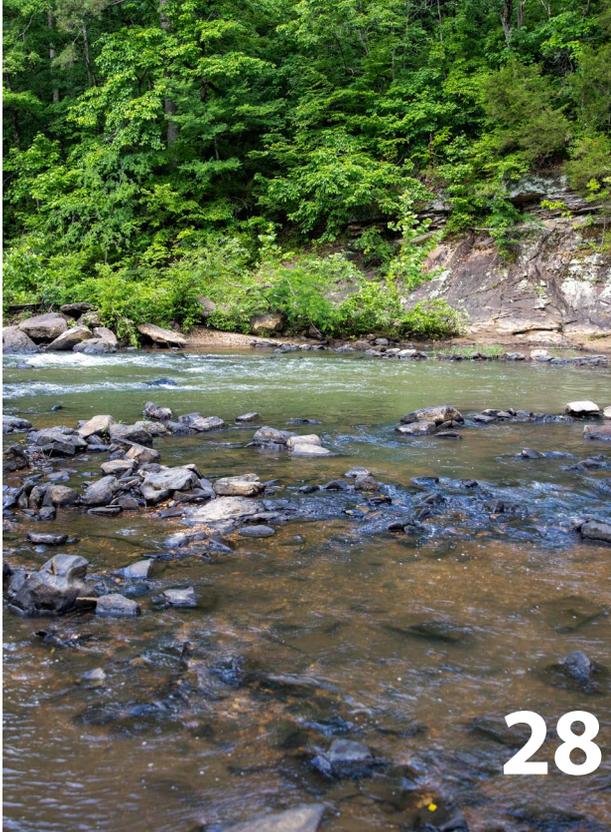


COLLEGIAN

FALL 2021



THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES MAGAZINE

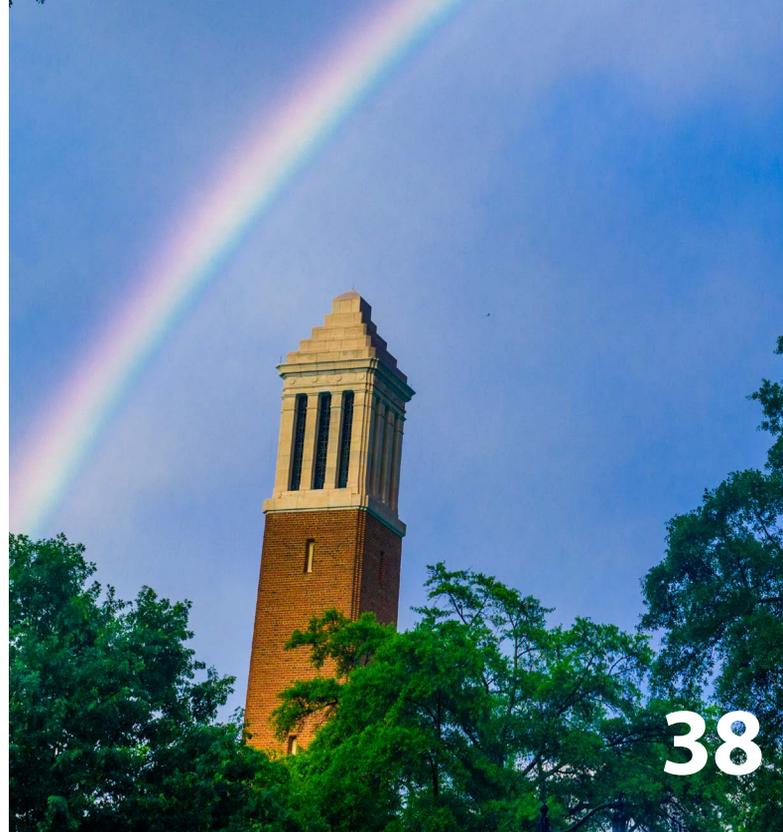


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College of Arts & Sciences

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Rising with the Tide

Highlights from campus and a call to action

In September, The University of Alabama launched the Rising Tide Capital Campaign, through which the College of Arts and Sciences is seeking \$100 million to propel the pillars of promise, our students; prominence, our faculty; and pride, our facilities. Our students and faculty already set a standard of excellence among their peers, and we aspire to continue empowering them to change the world.

Over the past year, our New College celebrated its 50th anniversary and is exemplary of the promising students who move through the College. This extraordinary program has allowed students, like Caroline Yuk, to approach learning through individualized programs of study and interdisciplinary experiences. Yuk, featured on this issue's cover, combined interests in audiology and neuroscience into a custom New College degree that will aid her pursuit of a healthcare career, serving the deaf and hard-of-hearing community. New College students go on to have a substantial impact on not only the world around them, but the students who follow in their footsteps. Jeffrey Levitz, whose story appears on page 40, is a successful New College alumnus whose dedication to mentorship and investment continues to impact our current students. His Levitz Leadership program provides scholarships, internship stipends, workshops, lectures, and innovation grants for help New College students explore and find their passions. We're proud to be the home of New College, and can't wait to see what's in store for the next decades to come.

Our faculty continue to be among the most prominent in their fields. This year alone, Dr. Lukasz Ciesla, assistant professor of biological sciences, earned a \$250,000 grant to develop a kit that speeds the discovery of drugs from plant sources, and published a study of his research on a natural compound that battles Parkinson's disease. Rebecca Salzer, associate professor of dance and director of the Collaborative Arts Research Initiative at UA, received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to construct a digital dance archive that will change the accessibility of dance for generations to come. Dr. Marcos Santander, assistant professor of physics and astronomy, and his graduate student Weidong Jin collaborated with scientists around the world to research a black hole using the VERITAS gamma-ray observatory in Arizona. These accomplishments are huge, but are a fraction of the work we're doing to make the world a better place here at the College.

From labs and studios to classrooms and quads, The University of Alabama boasts a uniquely beautiful campus which the College takes great pride in enriching. In October 2021, an eight-foot-tall cast bronze crescent of flowers, entitled "Flourish," was added to the Woods Quad sculpture garden. Designed by 2020 BFA major and UA art foundry member Ringo Lisko, the sculpture is the first



piece created for the McMahon-Pleiad Public Art Trail Initiative. This year also marked the unveiling of the Math and Science Education Building, formerly known as the Biology Building. The newly-renovated space will allow students to learn at their best in state-of-the-art classrooms and labs, housing classrooms for the Departments of Geography, Geology, Physics and Astronomy, and New College. It's also

home to the Mathematics Technology Learning Center, which you can read more about on page 16.

I believe that a rising tide is a collective and transformative force. Already, we have raised over half of our goal, and we are deeply grateful for your support. Still, we have a long way to go, and we hope that you will consider contributing and driving forward the changemakers, innovative thinkers,

and creative trendsetters who call the College of Arts and Sciences home.

To learn more about the Rising Tide Campaign, visit <https://risingtide.ua.edu/as/>. ■

Dean Joseph Messina



Shelby Hall, home of the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry



SHELBY HALL

CAMPUS NEWS

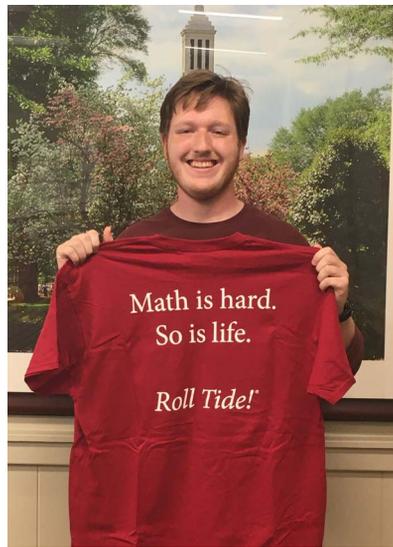
UA Freshman Places in Top Percentage of Prestigious Math Competition

UA freshman Jacob Glidewell has been competing in mathematics competitions since eighth grade, constantly trying to push himself to do better and grow in his skill. This year, he has once again succeeded in his challenge by placing in the top 100 competitors of the Putnam Competition.

The William Lowell Putnam Mathematical Competition is one of the most prestigious competitions for undergraduate students in the world. Now in its 81st year, the competition has nearly 1,600 students competing from different institutions around the country.

“Generations of math students have attempted the exam and claimed victory if they scored any points at all, since historically, the median score has hovered near zero,” Dr. David Cruz-Uribe, professor and chair of the Mathematics Department, said. “That Jacob Glidewell scored 40 points, placing in the top 100 in the United States, is an outstanding achievement.”

Glidewell, a mathematics and physics major from Trussville, Alabama, scored a 40 on the Putnam exam, going well beyond this year’s median score of eight. But this doesn’t faze Glidewell—he says that the most



Jacob Glidewell

important part is competing against himself.

“I was just trying to beat myself and get better,” Glidewell said. “And so now, I see it as checking that I’m on the right path and if I’m being the best that I can be.”

Glidewell’s standard of excellence extends outside of competitions. Now enrolled in the Accelerated Master’s Program for math, he strives to further his education with the help of his professors and classmates at UA.

“In the history of the department, only three other people have scored more than 25 points,” Cruz-Uribe said. “That Jacob has done so well as a first-year student, when many exam questions require knowledge of advanced mathematics, tells us that we can hope for even greater things in the future.” ■

UA Percussionists Earn Top Placements at International Convention

After taking home the top award for university concert snare players at the 2020 Percussive Arts Society International Convention Individual Competitions, graduate student Nathan Rearick looks forward to seeing UA’s percussion program evolve into a powerhouse.

“The UA percussion studio is a thriving family that keeps pushing the boundaries of proficiency,” Rearick said.

His claim holds true, with three of his classmates also placing in the competition, making UA’s the only percussion program to receive that many top placements. Brandon Mooney placed first in 26+ concert snare, David Curtis placed second in university keyboard, and Benjamin Gould placed third in university concert snare.

Despite their success, placing wasn’t the goal for the studio. Gould was preparing for his junior recital when his professor, Dr. Andrew Lynge, suggested he join the highly-recognized competition less than two weeks before the deadline to submit a recording.

“People in my life, including myself, didn’t know if music was a very dependable lifestyle,” Gould said. “Placing alongside players of such high caliber means more to me than actually placing in the competition... it means that I’m doing what it takes to succeed in music.”

The two percussionists plan to continue their percussion work in whatever way they can, with Gould looking to work as a freelance percussionist, and Rearick auditioning for the Air Force Ceremonial Band soon.

“I hope to continue pursuing my passion for music, whether it be performing or teaching,” Rearick said. “Music has always been a positive force in my life and has opened numerous opportunities for me to explore.” ■

Anthropologist's Film Featured in **Prestigious International Festival**

When anthropologist Dr. Kathryn Oths released her film, “The Last Bonesetter,” in 2018, she was excited that it would reach students and researchers across the globe interested in studying traditional medical communities in Latin America. Earlier this year, her film was shown at the prestigious Royal Anthropological Institute (RAI) Film Festival in London, where her life’s work reached a larger audience than ever before.

The film follows a *huesero*, or bonesetter, named Don Felipe, who healed the musculoskeletal ailments of his community in the Andes of northern Peru through manipulation, massage and herbal remedies. He was quick to diagnose and correct, relieving a burden from his village located many miles away from the nearest hospital. But, as Oths discusses in her film, economic decline, climate change, and a migration of young people from remote areas to coastal cities left Don Felipe one of the last traditional health care practitioners in the region.

“Don Felipe was a master of his practice, but it was difficult for him to talk about things abstractly,” Oths said. “But if you gave him a broken finger or



Dr. Kathryn Oths in Peru

some other ailment, he could tell you what to do while he was fixing it. So we thought showing the regional health care practitioners exactly what he was doing would be perfect. We advertised on the radio and brought together academics, doctors, local healers, and peasant farmers from the highlands to receive treatment and learn from him.”

Since the film’s release, Oths and her team have received praise from multiple organizations, including an

honorable mention by the Jury for Music at the Archaeology Channel International Film Festival in 2020. The film has also been shown at the Ethnografilm Festival in France, the Society for Visual Anthropology Film Festival, the First Medical Anthropology Symposium in Peru and the Society for Applied Anthropology in Vancouver. However, having her film shown at the RAI is, for Oths, a dream come true. ■

UA Professor Elected **Trustee of Shakespeare Association of America**

Dr. Michelle Dowd, the Hudson Strode Professor of English at UA, was recently elected a trustee of the Shakespeare Association of America (or SAA), one of the largest professional organizations in early modern literary studies.

The organization, which was founded in 1972, serves scholars from around the world, including North America, Asia, Australia, and Europe. Dowd, who has been a member since she was a graduate student in 2001, says that the organization’s focus on collaboration and community at its

annual conference have helped her to foster strong relationships with her colleagues.

“It’s not just focused on Shakespeare—it’s been very open and welcoming to different kinds of theoretical approaches, historical approaches, literary approaches,” Dowd said. “I think that the field has diversified so much in important ways over the last several decades and, in order for us to do our work well, we often rely on the work others have done. So that collaboration that the organization provides is key.”

Over her three-year term, Dowd is most excited to work on the SAA’s annual conference. Instead of a traditional conference where scholars read papers, the organization focuses on a seminar-style, where attendees read the presenter’s work ahead of time and spend conference time giving feedback and offering ideas for collaboration. With this model, Dowd believes that the SAA allows its members to come up with new, innovative ideas that expand the study of early modern literature. ■

National Awards for Early Career Research Go to Two A&S Professors

During the past academic year, two professors in the College of Arts and Sciences received national recognition early in their careers for leading-edge research that will advance knowledge and enhance the educational experience.

An NSF CAREER Award will fund projects by Dr. Adam Hauser, assistant professor of physics and astronomy and Dr. Jason Pienaar, assistant professor of biological sciences.

Hauser's award seeks to understand how complex materials with three or more elements can be ordered in a crystal structure with atomic precision. The creation of two-element ordered materials led to many technologies used today, including cell phones and high-efficiency solar panels. However, a blueprint for three-element atomic ordering has proved elusive for decades. These materials are needed in information technology, solar cells, lighting, microwave communications, thermoelectrics and power electronics. Hauser proposes to create a quantitative predictive model for atomic ordering in complex alloys to solve this problem and lead to the next generation of technologies.

With his award, Pienaar will investigate the coevolution of the micro-animals tardigrades with the mosses and lichens they inhabit, specifically their joint adaptations to survive extreme dryness. Through studying the genetic, phenotypic, and ecological interaction of tardigrades, sometimes called water bears or moss piglets, with their environments, Pienaar hopes shedding light on the joint mechanisms to survive complete dehydration can be used to understand and manage drought resistance in crops and other organisms, as well as to alleviate cellular damage during space travel. ■

Center for Youth Development and Intervention Sets the Standard for Community-Engaged Research



The faculty, staff, and students of the Center for Youth Development and Intervention.

Over the past several years, the Center for Youth Development and Intervention (CYDI) has become an example on UA's campus of successful community engagement. Through community-based research, scholars at the center hope to improve life for those around them and throughout the world.

"One in five children and adolescents in the US need mental health services," said Dr. Susan White, psychology professor and director of the CYDI. "In fact, most mental health disorders emerge by early adolescence. Unfortunately, there is a considerable gap in translating effective interventions into real-world delivery, especially for youth."

The CYDI strives to close this gap. This team of interdisciplinary researchers and clinicians works in state-of-the-art facilities to create impactful processes in the prevention, remediation, and management of behavioral, emotional, and neurodevelopmental conditions present in children. By partnering with local families, the CYDI can create processes

that are both well-researched and actually work in their patients' lives.

One method members of the CYDI have used to do this is Building the Bridge, a program started by White in 2019. Here, faculty members can connect local families with the assistance they need, and families can inform researchers about what works and what doesn't work for their families. Several core and affiliated faculty of the CYDI have worked on various initiatives related to Building the Bridge, which has contributed to several grant applications and peer-reviewed publications.

"I think the biggest benefit to this research is letting the participants' voices be heard," White said. "So we, the researchers, make educated assumptions about what we think obstacles are to treatment access, for instance. But that doesn't mean it applies in every region, or to every segment of society—there are other things that might play a big role in terms of how families access care that we may not know or think about." ■

Dance Alabama! Tour Brings **Art to Alabama Schools**



Dance Alabama! students performing for students at various elementary schools in the West Alabama area.



From year to year, one of the most anticipated productions from UA's Department of Theatre and Dance is Dance Alabama!, a program choreographed and performed entirely by students. Hundreds of people flock to Tuscaloosa to watch as dancers perform a wide variety of genres and styles. But this isn't the students' only chance to perform. Over the past six years, Dance Alabama! has taken its show on the road, performing at elementary schools across the state.

Throughout the spring semester, the dancers and choreographers travel to underserved elementary schools across the state. Here, they perform pieces from their program and host an interactive "talk-back" session for students to learn more about dance. After these activities, associate chair of dance and associate professor Lawrence Jackson says that he hopes students will have a better understanding of the importance of the arts.

"Many rural areas in Alabama have limited access to the arts, so I initiated this project to engage and educate those regions by awakening interest, excitement, imagination, and creativity to those areas that have historically had limited exposure to the arts, particularly dance," Jackson said.

These performances are supported by the Alabama Touring Artists Program through the Alabama State Council on the Arts. The program, which is free to schools, allows schools to book performances by artists, and provides resources such as study guides for students to prepare questions for performers and post-performance activities.

"It is imperative for artists to develop and maintain relationships throughout the communities for which they serve," Jackson said. "Integrating the arts within our community enriches each member of that community, and because engaging in the arts brings individuals together, it fosters a sense of community."

This year, the Dance Alabama! team plans to still bring their performances to elementary schools through a virtual format. The schools will each receive a link to a pre-recorded version of the performance, and the talk-back will occur via Zoom. Because of the program's importance to expanding the arts around the state, as well as fostering real connections between the dancers and the schools, Lawrence said he wanted to make sure these performances still happened, even if they couldn't be face-to-face.

"I hope that presenting art at the heart of the communities we tour enhances the lives of members within each community by stirring hard-to-articulate feelings and inspiring them to look beyond what they believe to be possible and imagine a more vibrant, exciting future," Jackson said. "I also hope these experiences assist our students in understanding the importance of fostering relationships for the communities in which they serve." ■

A&S Faculty Working with National Project to Increase Equitable Vaccine Access

Dr. Stephanie McClure has a longstanding interest in public health and increasing equitable access to healthcare for underserved groups. When the COVID-19 pandemic began, she was concerned about how the pandemic would affect these communities, but was unsure how her interest in contributing to theory concerning health disparities manifestations and effects would be of use in the emergency. But when she heard about the opportunity arose to be part of the CommuniVax project and explore experiences of the pandemic at the community level, she knew that she had to get involved.

CommuniVax is a nationwide project aimed at promoting equitable access to COVID-19 vaccination in populations that have disproportionately experienced the negative effects of the pandemic—Black, Latinx, and Indigenous communities. The project seeks to document the experiences of these communities with the virus, and vaccine access and uptake. The long-term aim of the project is to advance community-centric public health practice as a means of ensuring a more responsive, effective public health infrastructure and health care delivery system in the future.

“If you want to figure out how to reach a specific group, connecting with people in that group is necessary,” McClure said. “If you want to encourage adoption of a particular treatment or behavior, ask that community. What voices are most persuasive? What methods of communication would be effective?”

The project, which is spearheaded by the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security at the Bloomberg School of Public Health and the Texas State University Department

of Anthropology, is funded by a \$2 million grant from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. These two institutions work with six local research teams located in different regions, gathering information that could increase vaccination efforts in their communities.

“We’ve learned that rolling out a generic national campaign is not an effective way to do public health,” McClure said. “So the planners of CommuniVax wanted to focus on specific communities in key regions. Alabama is ideal in a lot of ways—it has majority-minority counties, transportation issues, and poverty. The state has significant challenges with equity on all fronts, and that includes health equity. And because of the University presence, it made sense to base the southeastern research team here.”

The UA team is composed of five interdisciplinary researchers: McClure, the team’s principal investigator; Dr. Kathryn Oths, professor emeritus of anthropology; Dr. Bronwen Lichtenstein, medical sociologist and professor of criminology and criminal justice; Dr. Levi Ross, associate professor of health sciences; and Dr. Pamela Payne-Foster, physician and professor of community medicine and population health.

CommuniVax’s goal is to be a bridge for community input to state and local governments in the cause of vaccine equity.

“Early in the vaccine rollout, the primary issue was access, and we have addressed some of those issues,” McClure said. “Many people we have spoken with credited their ability to get vaccinated to the mobilization of the national guard to administer vaccines in the Black Belt. Those mass vaccination efforts are not



Dr. Stephanie McClure

drawing the crowds that they did back in March and April, because the issue now is that people want to ‘wait and see’ before being vaccinated, or state they are unwilling to be vaccinated.”

McClure says that vaccine hesitancy and refusal are influenced by several factors, from unanswered questions to misinformation to mistrust resulting from negative personal and historical interactions between communities of color and the health care delivery system.

“Some people are suspicious of the fact that the vaccines appear to have been developed very quickly,” McClure said. “It’s too fast,” they say. Some of the pro-vaccine people we have spoken with say that a lot of misinformation is circulated through social media, and people who are hesitant have shared stories of their experiences with COVID-19 that make them doubt that vaccination will be effective. To have a shot of vaccinating at least those who are hesitant, we have to know their concerns and address those concerns in a way that is relatable. That is part of what CommuniVax aims to do.” ■

UA Enrolls Record Numbers of National Merit Scholars

The University of Alabama continues to distinguish itself as a top-tier academic institution, attracting and enrolling an increasing number of scholars from across the nation.

The Capstone enrolled a record 281 new National Merit Scholars in its 2021 fall freshman class, a 26% increase from UA's fall 2020 class, which had 223 freshman National Merit Scholars. The freshman class of fall 2019 had 210 National Merit Scholars, according to the National Merit Scholarship Program.

The University has a total of 940 National Merit Scholars enrolled, another record for the Capstone.

The National Merit Scholarship Program is a premier academic competition that annually recognizes the top 15,000, or 1%, of the 1.5 million students who apply to the program

using their scores on the Preliminary SAT college entrance exam, usually taken during their junior year.

To qualify as a National Merit Scholar, students must score among the very top of those taking the PSAT and complete the application process, through which they must write an essay, demonstrate a strong academic record and leadership abilities, and provide a written recommendation from their high school.

In addition to a steadily growing number of National Merit Scholars, the Capstone's number of first-time undergraduates enrolled in the Honors College in fall 2021 increased to 2,053, a 14% increase from last year.

The University has produced a total of 15 Rhodes Scholars, 16 Truman Scholars, 36 Hollings Scholars and 16 Boren Scholars. ■

Freshman students participate in the Script-A tradition in Bryant-Denny stadium to kick off the school year.



Art and Art History Announces New Graphic Design BFA

The University of Alabama will offer a new Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in graphic design beginning Fall Semester 2022.

Since 1945, when the University introduced the BFA degree program, it has offered the BFA degree in studio art with concentrations in specific areas (ceramics, digital media/graphic design, drawing, painting, photography, printmaking and sculpture). Now that the department has introduced the specialized degree in graphic design, it will give graduates added credentials in the field. The BFA degree in graphic design, like all the department's degree programs, is fully accredited by the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) and meets NASAD's most stringent standards for graphic design programs.

"This is an exciting time for our students," said Assistant Professor Jonathan Cumberland, who heads the graphic design program at UA. "While we already have facilitated a high-caliber educational experience in graphic design in the past, our students will now have the degree that more properly identifies what they've learned during their time at UA. The graphic design BFA will provide new opportunities for growth within the program and enable our students to produce a competitive portfolio upon graduation."

The BFA in graphic design is the professional degree for the graphic designer and the degree that design firms look for in hiring prospects. Graduates are prepared to go directly into design careers and the BFA degree also qualifies students who are seeking graduate studies in graphic design. ■

2021 Graduate Feature: Angel Narvaez-Lugo

When Angel Narvaez-Lugo walked across the commencement stage on July 31 to receive his bachelor's degree in religious studies, it served as a testament to how he's overcome his challenging past, and as a gateway to a future of possibilities.

Born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, Narvaez-Lugo moved to Fort McClellan, Ala., in the seventh grade. After graduating high school in 1993, he went to Jacksonville State University where he excelled as a political science major, was active in his fraternity, and served as vice president of the Student Government Association.

But as he was completing his fourth year, a chain of tragic events occurred that led to his graduation being pushed back for 25 more years.

"I experienced the perfect storm of personal issues that started with an accidental outing by a close friend," he said. "It coincided with my parents' decision to move back to Puerto Rico."

Wanting to be closer to family, he transferred to The University of Alabama where his sister was attending in 1997.

"But my head wasn't in the right place," he said. "My parents had left, I was a Puerto Rican in Alabama — there aren't too many of us here — I identified as a gay male, I had to start over making friends, and most of my classes from Jax State didn't have equivalencies here."

Narvaez-Lugo bounced around to different majors, feeling lost until a friend asked him to take Intro to Native American Religions with her as an elective. He gave it a shot and fell in love with the class.

Having found purpose again, he pursued his new major with renewed focus, but his hardships had only just begun. His parents divorced and as a result, stopped helping him pay his rent. He became homeless.

"I couch-surfed and slept in my car for about 13 months. I ended up not



Angel Narvaez-Lugo in front of Presidents Hall, the building that houses the Department of Religious Studies.

finishing my courses that year in 2001."

After finding steady employment, Narvaez-Lugo re-enrolled at UA full-time in 2007. But within a year, he was stricken with sudden, crippling neck and back pain. He was eventually diagnosed with three ruptured discs in his cervical spine, and because of his ongoing medical issues, he dropped out of school again.

A few years later, the April 27, 2011, EF4 tornado smashed its way through Tuscaloosa creating a great need for Spanish-speaking volunteers to help with relief efforts by interpreting for Hispanic families. Narvaez-Lugo volunteered, and from there, things began to look up.

His volunteerism led to an interpreting contract job for Tuscaloosa County DHR, which led to a job for the City of Tuscaloosa where he became the first bilingual telecommunications specialist for 311, a job he worked from 2013-2016. Though he was glad to be employed, his lack of a degree kept him from advancing.

Narvaez-Lugo became a program assistant at UA's Moundville

Archaeological Park — a job that took him full circle to the Intro to Native American Religions religious studies course he fell in love with.

He worked at Moundville for two years and took advantage of the educational benefits available to UA employees. He then joined UA's Fraternity and Sorority Life as a program assistant, and soon after became the interim SGA advisor.

"Dr. Myron Pope saw value in me, and he's been one of my biggest cheerleaders."

Now in his fifth year as a UA employee, he's become president of the Office, Clerical, & Technical Staff Assembly and founded the LatinX Faculty and Staff Association.

"It's been a slow and steady journey and I couldn't have done it without The University of Alabama's fantastic employees. Though I used to be a little embarrassed about my lack of a degree, I hope now that my story's out, students who find themselves in similar circumstances see that it can get better." ■

UA Professor Uses NSF Grant to **Explore Evolution and Facilitate Diversity**



Some of the students in Dr. Pérez-Huerta's class at Stillman College.

Dr. Alberto Pérez-Huerta, a professor of geological sciences at The University of Alabama, hopes to change the way people think of geology's role in the emergence of life on Earth. In July 2020, Pérez-Huerta received an EAGER grant from the National Science Foundation to help him not only make that happen, but to bring Stillman College students with him along the way.

Pérez-Huerta's research focuses on the hypothesis that the biomolecules that eventually formed RNA, DNA, and life on Earth potentially survived the harsh environmental conditions of billions of years ago because of clay minerals, which could have trapped them between their layers and preserved them like cell membranes.

"The problem with that hypothesis is that these spaces are really tiny, so we cannot see if organic molecules could get there," Pérez-Huerta said.

Pérez-Huerta's project remedies that with a technique called atom probe tomography, or APT, in which he uses an instrument that allows him to see atoms and discover if molecules could become trapped inside the spaces. The

state-of-the-art instrument, located in the Alabama Analytical Research Center (AARC), housed in the Tom Bevill Building on UA's campus, is one of only two in the world, the other in Australia, that are being used for this kind of geological application. This makes the potential findings even more important.

"A better understanding of how life formed on this planet and the conditions that made it possible—that's fundamental to understanding why we are here," Pérez-Huerta said. "And in the future, it can help us tackle some of the challenges we face with environmental changes, or we can go to other planets and explore the possibility of life there."

An equally important part of this project to Pérez-Huerta is the community-engaged teaching and learning component, for which he chose to form a partnership with Stillman College, a historically Black university in Tuscaloosa, to facilitate diversity in geological research.

"We don't have a lot of diversity in our sciences," Pérez-Huerta said. "A more diverse workplace and academic

environment enriches everything we do. If we don't have a diverse research community, we are missing out on a lot of human potential in terms of perspectives and ideas."

He and associate researcher Dr. Chiara Cappelli work with two Stillman biology students, Ayana Green and Bridgett Pettway, who receive a stipend, research experience, and a mentor in Pérez-Huerta. Because this particular project operates at the intersection of geology, chemistry, and biology, it exposes the students to research they might encounter in graduate school whether they pursue geology or not.

Pérez-Huerta's ultimate goal is to establish a long-term collaboration with Stillman College where he can write proposals with the students and faculty to further diversify the research community.

"As a public state university, I think our community has to reflect the community we provide service to," Pérez-Huerta said. "Both with students and faculty, we have to be a representation of the people we serve and show we care." ■



Farrah Hall, home of the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice and Department of Geography



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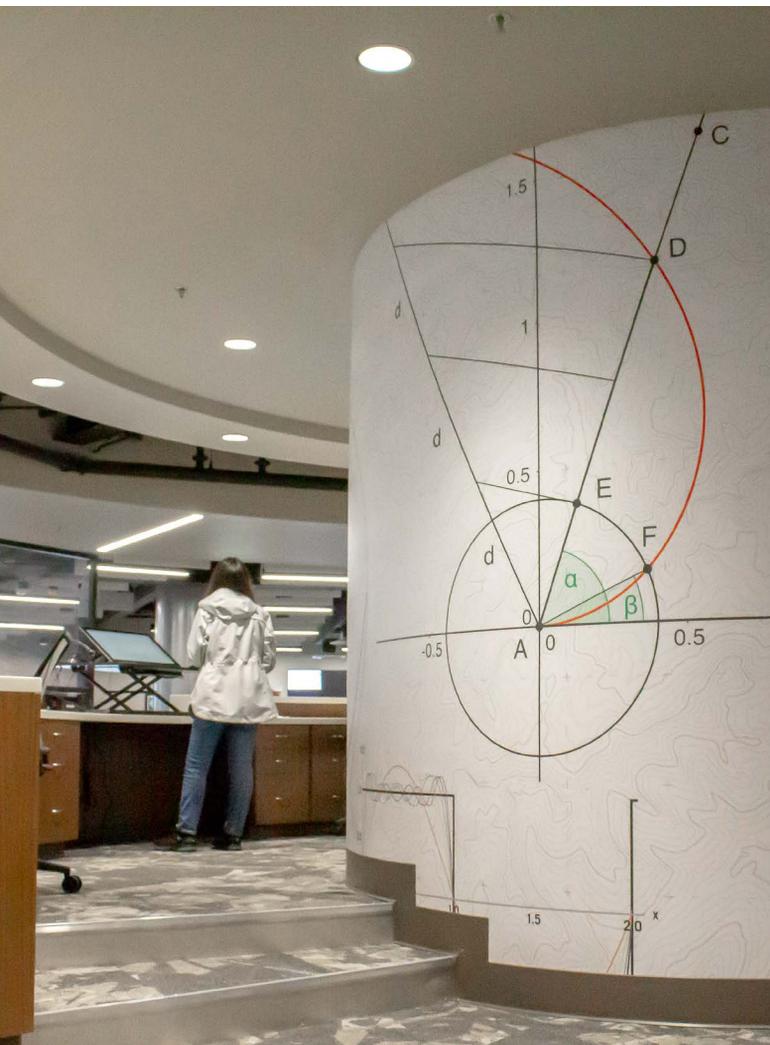
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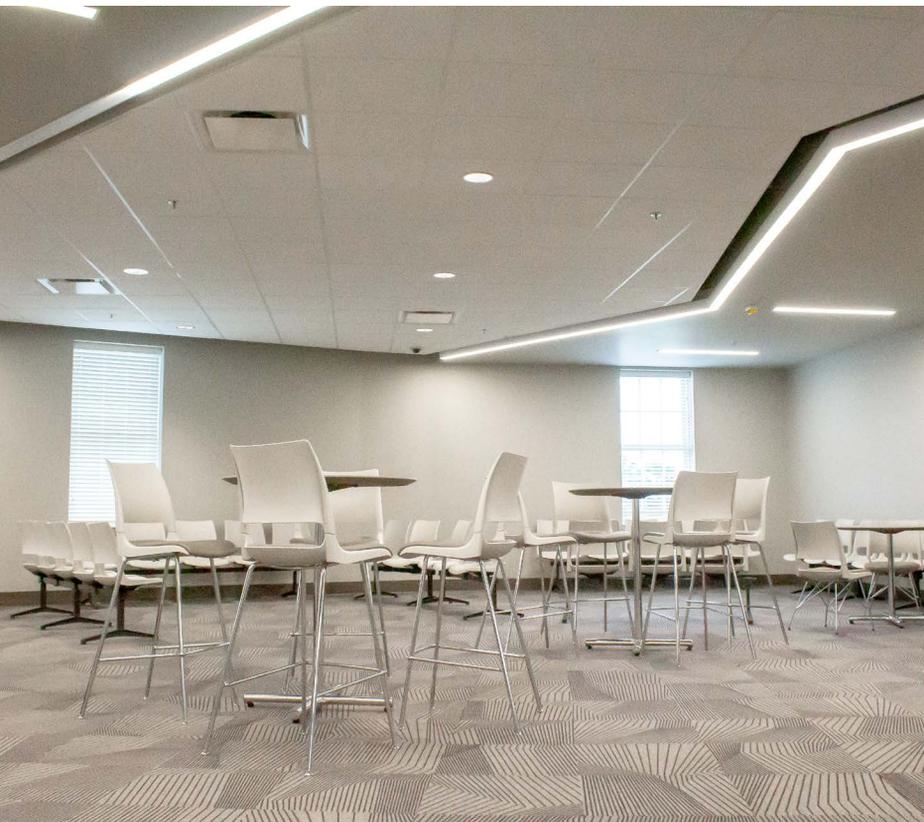


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A LOOK INSIDE THE NEW MATHEMATICS TECHNOLOGY LEARNING CENTER

The University of Alabama’s Math Technology Learning Center serves thousands of students every semester, offering classes and free tutoring for over 40 hours a week to lower division math students to help them succeed. Its former location and facilities in Julia Tutwiler Hall, however, made accommodating its many students difficult, so at the beginning of 2021, the MTLC moved across campus to make implementing those services easier, upgrading their facilities and enhancing the student experience.

In its new location, the recently renovated Math and Science Education Building, the MTLC boasts two labs with 334 computers each, small labs with 50 computers each, and its own Office of Disability Services classroom with 54 computers. With over 100 more computers than its previous location, the MTLC is now able to expand their classes and tutoring services.

“With the university and enrollment growing, that was the main reason for this,” MTLC director Aurora Ponta said. “We can accommodate many students and don’t have to juggle things anymore.”

Steps away from the math department in Gordon Palmer Hall, North Lawn Hall, and Lloyd Hall, where Ponta says many of their students have classes, the new location also brings convenience for instructors and students. Though the trek from that side of campus to Tutwiler caused tardiness from students in the past, the new location has alleviated much of that problem.

Along with their improved facilities, the MTLC is constantly enhancing the way they teach students with technology. They utilize features through Cengage that tell students what types of problems they need to practice more or contact their instructor about specific questions. All courses now have completed class notes and videos made by their instructors available on Blackboard.

There is also someone available to help students at almost all times throughout the week. The MTLC currently offers online tutoring for Math 005 through 238 every weekday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and the Capstone Center for Student Success holds tutoring in the MTLC Monday through Thursday from 5 to 9 p.m.

“Everyone has the resources to improve whatever they need,” Ponta said. “We are very happy to be here.” ■

UA Professor Wins Two **Fulbright Awards**



Dr. Andrew Raffo Dewar, a professor of interdisciplinary arts in New College and the School of Music, was recently awarded two different Fulbright positions in one year: one as a Fulbright specialist in Bogotá, Colombia, and the other as a Fulbright Canada Research Chair in Toronto, Canada.

Dewar, whose work as a composer, performer, and ethnomusicologist has allowed him to create and study the intersections of art, music and culture, will work in both locations to foster relationships between American and international scholars while sharing his expertise with each institution's communities.

In June, Dewar traveled to Bogotá, where he worked with scholars at Universidad Antonio Nariño to develop an undergraduate curriculum in ethnomusicology, and gave public talks on experimental music and intermedia arts.

Dewar also worked with Professor Rodrigo Diaz to record sounds throughout the city, in the countryside, and at famous landmarks, such as the Salt Cathedral of Zipaquirá on the outskirts of Bogotá. These sounds will be assembled into an electronic music composition that combines different spaces and different periods of time though a process known as convolution, which interweaves two sounds together, transforming each sound with the characteristics of the other.

"The idea is that we're going to work with these different field recordings we made and put them into different spaces," Dewar said. "For example, I'm going to use the process of convolution to combine the sounds of 1500-year-old bells from a museum with the sounds of modern-day ice cream cart bells we passed on a walk in the city to create a kind of pan-temporal bell sound that is a combination of both past and present. I might also take sounds

we recorded at the top of a mountain and place them in the reverberant underground caverns of the salt cathedral."

Following his work in Colombia, Dewar will serve as the Fulbright Canada Research Chair at York University in Toronto, Canada for the Spring 2022 semester. Each year, only a maximum of two scholars are selected as Fulbright Canada Research Chairs and placed at institutions that would most benefit from their expertise.

Dewar says one of the reasons he was interested in York University is because of its expansive Distributed Performance and Sensorial Immersion, or Dispersion Lab. The lab allows faculty and students to do research-creation work in digitally-mediated performance, electroacoustic and computer music, sonic arts, improvisation, and computational creativity.

"It's basically an experimental intermedia arts incubator," Dewar said. "They have amazing technological tools, like multichannel 3D spatial audio. They even have loudspeakers built into a haptic floor, so that you can send sounds through the floor to create vibrations, which is unique to the Dispersion Lab. And they have projectors and screens for video or other media."

For Dewar, these resources are a huge benefit as he works to expand his experimental opera, *Volver*, which was awarded the 2019 Robert M. Stevenson Prize from the Society for Ethnomusicology. *Volver* explores the experiences of Mexican-Americans who were repatriated to Mexico in the 1930s, as told through oral history recordings collected by historian Dr. Christine Valenciana in the 1970s when she was a student. The recordings were made available to Dr. Dewar by the Lawrence de Graaf Center for Oral and Public History at California State University, Fullerton. The opera interweaves

these testimonies into an imaginary conversation that functions as the libretto, with the rhythms and sounds of the interviewee's voices driving the electronic sounds that accompany them. The audience views these experiences as though they are time travelers with the help of projected archival images that are dynamically altered by the music. Throughout his time in Toronto, Dewar hopes to expand this piece from its current 15 minutes so that the audience has more time to absorb the information, while also developing different iterations of the piece for different spaces.

"I'm planning on making the piece modular, which is to say that there will be different versions of the work depending on the resources of where it's being presented," Dewar said. "For example, a web version would use spatial audio through headphones, so that the sounds will be moving around your head. I'm also planning to add generative video, which morphs and changes based on the sound. I'll also add archival images that are connected to the story of these Mexican Americans who were repatriated to Mexico. Essentially, there'll be a web version, a gallery or museum installation version, and a live performance version with electronics, live video manipulation, and live acoustic instruments."

Although these two Fulbright experiences will be very different, Dewar says he is ecstatic to receive both in the span of a year. For him, this is not only satisfying in his career, but a sign that his work is being recognized and appreciated.

"Getting both of these awards is an honor," Dewar said. "It makes me feel like, perhaps, I'm onto something, and I have the freedom and support to explore these new ideas and approaches." ■

MAKING HER MARK

Caroline Yuk has always known she wanted to make a difference in the world.

COVID-19 brought many challenges to UA's classrooms. For Yuk, a senior, it spurred a new challenge—figuring out how to learn all that she needed to when communication was muffled by cloth face coverings and plexiglass—and an opportunity.

"I'm always thinking about how things can be better," Yuk said. "How can things improve? And what ways can they? I think I've always had this mindset of wondering why we can't change things and make them better than they were before."





My mom quit her job just to take me to speech language, pathologists, appointments, audiology. The surgery is extremely expensive. There are so many appointments. And that's something that not everyone can have or afford. When I got to Alabama, I realized that this accessibility was something I really wanted to focus on."



As a child, Yuk was interested in everything. She was a dedicated student and an avid tennis player. She and her twin sister were attached at the hip, and with four other siblings, their house in Crystal Lake, Illinois, was always filled with activity.

She was also born completely deaf, and learned how to navigate the world with cochlear implants from a young age.

After Yuk was born, her mom quit her job in order to take Yuk and her older brother Patrick, who is also deaf, to speech therapy and doctor's appointments. She went to audiology clinics in the midst of her other extracurriculars, and her sister would help her if there was something she didn't quite understand.

"I never really identified as deaf too much growing up," Yuk said. "I did well in school and in sports. But when I got involved in UA's audiology clinic, I saw how different my life could have been. My mom quit her job just to take me to speech language, pathologists, appointments, audiology. The surgery is extremely expensive. There are so many appointments. And that's something that not everyone can have or afford. When I got to Alabama, I realized that this accessibility was something I really wanted to focus on."

While participating in a research study at Indiana University, her doctor mentioned that he had a colleague at UA who worked in rural auditory health, Dr. Marcia Hay-McCutcheon. This casual conversation would go on to influence the course of Yuk's life.

When she arrived at UA, Yuk knew she wanted to study audiology, but she wasn't sure where to start. She took a few biology courses, but knew she wanted to take courses in other fields, including communicative disorders,

computer science, and biophysics, that would help further her audiology knowledge. Then she found New College, a program that allows students to create their own degrees.

In New College, Yuk decided to do a depth study in neuroscience, which would allow her to take classes in a variety of fields. Not only was she able to take those classes, but she was able to explore other unexpected interests through required core classes and seminars, like environmentalism, cultural competence, and even fly fishing.

“My core classes were some of the best classes I took during college,” said Yuk. “One of them was fly fishing, and it was awesome. When the University had to shut down because of COVID during the middle of the semester, my professor let me take the fly fishing pole home, and I fished the rest of quarantine. It was a great hobby to pick up. And I would not have done that without New College.”

Yuk didn't limit her campus involvement to New College—she got involved in everything she possibly could. She gained lab experience in Dr. Rebecca Allen's psychology lab studying art therapy intervention in patients with dementia and Dr. Jack Dunkle's biochemistry lab studying a protein that can cause antibiotic resistance. She gained hands-on experience in UA's audiology clinic, then during internships with Harvard, Johns Hopkins, and the University of Michigan. She served as the president of the Office of Undergraduate Research ambassadors and spent her weekends as a medical advocate for patients at the Tuscaloosa SAFE Center. To Yuk, her personal and educational experiences shaped her trajectory, giving her a path

towards making a difference in her community.

“In my first three years at UA, I've never really had to use accommodations because of my cochlear implants,” Yuk said. “They were there if I needed them—say, if my cochlear implants were to die in the middle of class, I would have captions available. But when COVID-19 happened, and everyone was wearing masks, and everyone was suddenly six feet away from me, it became more difficult. I felt like I couldn't take my mask off and ask ‘what are you saying?’ And I realized I was majorly struggling.”

Yuk explained that clear masks were available for faculty to use, but they were uncomfortable and fogged up easily, so many did not. Because of this, Yuk took it upon herself to research clear masks and find a solution that would work for faculty and deaf or hard of hearing students.

After researching FDA-approved clear masks, Yuk brought them to a handful of faculty members who taught deaf or hard of hearing students. These faculty members wore the masks during a class, then answered a survey about the experience. The students in these classes also had the chance to complete a survey about their experience being taught by someone wearing a clear mask. Of the 170 students surveyed, 165 said that professors and instructors should wear a clear mask if there's a deaf or hard of hearing student in the class.

Yuk presented her work at the Levitz Leadership Conference in April 2021. The conference, presented by New College and the Levitz Leadership Program, allows student

entrepreneurs, researchers, and creatives to present their ideas to a panel of local and national leaders and industry experts and receive feedback, as well as funds to grow their ideas. Yuk presented as part of the Levitz Light Bulb Awards, which provides participants with \$1,500 to further their research or develop their product.

Yuk graduated in May 2021, receiving a B.S. in interdisciplinary studies focused on neuroscience. Although she's left the Capstone for now, she plans to continue the work that was sparked when she first heard about UA's audiology clinic.

Over the next two years, Yuk will study in the United Kingdom, thanks to funding from the Marshall Scholarship, which provides aid for American students to study any discipline in the U.K. She is the third UA student to win the award, and the first in over 40 years.

While in the U.K., Yuk will pursue postgraduate degrees in neuroscience from the University of Oxford and audiology at the University College London.

“The U.K. has some of the best hearing healthcare in the world,” Yuk said. “Their hearing aids are high-quality, and it's a lot easier to receive help there than in the U.S. I'm hoping to learn how they can do that. My biggest goal is to return to the U.S. and I have some new ideas.”

After she finishes her studies in the U.K., Yuk hopes to return to the U.S. and work in rural or urban healthcare, where she can make a difference in areas that may not have the resources they need to serve their deaf or hard of hearing populations. For Yuk, this is a way she can improve her community and leave her mark on the world. ■

finding

HAPPINESS

Dr. Jacqueline Trimble's first impulse after learning to read was to write, so at the age of six, she wrote her first piece of work: a one-paragraph autobiography. Though she talks fondly of the memory now, her accomplishments assure she has much more to add.

Trimble, who earned her master's and Ph.D. at UA and serves as the chair of Alabama State University's department of languages and literatures, was one of only 35 selected as a 2021 National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellow for poetry.

"It was very much a surprise," Trimble said. "I got the call in November, and they said, 'Congratulations!' I thought, 'This has to be a joke. They've got to be punking me.'"

With the fellowship comes \$25,000, an amount Trimble hopes will allow her to take half of the summer off work to give her the time, space and atmosphere to write. Currently, she is writing a novel, a poetry collection, and working with a director to turn her poem, "The Language of Joy," into a short film, among other ventures.

Though now busy with creation, Trimble has spent a majority of her career primarily teaching. She directed Alabama State's honors program and served as department chair in American literature at Huntingdon College before serving in her current position. Everywhere she went, she used her own experience as a student to craft what she taught.

"In my formal education, there were not many people being taught who looked like me," Trimble said. "Writers of all sorts of ethnicities became a normal and prominent part



of my syllabus everywhere I taught, because they're an important part of the American fabric of literature."

Ten years ago, however, her husband could tell she was unhappy due to her lack of writing in the midst of her teaching, prompting her to apply to a writing workshop in Cape Cod. Suddenly, she was back writing poetry.

"It's really an interesting time for me, having started another career, which I consider my writing career, after 50," Trimble said. "That's the great thing about being a writer. You just keep doing it. As long as the brain is functioning, you can keep writing."

Her first poetry collection, "American Happiness," came out in 2016, after a publisher approached her at a reading and offered to publish it.

"I've been writing ever since, going to workshops and learning as much as I can," Trimble said. "Since I got my Ph.D. and not my M.F.A., I sort of made my own M.F.A. program by going to all of these retreats and workshops."

She has since explored many other forms of writing, including writing episodes for a South African television show. Her passion for television shows, what she calls the fairytales of our time, led her to ask a friend to teach her about writing scripts, and she hopes to do it again in the future.

"I'm not wedded to genre, because I think writing is writing," Trimble said. "Writing is about observation, understanding, and clarifying, and it helps me understand the world."

Trimble writes what she knows, with poems about her husband and sons ("A Woman Cohabitates with Three Men"), her mother ("The Language of Joy"), and social justice ("How to Survive as a Black Woman Everywhere in America Including the Deep South"). She describes herself as a Southern writer, fascinated with the irony and absurdity of being able to stand where Martin Luther King, Jr. did, look up and see where Jefferson Davis took his oath of office or George Wallace strategized in her hometown of Montgomery.

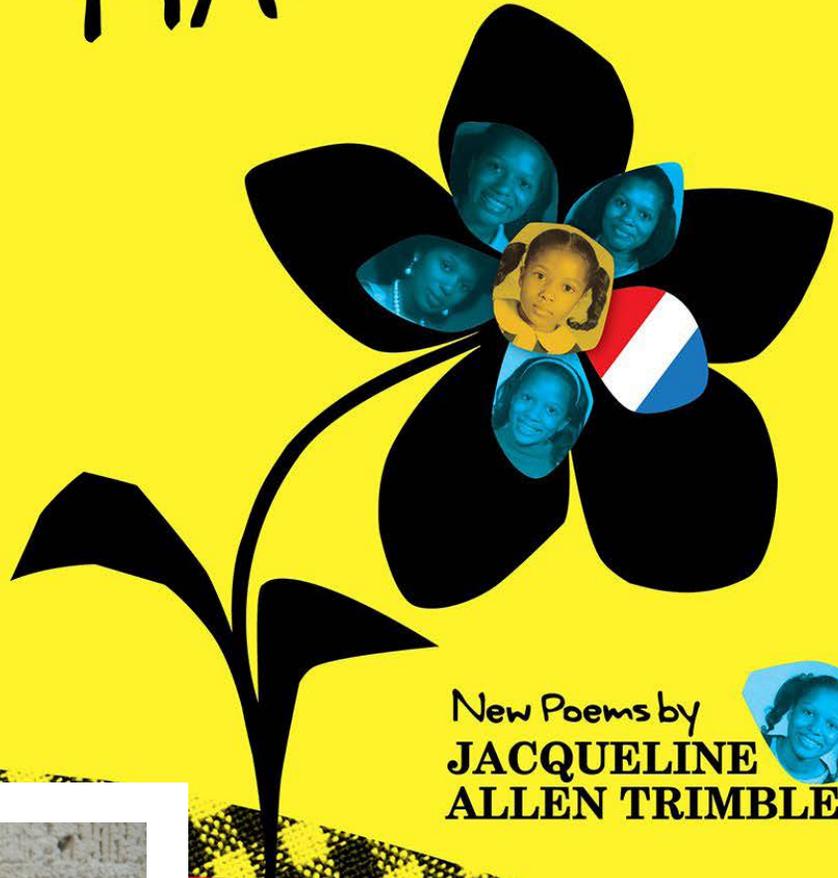
"Everything is right here together, and it always has been. I grew up on West Jefferson Avenue, and the cross street for West Jeff Davis Avenue is Rosa Parks Avenue. Where else can you live at the cross section of Jefferson Davis and Rosa Parks?" Trimble said. "To me, that's writing gold. I look out my window, and I write what I see."

While most of her colleagues are thinking about retirement, Trimble can only think about the future and all of the works she has yet to produce.

"I would like to leave a body of all kinds of work: essays, television shows, novels, books of poetry," Trimble said. "Books and stories have given me so much pleasure my entire life. They're significant in the world, because there's something about them that lasts past our lifetimes and generations. My goal is to produce those." ■

**Writing is about
observation,
understanding, and
clarifying, and it helps me
understand the world.**

AMERICAN HAPPINESS



New Poems by
**JACQUELINE
ALLEN TRIMBLE**







GOING WITH THE

Flow



Two UA professors want to involve Tuscaloosa residents with their ecological community. The medium? Art.

In the heart of Tuscaloosa County, a small stream runs through the woods. Here, frogs hop from stone to stone, insects and butterflies flutter about, and water transports fish and other river dwellers downstream. Locals spend their days on the creek's banks, swimming, hiking, and adventuring in their own backyard.

This stream is known as Hurricane Creek, a tributary of the Black Warrior River. A landmark to Tuscaloosa natives, Hurricane Creek has long been a favorite place to spend the afternoon. But it's also home to a diverse ecosystem—one that, without help from the public, could become unhealthy.

Dr. Julia Brock, an assistant professor of history, and Jamey Grimes, an assistant professor of art and art history, want to help Hurricane Creek's patrons, as well as patrons of the Black Warrior

watershed as a whole, gain a deeper understanding of the environmental issues surrounding the creek's ecosystem through their project, Flow Tuscaloosa.

Brock and Grimes, who are both fellows in the Collaborative Arts Research Initiative, or CARI, decided to collaborate after CARI directors Rebecca Salzer and Michelle Bordner saw that they both wanted to bring environmental issues to the community through an arts-based project. After meeting, they realized they had similar ideas about the execution—a lantern parade.

"Lanterns are beautiful," Grimes said. "Everybody loves a lantern. It's interesting that we can even do things like just put lights on the trees that are already there, and find a way to see them a little bit differently for just a moment. And so we want to find a way not to hijack nature



and turn it into something different, but to just get people to notice, for a moment, what they typically walk past on a regular basis.”

The lanterns will be created through Flow Tuscaloosa workshops in city and county schools and in the community, with help from the Friends of Hurricane Creek, UA’s Geography Department, the UA Map Library, and the Arts and Humanities Council of Tuscaloosa. Throughout the workshops, the lantern-makers will learn more about Hurricane Creek and the Black Warrior River watershed.

“We want to bring folks together and talk about the creek,” Brock said. “We’ll talk about the human and natural history of the creek, and the ecology of the creek. And then ideally, they’ll build lanterns that represent the health of the creek—something like a mayfly, which is an indicator species that says the creek is healthy, or an aspect of the watershed’s history.”

The lanterns will make their public debut at the parade, which will take place on the Tuscaloosa Riverwalk. Brock and Grimes hope that this will bring lantern-makers from different workshops together, connecting the community through a shared learning experience.

“We want to provide educational opportunities that are fun, and as hands-on as possible,” Grimes said. “And our guests to our workshops

would hopefully attend the parades. So the idea is that they’re going to be there not just as a visitor at a parade, but really, as an active participant. It’s all about bringing people together that typically might not actually interact as much as they would otherwise. We’re looking for ways that people can have more common ground.”

With the knowledge learned from the workshops and the sense of community garnered from the parade, Brock and Grimes hope that visitors will gain a stronger sense of pride and ownership over the Black Warrior watershed in Tuscaloosa. They also hope to bring light to environmental justice issues and initiatives in West Alabama.

“We were inspired by the Creekkeeper of Hurricane Creek, John Wathen,” Brock said. “And in some ways, we’re trying to encourage another kind of ‘keeping’—the keeping of place for the Tuscaloosa community and beyond. We’re hoping to not only render the natural environment more visible, but the historical narratives of place more visible, so we can encourage the kind of stewardship that comes with place-keeping.”

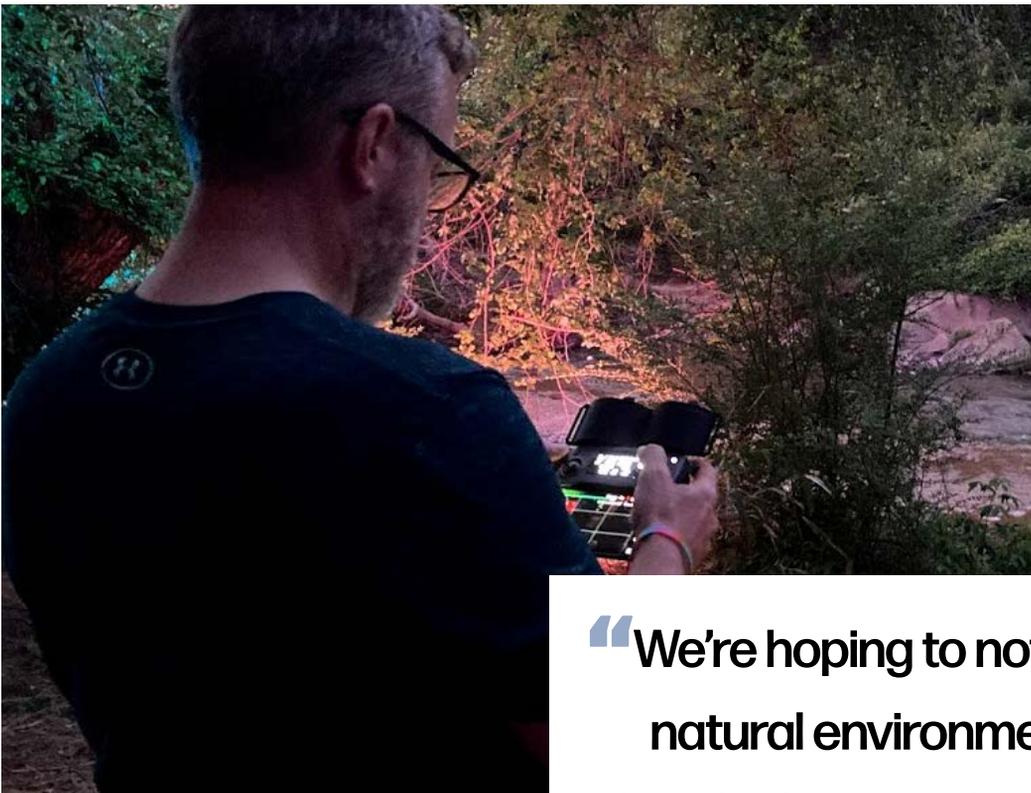
In addition to the lantern workshops and parade, Brock and Grimes are working with the Selvage Collective to create installations that represent histories of and human connections to our

waterways. Selvage, made of Teresa Bramlette Reeves, Kirstie Tepper, and Brock herself, is a curatorial collective focused on using art to reveal alternative narratives to historical events. The installations will take place at the Mildred Warner Westervelt Transportation Museum, the Paul R. Jones Museum, and the UA Gallery in the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center and will feature artists Tony Bingham, Boo Gilder, Michi Meko, Kelly Taylor Mitchell, and Hannah S. Palmer.

The installation is supported in part by an Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, which funds projects that strengthen community through arts and culture. In 2021, only 63 projects across the nation received these grants. For Brock and Grimes, the Our Town grant shows just how important this project is to preserving not only the Black Warrior watershed, but creating a community in Tuscaloosa.

The Flow Tuscaloosa workshops are set to begin in Spring 2022, with the lantern parade capping off the end of the spring semester. The installations will open in spring and summer of 2022. For more information, visit flowtuscaloosa.com. If you’d like to get involved, email Julia Brock or Jamey Grimes. ■

*First page: Hurricane Creek.
Third page: Jamey Grimes conducts a lighting test at Hurricane Creek park.*



“We’re hoping to not only render the natural environment more visible, but the historical narratives of place more visible, so we can encourage the kind of stewardship that comes with place-keeping.”

BEING THE CHANGE

When Brittany Hamner graduated from UA in May 2021, she walked across the stage prepared to take on the world. The 2020 Campbell-Portera Scholarship winner had spent the past four years learning all that she could, getting involved in multiple organizations on campus, and making memories that will last a lifetime.





Hamner, a Tuscaloosa native and first-generation college student, decided to go to UA to be close to her large, tight-knit family. UA gave her the opportunity to be there for her siblings while taking advantage of the resources, both financial and academic, a large university had to offer. Her freshman year, she decided to study psychology and biology with a concentration in neuroscience, something that had sparked her curiosity all her life.

“I’ve always been interested in the human brain and understanding behavior,” Hamner said. “I just want to figure out why people are the way they are. And then, when I got to UA, I loved biology and psychology, so it was a great experience for me to be able to study both of those.”

As a psychology major, Hamner took Biological Basis of Psychological Disorders, where she met her mentor, Dr. Andrea Glenn. This mentorship allowed Hamner to explore other options for her career that she says she wouldn’t have had before.

“The biggest piece of advice I could give would be to find a

mentor, because I didn’t realize that the professors and the people who are in administrative roles really do want to be a resource to students,” Hamner said. “They really want to help. Students should know that most faculty members really like to teach and engage with students.”

When she wasn’t studying, Hamner was involved in a variety of extracurricular activities. She served as an ambassador for the College of Arts and Sciences, spent her summers as an orientation leader, and participated in the Blackburn Institute, a civic engagement group for students on campus.

“With the Blackburn Institute, we traveled to rural areas in Alabama and learned a lot about the education system,” Hamner said. “Before I got to UA, I thought I wanted to leave Alabama after graduation. A big thing about Blackburn is ‘Be the change you want to see’ and, if there’s something you don’t like and you’re exposed to it, you have a certain obligation to be a part of the change. So when I was exposed

to some of the problems in the education system, I wanted to get more involved.”

Because she received the Campbell-Portera Scholarship, which goes to one male and one female Arts and Sciences student with exemplary academic and leadership achievements, she was able to dedicate more time to learning about the Alabama education system, as well as complete her studies in neuroscience.

After graduation, Hamner will continue her work in the Alabama education system with Teach for America. She is currently completing her master’s in education, and serves at Erwin Middle School as a seventh and eighth grade social studies teacher.

“I never saw myself as someone who wanted to get involved in community issues,” Hamner said. “But being able to get involved in Blackburn and the ambassadors on top of my studies really pushed me to do that. So because I was able to have those experiences, I found something that I love.” ■



Presidents Hall, Clark Hall, and Garland Hall at sunset.







THE RISING TIDE™

A CAMPAIGN FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA®

The College of Arts and Sciences is proud of our legacy. Our students are tomorrow's leaders—they're changemakers, innovative thinkers, and creative trendsetters with determination and curiosity. Our faculty are among the best, solving issues both globally and in their own backyards, and setting a standard of excellence among their peers and for students. We want to continue to empower them to change the world.

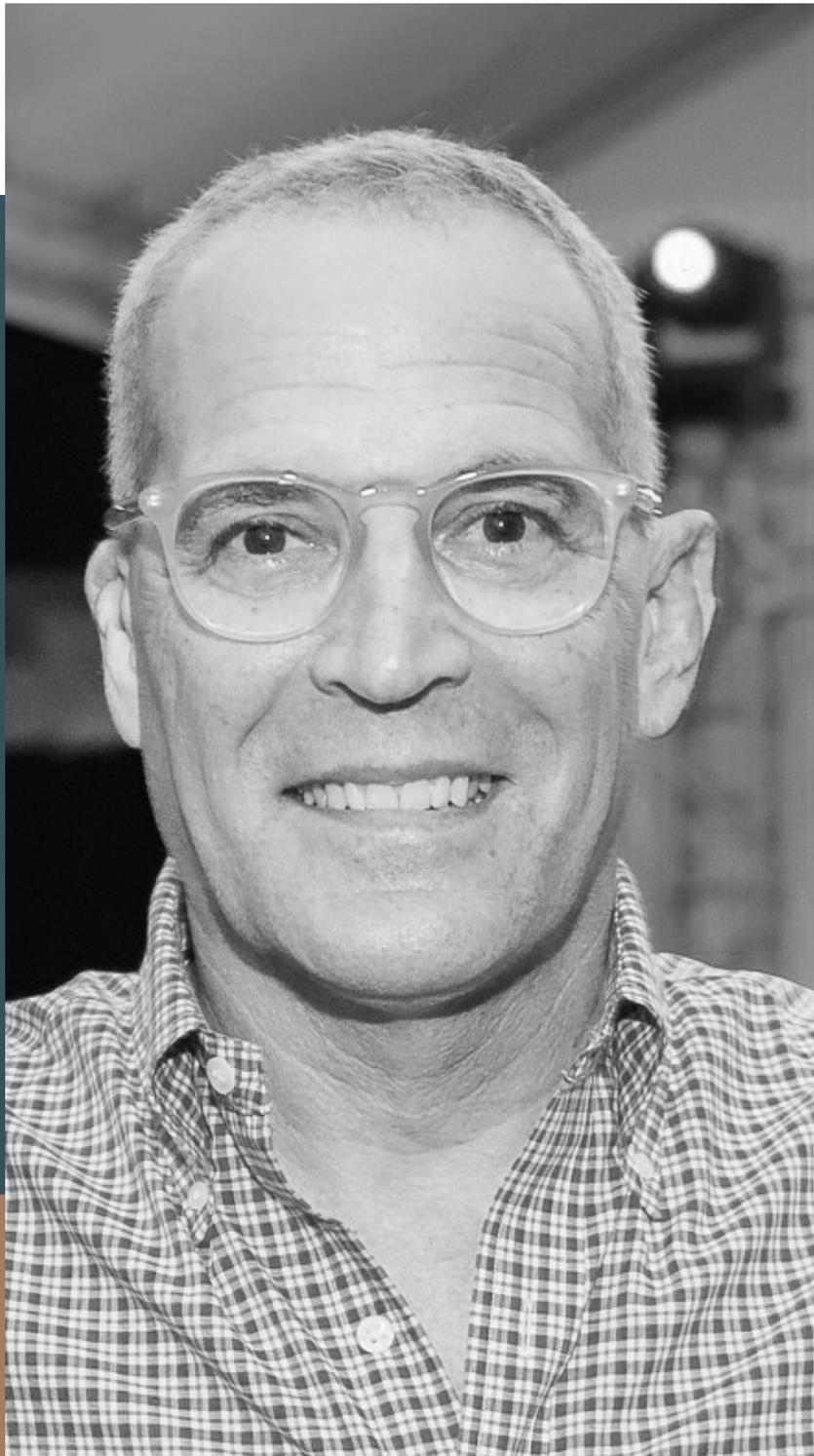
Through UA's Rising Tide Campaign, the College is seeking \$100 million to help our students and faculty on their journeys. More students will be able to explore their passions and dreams on campus without the barrier of finances. Faculty members can focus on cutting-edge research and creative activities through endowments and fellowships. Our facilities will be upgraded to further foster an environment where students and faculty alike can thrive in their academic endeavors.

Together, we can create an unfathomable impact on the lives of our campus community. Every contribution counts to enabling our students and faculty to dream bigger than we ever have before. The tide is rising—let's make a wave together! ■

For more information, visit risingtide.ua.edu

Levitetz Gives Back

“I want to help them find their
passion, like I found mine.”



When Jeffrey Levitz graduated from The University of Alabama, he left with a sense of determination, a dream, and a business he ran out of his car. Now, he returns to campus to share what he’s learned as a successful entrepreneur and philanthropist.

Levitz began his career while he was a New College student, where he sold surplus merchandise and other goods out of the trunk of his car to students and locals. This business, which he called University Marketing, sparked a love of providing resources to the people around him.

“I left UA with the ability to think on my feet because I had some business experience in the real world,” Levitz said. “I learned not only to buy and sell goods, but how to run a business. And I really enjoyed being around people, so it seemed like an inevitable next step.”

After graduating from UA, Levitz knew he wanted to continue the business he began on UA’s campus. He founded Purity Wholesale Grocers, and since then, has become a major player in the industry. But for him, this wasn’t about making money—it was about making people believe in him and his products.

“Every time you sell something, that’s another person saying ‘I believe in you,’” Levitz said. “It’s someone saying that they trust you.”

Since 1982, Levitz’s “people

first” business model has caused his business to grow. Currently, Purity Wholesale Grocers conducts business in 48 states, with 350 trucks on the road weekly. But this idea of “people first” is also reflected in Levitz’s philanthropic endeavors.

Levitz has made a point to frequently return to where it all started—UA’s campus. The entrepreneur travels from his home in Key Largo, Florida to Tuscaloosa, where he spends time with undergraduate students, giving them advice on their time at school, their passion projects, and their future careers.

“When I was young, I appreciated the mentors I had through school,” Levitz said. “If they had an extra minute, I would absorb everything they said. I believe that every young adult needs a mentor, needs someone they can ask questions and get advice. It means so much to me to listen to what they have to say, and I’m hopeful that there are a few insightful things from my experience that can help them.”

Because of his dedication to mentorship, Levitz has established several programs through New

College. The Levitz Leadership Program, established in 2018, provides scholarships, internship stipends, workshops, lectures, and innovation grants to students in New College. He has also funded several scholarships and lectures biennially to students on a variety of topics. Over the past decade, over 150 students have received aid from the Levitz family, and are proud to call themselves Levitz scholars.

“I want to help these students get the most out of their college experience,” Levitz said. “I want them to know that they don’t have to have it all figured out yet. There’s nothing wrong with that. And I want to help them find their passion, like I found mine.”

Through his foundation, the Levitz Family Foundation, Levitz is able to contribute time and money to a variety of organizations, like UA’s New College. Currently, the foundation supports over 50 organizations nationwide including Dolly’s Dream, which helps shelters fund free pitbull adoptions.

“I feel really blessed to be able to give back, both with my time and with financial support,” Levitz said. ■

A Legend's Legacy

When Carla Rountree recounts her childhood, she remembers her father's floor-to-ceiling library, filled with novels, biographies, travel guides, and historical books. Her father, Dr. Thomas Rountree, served as UA's creative writing program director from 1963 to 1971, before moving to the University of South Alabama to become chair of their English Department.

But before he began his time as a faculty member and writer, he was a master's student at UA, mentored by Hudson Strode. Strode, who began UA's creative writing program and served as chair of the department for several years, is widely regarded as one of the most prolific writers to walk the English building's halls.

"Hudson Strode was a mentor to my father," Rountree said. "They traveled and did research together, so they became very close. They were colleagues. And then eventually, when

Hudson Strode retired, my father was offered the position to take over the Creative Writing Program at Alabama."

"Strode was an extremely influential teacher who taught in the department for a long time," said Steven Trout, chair of the English Department. "He was known as a Shakespeare scholar. But he was also famous for offering creative writing courses. A large number of the students who took those creative writing courses went on and published novels and short stories. So he seemed to have this ability to enable people to get into print. Now, we have a program in Renaissance studies that bears his name that's known all over the world. So clearly, he left an impactful legacy in this department."

Growing up, Rountree says she remembers hearing stories about her father's friend, Hudson Strode. When her parents passed, she looked through her father's belongings and found books

bearing Strode's signature. These, it turns out, were gifts to her father from his mentor.

Rountree brought these books with her to her home in Washington, D.C., where she works as an engineer and opera singer. Here, she debated where the collection would go. She contacted UA, asking if they would have any use for the books.

"Books were my father's life. These books were important to him," Rountree said. "Since I knew that Hudson Strode was a large part of the University's history, I felt like they would be much more useful here."

The books, which included signed first edition copies of many of Strode's works, will be stored in the English Department's climate-controlled library in English Hall. Rountree and Trout hope that these books will allow current students to enjoy the legacies of both Strode and Dr. Thomas Rountree. ■

Carla Rountree and English Department chair Steven Trout unpack the books Hudson Strode left Rountree's father, Dr. Thomas Rountree.



Extending a Helping Hand

For Brand Elverston, attending The University of Alabama was the chance of a lifetime. Now, he wants to help other students have that chance through the Brand L. Elverston Endowed Eminent Scholarship in Criminal Justice.

“My biggest desire is to help a student who wants to go to college, but maybe can’t afford it,” Elverston said. “I want to help the Brand Elverston of 2021.”

Elverston graduated from UA in 1983, after transferring to the school before his junior year. He was a member of the ROTC, and helped form the Criminal Justice Student Association. His mother, who raised Elverston and his brother as a single parent, encouraged him in every way possible. Elverston says that his experience at UA and his mother’s support helped shape him into the person he is today.

“To this day, those two and a half years when I was a transfer student really changed who I am,” Elverston said. “It was an incredibly positive experience.”

After graduating, Elverston served in the United States Army as a Field Artillery officer until 1995, when he took a position with Walmart’s operations management. In 2003, Brand was recalled to active duty, assigned to Afghanistan as part of Operation Enduring Freedom. After he returned to the States, he continued his role at Walmart, eventually becoming the Director of Asset Protection Strategic Initiatives for the corporation. When he retired

in 2017, he became a business consultant and a self-described “serial mentor.”

“I have a real deep-seated desire to pay it forward,” Elverston said. “I want to tell students that I was them 40 years ago, I was in the same chair that they’re in now, and I didn’t have everything figured out. I had no plan. But with a good moral foundation and the ability to do what’s right, chances are it’s going to work out just fine.”

Elverston “pays it forward” by both visiting campus to meet with

students and funding a scholarship to help students in the major from which he graduated. He also mentors students and professionals all over the world through his book, *Proclivity: It’s more intuitive than you think, resist making it hard*. The book, released in June of 2021, has sold hundreds of copies all over the world and explores how Elverston’s life experiences shaped his worldview, motivations, and business knowledge. ■



My biggest desire is to help a student who wants to go to college, but maybe can’t afford it. I want to help the Brand Elverston of 2021.

Class Notes

1950s

Jeannine Roberts Sizemore (Class of '54, journalism) recently retired from Birmingham news station WAPI. She is also a retired teacher. Although she is retired, she is still a world traveler.

1960s

Dr. Mack Welford (Class of '62, biology) passed away in September 2021. After graduating from UA, he received his master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Virginia, and worked as a professor of education at Roanoke College for 32 years before retiring in 2002. Welford was well-known for his giving heart and his immense level of volunteering in his community. He is survived by his wife of 56 years, Nettie Alice (Huffman) (Class of '65, home economics education), and his daughters Beth Poff, Julie Greenhill, and Dr. Catherine Varney (Class of '99, athletic training).

Joseph W. Lewis, Jr., M.D. (Class of '66, M.D.) published "Amazing Alabama: A Potpourri of Fascinating Facts, Tall Tales, and Storied Stories" in 2020. This book is available at authorhouse.com and amazon.com.

Joaquin Lubkowitz (Class of '68, chemistry) received the Sydney Andrews Scroll of Achievement from ASTM International for contributing in the development of ASTM methods.

Thomas L. Atkins (Class of '69, political science) recently retired as a lawyer. During his retirement, he works part-time as a testing center proctor at Grayson College in Denison, Texas. He is married to Beverly Davis Atkins.

1970s

Ernie Hornsby (Class of '70, history) serves as chairman of the Citizens Supervisory Committee, which oversees the Personnel Board of the city of Dothan. He and his wife, Marianne, have three daughters and seven granddaughters, and live in Dothan, Alabama.

Dr. Stephanie Kondy (Class of '75, psychology) recently retired.

Loring S. Jones, III (Class of '76, political science) is an attorney at Jones and Associates in Birmingham, Alabama. Loring V was born on July 24, 2021.

Remembering Bobby Wilson

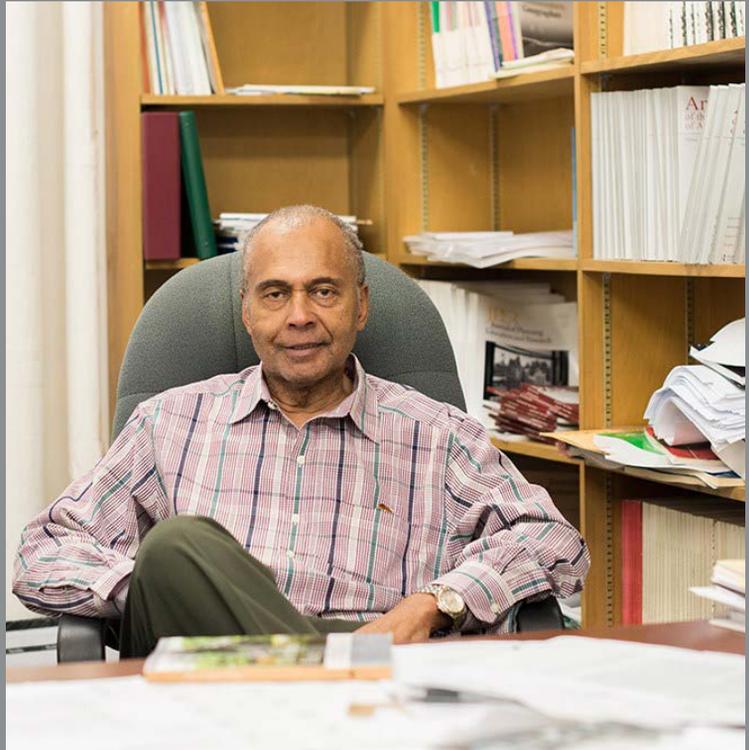
Dr. Bobby Wilson, a former professor and interim chair in the Department of Geography in the College of Arts and Sciences, passed away on August 25, 2021.

Wilson was raised on a farm in Warrenton, North Carolina. He attended North Carolina Central University, a historically Black college, before completing his Ph.D. at Clark University. In 1974, Wilson received a position at The University of Alabama at Birmingham, where he taught until moving to Tuscaloosa in 2002. The American Association of Geographers awarded Wilson the Presidential Achievement Award in 2012, as well as the Lifetime Achievement Award and Rose Award for Anti-Racism Research in 2015 from for his decades-long career in anti-racist scholarship in geography and commitment to mentorship.

Wilson's work focused on the economical, political, and social transformations of Black communities from the Civil Rights Movement to present day. Wilson published two major works: *America's Johannesburg: Industrialization and Racial Transformation in Birmingham* and *Race and Place in Birmingham: The Civil Rights and Neighborhood Movement*, both published in 2000.

"Race has a geographical dimension," Wilson said in an interview with the Department of Geography in 2015. "Space is often used to define social patterns, to make a statement, to exhibit power. There are so many ways in which space is used."

Wilson was often described as a kind and generous person who looked out for his students and colleagues. He will be dearly missed by the faculty and students in the College, as well as all who knew him. ■



Edward Journey (Class of '77, political science; Master of Fine Arts '88, theatre) retired from Alabama A&M University in 2020 after 18 years teaching performance classes in Communications Media. Prior to that, he worked professionally in regional theatres across the U.S. Now living back "home" in Birmingham, he writes for various publications, is a regular reviewer for Alabama Writers' Forum, and shares essays on his online journal, "Professional Southerner."

1990s

Robert Hill (Class of '96, criminal justice) lives on Watts Bar Lake in Spring City, TN. He is the Senior Vice President of TCG, LLC., which is involved in technology consulting and sales through 5,500 partners nationwide. Robert won the company's "Top Producer Award" six years in a row. He enjoys hunting, boating, international travel, hiking, and camping. Robert is married to Sheri Hill and has one son, Robbie

Hill (12). He actively supports "Bama" football.

John C. Brown (Class of '99, English): As a goal for over a decade, John was able to add Northeast Alabama's first film office in the Gadsden-Etowah Film Group. GEFO is the state of Alabama's primary film office for the area. They exist to pinpoint location scouts to choose Gadsden for large-budget projects.



2000s

Dr. Ron Reynolds (Class of '01, Doctor of Public Administration) recently retired as the Dean of the West Campus of the Defense Security Cooperation University at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio. He served with the university, and its predecessor organizations (Defense Institute of Security Assistance Management and Defense Institute of Security Cooperation Studies as Commandant of the Institute) for over 19 years. This after serving in the United States Air Force for over 25 years. During his time in leadership at the university, he led in the growth of faculty/staff from 55 to 110 in educating a grand total of over 168,000 students including over 18,000 U.S. industry and 31,000 international partners in addition to U.S. Department of Defense and other U.S. government personnel. The university is responsible for training personnel in the skills needed to carry out U.S. Security Cooperation programs. His retirement culminates a career of over 45 years of total government service, with plans for continuing research in the areas of International Affairs/Security Cooperation Programs.

Dr. Wanfa Zhang (Class of '09, Ph.D., political science) and **Dr. Feng Sun** (Class of '09, Ph.D., political science) published *Why Communist China isn't Collapsing: The CCP's Battle for Survival and State-Society Dynamics in the Post-Reform Era* in November 2019. Dr. Wanfa Zhang is currently an associate professor of Political Science at Florida Institute of Technology and Dr. Feng Sun is an associate professor of Political Science at Troy University.

Major Ty Brackin (Class of '09, history) was promoted to Major and transferred to the United States Space Force as an active-duty member on July 1, 2021. He applied and was accepted as a part of the first group of transferees into the new service. In addition to that, he and his wife adopted a baby girl, Nora Ray Brackin, who was born on June 29.

2010s

Tiffany Taylor (Class of '10, English) was nominated for a 2021 International ATHENA Young Professional Award through Rutherford Cable of Middle Tennessee. The ATHENA Award is given annually to a professional female leader who has demonstrated significant achievements in business, community service and the professional advancement of women. Tiffany was recognized for her leadership in the community and as a communications manager for the American Red Cross at the Rutherford ATHENA Luncheon and Award Ceremony June 3, 2021 in Murfreesboro, Tennessee.

Ebonē Johnson (Class of '16, criminal justice) graduated from UA in 2016 after first enrolling in 2008, but withdrawing to join the Alabama Army National Guard as an intelligence analyst. A week after graduating, she accepted a position in Washington, D.C. supporting the Federal Bureau of Investigation Counterterrorism Division. A year after graduating, she earned an Associate of Applied Science in Intelligence Operations. Since moving to the D.C. area, she has supported other agencies within the Intelligence Community such as the Department of Homeland Security, the Defense Intelligence



Agency, the Missile Defense Agency, and the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency. Last fall, she accepted a federal position as a cartographer on the Tactical Ocean Data team in the Maritime Safety Office (an office created after the sinking of the Titanic) at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency, where she assists in the updates for oceanic navigational data. In December, she earned her Master of Science in Intelligence Studies with a concentration in Strategic Intelligence. In May, she launched her first business, a financial firm.

CPT. Alec M. Maglione (Class of '16, biological sciences) graduated with his master's in global health from the Eck Institute for Global Health at Notre Dame University in 2017. He joined the U.S. Army, and received the Health Professions Scholarship to attend medical school at the University of Missouri, where he graduated in May 2021. Currently, he is part of the U.S. Army Medical Corps and will be serving in the Emergency Medicine Residency program at Madigan Army Medical Center in Fort Lewis Tacoma, Washington.

Dr. Samuel Tucker (Class of '17, English and biological sciences) graduated from North Carolina State University College of Veterinary Medicine with his Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM). During his clinical year, he was awarded with excellence in anesthesia and invertebrate medicine. Following graduation, he will serve as a captain in the U.S. Army Veterinary Corps, and begin his one-year internship at Fort Bragg, NC.

Mitchel Maglione (Class of '18, criminal justice) graduated from the St. Louis University School of Law in May 2021. Currently, he is an associate at the Rynearson, Suess, Schnurbusch & Champion law firm, St. Louis, Missouri.

2020s

Will Bridges (Class of '20, geography) is working as a Regional Planner for the Southeast Alabama Regional Planning and Development Commission. He is also working on his master's degree in Geospatial Science from the University of North Alabama.

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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