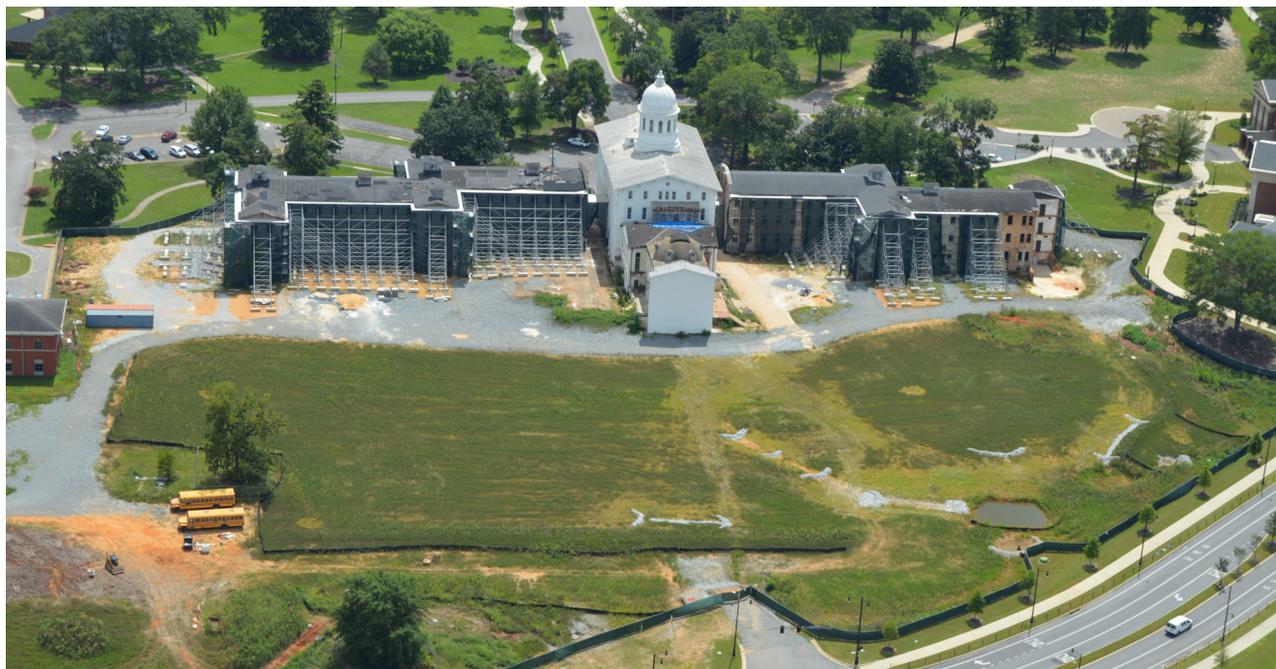
arts. We look forward to finding more ways to work with community partners to enhance theatre and dance exposure and education.”

Donations to the campaign included a \$5.25 million gift from an anonymous donor, a gift of \$1.5 million from Robert and Laura Abernathy to name the grand lobby and 20 additional gifts of \$100,000 or more.

“The campaign reached its goal of \$15 million because alumni and friends understood the impact and gave generously,” said Mary Battle, campaign co-chair. “To each donor who has already given, we want to say thank you again. With your support, the University will have a state-of-the-art facility to prepare the next generation of artists. Your generosity has changed our campus forever.”

The restoration of Bryce Main, which will include the University’s new Welcome Center, is already underway. Pending approval by the UA Board of Trustees, construction on the new PAAC is expected to begin in spring 2022. A groundbreaking ceremony will be held in spring 2021 if conditions permit.

“The PAAC will bring The University of Alabama theatre and dance programs to the forefront of artistic expression,” said Joseph P. Messina, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. “Learning and performing in spaces that rival major performance venues across the country will provide an invaluable experience for students to seamlessly launch their careers and begin building their legacies. And with more space, the college will expand its outreach with the surrounding community and schools, enriching the area with even more opportunities to experience the many benefits of the arts.” ■





Paying It Forward

“It was an interesting time to be at the University,” says Ed Braswell, a 1967 graduate.

George Wallace’s famous “Stand in the Schoolhouse Door” took place mere weeks before Braswell would arrive for freshman orientation. He was also a student during the tenures of three of his heroes—President Frank Rose; the legendary Colonel Carleton K. Butler, director of the Million Dollar Band; and Coach Paul “Bear” Bryant.

While at UA, Braswell studied math and played alto saxophone in the Million Dollar Band before earning a master’s degree from Florida State University. He then served six-and-a-half years in the Air Force, and utilized his knowledge of mathematics and his experience with computers

to build a career at USAA, eventually earning the title of Assistant Vice President. After his career at USAA, he worked for the University of Texas at San Antonio where he and his wife Doe had earlier earned their MBA degrees.

He and Doe went to high school together and reconnected their senior year of college. The couple eventually got married and have lived in Texas since 1972, where they enjoy being “ambassadors in a foreign land.”

“People in Texas always ask me if we have a hand sign at Alabama,” Braswell said. “I just hold up my index finger (number one) and say, ‘Yes, we have a hand sign.’”

Looking back on their careers, Braswell said they have been blessed and want to pay their good fortune

forward. “I remember when I was going to school, I received the Thomas Waverly Palmer Scholarship. It was \$50, and that was a big help in the 1960s.”

After reading an article about how UA’s Math Department is working to increase diversity, he said that establishing a scholarship seemed like a logical and good thing to do. “We want our scholarship to be able to help someone else,” he said.

The Joseph Edward Braswell Endowed Scholarship in Mathematics, established earlier this year, provides scholarship support to UA students majoring in mathematics, with priority consideration given to students who enhance the department’s diversity and students who demonstrate financial need. ■

Leaving a Legacy

Those who knew long-time history professor Dr. Helen Delpar describe her as a character. Voted “Most Likely to Succeed” by her high school classmates, she never owned a car and instead walked to work nearly every day until she retired in her late 60s. Though she never married and enjoyed solitude, she loved the company of others and had a deep-seated drive to focus her intellect and abilities into not only improving herself, but also serving the larger community.

“To be honest, I was kind of intimidated even before I met her,” said Dr. Steve Bunker, who came to know Delpar after filling her position when she retired from UA in 2006. “She was rather cantankerous at times and challenging, but she was an impressive person who was fundamentally generous. When she saw anyone having a rough time, she was there.”

When UA hired Delpar as an assistant professor in 1974, the Latin American studies program didn’t exist, though Delpar quickly put UA on the map for the subject as a prolific Latin American scholar. She and faculty members Larry Clayton and Ed Moseley made UA the seat of the Southeastern Council of Latin American Studies, of which Delpar would later serve as president.

Perhaps her biggest legacy, however, stemmed from her role as director of UA’s graduate program in history. Having been given a chance herself to pursue a Ph.D. at Columbia University in the 1960s, Delpar felt it her duty to expand opportunity for others.

“She felt that our job as a state university was to provide opportunities—to look for diamonds in the rough and to provide students with the opportunities and guidance to become great scholars and people,” Bunker said.

In making plans for her estate, her fondness for graduate students guided

her. After passing away in 2018, Delpar gifted the University with \$750,000 to establish the Helen Delpar Endowment for Latin American Studies supporting graduate students and a lecture series.

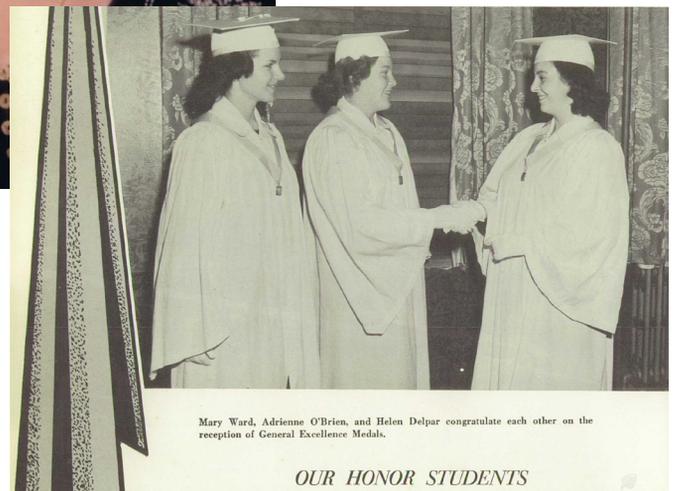
“She had been lucky herself to go for a summer and do research for her dissertation, and to not have to worry about cobbling together funding,” Bunker said. “She thought that was really important for graduate students to focus on their work and produce excellent scholarship without having to worry about the money.”

Delpar’s own interest in the field also dovetails with a growing interest

in Latino history nationwide as well as UA’s increasing focus on international collaborations and scholarship.

“She saw an area that could be helped, and she didn’t need to have \$20 million to do it,” Bunker said. “She saw that a little went a long way, and she saw her gift as a way of rounding out the opportunities that the history department and the College could provide for graduate students. She felt that this gift could do the most good.

“She was really remarkable, and UA was really lucky to have for 32 years on faculty. It is a fitting legacy for her.” ■



Top left: Dr. Helen Delpar.

Bottom and top right: Newspaper clippings of Dr. Helen Delpar from her time in school at Columbia University.

Class Notes

1940s

Marie Kiely Tynan (Class of '41, English) retired after 35 years with NASA. In December 2019, she published her book *Bipolar Extremes: A Memoir*.

1950s

Paul H. Page (Class of '50, political science) worked at ALCOA for 30 years and in real estate for 25 years. He and his wife, Nancy, have three children (Heather, Thomas, and David) and four grandchildren.

Clifton O. Istre (Master's '56, speech communication) recently retired from his career as an audiologist at his private practice. After completing his master's degree at UA, he received his Ph.D. in audiology from the University of Indiana.

1960s

Durwood L. Sims (Class of '69, geography) retired as the director of inmate services at the Jefferson County Jail in 2015. He has a daughter, Andrea, and two grandchildren, a boy and a girl.

Samuel V. Wilson, Jr. (Class of '69, political science) recently retired as a chief park ranger at an American Civil War battlefield. Previously, he served as a career Army officer, then as an educator in the Virginia School System. After earning his bachelor's at UA, he went on to earn a Master of Arts in Journalism at the University of Georgia (1978), a

Graduate Diploma certifying completion of a one-year course of resident study at the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College (1980), a Graduate Diploma for completing four years of theological education by extension from the University of the South (1986), and a Master of Science in Education (English) from Longwood University (2000). He currently mentors a group at his local Episcopal church in the same four-year theological education he graduated from in 1986.

1970s

Don Keith (Class of '70, broadcast and film communication) published his 36th book, *Arabian Storm*, to be released by Severn River Press. His previous works have included the novel *Hunter Killer*, which became the major motion picture of the same title, and his book on former Alabama football legend Coach Paul "Bear" Bryant remains in print after more than 14 years. Don's film production company, Fig Tree Media Group, has just completed production on a documentary film to be released in 2020 titled *Colors of Character*. The movie tells the story of Steve Skipper, the only artist officially licensed by The University of Alabama to do artwork of Crimson Tide sports events and who is now gaining international recognition for his paintings commemorating key events in the civil rights struggle.

Rev. Eugenia A. Gamble (Class of '76 New College) will publish a new book, *Love Carved in Community: A Healing Journey with the Ten Commandments*, in January 2022 by the Westminster/John Knox Press. Her previous bible study, *Love Carved on the Heart: A*

Remembering Brad Watson

Award-winning writer and University of Alabama alumnus Brad Watson (age 64) passed away this year in Laramie, Wyoming. At the time of his death, Watson was an associate professor in the creative writing program at the University of Wyoming, and lived on a ranch with his wife, Nell Hanley. Watson was born in Meridian, Mississippi, and spent a significant part of his writing apprenticeship in Alabama.

The recipient of numerous honors and distinctions, including a Guggenheim Fellowship and appointment as lecturer in fiction at Harvard University, Watson received an MFA in creative writing from The University of Alabama and worked as a reporter and editor for state newspapers, including The Montgomery Advertiser. He also worked for the College of Engineering at The University of Alabama in the communications department in the early 1990s.

Watson's first novel, *The Heaven of Mercury*, was a finalist for the National Book Award in 2002 and won the Southern Book Critics Circle Award in Fiction. His most recent novel, *Miss Jane*, was longlisted for the National Book Award last year. His first book, *Last Days of the Dog-Men*, won the Sue Kaufman Prize for First Fiction from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and his second short-story collection, *Aliens in the Prime of Their Lives*, was a finalist for the Pen/Faulkner Award in Fiction.

Watson returned to Alabama to receive the Harper Lee Award for Alabama's Distinguished Writer of the Year in 2017 and made an appearance at the Alabama Book Festival. At that time, Don Noble, host of Bookmark, Alabama Public Television's literary interview show, declared, "Brad Watson is most deserving of the Harper Lee Award. He is the best Southern fiction writer of his generation." ■



Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments, was recognized with the Award of Excellence (1st place) for Biblical interpretation in spring 2020.

J. Michael Miller (Class of '78, history) published his book, *The 4th Marine Brigade at Belleau Wood and Soissons: History and Battlefield Guide*, in late June with the University Press of Kansas.

Joe Cottle (Class of '79, political science; master's '82, political science) recently retired as the director of governmental relations with the Alabama Education Association.

He has established an endowed scholarship program for students majoring in political science at UA.

Tommy Morgan (Master's '79, English) retired in May 2019 after 28 years of teaching English as a second language in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Oman.

1980s

Alex Lushington (Class of '80, biological sciences) is the vice president and partner at The Radiology Clinic

in Tuscaloosa. His spouse, **Donna Gambrell Lushington** (Class of '82, secondary education and theatre), is an associate broker at Hamner Real Estate.

Glenn Quiggle (Master's '82, history) is a native of Fairhope, Alabama, but currently resides in LaGrange, Georgia, where he is retired, but still coaches high school football at LaFayette Christian School. He and his wife, Tina, have five children and five grandchildren.

Jonathan Mayhall (Class of '83, religious studies) recently had his poem, "Two Shores," published in the *Birmingham Arts Journal*.




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1990s

Helen Kelly Sayre (Class of '98, psychology) is getting ready to launch her first business. Five Flags Food Tours is a three hour walking food tour in Pensacola, Florida. Helen and her husband **Blake Sayre** (class of '92, biology) will guide guests through Pensacola while savoring delicious local delicacies and learning interesting details about Pensacola's culture, history, and architecture. When not guiding tours, Helen is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor, and Blake is a physician who works in aesthetics.

Brigid-Elizabeth N. Reardon (Master's '98, English) is a technology consultant.

2000s

Stephanie Holcomb (Class of '03, history) has been a UA staff member for almost 16 years. She earned a master's degree in higher education administration from UA in 2012.

Stephanie Howard (Class of '07, biology and psychology) was selected as the Most Outstanding Physician's Assistant in Women's Health by the Association of Physician Assistants in Obstetrics and Gynecology.

Jessica Williams (Class of '07, criminal justice) is a newspaper reporter for *The Hernando Sun* (Hernando County, Florida), a contributor for *Celebrations Magazine* (Walt Disney World), and a journalist for *Citrus County Life Magazine* (Citrus County, Florida). After graduating on May 12, 2007 from the College of Arts and Sciences, she moved to Florida. Mrs. Williams was a Child Protective Investigator for the Citrus County Sheriff Office (2009-2012) and an

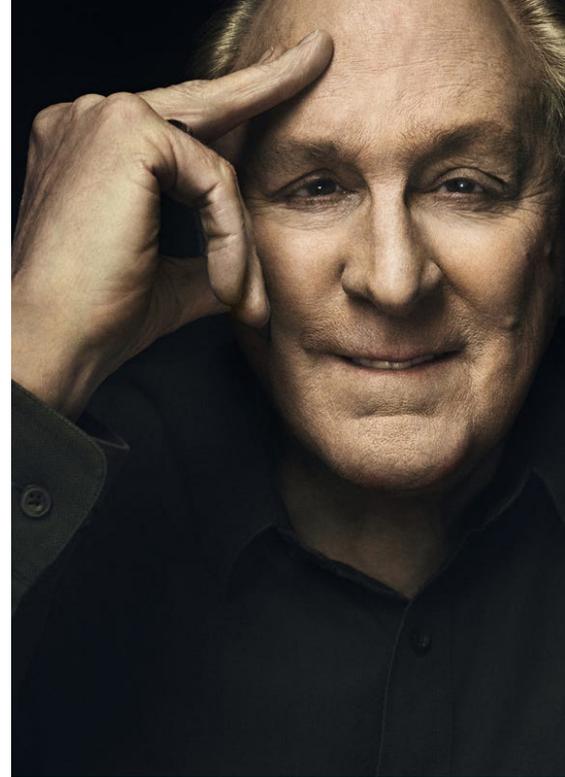
Adult Protective Investigator for the State of Florida (2012-2016). She is now pursuing her writing career and enjoys time with family.

2010s

Tiffany Taylor (Class of '10, English) was nominated and awarded the 2020 Nashville Black 40 Under 40 Award. These awards were created to honor and highlight 40 of Nashville's exceptional Black residents who are making significant contributions to the community in the Nashville and Metro Nashville Areas. As the external communications manager for the American Red Cross Tennessee Valley and River Valley Blood Services Regions, Taylor says that she has been instrumental in leading the public relations efforts to inform the community of ongoing blood needs amid the current pandemic and emergency blood shortages, COVID-19 safety measures put in place to protect donors and staff, and the emergency need for convalescent plasma donations used in treating those critically ill with COVID.

Kevin Duque (Class of '14, biological sciences) graduated with honors from the University of Puerto Rico, School of Dental Medicine with a Doctor of Dental Medicine in June. Dr. Duque began a general practice residency at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in July.

Nathaniel Harris Graham (Class of '14, anthropology) is currently a community assistance planner at the Bay-Lake Regional Planning Commission in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Previously, he worked as a graduate research assistant at Auburn University and The University at Albany, SUNY, a planning intern at the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham, and a graduate



Remembering Winston Groom

Novelist Winston Groom grew up in Mobile County and graduated from The University of Alabama in 1965. At UA, he was a member of Delta Tau Delta fraternity and the Army ROTC. He served in the Army's Fourth Infantry Division from 1965 to 1969, which included a tour of duty in the Vietnam War. After returning to the United States, Groom worked as a reporter for the *Washington Star* before turning his attention to writing novels.

Author of sixteen books, Groom's biggest success was *Forrest Gump*, which was later turned into a 1994 movie, featuring actor Tom Hanks. The film was a cultural sensation and won six Academy Awards. He published a sequel, *Gump and Co.*, in 1995. He has also written numerous non-fiction works on diverse subjects, including the Civil War, World War I and Crimson Tide football. Groom's book, *Conversations with the Enemy*, was a Pulitzer Prize finalist, and his most recent novel, *El Paso*, was published in 2016. He passed away in 2020. ■



teaching assistant at The University at Albany, SUNY. He received a master's in biological anthropology from The University at Albany, SUNY in 2016 and a master's in community planning from Auburn University in 2019. In 2018, he won the Arch Winter Award in Community Planning at Auburn University.

Ryan Knuckles (Class of '14, geography) worked for the City of Tuscaloosa's water and sewer department as the GIS Application Specialist from 2014 until 2017. He then moved to Huntsville, Alabama, where he worked as a Military Master Planner for POND & Company. At POND, he travelled around the country producing a variety of military master plans and programming documents as required by specific contracts. In October 2020,

he started as the Community Planner at Arnold Air Force Base in Tullahoma, Tennessee, for Air Force Civilian Service.

Alexander Laminack (Class of '15, physics) graduated from Louisiana State University with a PhD in physics and is now advancing his career in a postdoctoral position at Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Brittany Kathryn (Carlisle) Hughes (Class of '15, art) is a senior communications specialist with the Cobb County Government in Georgia. She is married to Josef Hughes.

ALUMNI, WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Please send information about new jobs, promotions, retirements, honors, achievements, and major life events for the Class Notes section. Mail entries to The University of Alabama, College Relations, Box 870268, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487 or email entries to sbbolin@ua.edu.

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