

WAKEFOREST

MAGAZINE

SUMMER 2025





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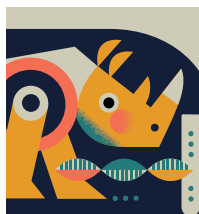


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WAKEFOREST

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ON THE COVER

Illustration by Jessica Hische

FROM *The* PRESIDENT

CREATIVITY IS IN HUMANITY'S NATURE. From the earliest points of our lives, we smear paint, sing made-up songs, break things apart and put them back together. I remember so clearly the creative *forces* that my daughters experienced in their early years and how I got to watch their imaginative natures flourish into interests and aptitudes, then callings and careers.

I would argue that creativity is in higher education's nature, too. I recognize that "creative" may not be the first word that comes to mind for much of what we associate with colleges and universities. But in every seminar, lab, residence hall and committee meeting — from first year students to the University Board of Trustees — new ideas, new approaches, new solutions and new relationships are brought into being. Every interaction where

creativity is fostered — or, rather, where our natural creativity is called upon to seize an opportunity — is deeply embedded in our relational, whole person-centered community of learning. And it makes Wake Forest exceptional.

That is why it is critically important that we in higher education celebrate creativity — that we embrace it as central to our purpose. We celebrate creativity in the arts and humanities, where creative expression and analysis

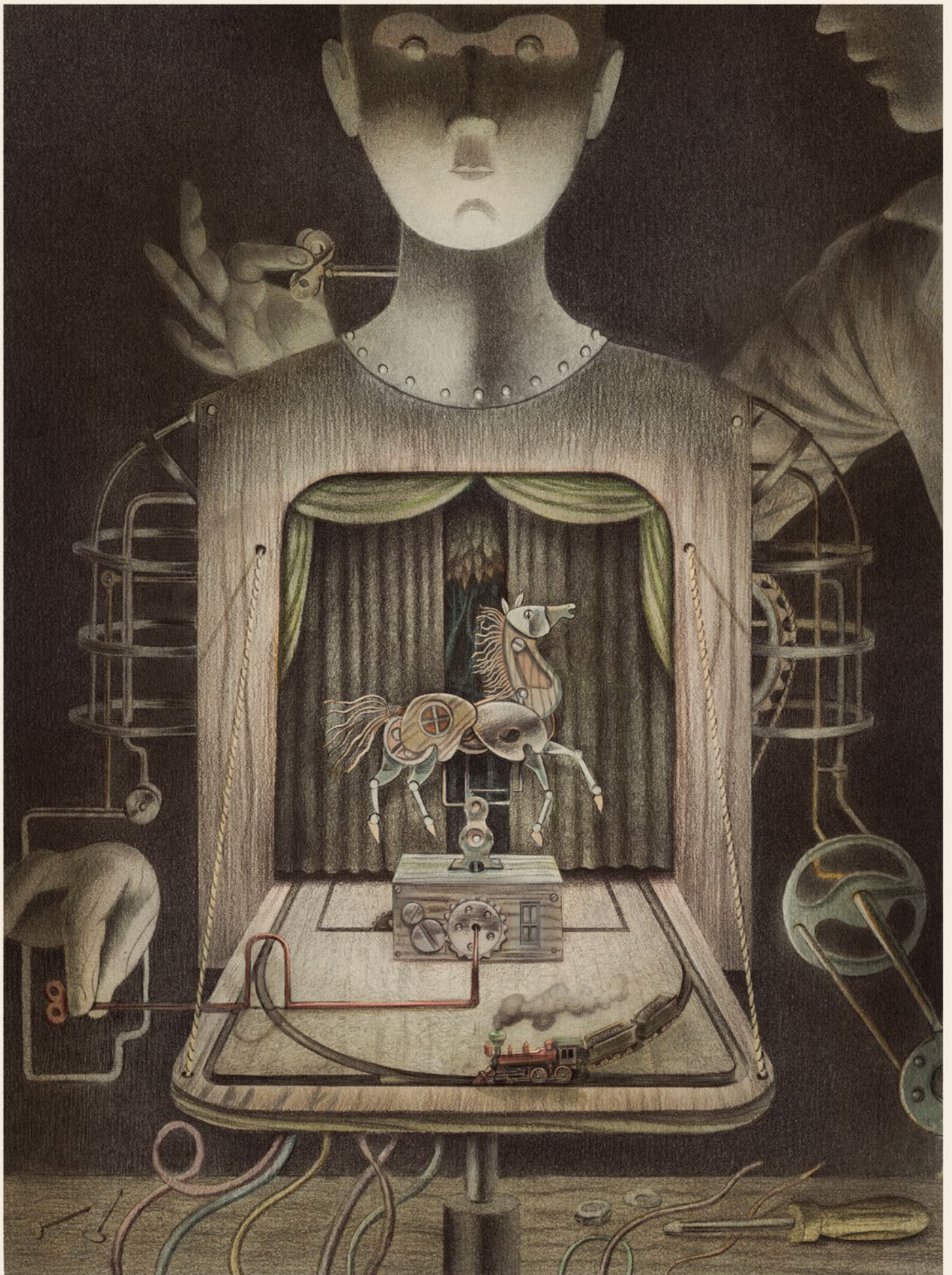


of meaning is front and center. We celebrate it in mathematics, sciences, business and technologies, where the drive to discover — to break apart and rebuild, to define and redefine, to unlock and uncover — leads us to solutions and strategies that even 10 years ago we could not have imagined.

But at Wake Forest, we do imagine! We harness that imagination, that tangible Demon Deacon *drive*, and we channel it for good. At Wake Forest, I see creativity as imagination in action. And the more opportunities for collaboration, to be resourceful and put our talents and imaginations to work, the more vibrant and impactful our community of learners will be.

This issue of Wake Forest Magazine shares the alumni stories of Nashville singer-songwriters, a North Carolina writer and a Brooklyn DJ. Faculty also share how creativity fuels their research and teaching in art, entrepreneurship, computer science and communication. Creativity is a powerful foundation of the Wake Forest community. Read on to see for yourself.

Sincerely,
Susan R. Wentle, Ph.D.



THE ALCHEMY OF CREATIVITY

**Everyone creates — but to
what end?**

BY ED SOUTHERN ('94)

Illustrations by Armando Vêze

I HAVE

had the good fortune not only to make a career with books — as a bookseller, publisher, author and director of a literary arts nonprofit — but to get to stay in North Carolina to do it.

In that career I've known and worked with enough creative people that I can say this with confidence: There's no such thing as "creative people."

There's only people.

Everyone creates, at least a little bit. They make up stories or jokes, or add new twists to old ones; they whip up recipes, or add spices to old ones; they come up with technologies or processes never tried before, or improvements to

those that already exist. Everyone really does have a book in them, after all.

That doesn't mean their book is any good. That doesn't mean their ideas are at all feasible or practical or beneficial. That doesn't mean that their recipes won't taste like boiled shoes, or that their jokes would make anyone laugh, or that their stories keep anyone's attention. That doesn't mean they'll have the opportunities and the resilience and the weird alchemy of arrogance and insecurity to turn their creativity into business plans, their recipes into restaurants, their stories into books or movies.

They created something, though, something that existed in the world even if no one else knew about it. Everyone creates: Or, to be more precise (professors will read this, after all), no one "creates." We combine; we join the elements at hand in ways they haven't been before, or in a long time, or in quite the same way. We "increase the variety of the created world rather than reduce it," the propensity to which is how author and critic Clive James defined the creative impulse.

I can say this with confidence, too: Creativity is not, in and of itself, a moral good. Someone created OxyContin and its marketing plan. Someone had the bright idea to blow the tops off mountains to get to the coal. Someone created subprime mortgages. Someone created cable news and social media, and no matter how much I enjoy the information and connection, I'm not convinced those are net gains to anyone but their shareholders. "Creativity" is not inherently Pro Humanitate.

Neither, for that matter, is a Wake Forest degree.

We hate to admit it, but of all the Demon Deacons who have made contributions in creative fields, all the poets and journalists and scholars

“Everyone creates, at least a little bit. They make up stories or jokes, or add new twists to old ones; they whip up recipes, or add spices to old ones; ...”

nurtured by Mother, So Dear, none have had as much popular success or cultural impact as Thomas Dixon Jr. (1883). Dixon wrote a trilogy of novels and adapted two into a stage play that toured the country to sold-out crowds, despite being banned in several cities. The play became the basis for director D. W. Griffith’s “The Birth of a Nation,” the film that revolutionized the movie business, turning lowbrow entertainment into an art form.

Dixon’s novels and play also were clumsy, witless, racist pastiches that refined and popularized the South’s noxious “Lost Cause” mythology. They introduced the idea of cross burning, and the play’s performances led directly to at least one lynching. Dixon’s old friend from Johns Hopkins University, President Woodrow Wilson, screened “The Birth of a Nation” at the White House, after segregating federal civil service departments that had been integrated — and working just fine — for decades. “The Birth of a Nation” helped revive the Ku Klux Klan, killing thousands, terrorizing millions.

I’m willing to bet Dixon would have said — with a straight face and pure heart, without qualm or hesitation —

that he wrote every word pro humanitate, but his words, his creativity, damaged the nation in ways we have yet to repair.

We may never finish those repairs. That, too, is something those of us from “Work Forest,” overachievers and planners that we tend to be, hate to admit: We might never reach the goal, cross the finish line, win the prize. We might have to settle for the work itself, the act of creation, the small and incomplete contribution to the “created world.”

Robert Gipe (’85) added his own pen-and-ink drawings to the words of “Trampoline,” “Weedeater” and “Pop,”

his “illustrated novels,” a format that sometimes softens and sometimes sharpens but always deepens the reader’s experience of his stories of life in the coal country of eastern Kentucky.

Gipe has spent most of his adult life there, since graduating summa cum laude from Wake Forest. Those mountains have fed not only his novels but the 10 plays he has helped produce through Higher Ground, the community performance project he founded in 2003.

“We write plays and put them on. We draw from oral histories we collect. We hire all kinds of professional theater



artists to help us look our best,” Gipe says. “All kinds of people get involved. We’ve had coal miners and outlaws and lawyers and students and whole families. Significant LGBTQ+ participation, African American participation. People of all ages. Income brackets. What they get out of it varies, as you might imagine. We try and keep it fun, but deal with issues of import to the community. It is a pretty good artistic outlet for people who don’t have the luxury to pursue the arts as a career.”

Gipe says, “I like creating stuff that leans towards art with people who don’t consider themselves artists. Telling stories and making music are nice entry points.”

Dhonielle Clayton (’05) took elements of mythology, the history and culture of New Orleans and its Creole community, and the contemporary

commodification of beauty, and spun them into the novel “The Belles” and its two sequels.

Finding that she had more story ideas than one person could write — and that too many writers from marginalized communities had stories they could not get published — she founded Cake Creative and its “edgier sibling” Electric Postcard Entertainment, which develop inclusive and appealing stories and then package that intellectual property across media, from publishing to film or TV producers, seeking to “ensure the next generation of readers can find themselves on the shelves and in story,” according to Cake’s website.



*“Like dandelions, it will take seed
and root though covered by concrete
(or algorithms) and bloom through
the smallest sliver of a crack. Like
dandelions, even the humblest,
clumsiest act of creativity offers
delight if we want it, nourishment
if we need it, ...”*

In 2023, The New York Times called Clayton “a former librarian whose hyperactive imagination has spawned a prolific factory for intellectual property. Though her name doesn’t always appear on the covers of the books she conceives, she has quietly become an influential power broker in the book world.”

She also serves on the board of directors of We Need Diverse Books, a nonprofit “that advocates essential changes in the publishing industry to produce and promote literature that reflects and honors the lives of all young people.”

Megan Mayhew Bergman (’02) has used fiction, creative nonfiction and journalism to face the climate crisis. The author of a novel and two collections of short stories, she also has

written articles and essays for The New Yorker, The Atlantic, Harper’s Bazaar and other publications, including The Guardian’s recurring column “Climate Changed,” describing for a global audience the effects of the climate crisis on the American South.

In addition to writing, she founded the nonprofit Open Field “to engage with the general public on outdoor storytelling, predominantly as it relates to climate.” Open Field offers workshops and resources to help people tell their stories of climate change in ways that will resonate with people who don’t consider themselves environmentalists.

“I think the environmental sphere has traditionally looked and sounded a different way,” she says, “and created elitist and self-righteous energy that makes it difficult for the general public

to feel a sense of belonging in climate conversations. I believe everyone has a story to tell about their connection to place, and about the ways environmental degradation affects them. I want to open up these conversations so that more people feel a part of the environmental movement and conversations.”

She also runs a consulting firm called GreenStory with a partner that helps environmental NGOs and cleantech firms “better tell the story of what they do.”

“It’s honestly brought me a lot of hope,” she says, “digging into the good work in the world.”

I can say this with confidence, last of all: Nobody can kill creativity-as-process, no matter how hard they try. Like dandelions, it will take seed and root though covered by concrete (or algorithms) and bloom through the smallest sliver of a crack. Like dandelions, even the humblest, clumsiest act of creativity offers delight if we want it, nourishment if we need it, if nothing finer and more sustaining can be found.

But should it have to?

“I think making things, creating something new, reminds us that we do have some agency in this life,” Gipe says. “It reminds us that most everything around us was made, and thus could be remade. And if you kind of live by that, it gives you some hope that things could be better. Creativity and hope are, if not the same thing, at least cousins.”

Ed Southern (’94) is the author of “Fight Songs: A Story of Love and Sports in a Complicated South” and the executive director of the North Carolina Writers’ Network. In 2015, he won the Fortner Award for service to the literary arts in North Carolina. He lives in Winston-Salem.

THE NASHVILLE

BY
KELLY GREENE ('91)

NETWORK



SONGWRITERS WHO STUDIED
AT WAKE FOREST HAVE FOUND
INSPIRATION IN MUSIC CITY — AND
THEY'RE CRANKING OUT THE HITS.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARY CRAVEN (HINES) DAWKINS ('03)



NASHVILLE, Tennessee

ACROSS THE STREET

Lower Broadway, below, is one of many spots where you can hear live music just about any time of the day or night in Nashville. Opposite page: A number of Wake Foresters are making names for themselves as songwriters here, including, from left, Andy Albert ('08), Dan Segall ('15), Hannah Hobbs Wolf ('14), Mark Socoloski ('22), Lauren Hobbs Yakopin ('14) and Charlie Januszewski ('17).

from a mural urging passersby to “Make Music Not War,” several flannel-clad songwriters in their 20s and 30s swap news about upcoming releases and tours over burgers and bourbon.

They are quick to reminisce about the outlandish dollar-stretching tactics they used when they first came to town — inviting themselves to Hampton Inn breakfast buffets, signing up for pizza-chain focus groups. They moved here with a goal of avoiding full-time jobs so they could stay ready for writing sessions at the music publishers lining Nashville’s Music Row.

Everyone around the long table at Burger Up, a popular gathering spot in the buzzy 12 South neighborhood, has two places in common: Wake Forest and Nashville. It turns out that Dan Harrison Segall ('15) and Andy Albert ('08), who was a few credits shy of graduating when he left school to go on tour with his college band, were nearly neighbors when Segall came to town. They rented ramshackle houses on the same block, missing each other by just a few months. A few members of this crew

have friendships dating back to essay writing and a cappella rehearsals on the Reynolda campus.

Now they have found one another in Nashville, where they congregate over drinks, occasionally write together — and, one night every February, host an all-Demon Deacon showcase at The Listening Room Cafe, a local songwriters’ venue.

Sharing that billing with Albert and Segall, who performs as Dan Harrison, are Hannah Hobbs Wolf ('14) and Lauren Hobbs Yakopin ('14), better known as The Hobbs Sisters; and Mark Socoloski ('22), now touring as Mark Taylor. Charlie Januszewski ('17), or Charlie Brennan to Americana fans, is a late-breaking addition to the Nashville group, lured here by Nicolette McCann ('17), an up-and-coming artist manager.





EVEN



BEFORE

graduation, Taylor had Nashville in his sights, making one-day trips to write and meet with mentors — including Albert and McCann. The rest of these songsmiths spread far and wide after leaving Wake Forest, from New York to Tokyo. Yet one by one, they found their way to Music City, reeled in by the community of like-minded artists.

Amy Kurland, founder of The Bluebird Cafe, world renowned as the go-to venue for singer-songwriters, once observed in an interview with The Legacy Lab: “Songwriters tend to be people from out of town — nomadic people who just moved to Nashville. They’re really looking for a place they can connect to and feel at home.”

As Wake Forest singer-songwriters know, those connections can make all the difference in this creative field. “Until you get here, you don’t know what you’re missing,” Harrison says. “The thing Nashville’s big on is writing together. A bunch of buddies will come to my house for a session, and you’re in a room together, and there will just be a sense of something there, like a story. It’s a creative impulse.”

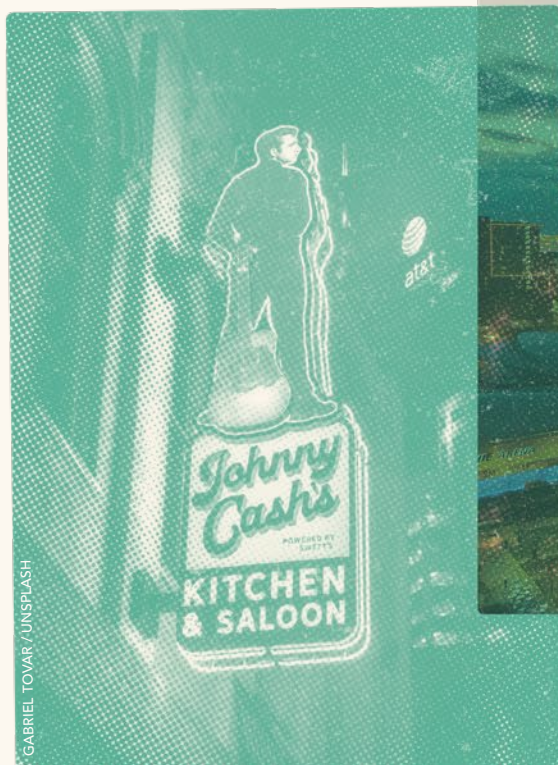
Albert agrees: “You just can’t do this anywhere else.”

What sets this town apart, they say, is the deep bench of local talent these writers have come to know as collaborators and friends. They also appreciate the way the music industry in Nashville provides equal credit —and payment — to everyone involved in creating a hit. (That’s in contrast to the way they’ve seen it work in Los Angeles and New York.) Plus, it’s still a thrill to bump into role models and mentors, whether it’s at Publix or the legendary Bluebird. (Watch closely, and you’ll probably notice songwriters in the aisle typing material for future lyrics into their phones.)



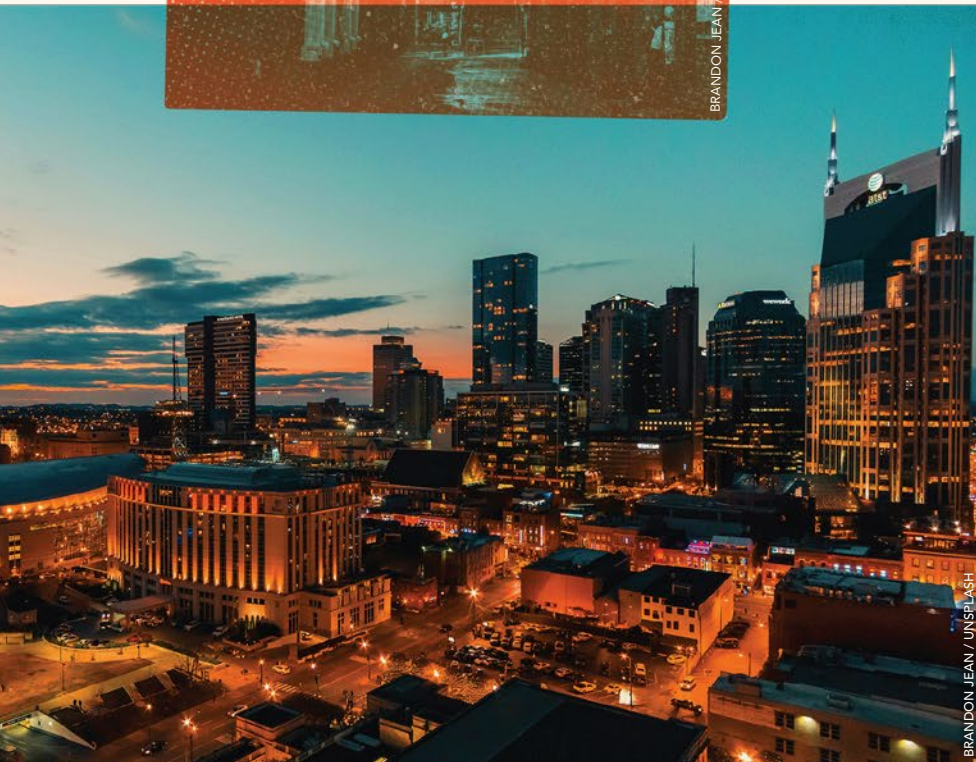
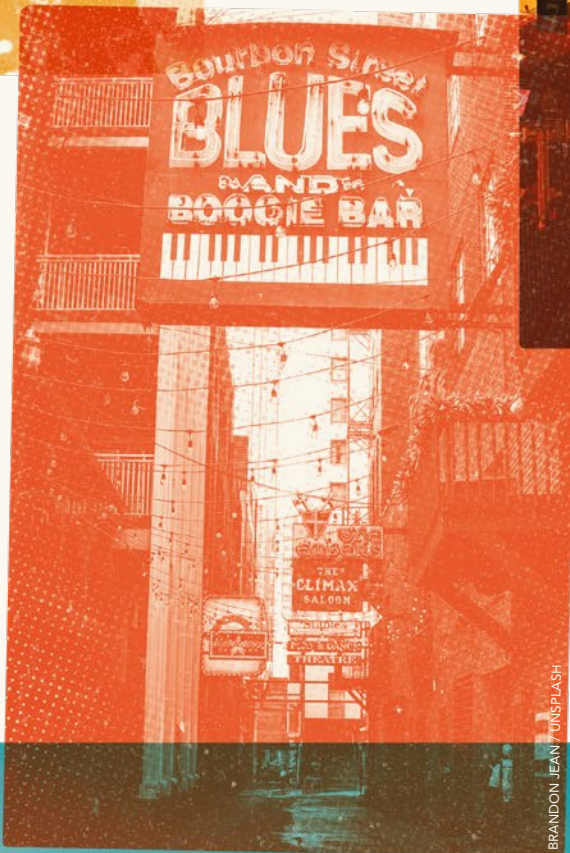
Ryman Auditorium, here and at right, was the original home of the Grand Ole Opry.

YURI STUPEN / UNSPLASH



GABRIEL TOVAR / UNSPLASH





They always have a place to go to hear live music, from downtown's honky-tonks to the Ryman Auditorium (original home of the Grand Ole Opry) to strip-mall spots hosting songwriter showcases. The Wake Forest minstrels love the city for the vibrancy that fuels their creativity while still feeling friendly and livable. Music City loves them back.

"Songwriters are the heart of Nashville," says Mary Craven (Hines) Dawkins ('03), a professional photographer who has made her home here (and whose photos grace these pages).

The city's songwriting roots go back at least a century to 1925, when far-reaching radio station WSM started a show that became the "Grand Ole Opry," igniting passion for country music across the United States. In 1942, show host Roy Acuff and songwriter Fred Rose set up the city's first music publishing company on what became Music Row. A record-pressing company (still operating today) and recording studios soon followed. Songwriters crowded into the neighborhood's Victorian houses, with many gingerbreads eventually making way for sleeker mid-century music studios and offices.

Today, songwriters here find special value in professional programs designed to open doors and provide visibility,

The first Demon Deacon
showcase at Nashville's
The Listening Room Cafe,
in 2023



along with myriad venues where these Wake Foresters love to test their latest work on seasoned, appreciative audiences.

"It's not unusual to see a cluster like this from one school," says Bart Herbison, executive director of the Nashville Songwriters Association International. "Songwriters come here because this is their last creative community."

And the draw goes beyond music. In 2024, 86 people a day moved here, making it the country's 10th fastest growing metro area with a total population of 1.3 million, according to Exploding Topics, a census-data cruncher. Neighborhoods around downtown are gentrifying, and high-rise condos are pushing upward to accommodate workers at the corporate headquarters of Bridgestone Americas Inc., Nissan USA and other well-known companies around the metro area. The skyline is filled with cranes; construction detours are the norm.

Tourism is breaking records, with nearly 17 million visitors coming to town in 2023. Busloads of bachelorette par-

tygoers loop lower Broadway's bars at all hours of the day and night. The Country Music Hall of Fame doubled its size a decade ago. Gibson, the iconic guitar maker, has opened an 8,000-square-foot flagship store just a few blocks away.

★ DESPITE ★

the city's growth and music tourism, Herbison at the songwriters' association notes a downside: Industry headwinds are making it tougher to sustain a long-term career as a songwriter. Increasingly, performing artists want a hand in their songwriting, along with a cut of the profits, making everyone's piece of the pie a bit smaller. Meanwhile, publishing houses, hurt over time by the switch to digital



music and streaming, have slashed the number of songwriters they offer contracts, making the profession increasingly freelance and fickle.

“Instead of signing dozens of writers, even the biggest publisher in town will sign a handful,” Herbison says. “You’ve either got to be a chameleon and write from a big artist’s mentality, or if you’re the artist trying to make it on your own, your biggest challenge may not be writing the song. It may be cutting through the white noise of social media. You’ve got to find your audience.”

The challenges play out in the younger Wake Foresters’ experiences: Taylor is on the road roughly 200 days a year. The Hobbs Sisters pitch in at their family’s property management company. Harrison DJs weddings and writes for hire to fund his own work.

Still, these Nashville Deacs are finding a way to spend the bulk of their days creating songs, whether they’re performing their own work — or writing No. 1 hits for Grammy winners.



★ ★ ★ ★ THE UP-AND-COMER ★ ★ ★ ★

DAN HARRISON SEGALL ('15)

ARTIST NAME

DAN HARRISON



HARRISON HAS PLAYED guitar since middle school in suburban Philadelphia, but when he came to Wake Forest, he was focused on running track. That is, until he found himself driving around with first-year friends in a pickup truck — listening to country music. And when his girlfriend, who booked acts for the Student Union, introduced him to the music of Eric Church and took him to a Brad Paisley concert, Harrison was completely hooked on the idea of country-music songwriting.

He had thought about writing his own tunes in the past, but he hadn't felt comfortable with the typical rock and hip-hop themes of fast cars, partying and bling. But when Harrison started listening to country, "I realized that you could write about anything," he says.

His songwriting aspirations simmered on the backburner while he studied philosophy, Spanish and film studies at Wake Forest. After graduation, he headed home to Philly, working an office job and considering law school seriously enough to take the LSAT twice.

But on a trip to see an old roommate who had moved to Nashville, he felt such a strong pull that "it was basically two-and-a-half years of me figuring out how to get here," he says.

In 2018, Harrison made the move, waiting tables at The Listening Room so he could keep his days open for co-writing sessions with other songwriters,



sometimes packing in three a day. “When you’re early on, and you’re figuring out the craft, you’ve got to write like crazy. But you can drain yourself pretty quickly,” he says. “I finally decided I’d rather write fewer great songs than more OK songs.”

He draws inspiration from being a relative outsider: a California-born, Philadelphia-raised kid who fell in love with the South and country music. Some of his recent releases chronicle his pursuit of the songwriting dream: “I Go To Church” references his admiration of country star Church, the big motivation for his move. Then there’s “Traded for a Truck,” about a teenager who drives a hand-me-down “little foreign four-door”

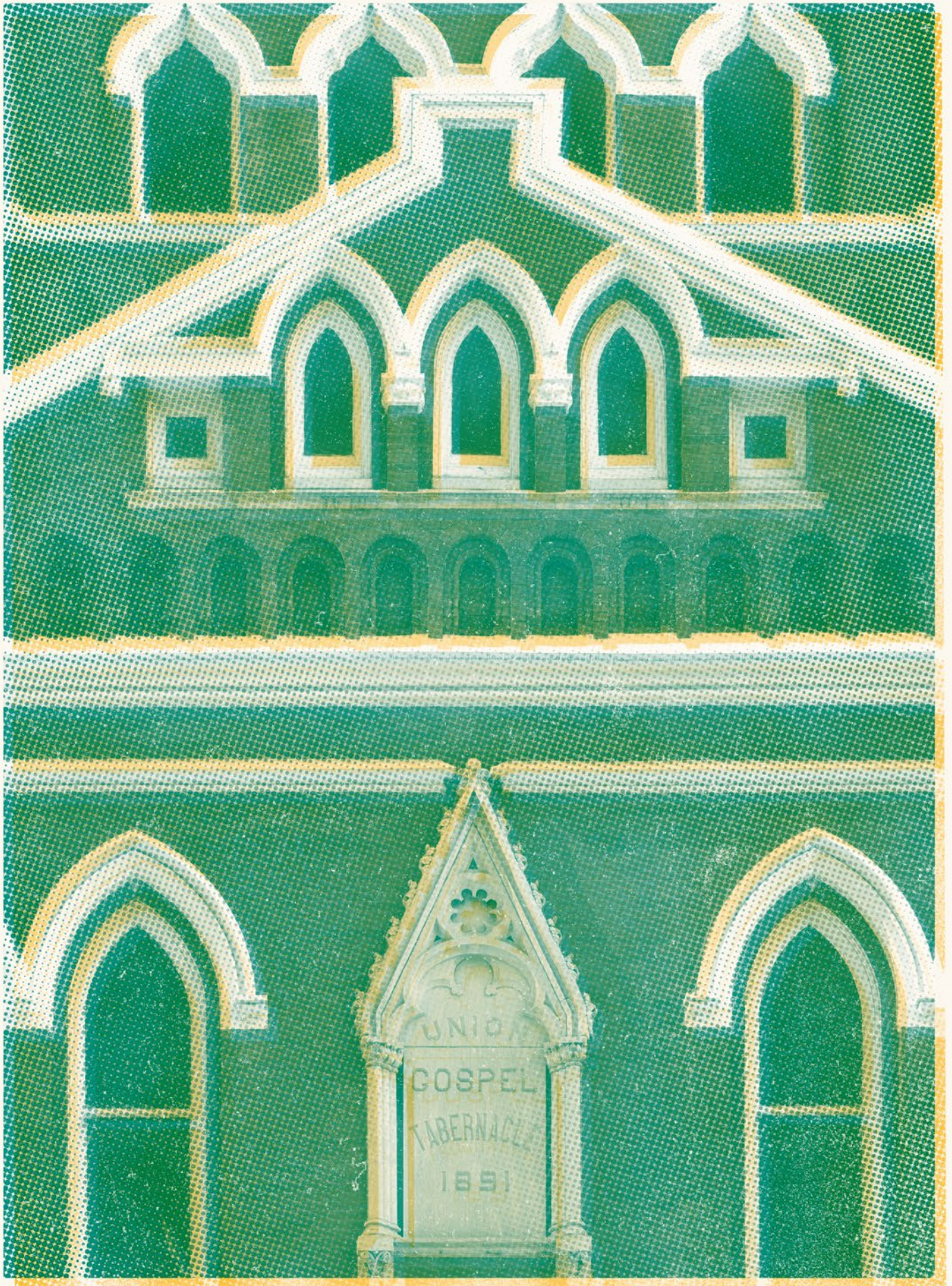
that he’s happy with until a truck pulls up next to him at a traffic light. “I never had a truck,” says Harrison, who dropped his last name because it was hard to spell, and he thought Harrison sounded more country. “But now, being down in the South and having a ton of friends that have had trucks, I kind of wish I did.”

In all, he’s released more than a dozen songs as a solo artist. A cut he wrote with Belles, “All Hat No Cowboy,” has more than 4 million views on TikTok. “Friendly Fire,” which he co-wrote with another young songwriter to highlight mental health challenges for military veterans, won the 2021 ASCAP Foundation Jay Gorney Award and was a 2022

Bluebird Cafe Golden Pick. Harrison has shared festival bills with Lady A, Lainey Wilson and Blake Shelton.

In 2023, he was picked for an ASCAP program that helps promising, unsigned songwriters get more attention. Country music bloggers have called him an artist to watch. (ASCAP, the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, is a longtime nonprofit that collects royalties on behalf of members and their copyrighted work.)

As Harrison’s career gains momentum, he continues to work toward his biggest goal: “I haven’t had a major,” meaning a hit song, he says. “But you’re only ever one song away. That’s what keeps me going.”



ON THE ROAD

MARK STACOLOSKI ('22)

ARTIST NAME ● MARK TAYLOR

TAYLOR CAME TO Wake Forest from Baltimore to sing in the concert choir and study business. He soon switched to communication and entrepreneurship, subjects that came more easily and allowed him to carve out time to play gigs on the road and Thursday nights at Shorty's back on campus.

With plans to become "a big entertainment attorney," Taylor interned one summer with a music industry-focused law firm in Nashville. Almost instantly,

he realized that he lacked the fortitude for the actual work: "I got through about the third page of the U.S. Copyright Act and said, 'I'm not very good at the whole reading and remembering thing.' And they said, 'What else can you do?' I was like, 'I can write songs a little bit.'"

The firm had recently started a music publishing unit and was working with Amii Stewart, a disco and soul singer best known for her 1979 hit "Knock on Wood." Taylor helped her write a new

song, "Perfectly Beautiful," and suddenly had his first publishing deal.

Songwriting "was always something I thought I wanted to do, but it was like a dream you don't think is actually attainable," Taylor says. His father, an insurance executive, plays in a band "in dive bars in Maryland," so Taylor had always seen music as a fun pastime rather than a potential profession. Writing Stewart's song changed his perspective. "I just naturally started coming down here, six

hours door to door, twice, three times a month,” he recalls.

What followed was senior year straddling two towns — Nashville and Winston-Salem. Taylor would cram three songwriting sessions and multiple coffee meetings into a single day by taking budget flights out of Raleigh that left at 5 a.m. and returned around midnight.

On one longer trip to Nashville, the night before Taylor had to take a sociology exam back on campus, he and Harrison wrote “Dust Off That Dirt,” the first big single Taylor released on his own. “It ended up being a massive song for me, but I had to hightail it back and barely made it into that classroom,” he says. “I drove through the night but made it just in time and got just enough of a passing grade to graduate.”

Taylor’s most popular song so far, “Brooks & Done,” came together when he shared his love of ’90s country with Harrison and hit songwriter Steve O’Brien, who co-wrote “Rock My World (Little Country Girl)” for Brooks & Dunn. “Dan brought this clever hook to us, and before we knew it, we were name-dropping many song titles from this iconic duo in our song,” Taylor says.



**“THERE’S NOTHING LIKE IT.
YOU WALK IN AND
TELL EVERYBODY
ANYTHING YOU’VE EVER THOUGHT OF
IN YOUR ENTIRE LIFE
AND HOPE THAT
A SONG COMES OUT OF IT.”**

His first songwriting sessions took place over Zoom, from his dorm room, during the COVID-19 pandemic. One tune, “Remember The Party,” was inspired by his many nights at Deacon’s Station, an off-campus apartment complex where he wrote much of his first album.

Post-pandemic, Taylor happily shifted to “the face-to-face connection of being in the room. There’s nothing like it. You walk in and tell everybody anything you’ve ever thought of in your entire life and hope that a song comes out of it,” he says.

“Remember The Party” climbed up the U.K. country charts after being used in a TikTok dance. Another song Taylor wrote for Whey Jennings, “Just Before the Dawn,” hit Norway’s top 10 and the Apple iTunes Top 40 Country Chart. “You never know what’s going to happen. You’re literally taking shots in the dark,” Taylor says. “It’s terrifying a lot of the time, but it makes me want to work harder for it, because the little taste of success that I’ve seen is so addicting.”

Taylor now leads a touring band that plays 150 shows a year (he and Harrison

both played Wake Forest’s DEACTOWN fan zone before football games last fall). In August, Taylor and his band toured 30,000 miles in 30 days, hopscotching from Ireland to Alaska, Boston, New York and many stages in between. This summer, he’s sharing festival bills with Lainey Wilson, Gary Allan and Tyler Hubbard.

At age 25, Taylor is running his own show, touching base almost daily with eight to 10 musicians, production folks and publicists, while also touring steadily and writing 120 to 150 songs a year. He’s engaged to marry his high school sweetheart this fall. And he’s the face of Cali Distillery’s Steel String Bourbon Whiskey. Sometimes, he finds himself wondering if it’s sustainable.

He got his answer while touring in Alaska. He gets a lot of radio play there, and “everybody knows all the words to my songs,” he says. “I traveled 5,000 miles ... to have several hundred people singing the words to my songs back to me.”

Someday, Taylor dreams, he’ll have that experience in sold-out stadiums across the country.





CIRCA 1890
EDISON CYLINDERS



CIRCA 1915
60 TO 120 RPM



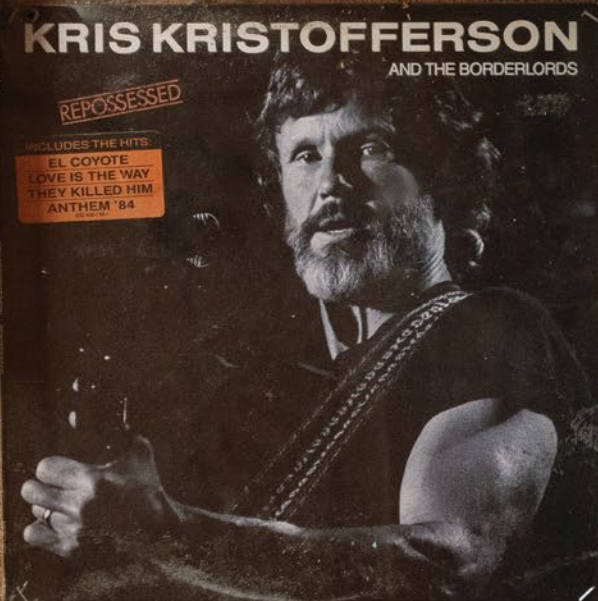
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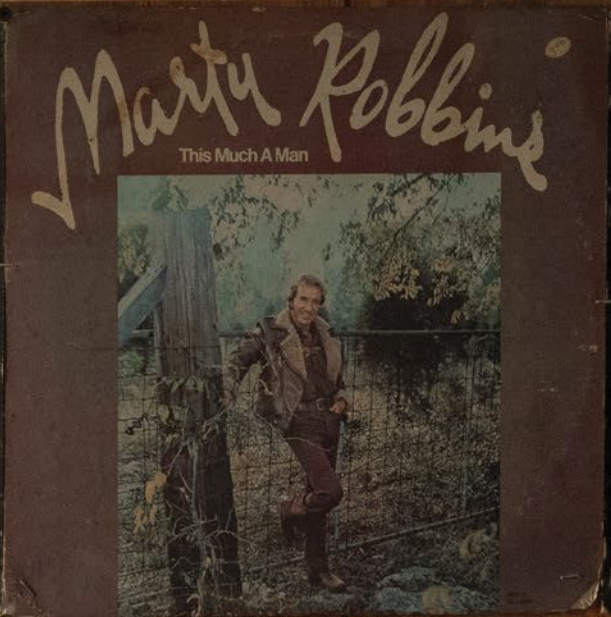
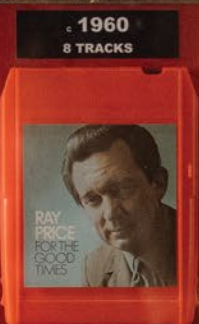


CIRCA 1949
45 RPM



HISTORY OF RECORDED MUSIC







The Hobbs Sisters, from left: Hannah Hobbs Wolf ('14) and Lauren Hobbs Yakopin ('14)

IDENTICAL TWINS Hannah Hobbs Wolf ('14) and Lauren Hobbs Yakopin ('14) never imagined doing anything other than singing country music. They grew up accompanying their grandfather, "Pappaw John," who played guitar and banjo by ear, and singing in church choirs in their hometown of Venetia, Pennsylvania. "Singing made us happy," Wolf says.

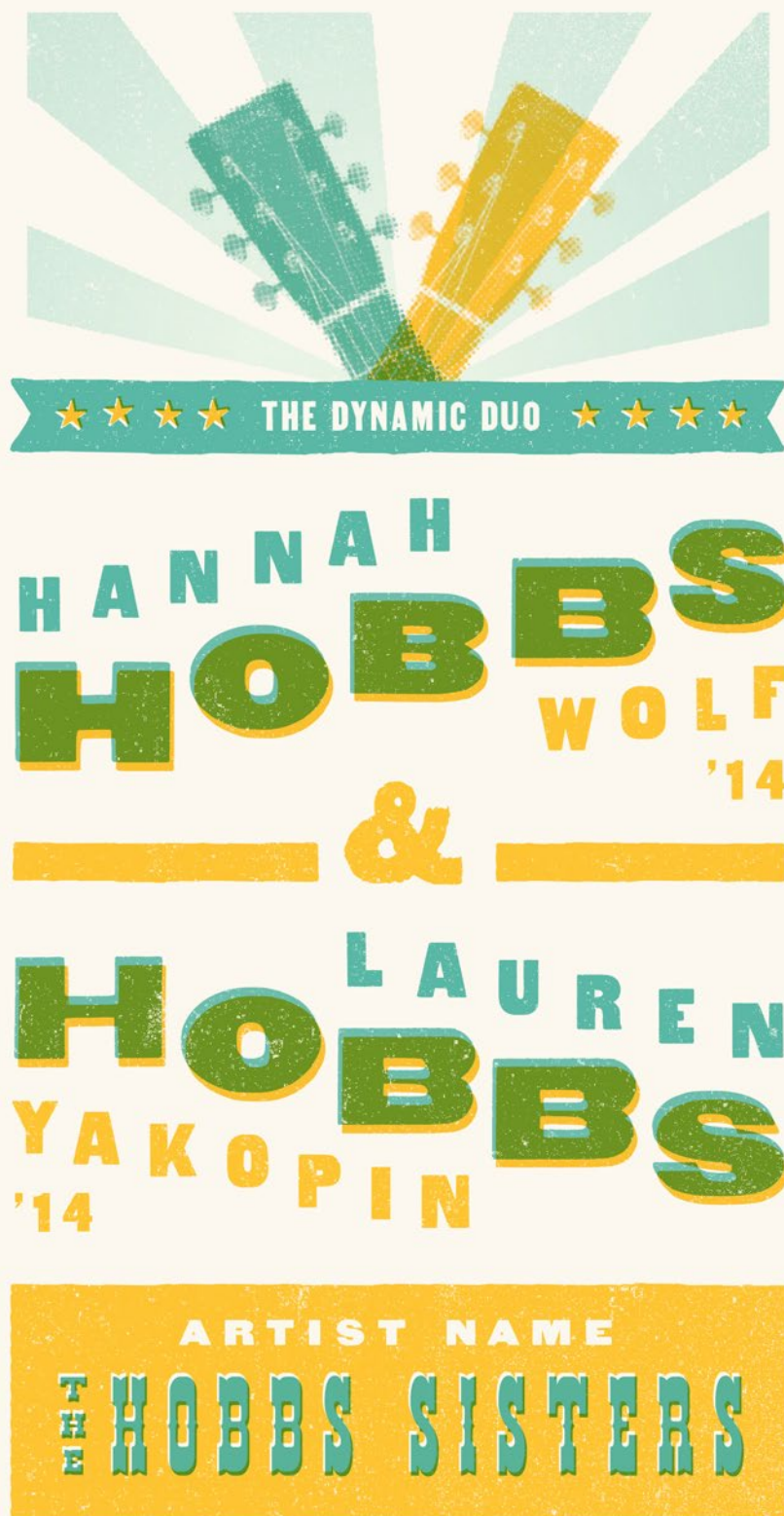
Their father was a devoted country music fan, and they aspired to follow in the footsteps of Shania Twain and Martina McBride from an early age. After years of studying piano and voice and singing in their high school's unique barbershop quartet, they landed at Wake Forest. They chose it together for its feeling of community, and they both majored in communication and joined Minor Variation, an a cappella group.

The Hobbs sisters got their first taste of Nashville during spring break their junior year, when their father drove them to a weeklong songwriting workshop — and they found themselves surrounded by much more experienced musicians. Yakopin remembers thinking, "Wow, it's not that our songs are bad, but we have a lot of room for growth."

When the duo graduated, they made Pittsburgh their home base for playing regional fairs, festivals and casino shows, and were soon opening for stars from Charlie Daniels to Lady A.

As they grew more comfortable on the festival circuit, they started working in more of their own material — and that meant more trips to Nashville to work with other writers. By 2017, the sisters were making the nine-hour drive south to Nashville, and sleeping on a good friend's couch, at least once a month. "We found people here to be super generous with their time and willingness to write a song with you, and when we weren't here, we found ourselves craving being around that community every day," Yakopin says.

That December, they made the move. "No matter where you're from, the typical performing experience is you play a lot of bars, you play primarily



cover songs — what people want to hear. And then you come to Nashville, and so many of the performing opportunities are writers' rounds," Wolf says. "It was eye-opening for us ... that we could play out these songs that we wrote and not just have to do all those standard cover country songs."

In 2021, the sisters had enough songs under their belts to release "Turn It Up," their debut full-length album. American Songwriter describes their sound as "so strong it can blow your hair back, yet, so precise that the voices still sound like one." Critics talk about their "relatable" lyrics, often involving relationship problems and emotions. Yakopin married in 2022 and Wolf in 2024. Recent song titles include "Never Find Another" and "Harder Than a Diamond," which they wrote a month after Yakopin's engagement.

They take turns as the lead in both singing and songwriting. "It's all about balance. We are fully equal parts," Wolf says. "We've had people ask, 'Did you ever want to each have solo music careers?' And truly it's like we never even ever walked down that road. It was always just unspoken: We are going to do this dream together."

They are working on their next album with a Grammy-nominated producer while touring in new states and ticking off classic Nashville writers' rounds from the Bluebird to Whiskey Jam and Song Suffragettes.

"What I love most about songwriting is taking an idea that meant something to us and finding other people in the world that it means something to," Yakopin says.



CHARLIE JANUSZEWSKI '17



ARTIST
NAME

CHARLIE
BRENNAN



CHARLIE BRENNAN ('17) set out to be a psychologist, not a songwriter. But he changed his tune when “Let Me Be,” a song he wrote while studying at Wake Forest’s Flow House in Vienna, hit No. 11 on Spotify’s “Viral 50-Global” playlist in 2016.

A self-taught pianist and guitarist who started experimenting with composing software at age 12 in his hometown of Greenwich, Connecticut, he worked with a producer in nearby Stamford during high school, releasing his music under the moniker Charlie Brennan. One of his songs, “The Ocean,” wound up in a Pepsi campaign. While he was studying at Wake Forest, American Eagle stores were playing his tunes.

Upon graduation, Brennan headed to New York, released his first album and played his signature blend of pop, folk

and Americana to sold-out crowds at hot spots including the Bowery Ballroom.

Then Nashville came calling in the form of Nicolette McCann ('17), a creative-writing classmate from his Wake Forest days who had gone to work for a music publisher. She kept inviting him to visit, insisting that he would love getting to work with other writers. When he finally made the trip, he decided to stay.

“I had never written with anybody before. I had been totally solo,” Brennan says. “Nicolette set up a week of writing with other songwriters and meetings with publishers, and she’s the reason I moved here. ... I will sing her praises forever.”

He dove into back-to-back co-writing sessions almost every day. “You get together like a meeting, sometimes at a publishing office and sometimes at someone’s house in their living room, and you

get really personal, really fast. I think that's where my psych degree comes in," he says. "I'm like, 'Let's get right into your trauma. Let's write something about it.'"

When Brennan told his New York friends he was moving to Nashville, they assumed he was going country. "But really, all genres are happening here," he says. "It felt like home right away." He no longer needed a side job to pay the rent, and he had space for a piano at home for the first time.

Brennan also was able to put together a support team here that includes a manager, graphic designer, videographer, photographer and distributor.

The move came with some surprising experiences. Through networking with a music editor, Brennan wound up with a song ("Broken Cities") on the soundtrack for the 2023 "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Mutant Mayhem" movie.

And his lyrics for Spencer Crandall's hit, "7 and 70," made their way onto a

fan's tattoo, which he spotted at a concert. "He has mega fans, and that was my first major cut where I was seeing a fan response to something I write, and I wasn't up there singing it," Brennan says. "It was really cool to see that, and the tattoo was wild."

His own profile as an artist is rising as well, with an extended play release, "The History of Everything We Went Through," in 2023 winning first prize in the Folk/Americana category of the New England Songwriting Competition and an honorable mention in American Songwriter's 2022 Song Contest. He released his latest album, "High Water," last fall with a sold-out party at Arlene's Grocery in New York.

Brennan finds it easier to perform in New York for strangers than in Nashville. "I love playing New York. It's my favorite," he says. "I have a little bit more nerves when I play here because I'll have friends who are major artists in the crowd, and I'm always like, 'Oh my God, do they think I'm good?'"

Songwriters joke that when people make it big in Nashville, they go back to their hometown and buy a big spread. And Brennan concedes that he misses the ocean. But for the moment, Nashville is a great fit.

"I just know what I'm doing is right for me right now, and I want to continue my artist project, writing music for me, touring, playing shows. I'd love to join a bigger tour and travel the world. I love writing for other artists, so I'm continuing to do that," he says. "Just putting my eggs in every basket and seeing what works."

The most rewarding part: "Someone reaching out and saying, 'I love this song so much. It changed my life,'" he says. "That's what you aim for when you write music. You want to be able to reach out and help someone in some way."



TABITHA TURNER

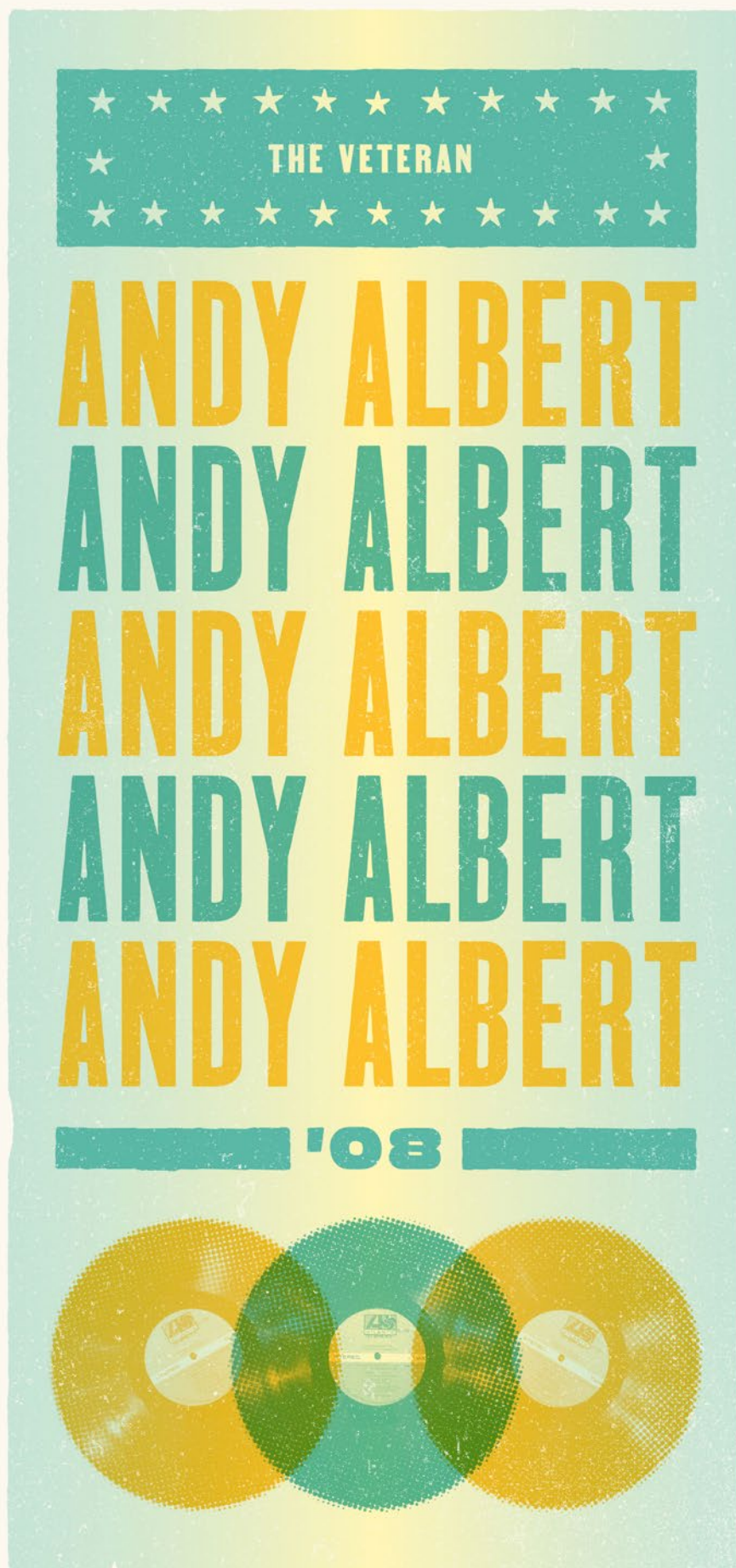
YOU MAY NOT HAVE heard of Andy Albert ('08), but you've probably heard his work. He spends his days collaborating with the likes of Blake Shelton, Carrie Underwood and Dustin Lynch. In 2024, about 24 million Spotify listeners streamed songs he wrote 242 million times.

And Albert didn't even realize songwriting was a career path until after he moved to Nashville.

At Wake Forest, where he majored in economics and minored in entrepreneurship, Albert would spend afternoons and evenings on homework and then stay up writing songs in Scales Fine Arts Center till 3 a.m. Weekends meant touring with his pop-rock band, Holiday Parade. When the band got a record deal in Japan, Albert left school. Back in Roswell, Georgia, his parents "didn't love it when it happened, but there was no looking back for me," he says.

Still, Albert credits what he learned at Wake Forest as intrinsic to his success: voice lessons with the late Professor of Music Richard Heard; entrepreneurship professors helping him put out his first EP and create a marketing plan that led to selling 300,000 singles. (Wake Forest assigns a class year to every student, including those who didn't graduate — like Albert and, for example, Demon Deacon athletes who left and went pro.)

By 2010, Albert's band had run its course. He and fellow musician Dan Smyers started a new group, Bonaventure. They were living in Atlanta and Pittsburgh, respectively, and needed to find a place they could both call home. An executive at what was then Island Def





Jam Music Group in Atlanta suggested Nashville, where rock bands including Kings of Leon and MONA were making a name for themselves. The duo couldn't afford to move to LA, so they decided to give Nashville a shot.

"It was honestly out of necessity," Albert says. "We got a terrible little house, but it was enough." When they "couldn't get the ball past a certain point on the field," he says, they split up. Albert

started writing music full time. Being in Nashville had made him realize that songwriting "was a career path I could take," he says.

Albert signed a publishing deal with Downtown Music Publishing in 2014 and made a name for himself as a prolific songwriter in many genres, including pop, rock, Christian music and a wide range of country. "I like doing all sorts of different kinds of

music in different styles," he says.

"When you're an artist, you have to really be one thing and have a sound and an identity. I wanted to be too many things at once — which pays a lot of dividends as a songwriter."

In 2023, Albert won first place for Country in the American Songwriter Song Contest with two other songwriters for "Comeback Kid." He has credits on gold records and No. 1 hits on several



charts, with many streamed hundreds of millions of times.

He still collaborates with Smyers, now half of the successful country duo Dan + Shay, and a song they wrote together, “Bigger Houses,” became a No. 1 country hit in January.

“You come up with a class of people in town, you start off playing small writers’ rounds and meeting them through

co-writers or friends,” Albert says. “And then all of a sudden somebody gets a record deal, and then somebody else gets a record deal, and you’re all still writing songs together, and then you get a single on them, and everyone bubbles up together as a class.”

Sometimes, to get a creative boost, he joins other songwriters and artists on retreats — often in a cabin in the

woods, and for the past two winters, in Hawaii for a week with a crew corralled by Liz Rose, an early collaborator with Taylor Swift.

Albert appreciates Nashville’s equitable approach to splitting royalties among collaborators. In Los Angeles, “they kind of nitpick sentences or ideas or concepts and kind of just shift percentages along the way,” he says. “But the view here is that everyone has a different role on different days. You’re in the room with people you respect, and it’s about getting the best song possible, not about getting your contribution on the song. So, you’re fighting for the best line as opposed to fighting for your line.”

Albert keeps a notes file on his phone with thousands of ideas. He’s constantly jotting his thoughts, often inspired by family life, including his two preschool-age sons, he says. When he’s working with an artist for the first time, “you spend the first hour just talking, getting to know them and where their head’s at and their heart’s at.”

Sometimes Albert scrolls through artists’ Instagram posts, spots a “caption they say about their family or their wife or something and pick a phrase from that” and proposes turning it into a song. He often writes two songs a day, four to five days a week. When he’s not holding court in a publisher’s writing room, he’s working on his back porch, overlooking pine trees.

There are days, he says, when “I’m on fire and just light up with an idea, and some days I’m sitting back and letting someone else do that job if they’re on a roll. ... It’s all about just seeing where the fire is that day.”

WHEN HE’S WORKING WITH AN ARTIST
FOR THE FIRST TIME,
“YOU SPEND THE FIRST HOUR
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AND WHERE THEIR HEAD’S AT
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THEIR HEART’S AT.”

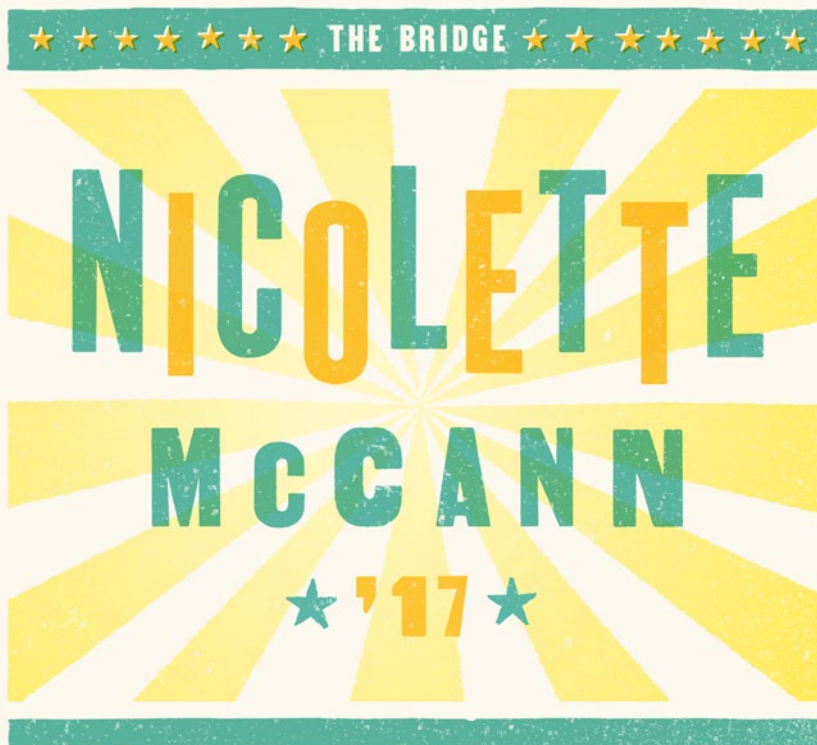
NICOLETTE McCANN, now an artist manager in Nashville, helped the Deacon songwriters come together. She sang a cappella at Wake Forest with The Hobbs Sisters. She and Brennan camped out together at Z. Smith Reynolds Library on Friday afternoons, writing essays that were due at 5 p.m. Taylor, part of their “brother” a cappella group, tracked her down when he started making trips to Music City.

“We all just wound up finding each other,” she says. Now, they are deepening those ties with regular get-togethers. Sometimes, Harrison joins Taylor on tour. And, for the past three years, they have entertained fellow alumni with a February showcase at The Listening Room that is quickly becoming an annual tradition.

Back at the gathering over burgers, the songwriters remember their amazement when they first looked out on a

Nashville audience loaded with Wake Foresters. Alumni here help power the law firms, music studios, publishing houses and other businesses that play a crucial role in the music industry’s success. Many Nashville Deacs have encouraged their own college-age children to head east to Winston-Salem. (Maybe the best-known Wake Forest parent in Nashville circles is Ashley Gorley (P ’26), a highly acclaimed songwriter and publisher who has written more than 70 No. 1 hits.)

What started for each of these Wake Forest songwriters as a solo, or duo, journey to Nashville has turned into a homecoming of sorts. McCann, who manages singers as her day job, delights in seeing audiences embrace their work. “It’s just so fascinating to watch their careers. They are all such a success,” she says. “They are able to support themselves doing what they love.”





Listen to a playlist featuring
the work of songwriters
in this story at [bit.ly/
NashvilleNetworkPlaylist](https://bit.ly/NashvilleNetworkPlaylist)



FIVE 2 QUESTIONS FOR 3 4 SPURGE 5 CARTER (14)

Carter calls himself a 'creative professional,' embodying the label to the hilt.

By Katherine Laws
Waters ('20)
Photography by
Sissela Johansson





purgeon “Spurge” Carter (’14)

was already DJing and making music as a high school senior when he visited Wake Forest’s campus to make his decision about where to go to college. Some students advertising for Wake Radio at a table outside The Pit caught his eye. Carter stopped to talk with them.

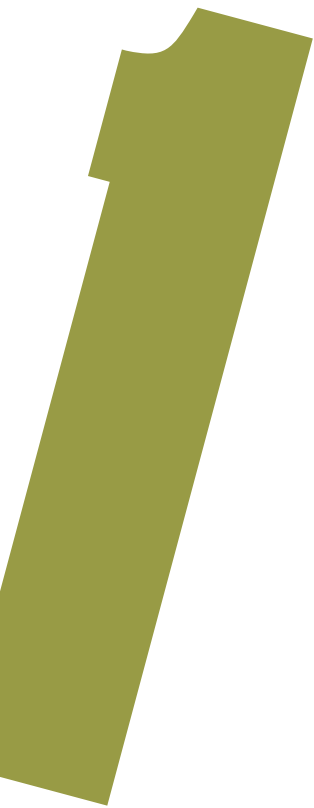
That night, after a storm rolled in and delayed his drive home to Randallstown, Maryland, he joined the Wake Radio students to hang out. “Finding that there were other people that seemed to fit with my aesthetic sensibilities,” Carter says, opened his eyes to the creative possibilities at Wake Forest.

As an undergrad, he pursued those possibilities with zeal. He managed the Wake Radio station, hosted a show, lived in the Wake Radio house and DJed for Wake ’N Shake and the President’s Ball. After graduation he moved to New York in search of more creative possibilities and community. He found both.

Today, Carter lists himself on LinkedIn as a “creative professional.” He makes electronic and alternative rock music, DJs at clubs and operates an imprint label, Eto Ano, which he uses to brand his radio show. He broadcasts the show monthly on The Lot Radio, a famed online nonprofit operating out of a shipping container in Brooklyn. At the time of his conversation with Wake Forest Magazine, Carter worked at a record label, Partisan Records, and ran its gallery space, Mews, where he designed programs for creatives “to generate dialogue that’ll hopefully be inspiring for people like myself,” he says. Add to the list of achievements the extended play release Carter released last year, “Are You Good?” under the name “Aliese,” a solo project.

We wondered at Wake Forest Magazine how Carter maintains his creative drive and what fuels his new work. Deputy Editor Katherine Laws Waters (’20) spoke with him in Brooklyn by Zoom to ask about his process, community and inspiration. This conversation has been edited for brevity and clarity.





Carter made his recent EP mostly independently, setting its creative direction, tone and visuals, playing every instrument and writing the lyrics himself. Here, he's in his Brooklyn home studio.

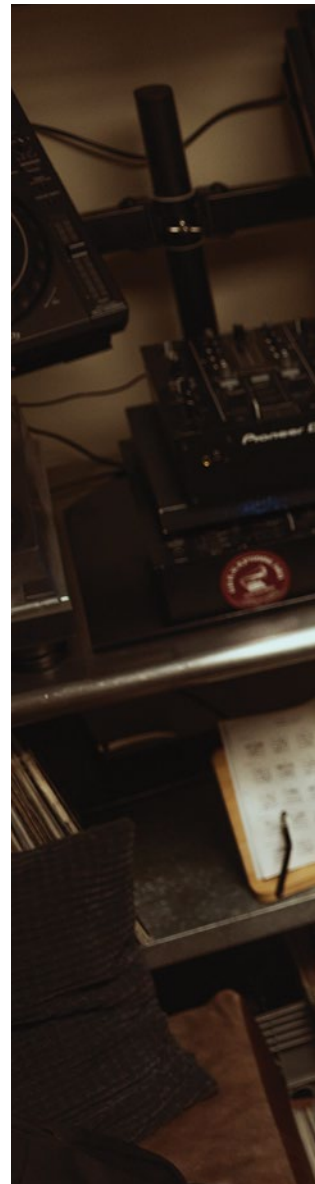
Katherine Laws Waters:
**WHERE DO YOU FIND INSPIRATION
TO SPARK YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS?**

Spurge Carter: Cultivating spaces for inspiration (is) important. For example, last night I hosted a table read event for a friend, where young TV writers bring their scripts and get (volunteer) actors to come and read in a table read format. There were probably about 50 people here (at Mews) who were in attendance and asking questions after. It could be a conversation you have after an event or something like that that resonates with you. ...

I think after having put out a record this year, I've honestly just been not feeling very creative for the past several months. ... I've, in the past couple weeks, I think broken through a little bit. ... (There's) something about just being regimented. Just working out. You're not going to feel like you want

to work out every day, but if you still show up and go to the gym, you are going to see small gains. ...

A lot of how this EP came about was I was in my apartment for, obviously, months on end during the pandemic, and it was sitting down every day and just making music for six to eight hours a day and trying to find something that resonated. So, there's a balance of just living life and allowing inspiration to come and just sitting down every day to make noise, make sound, and when you feel something, you feel something.



KW:
**TELL ME MORE ABOUT
YOUR CREATIVE PROCESS.**

SC: I think that music for me is also a form of processing life and experience, ... very much like a journal, where a lot of it is processing the emotions or a way to express that feels quite personal. ... That's why it's meaningful to share and, hopefully, see people connect or enjoy it, because it feels like such a core extension of myself. ...

(Even last night) I was up late working with one idea, woke up, picked up the guitar, immediately started again. ... (I)t's just weaved into the fabric of how I live.





Carter finds spaces in Brooklyn and online for creativity-sparking conversations. He formerly ran a gallery space, pictured here, that brought creatives together. During his decade of building a music and DJ career in New York, he has also been a barista, screen printer, studio engineer, record shop attendant, talent scout and magazine editor.

“ (A) BIG REASON WHY I MOVED TO NEW YORK (WAS THAT) I ALWAYS KNEW THAT I WANTED TO PRIMARILY MAKE MUSIC AND EXPRESS, BUT I DIDN’T KNOW WHAT I WANTED TO SAY. ”

KLW: WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF HAVING A CREATIVE COMMUNITY AROUND YOU?

SC: With music, it’s nice, you can play a half-baked idea at a show to five people, get their feedback and then take that and workshop it. And you have this really nice dialogue between audience and artist. ... I think that it’s something where you also need to find a balance of trusting yourself and going back to this relationship to self and intuition. You can certainly pander and try to go too far toward external opinion and validation.

And I’ll say for myself a big reason why I moved to New York (was that) I always knew that I wanted to primarily make music and express, but I didn’t

know what I wanted to say. I spent most of my 20s jostling around, taking on opportunities, trying to figure it out. This record that I put out under this project, “Aliese,” was definitely the most synthesized version of myself in the way in which I want to express, and that took just about 10 years in New York to get to a place where that was the case. But, knowing that I wanted to do that, the reason why I moved here was to find community or at least be in a space where I could grow. So, it definitely feels super important to be a part of.



4

KLW:
**YOU HAVE A MONTHLY SHOW ON
THE LOT RADIO. HOW DID
YOU GET INVOLVED THERE?**



**“A LOT OF
MUSIC THAT
I HONESTLY
LISTENED TO
WHEN I WAS
AT WAKE IS
STARTING TO
BECOME
REFRESHING
AGAIN. ...”**

SC: When I moved here, I worked at (Creative Artists Agency). ... I bounced around to recording studios for a while. Basically, I was looking for community. When you think about 1960s California and this vision of (how) recording studios used to be a place where you could bump into other musicians and create community — that was less of the case in my experience (here). It’s very isolating, especially if you’re engineering or in roles that can be a little bit more

behind the scenes. So, I was kind of looking for that, and because of my time (studying abroad) in London while I was at Wake, I knew about internet radio from this radio station, NTS, (that) seemed to be a big point of cultivating community.

So, I had stumbled upon The Lot in its first few months of opening up and just anticipated that it was going to be something where it was going to build a big community around it. So, I started working there in 2016. I worked there from a barista standpoint ... meeting people, meeting all the DJs, helping out with all of the technical aspects of running the shows. ... Basically, I was embedded in the team that way for four years. ... I was able to really cultivate most of my community.



KLW:
**WHAT SOUNDS ARE YOU HEARING
IN BROOKLYN THAT COULD MAKE IT
INTO YOUR FUTURE MUSIC?**

SC: A lot of music that I honestly listened to when I was at Wake is starting to become refreshing again, which is weird to experience but kind of nice. I genuinely enjoy going out more now than I have in the past couple of years because obviously it's been difficult to do things ... through the pandemic.

—

In terms of sounds, honestly, it's probably more dialogue. Just conversations have been inspiring — conversations that will probably show up more thematically than sonically. ... I think right now there's trying to parse through the grief, then apathy, living in this time that we're living in where everything's so obviously politically fraught and quite upsetting. What do we do with that energy? ... (Also)

people really digging in or finding community and enjoying smaller moments. That's what I'm also trying to cultivate here, where things feel so big and kind of uncontrollable in a lot of ways. I think that we just have to get up every day and continue to exist even despite that. And what do we do with that? How can we make a difference or impact?

—

And then just very classic things like, I'm getting older. What does that mean? ... I'm living in and experiencing things that are as old as time and also, maybe, some things that are new and confusing, and we're trying to figure it out. Ultimately, that's, to me, again, what I guess creativity, but art is about: just processing things that hopefully people can relate to and be like, "I can understand that, or maybe I can't, but it makes me feel something." ... I don't think that what I'm doing is, in the grand scheme, new in any way, but I can only just get up every day and leave my version of the story.

Carter at his home
in Brooklyn



1715

CHOCOLATE
PIPER
GUEST
HOUSE

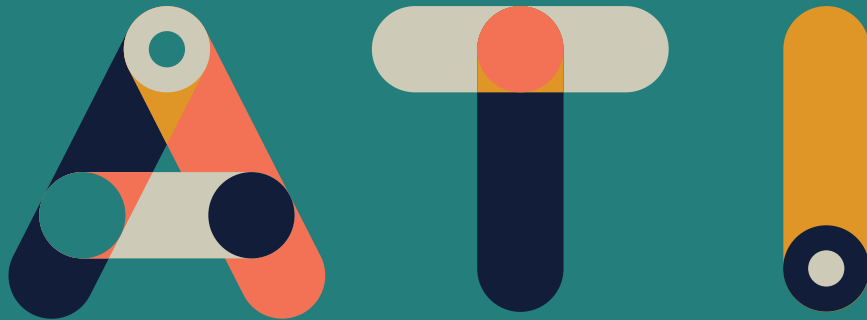
1717

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PROBLEM

From imagining how to save endangered rhinos



SOLVING

to chasing an insight at a grocery store,



these three professors demonstrate fresh thinking in their research.

BY KERRY M. KING ('85) Illustration by Tracy Walker



Creativity can strike in unexpected places, from the grocery store to the hurricane-ravaged mountains. A trio of Wake Forest faculty have used such light-bulb moments to develop creative solutions to complex problems.

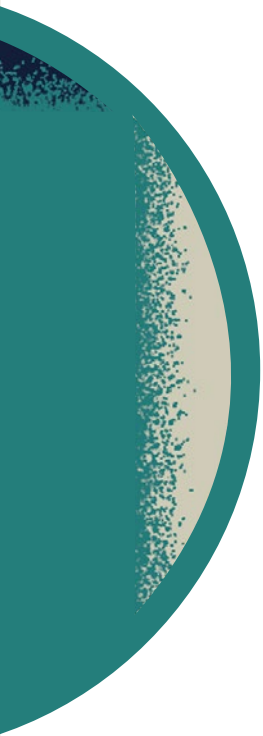
Computer Science Professor Errin Fulp turned to nature years ago to develop “digital ants” that hunt down computer viruses. More recently, the grocery store checkout line gave him an idea for improving internet speed and security.

Assistant Professor of Communication Rowena Rowie Kirby-Straker studies the ways storytelling can influence disaster preparedness. And Economics Professor Fred Chen sees a creative application for economics — helping save endangered rhinos. —*Kerry M. King* ('85)



ROWENA ROWIE KIRBY- STRAKER

Assistant Professor of Communication



STORYTELLING CAN BE

a powerful tool to help people prepare for and recover from natural disasters, says Assistant Professor Rowena Rowie Kirby-Straker, who studies how communication can influence behavior.

Stories of past experiences can shape risk perception and disaster preparedness. “How people perceive risks should be factored into disaster communication,” she says. “That’s important because technical experts perceive risk very differently from people on the ground. So how can communication from lived experiences improve outcomes and save lives,

livelihoods and property, in addition to messages coming top down?”

In 2021, Kirby-Straker received a timely grant from the Natural Hazards Center, the U.S. National Science Foundation’s designated information clearinghouse for the societal effects of hazards and disasters. She studied how individuals’ past experiences shape how they react to future extreme weather events. Her results showed that experiencing material loss or other personal harm during an extreme weather event can have a strong, direct positive influence on individuals’ preparedness behavior for future disasters.

“Risk communicators can apply these findings by working with communities to help them process stories of loss and use those stories to save lives and valued possessions,” she says.

Kirby-Straker regularly teaches a class on environmental risk and crisis communication. In her class this spring, she asked students to explore disaster-preparedness messages from various sources — national and local media reports, weather predictions, official warnings and communication from government officials and nongovernmental organizations — leading up to Hurricane Helene, which killed hundreds and ravaged western North Carolina and other Southern states last fall.

She hopes students will recognize the complexities involved in disaster communication, including the context of messages, who they’re from and how those factors could help or hinder disaster preparedness and response.

Individual risk perception feeds into community-level risk perception, Kirby-Straker says, and collective decision making plays a critical role in preparing for a disaster and rebuilding after a storm. It’s especially important



to build trust in under-resourced communities, because those are often the ones that bear more risk and harm from natural disasters or environmental problems, she says.

In areas less susceptible to natural disasters, collective memory of past disasters often fades quickly, she says. Warnings of a dangerous hurricane forming traditionally have been regarded as very relevant in the hurricane-prone Caribbean — where Kirby-Straker grew up — but not so much in the North Carolina mountains.

Storytelling is especially important during the time gap between disasters. “People may say, ‘Oh, that happens only every 20 years.’ How do we keep those stories relevant and remind people when there’s another one?” she says. “That knowledge circulating in the community is really important, especially for rare events. If these stories can be kept alive in the community, especially through intergenerational storytelling, can that prepare people?”

While storytelling is important, we need to be respectful about how stories are shared, she says. “These are sad stories, and we don’t want to get to a point where we become desensitized to them or seem to be taking advantage of people’s pain, even if we think it’s for a good cause.”

FRED CHEN

Professor of Economics



CAN ECONOMICS SAVE

endangered rhinos from poaching? Professor Fred Chen, who started researching the economics surrounding rhino horns nearly a decade ago, says introducing lab-grown horns into the marketplace could decrease the demand for illegal wild horns.

The poaching of rhino horns is essentially an economics problem, but it's not based on a simple supply-and-demand model, Chen says, because the poaching and selling of animal parts doesn't occur in a typical competitive market. "Many of the issues involved in economics of conservation are economics ideas that you won't encounter in Economics 101," he says. "You need more advanced economics to understand these things."

Chen first started researching synthetic horns in 2016 after he read an article about the topic that he thought used the wrong economic analysis. He has since formulated economic models to predict how lab-grown horns would fare in the marketplace.

His initial research, "The Economics of Synthetic Rhino Horns," showed that synthetic horns can reduce the demand for rhino horns. Synthetic horns engineered to be all but indistinguishable from real horns to most would-be consumers would create confusion in the marketplace, he says. "The main idea is: Can producing high quality fakes, like synthetics, destabilize markets so that they have beneficial conservation results?"

Chen compares it to buying luxury goods on Amazon. If you're not sure you're buying the real thing, how much are you willing to pay for it? "If you create enough confusion, and people are more reluctant to buy the product, that would reduce demand" and drive down prices, he says, making poaching less profitable.

Chen says there are many variables to be considered. If synthetic horns are indistinguishable from real horns, how do you tell which ones are legal —

**“You can’t just say,
‘Oh, it could lead to
more demand, so
we don’t want it.’
I think we need to
dig a little deeper
than that.”**



the real horns or the synthetic ones? How do you prevent poachers from “laundering” real horns by passing them off as synthetic horns? How do you ensure there are enough producers of synthetic horns to keep prices competitive versus a monopoly producer? The latter could charge higher prices, which would keep the prices of real horns high, too, and continue to incentivize poaching.

In a forthcoming book, “The Economics of Wildlife Trade: Theory and Implications for Conservation,” Chen delves more into the economic principles involved in wildlife trade

and conservation issues. Chen was co-recipient last year of Wake Forest’s URECA Faculty Award for Excellence in Mentorship in Research and Creative Work in the Sciences and Social Sciences.

Conservation groups oppose the idea of synthetic horns, arguing that they would remove the stigma from owning horns, increase demand for authentic horns, worsen the poaching problem and make it more difficult for law enforcement to spot illegal horns. A 2024 story on National Public Radio said conservationists viewed the idea of synthetic horns “as misguided at best

and dangerous at worst.”

The same story notes that Chen’s economic models suggest that lab-grown horns could be a powerful tool in conservation, even if they led to some increase in the demand for the real thing. “You can’t just say, ‘Oh, it could lead to more demand, so we don’t want it.’ I think we need to dig a little deeper than that,” Chen told NPR.

Chen knows he’s facing an uphill battle to convince conservationists but says it’s not a reason to shut down further study of the idea. “That could lead us to the outcome we all want — saving animals.”



ERRIN FULP

Professor of Computer Science

PROFESSOR ERRIN FULP

was waiting in line at the grocery store when he saw a way to increase internet speed.

Fulp, who was researching how to make digital information pass more quickly through security firewalls, saw that the problem was similar to choosing the fastest-moving grocery store checkout line.

Data that flows along the internet is organized in “packets” that pass through firewalls to protect computer networks from malicious attacks. The firewall inspects and filters arriving and departing packets by using millions of “rules” to make sure the information is safe to pass through to your network and ultimately your computer.

“The firewall causes a lot of pain points,” Fulp says. “When a packet arrives at a firewall, the firewall has to figure out whether or not it should enter my network or leave my network. A growing set of rules slows things down.”

Fulp compares that to a typical grocery store scenario. You try to pick the shortest checkout line, but inevitably you choose the slowest line. The same problem affects information passing through a firewall; once your information is in a “lane,” it could get stuck.

“We thought we could flip it around a little bit,” Fulp says, explaining the grocery store analogy. “Instead of picking one cashier, could I take my basket of goods and split it up across all cashiers?”

If I’ve got 25 things, I can give each cashier five things. I can get through in the amount of time it takes to check out five (items) versus 25 (items).”

Fulp’s idea was to duplicate packets so they could be processed simultaneously by multiple firewalls, like dividing your grocery order among five cashiers. Each firewall applies a shorter set of rules “leading to a dramatic improvement in speed,” he says.

In 2003, Fulp received funding from the U.S. Department of Energy to continue his research. Fulp and Robert Anderson (MBA ’94) founded startup GreatWall Systems in 2005 with Dave Ahn (’95) joining in its early stage. With an additional grant from the Energy department, they built a team of largely Wake Forest alumni and students to develop Fulp’s idea into a product.

You probably don’t know it, but your computer at home or work likely uses a similar system. “It’s been more successful than I ever imagined,” Fulp says.



How can you write rules to protect against future threats based on prior attacks?

GreatWall was later acquired for its innovative and groundbreaking network filtering technologies by Centripetal Networks, where Ahn is chief architect and vice president.

Fulp is a visiting scholar-in-residence at Centripetal, where he leads research in cyber threat intelligence and how threat data can be analyzed, curated and transformed into rules in firewalls for protection. Wake Forest graduate students and undergraduates regularly work with Centripetal.

They are investigating a new set of questions: When a firewall is applying millions of rules, how can you select the ones most appropriate for a particular customer to make the process go even faster? How can you write rules to protect against future threats based on prior attacks?

“We’re also looking at how things are progressing in terms of an attack,” Fulp says. “We’re really good at Day Zero (when an attack occurs), but we’re trying to get a few days ahead. We would like to understand, based on prior attacks, what are good rules to have in the future based on what we’re seeing.”

On his visits to the grocery store, as he waits in line, Fulp now finds himself asking a new question: “How can I get my items to do a self-checkout?”





A NATURAL WORLD

Walking a path of discovery on the grounds of Reynolda and the slopes of North Carolina mountains, **Leigh Ann Hallberg** painted what she felt.

'BOTH

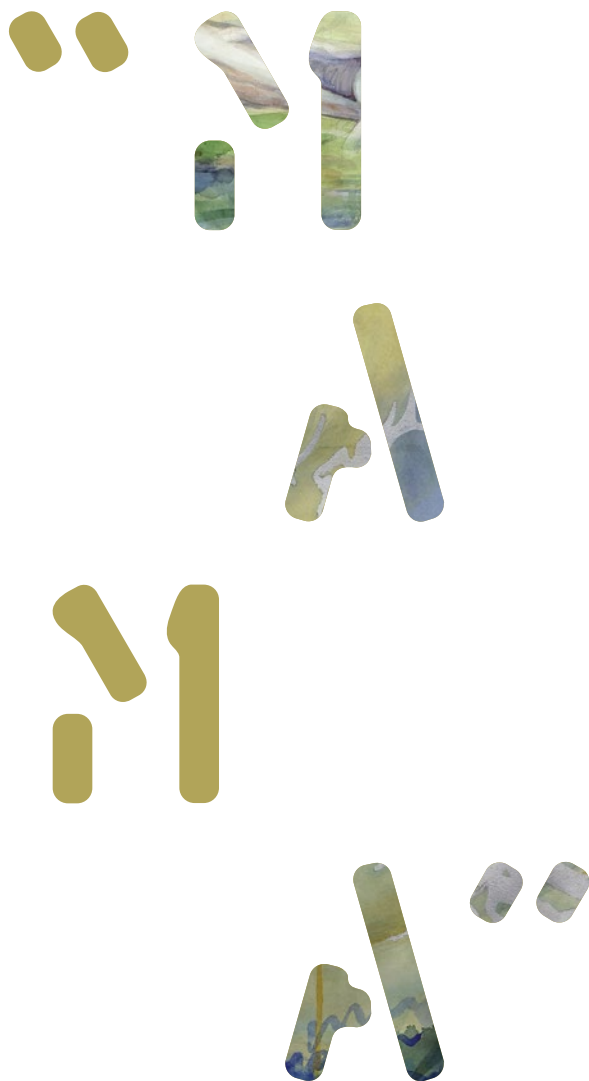
FAMILIAR

AND

MYSTERI-

OUS'

by
Maria Henson ('82)
photography by
Travis Dove ('04)



or “Dada” did not come to mind when 1-year-old Leigh Ann Hallberg decided the time had come to speak. Her first words held more weight. They foretold a destiny.

“See pretty,” she said.

Hallberg doesn’t remember proclaiming those words, but over all these years she has carried her mother’s story about the unusual utterance. What she does remember from childhood: Hanging in her bedroom window were curtains festooned with circus animals, flags and the big top. One night, lightning flashed across a window, and the flash appeared to match the colors of the curtain — “a strong memory,” Hallberg says. She was 3 years old and knew enough to pay attention.

She had seen an image bursting with color, arising from nature, that fascinated her.

“See pretty.”

She’s done that all her life. I spoke with her after visiting her exhibition, “Phenoms,” in Reynolda House Museum of American Art. Six large-scale abstract paintings mounted on wood structures jutting about four inches from the wall, as if thrust slightly into viewers’ space, hang in the West Bedroom Gallery. They are among a series of 20 paintings Hallberg completed after finding inspiration on walks with her tiny rescue dog, Lola.

Since 1999, until retirement this month, Teaching Professor of Art Hallberg (P ’12) taught in the art department in various roles, first as a visiting professor and, for a time, as an adjunct before teaching full time. Her courses

Leigh Ann Hallberg, right, says when she and Lola walked paths repeatedly, Hallberg began to notice things in new ways: “I don’t know if this is a function of age, which it totally could be, or just being quiet.”



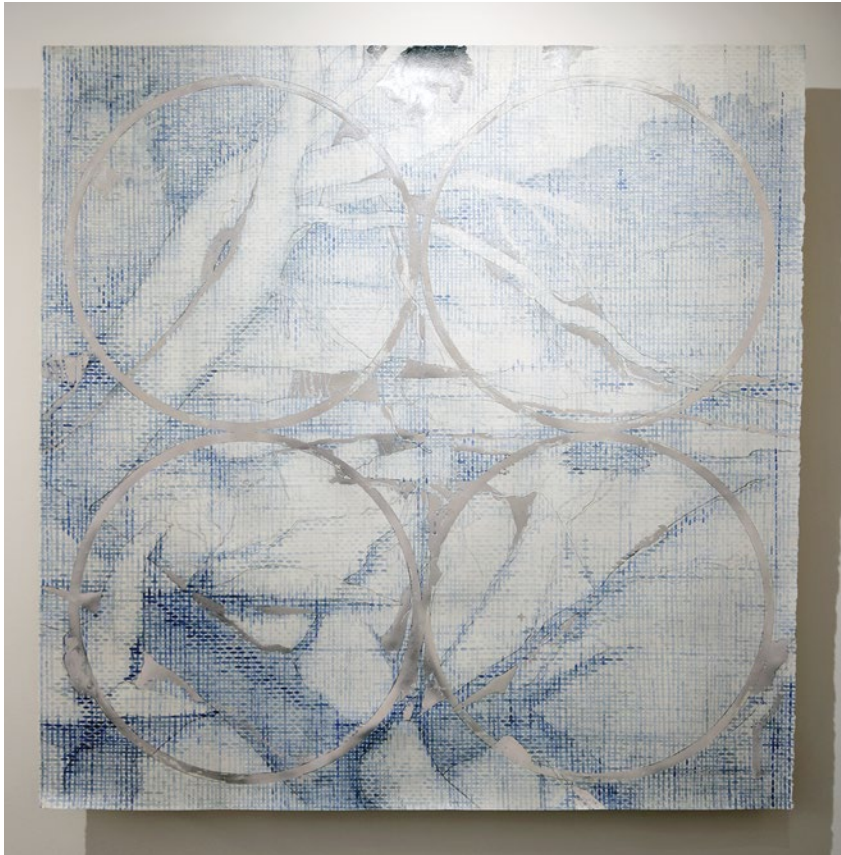
included studio art fundamentals, sculpture, drawing, management in the visual arts and a first-year seminar on the avant-garde. Somehow, aside from the teaching, grading, coaching and advising, Hallberg found time to retreat to her studio — “heaven on earth” — to make art intended to spark conversations.

Born in Connecticut but raised in Ohio, Hallberg knew from a young age she wanted to be an artist. Cutting out felt fabric to mount on burlap banners, diving in with crayons into coloring books that featured dolls of the world, making crayon scratch art, Hallberg kept going even when a seventh-grade teacher told her she would never become an

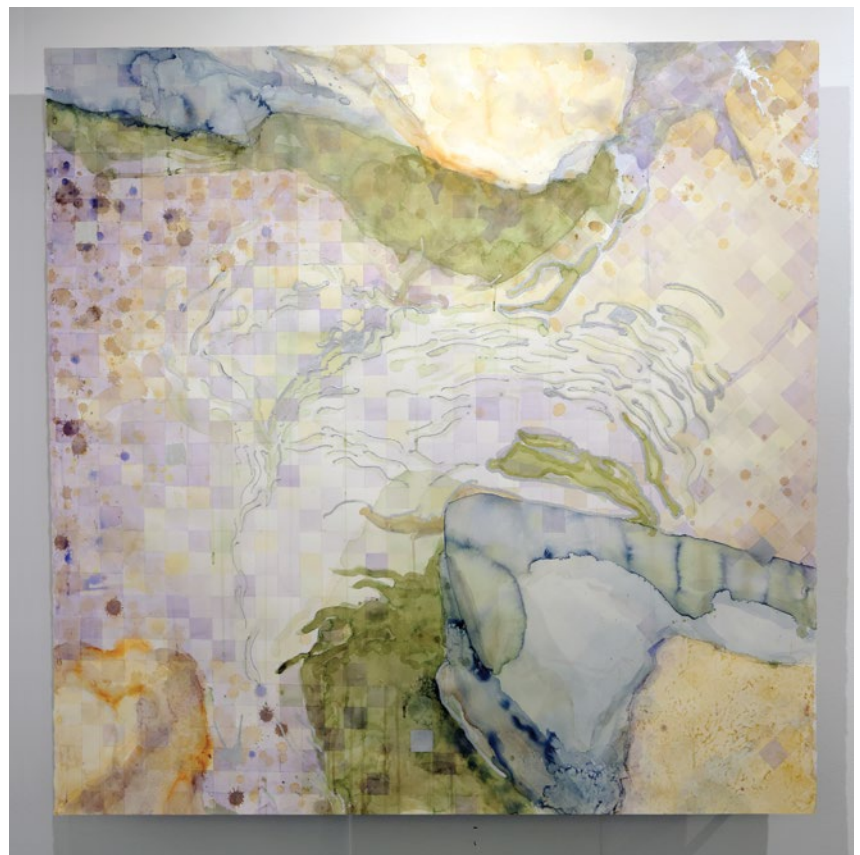
artist. “I thought that was kind of sad, but I didn’t pay any attention,” Hallberg says.

Hallberg had no artists in her family to emulate or museums to haunt on weekends. She found her Warren, Ohio, steel-town region “horrible,” lacking in artistic virtues and with characteristics she shudders to remember. High unemployment rates, “mafia, racism, you name it,” she says. “We actually had a mobster murder at the end of my block. A guy was out practicing golf in his front yard (and) got killed, got whacked.”

She was glad to leave. She went to what was then Mount Union College in Alliance, Ohio, and took “a zillion art



"IT'S
ABOUT
THE
LIGHT."



courses” — painting in acrylics, watercolor and sculpture — and classes in literary interpretation. She moved to Buffalo, New York, for her fourth year, finishing her degree at what was then known as SUNY Buffalo. She liked the city. “I mean, I know that sounds funny. Most people don’t,” she says.

Six blocks away from home was the Albright-Knox Art Gallery, since renamed the Buffalo AKG Art Museum. Its rich history includes how in the early 1900s it helped introduce photography to the world as fine art and became a frontrunner in exhibiting abstract expressionist works. Hallberg was a frequent visitor. She didn’t have much money, but what little she had she saved for trips to The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City.

On her list — and she got there — were “Treasures of Tutankhamun,” aka the King Tut exhibit, and “Degas in the Metropolitan.”

She continued to steep herself in art. She moved to Boulder, where she earned a Master of Fine Arts degree at the University of Colorado Boulder and later owned a frame shop in an art and drafting supplies store. She spent 1980 to 1990 in Colorado.

All her experiences studying art and, eventually, traveling to the best museums in the world played a part in Hallberg’s development. At Wake Forest, as an art teacher easily identified by her funky, colorful outfits and stylish round glasses, she sought to help students understand the fundamentals of critiquing art. How are the artists using texture? Line? Value? Shape? Color? How are these fundamentals organized? Are there big differences in light and dark? How do the artists “involve you and keep you involved” as the art is revealing itself?

“You’ve probably had this experience where you go — you love this painting — and look at the painting. You come back two years later, and you go, ‘I didn’t see that. I didn’t get it.’”

Hallberg adds, “It gives me goose bumps.”

As for creativity, she acknowledges adhering to an unpopular view. “I don’t think you can really teach it,” she says. “I mean, you can provide a space where it’s possible to be creative, but I don’t know that you can teach it.”

That comes from someone creative who says she was “wired that way ... from the get-go” to become an artist, constantly looking at other art works and noticing how she might translate visual, emotional and physical feelings into her work. When she swims laps, which she does regularly, she’s “thinking about the water and how the water feels on my skin and what that might look like” in a painting or drawing.

THE COOLEST THING ABOUT THOSE PAINTINGS IS THAT THEY CHANGE.”





Eventually, her brand of kinesthetic contemplation proved revelatory on walks through the nearby woods and grounds of Reynolda House and the mountains. Hallberg can thank Lola, the white, fluffy rescue dog with a bit of an attitude, for the nudge. Hallberg and her husband, artist Paul Bright, until recently the University's director of Wake Forest art galleries and programming, adopted Lola in 2014. They didn't know at first how old she was — they later learned she was 5 — just that she was a good companion who wanted to be with them every minute. One day, around 2015, Hallberg realized in Scales Fine Arts Center that Lola decided school was “boring and that there was actually a park out there, and ‘Why, in the world, would she want to be in class?’” Lola's humans got the message. Hallberg's daily, one-hour walks with Lola evolved; they began to feel like museum visits and helped Hallberg regain a sense of stability during a stressful time. Lola was happier, and so was Hallberg.

“You just start noticing things,” Hallberg says. “I was remembering even from childhood how amazing the world is.”

She began taking photos, sketching and imagining the viewpoints of birds and insects. She reveled in contemplating the complexity of nature and “the hubris” of thinking that a human might understand it all. She was inspired. After her father's death in 2017, she began what she calls the big paintings — the ones that went on exhibit last September in Reynolda House and the others in the series that have been rotated into the gallery before the exhibition ends on Oct. 19.

The description of the exhibition says the large-scale, square abstract paintings are “neither portrait nor landscape.” They are “a pretend space in which the viewer is able to reconsider and reimagine” their experience with the works. Nearly all of the paintings are composed with what Bright calls “a spectrum of color — cool playing off warm,



descriptive versus allusive — just as the compositions themselves occupy different places between poles of depiction and abstraction.”

“It's about the light,” Hallberg told me. “The coolest thing about those paintings is that they change.” The exhibition space or time of day or how one walks around the paintings can make a difference.

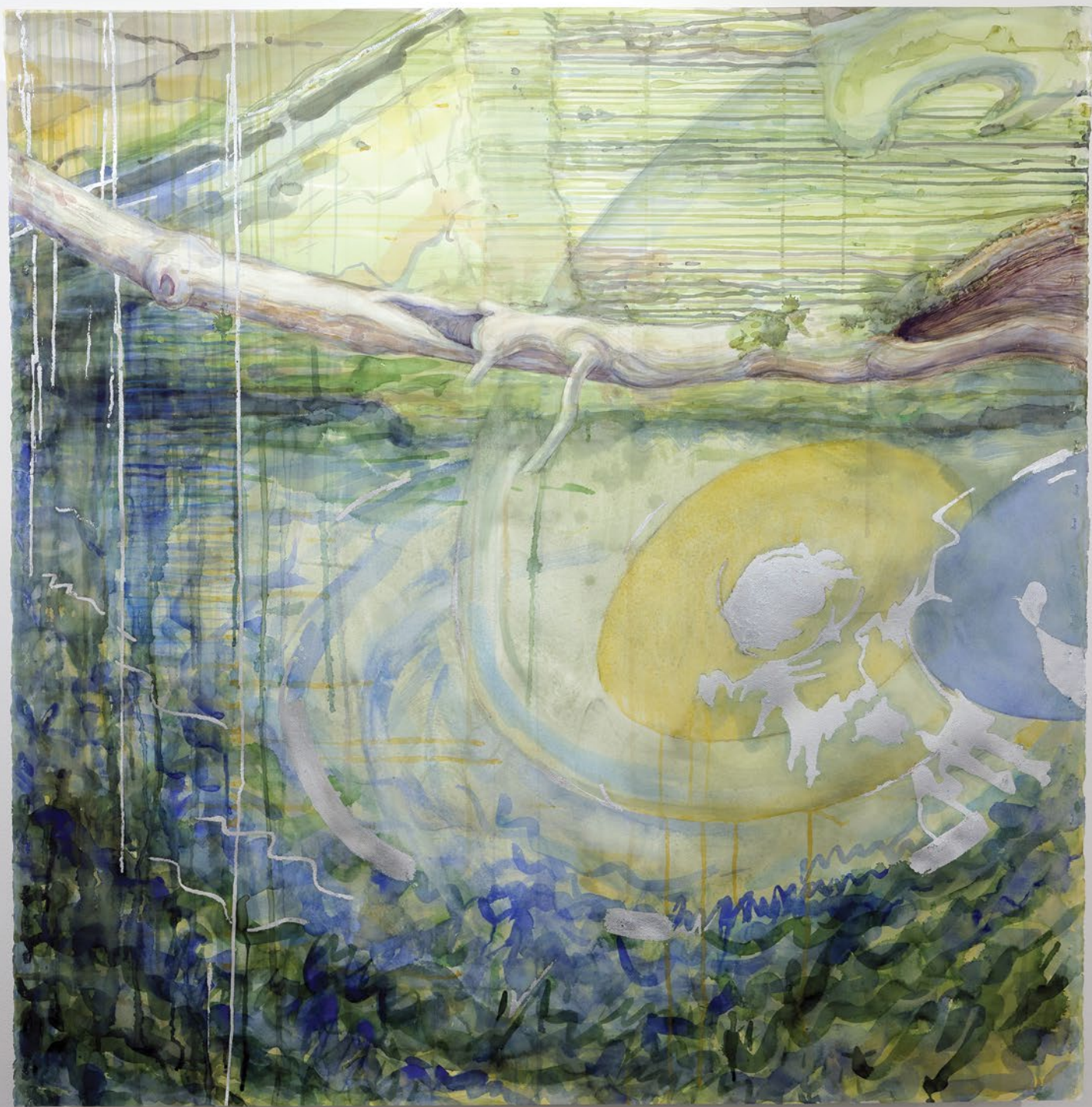
In a public talk at Reynolda House last fall, Hallberg made it clear that she wanted to use only enough representation in the paintings to ground the viewers and give them a clue about where they were. She shortened the exhibition's original title to “Phenoms” after she decided “Phenomenological Walks” was too much of a mouthful.



"I DON'T WANT TO
TELL THEM. I WANT TO
SUGGEST, AND LET IT
GO FROM THERE."







Examining one painting, the viewer can see a log and “waves” that might indicate water. “I don’t want to tell them. I want to suggest, and let it go from there,” Hallberg says. She sees paintings as “arenas” that allow the viewer to participate. (Having the canvases jut from the wall on their wooden bracing that Hallberg calls “sleds” helps further the goal.) For both Hallberg and Bright, their way of creating art can be traced back to an influential mentor: the late James Rosen. A gallery’s biography of Rosen notes how the artist would paint over his works on canvas with monotonal hues he called “veils” so that the works can be “completed by the observer.”

Bright says of Rosen, “He instilled in us that paintings are places where experiences happen. ... You don’t want to over-depict.”

In one “Phenoms” painting, Hallberg invites the viewer to experience her version of entanglement theory, which suggests that when two particles have become entangled, no matter how far apart they are later, they remain connected on a quantum level and react.

Bright, who moderated the talk, noted how “the entangled quality ... gives it a sort of a cosmic quality.” So does the salt that Hallberg worked into the painting to evoke “tiny explosions.”

Veronica Kavass, a former curator who teaches creative writing at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, captured the beauty of Hallberg’s series in a June 2024 essay about “Phenoms.” (Kavass became grants and stewardship manager at Reynolda House in late fall.) An excerpt:

There’s a kind of art where the artist seems to hover over you — they’ve crafted each detail intentionally, shaping your experience in a way that makes it clear how they want you to engage with their work. Sometimes this can be a good thing, but most of the time it feels too controlling.

Hallberg’s work does the opposite: they invite and provide entry, even potential guideposts. For example, the interplay between depicted elements and abstraction, metallic sheens and watercolor washes that introduce a dynamic contrast, capturing light in a way that suggests both the ephemeral and enduring aspects of nature. Yes, the mix of media and tones creates a visual space where the natural world is both familiar and mysterious. But it doesn’t feel like there is a prescribed way to understand the “Phenoms.” They function more like semi-permeable membranes — inviting some ideas and feelings in while filtering others out. ...

An audience member at the Reynolda House talk commented in the Q&A portion of the event that the paintings “brought me a new way of looking” — an invitation to experience the natural world and not always frame something in one’s mind as a photograph. This kind of seeing is unpredictable “and not standard,” she said.

Hallberg has a phrase for the predictable in artworks: “It’s nailed down, and then you’re gone.”

Not so with “Phenoms.” Arising from contemplation, this example of creative expression invites one to linger, to experience wonder and, above all, to feel how good it is to be outside. Lola understood.

Only a few weeks after the Reynolda talk, I was distraught to learn that Lola had died. But at least I could say I had met her on a warm autumn day when she received “good, old girl” pats from Bright and Hallberg. I understood then — and appreciate even more now — the role she played with that nudge to send Hallberg into the woods on sensory journeys filled with flights of reverie and flashes of insight.



Commencement 2025

Run with the Baton to Answer History's Call

By **MARIA HENSON ('82)** and **KATHERINE LAWS WATERS ('20)** | Photography by **LYNDSIE SCHLINK**

FOR THE CLASS OF 2025, the Commencement ceremony on May 19 on Hearn Plaza featured moments of levity and celebration amid clarion calls for courage and a defense of truth to meet perilous times.

The ceremony honored 1,218 undergraduates and capped a weekend of hooding ceremonies for 1,086 students who received advanced degrees from the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences and the business, law, divinity, professional studies and medical schools. On a partly

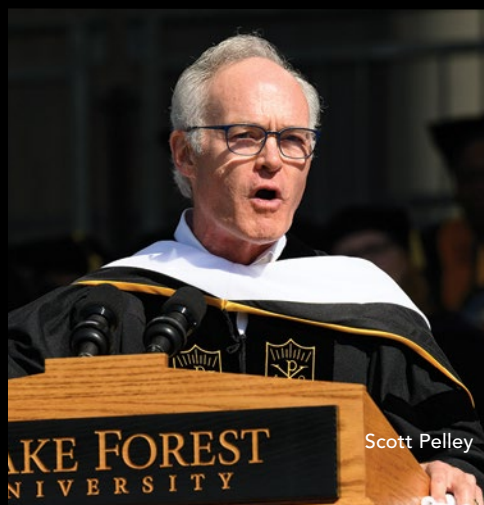
cloudy, 68-degree morning, undergraduates representing all 50 states and 41 foreign countries made their way past beaming family members to their seats.

President Susan R. Wente reminded the young people that her arrival as president in 2021 coincided with their academic journey. She recounted how in August 2021 she encouraged their academic pursuits. In four years together, beyond academics, she and these graduates had shared honored traditions and the thrill of three national

championships: debate, women's golf and, just a few hours earlier, men's tennis.

In a surprise move to celebrate the newest NCAA tennis champs, Wente threw a roll of toilet paper to the jubilant crowd and made "one more assignment: Roll the Quad!"

Shifting tone, Wente discussed what a Wake Forest education means. "You know that discovery and innovation without respect and care for one another will never solve the urgent problems facing society," she said.



Scott Pelley



Graduates will need the “essential trait” of courage. When facing difficult challenges to think critically, listen generously or lead with compassion, she said, “Trust yourselves to be brave enough to live Pro Humanitate.”

Commencement speaker Scott Pelley, journalist, author and a CBS “60 Minutes” correspondent who has earned more than 50 prestigious journalism awards, did not flinch in telling the graduates that “our sacred rule of law is under attack.” Journalism. Universities. Freedom of speech.

“And insidious fear is reaching through our schools, our businesses, our homes and into our private thoughts. The fear to speak in America,” he said. “If our government is, in Lincoln’s phrase, ‘of the people, by the people, for the people,’ then why are we afraid to speak?”

The Wake Forest classes of 1861, 1941 and 1968 did not choose their time of calling. History called them. And history is calling the Class of 2025 to stand up as the pursuit of truth is under attack, he said, “because ignorance works for power.” False narratives “can make criminals heroes and heroes criminals.”

With rights and laws in peril, Pelley asked rhetorically whether the truth can win. “Nothing else does,” he said. “It may be a long road, but the truth is coming.”

He asked graduates not to settle for anything less than following “the song” in their hearts and not to quit. “Who are you? You are the educated. You are the compassionate. You are the fierce defenders of democracy, the seekers of truth, the vanguard against ignorance. ... We’re handing you the baton. Run with it.”

Pelley received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree. Other recipients at earlier ceremonies were Dr. Akinyele “Yele” Aluko (MBA ‘14), EY’s chief medical officer and founding director of the EY Center for Health Equity, a Doctor of Business Administration honorary degree; Dr. John Fiadjo, anesthesiologist-in-chief and chair of anesthesiology and critical care medicine at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, a Doctor of Science honorary degree; and Carmine Di Sibio (P ‘25), former global chairman and CEO of EY, a Doctor of Business Administration honorary degree.

The Baccalaureate speaker in Wait Chapel on May 18 was the Rev. Dr. Emma Jordan-Simpson, president of Auburn Theological Seminary in New York.

“We’re called to build a thriving world where all of us belong,” she said. She named cases in history when “love and justice have been withheld,” from slavery’s auction blocks to the Trail of Tears to Japanese internment camps. “But in every age,” she said, “love and joy has turned the tide.”

The time-honored tradition at Commencement in which graduating ROTC cadets march onstage to be sworn in as second lieutenants in the Army drew loud applause. Eight cadets took the oath to defend the U.S. Constitution.

Graduate Ashley Almanza (‘25), a first-generation student from Dallas, acknowledged on Commencement morning the hard work and sacrifice to reach this day but insisted the honor be shared by her mother and her late father. Earning a degree, she said, is “something I did for myself in the future. But I’m holding the hands of the people who helped me.”

Retiring Faculty

FROM THE REYNOLDA CAMPUS

Jane Aiken, J.D., Professor of Law, five years

Jane W. Albrecht (P ‘04), Ph.D., Professor of Spanish, 37 years

Tom K. Aleman, Professor of the Practice in Accountancy, seven years

Paul R. Anderson, Ph.D., Professor of Physics, 35 years

Roger L. Beahm, Professor of the Practice in Marketing, 20 years

Stewart A. Carter (P ‘02), Ph.D., Professor of Music, 43 years

Leigh Ann Hallberg (P ‘12), M.F.A., Teaching Professor of Art, 26 years

Katy Harriger, Ph.D., Professor of Politics & International Affairs, 39 years

Natalie A. W. Holzwarth, Ph.D., Professor of Physics, 42 years

Linda S. Howe, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Spanish, 32 years

Kathryn Levy, Professor of the Practice of Music, 37 years

Mary Beth Lock (MALS ‘19), Associate Dean, Z. Smith Reynolds Library, 16 years

Dan Locklair, D.M.A., Professor of Music and Composer-in-Residence, 43 years

FROM THE MEDICAL CAMPUS

Laurie Ann Demmer, M.D., FACMG, Professor of Pediatrics, 12 years

Cristin M. Ferguson, M.D., Professor of Orthopedic Surgery & Rehabilitation, 20 years

John H. Gilliam III (P ‘02), M.D., Professor of Internal Medicine, Division of Gastroenterology, 46 years

Mary N. Hall, M.D., Professor of Family and Community Medicine, 37 years

Annette T. Hastie, Ph.D., Professor of Internal Medicine, Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care, Allergy & Immunology, 21 years

Bruce A. Lessey, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, six years

Douglas S. Lyles, Ph.D., Professor of Biochemistry, 46 years

Mary F. Lyles, M.D., FACP, Professor of Internal Medicine, Division of Gerontology & Geriatrics, 47 years

Gail S. Marion (PA ‘80), PA-C, Ph.D., Professor of Family and Community Medicine, 44 years

Pat C. Lord (PhD ‘86), Teaching Professor of Biology, 25 years

David Lubin, Ph.D., Charlotte C. Weber Professor of Art, 25 years

Barry Maine, Ph.D., Professor of English, 44 years

Gordon McCray (‘85), Ph.D., Associate Professor in Management Information Systems, 30 years

Stan Meiburg (‘75), Ph.D., Professor of the Practice in Politics & International Affairs, eight years

J. Robert Nations, D.Min., Assistant Teaching Professor of Counseling, 14 years

Alan Palmiter, J.D., Professor of Law, 38 years

W. Jack Rejeski (P ‘05, ‘08), Ph.D., Professor of Health & Exercise Science, 47 years

Brett Rosenberg, Ph.D., Assistant Teaching Professor of Italian, nine years

Rebecca S. Thomas (P ‘04, ‘12), Ph.D., Professor of German, 32 years

Mary Wayne-Thomas, M.F.A., Professor of Theatre, 45 years

Phoebe Zerwick, Professor of the Practice, Writing Program, and Director of Journalism, 15 years

Donald A. McClain, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of the Clinical and Translational Science Institute, 10 years

John D. McConnell, M.D., Professor of Urology, 16 years

Susan A. Melin (MD ‘85), M.D., Professor of Cancer Medicine, 24 years

Carol Milligan, Ph.D., Professor of Translational Neuroscience, 29 years

Mary Claire O’Brien (P ‘11, ‘18), M.D., Professor of Emergency Medicine, 21 years

Stephen P. Peters, M.D., Ph.D., Professor of Internal Medicine, Division of Pulmonary, Critical Care, Allergy & Immunology, 21 years

David C. Pollock (‘84, MD ‘92, P ‘25), M.D., Professor of Orthopedic Surgery and Rehabilitation, nine years

Laura J. Veach (‘79, MAEd ‘82), Ph.D., Professor of Surgery, Division of Trauma, 15 years

James Koudy Williams, D.V.M., Professor of the Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine, 37 years





1 South Residence Hall has been renamed Dr. Larry D. Hopkins and Professor Beth N. Hopkins Hall to recognize two alumni trailblazers who were college sweethearts. **Beth Norbrey Hopkins ('73, P '12)**, one of Wake Forest's first two Black women residential students, has advocated for justice, equity, education and athletics across her extensive career. She worked as an assistant U.S. attorney in Virginia and Louisiana and assistant attorney general in Virginia. She returned to Wake Forest in the 1980s and held many leadership and teaching roles, including University trustee and inaugural director of Wake Law's Smith Anderson Center for Community Outreach. In 2023, she received the Distinguished Alumni Award and the Billie Jean King Champion of Equality award.

The late **Dr. Larry Hopkins ('72, MD '77, P '12)**, a Wake Forest Sports Hall

of Fame running back, turned down a chance to play professional football to attend Wake Forest School of Medicine. He became a physician and assistant professor of obstetrics and gynecology who led efforts to improve access and outcomes for women's and neonatal health in Winston-Salem. In 2020, Hopkins was awarded the University's top honor, the Medallion of Merit. *More at bit.ly/HopkinsHall*

2 **Don Flow (MBA '83)**, chairman and CEO of Flow Automotive Cos., community leader and University trustee, received the Medallion of Merit, Wake Forest's highest honor. He chaired the record-breaking Wake Will campaign. Flow received the Distinguished Alumni Award in 2017. Flow also has been recognized statewide for his work promoting economic and cultural gains.

"Don is an invaluable member of our Wake Forest community," said **President Susan R. Wente**. "Our University continues to benefit from his love for Wake Forest and his dedication to its future, and he is truly emblematic of the spirit of the founders." *More at bit.ly/DonFlowMedallionofMerit*

3 Against a backdrop of challenges to higher education from the new federal administration, President **Wente**, Provost **Michele Gillespie** and Executive Vice President **Jackie Travisano** sent a letter to the Wake Forest community affirming the University's institutional commitments. They wrote: "While we continue to do our work in compliance with applicable laws and regulations,

- We will uphold Wake Forest's mission.
- We will champion Wake Forest students, faculty and staff in their learning,

academic ambitions, research, scholarly pursuits, creative endeavors and professional journeys.

- We will advance our collective understanding and promotion of academic freedom and free expression.
- We will embrace all people, recognizing that education for all and research to benefit all are vital to advancing knowledge for the greater good.
- We will support our alumni in their lifelong pursuit of learning, including those impacted by recent federal changes, with career counseling and transition workshops.
- We will serve the broader communities in which we live, work and learn.”

More at bit.ly/AffirmingCommitments

4 On April 25, the University Board of Trustees adopted a Statement on Freedom of Expression and Academic Freedom affirming a commitment to those values as reflecting universities’ central role “as the primary engines to generate and disseminate knowledge in our society.”

The statement said, “The culture within great universities — those that are steeped in independence of thought and academic freedom — creates a community in which lines of inquiry can be pursued unfettered. We create the most meaningful new knowledge when we are exposed to a variety of viewpoints and to the rigorous and respectful debate that can occur when ideas intersect. And we learn best when we evaluate various ideas that others seek to share so that our knowledge and values are refined and improved when interrogated in a setting rooted in curiosity.” *More at bit.ly/FreedomStatement*

5 Wake Forest named **Lauren Pressley** dean of the Z. Smith Reynolds Library. She worked most recently for the University of Washington Libraries in Seattle as senior associate dean for research and learning services and previously at Wake Forest. *More at bit.ly/LaurenPressley*

6 The College Board of Visitors recognized Associate Professor of Anthropology **Sherri Lawson Clark** and Assistant Dean of Academic Advising **Karen Bennett (MALS ’98)** for their leadership. **Lawson Clark** has led wide-ranging initiatives, including expanding the American Ethnic Studies program and facilitating connections between faculty

and community groups. **Bennett** has been a distinguished leader in student advising. *More at bit.ly/CBOVAwards*

7 Building on an agreement last year with Winston-Salem State University, the School of Law created partnerships with UNC Charlotte and North Carolina A&T State University to advance access to legal education. Wake Forest Law will host pre-law programming to expand awareness of and remove barriers to legal education. **Andrew Klein**, Wake Forest Law’s dean, said that the University intends to provide scholarships as well. Separately, the School of Law and School of Professional Studies started a new program, the Juris Doctor/Master of Health Administration joint degree, designed for students interested in shaping healthcare policy, administration and law. *More at bit.ly/UNCCpartnership, bit.ly/NCATLaw and bit.ly/LawHealth*

8 Two Wake Forest researchers were elected 2024 Fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the world’s largest general scientific society: **Kimberley McAllister**, professor of biology and professor of translational neurosciences, as well as vice provost for Research, Scholarly Inquiry and Creative Activity; and Professor of Chemistry **Abdou Lachgar**. *More at bit.ly/2024ScienceFellows*

9 Baker Family Professor of Physics **Oana Jurchescu** was elected a 2025 Fellow of the Materials Research Society, an honor recognizing the most accomplished members of the global materials research community. *More at bit.ly/Jurchescu*

10 The University honored **Bill Hayes** and the late **Audley Bell (’73)** with the Robert Grant and Butch Henry Trailblazer Award, which celebrates student-athletes, staff, alumni and community members. Hayes joined Wake Forest’s football staff in 1973, becoming the first Black assistant coach in ACC history. Bell became the first Black ACC tennis player when he joined the University’s team in 1972. *More at bit.ly/TrailblazersAward*

11 Professor of Politics & International Affairs **Katy Harriger**, a faculty member who has retired after 39 years, including eight years as the first faculty

director of the Wake Washington Center, delivered her “Last Lecture,” titled “What We Learned: Reflections on the Teacher Scholar Model,” to alumni, former Wake Washington participants and DC Deacs in Washington, D.C. Every guest received a pocket copy of the U.S. Constitution.

12 A.C. Reid Professor of Philosophy **Christian Miller** gave the 25th annual Hubert McNeill Poteat Lecture on “Honesty: Preserving our Most Treasured Virtue in an Increasingly Dishonest World.” *More at bit.ly/PoteatMiller*

13 The 2025 12-hour **Wake ’N Shake** Dance Marathon raised more than \$322,975 for the **Brian Piccolo (’65, P ’87, ’89)** Cancer Research Fund. **Mike Ford (’72)**, a student life administrator and campus leader for 36 years who championed Wake ’N Shake’s start, made a special appearance. *More at wakenshake.wfu.edu*

14 Wake Forest ranked No. 18 on Poets&Quants’ 2025 list of the nation’s best undergraduate business schools and No. 25 for best online MBA program. *More at bit.ly/BusinessSchoolRanking*

15 **Claudia Vega**, a fellow at the Sabin Family Center for Environment and Sustainability, was named a 2025 TED Fellow for her groundbreaking work on the environmental and health impacts of mercury pollution from illegal gold mining in the Amazon. *More at bit.ly/ClaudiaVegaTED*

16 **Debbie French**, associate professor of science education, Bitove Family Faculty Fellow and associate director of the Graduate Education Program, was named a 2024 Sound Science Fellow by the National Center for Science Education (NCSE). *More at bit.ly/DebbieFrenchFellowship*

17 **Lynne Heflin**, administrative assistant to the University’s head men’s basketball coach for 35 years, received the **Gene Hooks** Lifetime Achievement Award. Hooks (’50, P ’81, ’87, ’89) was the University’s athletics director from 1964 to 1992. *More at bit.ly/LynneHeflin*

DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI

REFLECT

The Spirit of Wake Forest



*Wake Forest and the Alumni Council named **Syd Kitson ('81, P '08)** and **Barbee Myers Oakes ('80, MA '81)** to receive the 2025 Distinguished Alumni Awards. They were honored for their service to the University and for exemplifying Pro Humanitate at a gala April 25 in the Sutton Center.*

Syd Kitson pursued his dream to build America's first solar town in southwest Florida for more than a decade. He envisioned a classic American hometown that emphasized community, nature, sustainability, clean energy and technology.

Friends told him it was a bad idea, but he persevered. "My father used to say, 'Don't ever be afraid to fail.' More people have good ideas that don't go forward because they're afraid to fail," says Kitson, chairman and CEO of Florida-based real estate firm Kitson & Partners. "I've always believed that it's the intersection between dreaming and doing that can change the world."

A former football player at Wake Forest and in the NFL, Kitson realized his dream in 2018 when residents began moving into Babcock Ranch, near Fort Myers. Today, the town has about 11,000 residents, toward a projected population of 50,000. An 870-acre solar farm and the country's largest solar-plus-battery storage system are already providing enough renewable energy to power the town.

Kitson, Time magazine's 2023 Dreamer of the Year, is most proud of what he didn't build. When his firm purchased the 91,000-acre Babcock property, it sold 73,000 acres of old-growth forests and wetlands — home to abundant wildlife and endangered species — to the state of Florida and Lee County for a nature preserve. It was the single largest land conservation deal in the state's history. Kitson also set aside half of the town land for parks, trails, wetlands and community gardens.



"This was an opportunity to create a new town ... (and) work with the environment and preserve most of the land and do something special," he says.

Wake Forest recognized Kitson as an "environmental guardian whose work was shaped by the values of his alma mater and his tireless work ethic."

Barbee Myers Oakes

recalls a vivid moment sitting with her grandfather in 1985. Oakes, who earned a Ph.D., was telling him about her new faculty appointment at Penn State. That's when she learned that her grandfather, David Lee Myers, helped clear the land for Wake Forest to be built in Winston-Salem, never imagining his granddaughter would be allowed to attend one day.

Oakes broke barriers. She moved

from being a member of a farming family in East Bend, North Carolina, to undergrad and grad student to professor to administrator and leader.

She arrived as the first in her family to go to a four-year college and found administrators and faculty who supported her, including in health and exercise science, where Professor Paul Ribisl (P '89, '91) encouraged her to become the first Black student in the department's graduate school program.

Oakes became Wake Forest's director of the Office of Multi-cultural Affairs from 1995 to 2009, then assistant provost for diversity and inclusion and later chief diversity officer. She left to work at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas from 2017 to 2021.

Wake Forest lauded how for decades Oakes "positively impacted college students' lives;" helped cultivate academic and personal success among all students, especially young people of color; developed the framework of a diversity, inclusion and equity commitment to her alma mater and became the first Black woman with a Ph.D. to join the influential American College of Sports Medicine.

"It was important to me to help enlarge people's vision for what was possible in their lives, like I had a spirit of exhortation," Oakes says. Her mission has been a big one — "creating a sense of belonging for everyone. That's always been at the heart of what I've done."

For videos and more on these Distinguished Alumni Award recipients, see bit.ly/WFUDAA2025

Next level

Get ready for a bigger, more robust entrepreneurship program

THANKS TO A \$30 MILLION GIFT

from an anonymous donor, the University's Center for Entrepreneurship will expand access and opportunities for undergraduates.

The gift is heralded as one of the most significant in Wake Forest's history — the largest gift ever from a single family to an academic program.

"This remarkable support allows us to elevate our Center for Entrepreneurship to new heights, ensuring extraordinary programs and offerings for our students," said President Susan R. Wenthe. "This gift — and the inspiration it will spark — are vital to shaping the future achievements of students, faculty, staff and alumni."

Entrepreneurship is the most popular minor at Wake Forest, with 430 students in the program last fall and a faculty that in the past five years has grown to six. Students learn from practicing entrepreneurs what it means to launch a business from the ground up. They learn proven strategies for generating innovative ideas and determining which ones are most likely to succeed, and they learn about scaling a startup into a profitable business venture.

For the entrepreneurship program, the donor's generosity will have wide-ranging impact. Over the next two years, the center will hire four full-time faculty, preferably entrepreneurs who have founded, scaled and exited their own ventures. The new faculty will join teams at the center's well-known accelerators: Deacon Springboard for early-stage startups to help students test, validate and launch their ideas and Startup Lab, the marquee practicum for students developing concepts into ventures via access to mentors and seed capital.

There will be new course offerings, and the entrepreneurship program will be able to reduce class sizes and allow for more one-on-one mentoring. The center's capital to invest in student startups is set to triple with the money. The donation also will help with construction costs to move the program from Reynolda Hall into state-of-the-art space in Alumni Hall, which is scheduled to be renovated and slated also to house the computer science, education and philosophy departments.

"This gift will allow us to do what we already do well — on steroids," Dan Cohen, the center's John C. Whitaker Jr. executive director and professor of the practice, told Triad Business Journal. "It's nothing short of transformative."



From left, Sam Chason ('20) and Matt Gronberg ('20) on "Shark Tank" in 2022

He noted the strength of having the center within the University's College of Arts and Sciences: "When you put an art student with a computer science student and an engineering student, they come up with amazing ideas."

Entrepreneurship courses are open to undergraduates with any major. The courses incorporate hands-on experience and groundbreaking research. Cohen and Greg Pool, associate professor of the practice in entrepreneurship, teamed with Heidi Neck, a Babson College entrepreneurial studies professor, to write "The IDEATE Method: Identifying High-Potential Entrepreneurial Ideas." Wake Forest uses the method to help students develop a skill set, as the book says, "to spot problems, develop new ideas and evaluate their value as potential entrepreneurial opportunities."

For a quick overview of some of the components, IDEATE stands for **Identify** a "migraine headache" problem worth solving; **Discover** opportunities in problem-rich environments; **Enhance** by adding innovation and novelty to existing opportunities; **Anticipate** by examining how sources of change are affecting existing markets and creating new ones; **Target** by exploring and connecting with early adopters; and **Evaluate** by scoring, selecting and defending high-quality ideas.

It's an award-winning method that has become a model for other universities across the country. And Wake Forest entrepreneurship students can point to startup success stories. One of the most famous: In 2022, more than 3 million viewers tuned into ABC's "Shark Tank" to watch Sam Chason ('20) and Matt Gronberg ('20), pictured above, explain the plans behind Storage Scholars, a business born in a dorm room that makes it easier for college students to store belongings for the summer and during other breaks. The Wake Forest friends won \$250,000 in funding from billionaire Mark Cuban.

It's my pleasure to welcome members of the Class of 2025 to the alumni family! I hope you'll take advantage of all that Wake Forest offers alumni, including career development and professional networking, connection with your local WAKECommunity and numerous opportunities to return to campus. As you move to your new home, be sure to update your contact information in WakeNetwork (wakenetwork.wfu.edu).

When you return to Winston-Salem this fall for Homecoming and Reunion Weekend (Oct. 24-26), you'll notice the exciting progress on The Grounds, a mixed-use residential, entertainment, retail and office development around Allegacy Stadium. The project is led by two active alumni: Adam Parker ('10), senior vice president at Atlanta-based Carter development firm and a member of the Alumni Council, and Coleman Team ('09), president and managing partner of Front Street Capital in Winston-Salem and a member of the School of Business Board of Visitors. Thank you to Adam and Coleman for revitalizing this area and to all of our alumni leaders for your service in your communities!

— Shelley Slaughter Holden ('00, JD '03), Winston-Salem
President, Wake Forest Alumni Council

Framing our Future

framework.wfu.edu

Wake Forest is already looking ahead to celebrating its bicentennial in 2034. A strategic framework, "Framing our Future," for the University's third century, has been developed through conversations with more than 1,000 faculty, staff, students, alumni, parents and friends.

University leaders have already met to discuss "Framing our Future" with alumni and parents in Atlanta; Boston; Philadelphia; San Francisco; Charleston, South Carolina; Palm Beach, Florida; Washington, D.C.; and Raleigh and Greensboro, North Carolina. Additional events are planned for the fall. To learn more, visit framework.wfu.edu or contact Alumni Engagement at alumni@wfu.edu.

Pro Humanitate Days

More than 250 alumni in 19 cities in 11 states volunteered in alumni-organized projects during Pro Humanitate Days. Among their contributions: Demon Deacons in San Francisco, Winston-Salem and Charleston, South Carolina, worked at local food banks. Alumni in Richmond, Virginia, volunteered at The Salvation Army, while Charlotte alumni packed 1,000 end-of-year goody bags for students in the Heart Math Tutoring program. And alumni in the North Carolina mountains cleaned up debris from Hurricane Helene.



Alumni in Atlanta (above), Joplin, Missouri, and Charleston, South Carolina, helped our four-legged furry friends during Pro Humanitate Days.

LET US HEAR FROM YOU

Have a question? Contact the Alumni Engagement Office at 800-752-8568, email alumni@wfu.edu or visit alumni.wfu.edu.

The Alumni Engagement Office has moved! We're now located in the University Corporate Center near Allegacy Stadium. Please reach out to us if you'd like to visit.

TRAVEL WITH THE DEACS

bit.ly/Deacontravel

Embark on an unforgettable journey with fellow alumni:

Flavors of Northern Italy,
Oct. 3-11

Cruise the Danube, Oct. 19-26

Montreal and Quebec City
Christmas, Dec. 3-8

El Camino de Santiago,
March 20-April 1

Dutch Waterways, April 18-26

Canary Islands, Morocco
and Iberia, April 28-May 10

See additional 2026 trips at bit.ly/Deacontravel

PERSONAL AND CAREER ADVICE

alumni.opcd.wfu.edu

There's an entire team dedicated to helping alumni navigate their personal and professional lives after college. Here are a few of the programs and resources offered by the Alumni Personal & Career Development Center.

Learn Model: Get Started

A self-directed, personal learning framework to develop professionally and take the next step in your career.

Recent Graduates

Register for Year One (how to make the most of your first year after graduating) or Your First Five (the areas you need to master in your first five years after college).

For Everyone

Connect with a career coach or an alumni career adviser and join the Wake Forest alumni group on LinkedIn.

1960s

George Williamson ('61) received the 2024 Distinguished Alumni Award from Vanderbilt University's Graduate Department of Religion for his commitment to social justice, ministry and peacemaking. He received his master's degree and PhD from Vanderbilt. As an undergraduate, Williamson was among students from Wake Forest and Winston-Salem State University who took part in the historic 1960 lunch counter sit-in at the Winston-Salem Woolworth's. He is a retired pastor and co-founder of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America. He and his wife, **Carol Wagster Williamson ('64)**, live in Katonah, NY. They have three children and four grandchildren.

Bobby G. Robinson ('62, P '83) was inducted into North Carolina's George Whitfield Hall of Fame. After playing baseball and football at Wake Forest, he coached golf, football, baseball and basketball primarily at Clinton High School, his alma mater. During his tenure as head football coach, the Clinton football team won 10 conference championships from 1970 to 1987. In 2019, the Clinton High School football stadium was named in honor of Robinson, who is also a member of the Sampson County Sports Hall of Fame.

Ed Fuller ('67) received the Americas Lodging Investment Summit Lifetime Achievement Award for his five decades in the hospitality industry. During his 40-year career at Marriott, he was chief commercial officer and Marriott International's president and managing director of international lodging. He retired from Marriott in 2012 and has written five books. He was a captain in the U.S. Army and earned the Bronze Star and Army Commendation Medal for his service in Vietnam and Germany. He and his wife, Michela Fuller, live in Laguna Hills, CA, and have two children and three grandchildren.

1970s

Roy A. Archbell Jr. ('71, JD '74) wrote his third book, "Beaufort County, North Carolina Ancestors." He received the 2024 Award for Excellence in Publishing in the family history category from the North Carolina Genealogical Society. Archbell practiced law on the Outer Banks for 40 years until retiring in 2015. He lives outside Roanoke, VA, with his wife, Mary "Charlie" Archbell.

Douglas Waller ('71, P '03) wrote a biography, "The Determined Spy: The Turbulent Life and Times of CIA Pioneer Frank Wisner," about a little-known early CIA leader during the Cold War. Waller is a New York Times best-selling author who has written seven books on the U.S. military and intelligence. He is a former correspondent for Newsweek and Time, where he covered the CIA, Pentagon, State Department, White House and Congress. He and his wife, **Judy Waller (P '03)**, live in Raleigh.



Williamson
('61)



Fehring
('75)



Cahill
('81)



Kitson
('81)



Acree
('82, JD '89)

R. Lee Farmer (JD '73, P '00) was appointed to the North Carolina Ethics Commission, which oversees the conduct of more than 7,000 legislators, judicial officers and certain state employees. He is a past president of the North Carolina Association of Municipal Attorneys and North Carolina Association of County Attorneys. Farmer has practiced law in Caswell County since 1973.

Costi Kutteh ('73) has served as mayor of Statesville, NC, for 20 years, but will not seek re-election. The city's longest serving mayor, he is a Statesville native and a lawyer. During his tenure, the city increased water and sewer capacity, expanded the regional airport, revitalized the downtown district and started construction on a municipal operations center. His wife, **Teresa Currin Kutteh ('73, MAEd '74)**, is a retired school counselor.

Reece Saunders ('74, JD '77) received The Order of the Long Leaf Pine, North Carolina's highest award for service. Saunders was district attorney in Anson, Richmond and Scotland counties for 14 years before retiring in 2024. He was also in private practice and was a district court judge in the 1980s.

Thomas Keith Fehring ('75) received the 2024 Honored Surgeon Award from the North Carolina Orthopaedic Association. Fehring led Ortho-Carolina's Hip and Knee Center for 40 years and trained more than 100 fellows and residents before retiring. He was president of the American Association of Hip and Knee Surgeons and the International Knee Society. Fehring and his wife, **Anne York Fehring ('75)**, live in Charlotte.

Bill Webb ('75, JD '78) received The Order of the Long Leaf Pine, North Carolina's highest award for service. He practiced law for 45 years and was the lawyer for Richmond County (NC). He is also owner of The Webb Farm in Ellerbe, NC.

Hugh Hamilton ('77) retired after 26 years as pastor at Trinity Presbyterian Church in Pensacola, FL, and 45 years in ministry. He and his wife, Sandy Hamilton, travel, visit family, play golf, read and volunteer. Hamilton enjoys visiting his sister, **Paige Parsons Lewis ('76)**, and his Wake Forest roommate, **Mark Robinson ('77, MBA '79)**.

Steve Shuff (JD '78) is co-founder of The NOAH (No One Alone or Hungry) Foundation of Ohio, which provides a free Christmas Day dinner to residents of Seneca County, OH. Last Christmas, the organization celebrated 17 years. Shuff is a longtime judge for the Seneca County Common Pleas Court.

1980s

Tony Cahill ('81) finished third in his age group and 182nd overall in the Myrtle Beach Marathon's 5K in March. He has logged more than 5,000 miles of mostly barefoot beach running since 2005.

Syd Kitson ('81, P '08) received the 2024 Governor's Business Leader Award from the Florida Council of 100. He also received Wake Forest's 2025 Distinguished Alumni Award. Kitson is chair and CEO of real estate firm Kitson & Partners, which is developing Babcock Ranch in southwest Florida, the first solar-powered town in the country. More at bit.ly/SydKitson

Reid Acree Jr. ('82, JD '89) was named to the 2025 edition of The Best Lawyers in America in workers' compensation law. He represents injured workers with an emphasis on lung diseases and cancer cases. He has had his own firm in Salisbury, NC, since 2003.

Jennifer Early Calvert ('82) is executive director of Finish the Work, which completes humanitarian construction projects in Central America. In the last two years, the nonprofit has completed two churches in Honduras. Calvert lives in Concord, NC.

Eric R. Spence (JD '82) was included in the 2025 North Carolina Super Lawyers magazine in commercial real estate law. He is of counsel at Ragsdale Liggett in Raleigh.

Wake Forest Magazine welcomes Class Notes submissions from alumni. There are three ways to submit information:



STANDARD MAIL:

Wake Forest Magazine
1834 Wake Forest Road
PO Box 7205
Winston-Salem, NC 27109-7205



EMAIL:

classnotes@wfu.edu



ONLINE:

magazine.wfu.edu/submit

AN ABIDING LOVE FOR WAKE FOREST

**Magazine Editor
Maria Henson ('82) retires
from a Pro Humanitate
career in journalism**

By Carol L. Hanner

Maria Henson ('82), editor of Wake Forest Magazine for 15 years, will retire in July after having led her team to more than 30 awards for general excellence and writing during her tenure.

The honors include Robert Sibley Magazine of the Year in 2019, the most prestigious international award for higher education magazines by the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE).

Maria's time at her beloved alma mater represents "a crowning chapter" after 27 years of stellar newspaper work that produced two Pulitzer Prizes, says Mark Petersen, senior vice president of University Advancement.

But Maria's legacy, say Petersen and others, lies not in awards, but in her devotion to building relationships, honoring alumni with masterful storytelling and conveying the Wake Forest story. She brought her personal touch to the mission.

"You can really just tell and feel all throughout the magazine — it's

got personality, voice, character in it," Petersen says.

Universities often are tempted to pack their magazines with what they want alumni to know rather than focusing on readers' perspectives, Petersen says. Maria's goal was to move, surprise and engage alumni while maintaining the magazine's long commitment to showcasing Wake Forester successes and Pro Humanitate lives.

Jeanne Whitman Bobbitt ('79, MBA '87), chair of the Wake Forest Board of Trustees, says the magazine "was always wonderful people doing wonderful work, but she redefined it."

Maria elevated the design, graphics, editorial content and the range and treatment of topics covered, says Bobbitt, who oversaw the magazine briefly when she worked in University communications.

Aside from the technical achievements, Maria "was faithful to that Wake Forest persona of serious character as well as its lighthearted and open, friendly demeanor. That's a very complex calculus, and she just did it so beautifully," Bobbitt says. "She was transformational."

Retired Senior Vice President and General Counsel Reid Morgan ('75, JD '79, P '14, '19), who spent 44 years in the administrations of four University presidents, has the long view of Wake Forest. He is secretary emeritus of the board of trustees after filling that role for 22 years.

He and Maria are friends, "and our conversations, as well as watching the magazine, tell me that she is a great student of Wake Forest's history, the narrative of Wake Forest," Morgan says. "She's also analytical, and she gets into the deeper themes and identity of the school, ... underlining things that illustrate the best of who we are.

"You feel the journalistic integrity that she applies to the job."

DEACON HUMILITY

Let it be clear that Maria was uncomfortable with this story that Petersen assigned me to write, even as she wrote a well-deserved tribute to retiring Senior Editor Kerry M. King ('85). (See page 84.)

Her career reflections shine a light on others.



Maria Henson ('82)

"I remember graduating in 1982 and thinking about how one of my mentors, Bynum Shaw ('48, P '75), who taught journalism, returned to our alma mater after his many adventures as a newspaperman. 'Wouldn't that be great if I could return one day, too?' " Maria recalls.

"It has been great indeed. My role overseeing Wake Forest Magazine and teaching journalism ... has been exhilarating and filled with unforgettable conversations with students, alumni, faculty and staff.

"I leave proud of the magazine's success, well aware that this publication has been the work of a team through the years, and I am grateful to each person who served with me. Thanks to our readers for sharing my love of Wake Forest and to Bynum and other mentors who have passed on but whose guidance I still cherish."

Like so many amazing and humble alumni, including those she has written about, Maria focuses on tooting other people's horns, not her own.

But toot about her, we shall.

She almost never mentions her Pulitzer Prize in 1992 for her investigative editorial series on domestic violence that led Kentucky to enact every law proposed in the editorials. Neither does she tout her role as editor of a series of editorials by Tom Philp of The Sacramento Bee that won a 2005 Pulitzer Prize. The series focused on

reclaiming a flooded valley in California's Yosemite National Park.

While teaching journalism on top of her role as editor, she created the journalism program's first News Literacy course in 2011 to help students understand the First Amendment and, with prescient insight, how to assess media in today's information jungle.

She quietly mentored many students, including Amber Burton ('15), of Charlotte, who took Maria's class and was a magazine intern (as was Deputy Editor Katherine Laws Waters '20). Burton is a senior research analyst at

i4cp, which focuses on best practices for human resources support. She previously worked for Fortune and The Wall Street Journal.

Maria boosted Burton's confidence to pursue her childhood goal of a journalism career. "She took me seriously before I took myself seriously," Burton says.

Burton says her most inspirational moment came when Maria invited her in 2016 to Harvard for a celebration of 100 years of the Pulitzer Prize. Maria, a prestigious Nieman Fellow at Harvard in 1993-'94, gave a speech about her domestic violence series.

"It was the most inspiring thing (to hear) someone who was so humble, ... to see where she was and to know I could do that one day," says Burton, a 2022 Pulitzer finalist with a team at The Wall Street Journal.

Maria has an unfailing nose for a good story. She befriended Wubetu Shimelash ('20), who grew up in Ethiopia as a shepherd boy and made his

way to Wake Forest. To tell his story in the magazine, Maria trekked, by mule at one point, with him to his remote mountain village to document his tale of determination, a loving family and the kindness of a stranger. Her writing won a top CASE award. Shimelash is thriving as an award-winning filmmaker and social entrepreneur.

King, who retired from the magazine in June, says Maria not only emphasizes relationships but has mastered the art of storytelling. "One of us would suggest a story on someone, and she would say, 'Let me think about that.' ... She would just find the little nugget that elevated the story."

Among other firsts, Maria began a monthly email newsletter to all alumni, with an evocative essay. (She was, after all, inducted into the Wake Forest Writers Hall of Fame in 2016.) She also initiated the magazine's social media channels and upgraded its online presence with magazine.wfu.edu.

Top left, Maria Henson ('82), in 2019 at Commencement. She bestowed the honorary doctorate hood on Frederick Ryan Jr. (P '16, L.L.D. '19), former CEO and publisher of The Washington Post. He is ahead of her in procession with President Emeritus Nathan O. Hatch (L.H.D. '21); **top right**, with Wubetu Shimelash ('20). **Bottom left**, receiving the 1992 Pulitzer Prize; **center left**, in Helsinki, Finland; **bottom right**, with her parents, Doug and Glenda Henson, at her induction into the 2016 Wake Forest Writers Hall of Fame.





Clockwise from top left: Maria with Amber Burton ('15); her return to Botswana; her mule trek to the mountain home of Wubetu Shimelash ('20) to get the story; with her "Bostwick Chicks" friends from freshman year and all 1982 grads, with Maria from left: Mary Helen Frederick Willett (JD '85), Kim Harviel Sue, Liz Kenney Bailey (MA '85), Tina Fulford Heelan, Kathy Rowlett and Mary Ann Parrott (P '20)

A WAKE FORESTER'S JOURNEY

Maria left her home in Louisville, Kentucky, to study at Wake Forest and graduated with lifelong friends and Old Gold and Black in her veins. She embarked on a newspaper career across the country — a statehouse reporter covering Bill Clinton as Arkansas governor, a Washington correspondent, an editor overseeing investigations and an editorial writer, columnist and editor on opinion pages in Kentucky, North Carolina, Texas and California.

As she is a traveler who has visited all 50 states and 60 countries, it seems fitting that a safari vacation in 2007 in Africa indirectly led Maria back to Wake Forest. She fell headlong in love with Botswana and took a sabbatical in 2008 from The Sacramento Bee to volunteer at the University of Botswana and at safari lodges in the Okavango Delta, where she also mentored AIDS orphans and at-risk children. In the bush, she savored every minute —

An excerpt from notes by Maria made during her first visit to Botswana in July 2007 and published in her blog in 2008:

"I know that stillness speaks. I know that the sky can sing. I know that unity with the other is possible beyond words and recognizable by only the slightest thread in ordinary space and time. ... I know that dominion over nature can be only a temporary exercise. The cycle will turn, round and inside out. What is nature if not ourselves?"

sometimes dangerous, always wild, always beautiful.

Soon after that, she realized she was ready to pursue that long-imagined return to Wake Forest. She arrived in June 2010 as associate vice president and editor-at-large overseeing the magazine. The job was more intimidating, she recalls, than the poisonous black mambas she had, literally, sidestepped in Botswana.

She and Petersen collaborated on a redesign and reimagining of the magazine in February 2011. The thing that immediately clicked with him and Maria, Petersen says, was how the magazine should feel when it arrives three times a year.

"It needed to feel like, 'Oh, my goodness, I just received such a lovely gift from Wake Forest,'" Petersen says. "You sit with it, can't wait to open it up, pour a cup of coffee and just enjoy. That was always our gut check."

In a consultant's survey of 100 alumni a few years later, respondents, unprompted, cited the magazine as their main source of University information and universally praised it.

Maria is retiring in Winston-Salem, where her parents and her sister and brother-in-law live. She will tend her front yard, known to neighborhood children as the Fairy College, where they often find treats left in the magical garden.

Friends of Maria, take heart that she, like so many alumni, will never really leave the Wake Forest community.

Carol L. Hanner, Maria's friend for three decades, retired in 2024 after six years as the magazine's managing editor, following a long newspaper career. She and her husband live in Portugal. Maria and Carol have traveled the world together, including that first trip to Botswana, with more adventures ahead.

FROM BUGS AND BIRDS TO DRONES AND DNA

Harold Greeney ('93) helped win a \$5 million prize to advance rainforest research.

By Kelly Greene ('91)

Harold Greeney ('93) has taken a circuitous journey through Ecuador, Poland and Arizona since his time at Wake Forest, and it has paid off.

Five years ago, he and a longtime friend and colleague assembled a rockstar group of scientists to compete for the \$5 million "XPRIZE Rainforest," sponsored by the environmentally focused Alana Foundation. After com-



Harold Greeney ('93)

peting against 300 teams in a five-year competition, they took home the grand prize in November for their masterful use of drones, DNA measurement, air and water filtration, and other technology, to survey 100 hectares (about 250 acres) of tropical rainforest in 24 hours and provide

meaningful real-time insights within 48 hours.

The "Limelight Rainforest" team eventually included about 60 biologists, anthropologists, engineers and drone pilots, among other experts. They developed and deployed a sensor platform using drones into the rainforest canopy, collecting data, images of insects and insect specimens attracted to its light trap. The platform also could provide a real-time data feed to its base technology and then quickly identify flora and fauna using machine learning.

It's one of many unexpected turns Greeney has taken during three decades as a research biologist specializing in identification and observation of rare insects, along with birds and their homes, creating an Ecuador research station from the ground up, and amassing about 450 published research papers. Following are a few words from Greeney, but you can read the full story at bit.ly/HaroldGreeney.

On his lifelong desire to study bugs

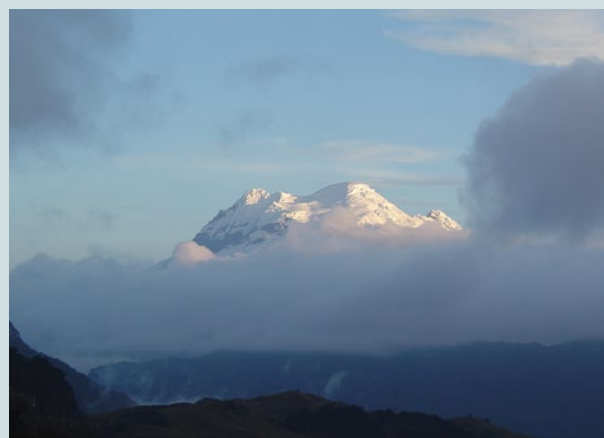
We lived in Venezuela for three years when I was in grade school. That's when I decided that when I grew up I was going to study bugs in South America. I met a professor that was down there doing that when I was in high school, and I saved his phone number and called him up while I was at Wake and said, "Hey, can I come down for

the summer?" ... I'd never been to the Amazon before, and about 48 hours later, I was guiding people to it. I (saved up) \$20,000, which is what it cost me to buy 200 acres. ... I was just living out in the jungle. (In the next decade), we had a bunkhouse for up to 40 or 50 people. We had regular groups coming down, one after another.

Becoming a Wake Forest cheerleader

My suitemates dared me to try out, and honestly, I went as a joke. I'd never tried gymnastics, and I couldn't lift any of the girls. ... But to get the \$200 my suitemates bet me, I had to stay and really try out. ... I was good at the stunting and the tumbling, and when I hit on something that I'm good at, I'm not afraid to push the limit.

More at bit.ly/HaroldGreeney



Antisana, above, a volcano in the Ecuadorian Andes visible from Greeney's Yanayacu Biological Station and Center for Creative Studies, below



Jones
(‘84)



Blanton
(‘85)



Thompson
(‘88, JD ‘94)



Flanagan
(JD ‘90)



Day
(‘92)



Dixon
(JD ‘92)



Hagaman
(‘92)

Carolyn Newsome Newton ('83) wrote “The Refugee’s Daughter,” a historical novel about the Wolfskinder, German children who were separated from their families during World War II and left to survive on their own. She says her Wake Forest professors encouraged her interests in German history and language and enhanced her skills as a scholar, teacher and writer. *More at bit.ly/CarolynNewton*

Sharon Taylor ('83) was promoted to senior vice president of partnerships and advanced training with Universal Technical Institute. She manages corporate oversight of the auto and diesel industry brand-sponsored advanced level training programs for UTI’s auto and diesel students. She partners with Porsche North America, Mercedes Benz, BMW and Ford Motor Co. She lives in Virginia Beach, VA.

Jennifer Dolby ('84, MD '89) is a pediatrician in San Diego. She has a daughter in high school.

Frederick “Fred” Douglas Jones ('84) is chair of the Department of Anesthesiology at Baptist Memorial Hospital-Memphis, the flagship hospital of Baptist Memorial Health Care Corp.

William W. Pollock ('84) was named to Business North Carolina magazine’s 2025 Legal Elite list in construction law and included in the 2025 North Carolina Super Lawyers magazine in construction litigation. He was also included in Super Lawyers’ lists of top 100 North Carolina lawyers and top 25 Raleigh lawyers. He is a partner at Ragsdale Liggett in Raleigh.

Bill Stines ('84) received Wake Forest athletics’ Pete Moffitt Courage Award. Stines is the director of golf at Linville (NC) Golf Club. After severe flooding caused by Hurricane Helene hit the North Carolina mountains last fall, Stines transformed the club into a relief hub that provided 24,000 meals to local residents and a distribution center for vital supplies. The Moffitt award, named for the late **Pete Moffitt ('84, P '19)**, is given annually to a student-athlete, coach or alumnus who exemplifies remarkable resilience and courage.

Lisa Leathers Blanton ('85) was named managing director of Theatre Charlotte. Blanton has been associated with the theatre for more than 20 years as a performer, choreographer, director and educator. She was previously director of education and community engagement.

Bobbi Acord Noland ('86, JD '89, P '12) received the Secured Finance Network’s (SFNet) 2024 Lifetime Achievement Award and was

inducted into the SFNet Hall of Fame. She is a partner and head of the commercial finance practice at Parker Hudson Rainer & Dobbs LLP in Atlanta. She is also co-general counsel for SFNet and an adjunct professor at Emory University School of Law.

Kelly M. Smith ('86) retired after 30 years as CFO of Greensboro, NC-based Replacements, Ltd., a retailer of current and discontinued china, crystal and silverware. Smith says he “enjoyed supporting the work of an organization focused on more than the bottom line,” including its mission to address inequality, food and housing insecurity and LGBTQ+ discrimination. In April, the School of Business awarded him the Allegacy Center for Leadership & Character’s Excellence in Leadership Alumni Award. In retirement, he plans to spend more time on the tennis court and with his partner of 38 years, Jeff Poteat, and their adult sons, Jonathan and Jordan.

Jeannette Sorrell ('86) was the featured speaker at the Akron (OH) Roundtable community forum in January. Sorrell is a Grammy Award-winning conductor and founder of baroque orchestra Apollo’s Fire. She lives in Cleveland Heights, OH.

Ed Balogh ('88) and his wife, **Kathy Balogh**, were named 2024 Deacon Club Members of the Year. They endowed the football program’s first named coaching position, the Balogh Family Football Assistant Coach for Wide Receivers. Ed Balogh is chief operating officer of Ridgemont Equity Partners in Charlotte. He is a member of the Deacon Club Board of Directors. The Baloghs’ daughter, **Caroline Balogh**, graduated from Wake Forest in 2022.

Ian Baucom ('88) was named president of Middlebury College in Vermont. He was executive vice president and provost of the University of Virginia and the Robert C. Taylor Professor of English. He joined UVA in 2014 as dean of the College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences after 17 years at Duke University. Baucom and his wife, **Wendy Pohligh Baucom ('88)**, have five adult children and a teenage son.

Bruce Thompson ('88, JD '94) was named to The Best Lawyers in America in government relations practice, land use and zoning litigation and administrative/regulatory law. He was also named to the 2024 edition of the Irish Legal 100, a ranking of distinguished legal professionals with Irish heritage. Thompson is a partner in Parker Poe’s Raleigh and Washington, DC, offices and an adjunct professor at the Wake Forest School of Law.

1990s

Emily Smith Cockerham ('90) was named senior director, volunteer engagement, for University Advancement at Wake Forest. She has worked with thousands of class reunion volunteers in the past 24 years. She and her husband, Van Cockerham, live in Winston-Salem and have a daughter, **Sydney Cockerham ('24, MSM '25)**.

Pat Flanagan (JD '90) was named to Business North Carolina magazine’s 2025 Legal Elite list in employment law. He is a partner at Cranfill Sumner LLP in Charlotte.

Jeff Malarney (JD '91) was named to Business North Carolina magazine’s 2025 Legal Elite list in real estate. He is founder of law firm Malarney & McCown PLLC in Kitty Hawk, NC.

Patrick Day ('92) finished a yearlong mobilization to Northern Sinai with the U.S. Army. An ordained pastor in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Day is chaplain with the 2nd Battalion 121st Infantry Regiment in the Georgia Army National Guard. The battalion deployed in support of the Multinational Force & Observers, a peacekeeping mission in the Sinai. On the civilian side, Day provides leadership coaching to individuals and teams through PTD Coaching and Consulting.

Mary Alice Dixon (JD '92) is an award-winning poet whose work has been featured in dozens of publications. She won the North Carolina Writers’ Network 2024 Randall Jarrell Poetry Competition and has been a finalist for the North Carolina Poetry Society Poet Laureate Award and the Broad River Review Rash Award in Poetry. She has been nominated for the Pushcart Prize multiple times and shortlisted for the Anthology (Ireland) Poetry Competition award. During her legal career, she advocated for abused children and unhoused families and was an adjunct professor of juvenile law at UNC Charlotte. She lives in Charlotte, where she volunteers with hospice and facilitates grief-writing workshops.

Scott Hagaman ('92, P '18) was named senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Lincolnton, NC, after 21 years as senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Marion, NC. His wife, **Hanna Sims Hagaman ('94, P '18)**, is a teacher in the Lincoln County Schools.

Jonathan Evans Jones ('92, JD '95) was elected a district court judge for the 2nd Judicial District of North Carolina, which includes Beaufort, Hyde,



Jordan
(‘92)



McIver
(‘92)



French
(‘93)



Iskra
(JD ‘94)



Leitzke
(‘94)



Ridenhour
(‘94)



Long
(‘95)



Gilson
(MALS ‘96)

Martin, Tyrrell and Washington counties. For 21 years, he was an assistant district attorney for the 2nd Judicial District. He lives in Washington, NC, with his wife and three daughters.

Larry Jordan Jr. (‘92) retired from the U.S. Army after 27 years of service and was inducted into the Officer Candidate School Hall of Fame at the National Infantry Museum in Columbus, GA. He is now vice president of mission partner engagements for Pacific Impact Zone Solutions in Honolulu.

Don McIver (‘92) was named president and CEO of Quality Oil Co., a private, family-owned business based in Winston-Salem. He joined the company in 2009 and was most recently executive vice president of finance.

Robert J. Ramseur Jr. (‘92, JD ‘95) was named to North Carolina Lawyers Weekly’s Real Estate Power List, and he received the Excellence in Law award. He was also named to Business North Carolina magazine’s 2025 Legal Elite list in real estate law. He is a partner at Ragsdale Liggett in Raleigh.

Andrew Robertson (JD ‘92) joined law firm Haynes Boone as a partner in the finance practice group in New York.

Mike Buddie (‘93) was named director of intercollegiate athletics at Texas Christian University. He had been director of athletics at the United States Military Academy at West Point since 2019.

Camille Wilkerson French (‘93) was named city attorney for Winston-Salem. She was previously senior assistant city attorney. Her husband, **Nate French (‘93)**, is associate teaching professor in the communication department and director of the Magnolia Scholars program at Wake Forest. They have three children; their son **Cam French** graduated from Wake Forest in 2023 and received a master’s in management from the School of Business last year.

Harold Greeney (‘93) was a founding member of the “Limelight Rainforest” team that won the \$5 million “XPRIZE Rainforest,” sponsored by the environmentally focused Alana Foundation. After competing against 300 teams in several rounds of the five-year competition, they took home the grand prize for their masterful use of drones, DNA detection, air and water filtration, and other technology, to survey 100 hectares (about 250 acres) of tropical rainforest in 24 hours and provide meaningful real-time insights within 48 hours. *More at bit.ly/HaroldGreeney*

Sherri Wilson Elliott (JD ‘94, P ‘20) was appointed superior court judge in North Carolina’s Judicial District 19, serving Catawba County. She was chief district court judge in Judicial District 36. She serves on the Governor’s Crime Commission and the Board of Law Examiners of the State of North Carolina.

Hanna Sims Hagaman (‘94, P ‘18) is a teacher with Lincoln County Schools (NC). She works with English language learners and their teachers at five schools. Her husband, **Scott Hagaman (‘92, P ‘18)**, is senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Lincoln, NC.

Eric W. Iskra (JD ‘94, P ‘22) was elected member in charge of lawyer administration at law firm Spilman Thomas & Battle. He is a partner in the firm’s Charleston, WV, office. He was previously member in charge of client relations.

Heather Rotondi Leitzke (‘94) was named Teacher of the Year at Heritage Elementary School in Tampa, FL, where she teaches special education. She says of the honor, “It’s not just about me — it’s about my amazing special needs students and my fellow teachers who have made this challenging journey so rewarding.”

Ashley H. Ray (‘94) was named to Business North Carolina magazine’s 2025 Legal Elite list in real estate law. She is a partner at Ragsdale Liggett in Raleigh.

Colleen Finn Ridenhour (‘94) is chief growth and strategy officer for Feed the Children, a leading nonprofit focused on ending childhood hunger in the United States and around the world. She was previously chief development officer at Habitat for Humanity International. She lives in Atlanta.

Heather Hoch Szajda (‘94, JD ‘97) was named to The Best Lawyers in America for taxes, trusts and estates. She is a partner at Virginia Estate & Trust Law PLC and an adjunct professor at the University of Richmond School of Law.

Amanda Lane Long (‘95) was named a 2025 Women of Influence honoree by GSA Business Report. The list honors women in South Carolina for their professional experience, community involvement and a commitment to mentoring. Long is a senior account director at Hughes Agency, a full-service marketing agency based in Greenville, SC.

Caroline Luchsinger Gilson (MALS ‘96) has retired from DePauw University Libraries after 22 years as science librarian. Her future plans include volunteering at her neighborhood elementary

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as she walks and talks with
outstanding teacher-scholars.



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Katzenbach
(JD '97)



Merrell
(97)



Hogg
(01)



Green
(JD '02)



Palys
(02)



Wenzel
(JD '02)



Seedorf
(03, JD '06)

school library in Terre Haute, IN, and continuing to research the 1864 Western travel diary of her great-great grandfather, Ernst Heinen.

Sean Cole (JD '97) was elected a superior court judge in Wake County, NC. Previously, he was a lawyer at several law firms and ran his own firm. He and his family live in Raleigh.

Dan Katzenbach (JD '97) was named to Business North Carolina magazine's 2025 Legal Elite list in construction law. He is a partner at Cranfill Sumner LLP in Raleigh.

Robin Merrell (97) was elected a district court judge in Buncombe County, NC.

Karen Bennett (MALS '98) received Wake Forest's 2024 College Board of Visitors Staff Leadership Award for four decades of dedication to the Wake Forest community and her leadership in student advising. Bennett is assistant dean for academic advising in the College.

Sebastian Correa (MBA '98) uses tobacco leaves to create custom finishes for tables, bars, panels and decorative accessories through his company, Artisan Leaf, based in Wilson, NC. He recently celebrated 10 years in business.

Joseph "Jody" Newsome (JD '98) was named general counsel of the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation. He was previously associate university attorney and ethics liaison at East Carolina University. He lives in Greenville, NC.

Amie Fonville Sivon (98) was named to Business North Carolina magazine's 2025 Legal Elite list. She was also included in the 2025 North Carolina Super Lawyers magazine in appellate practice. She is a partner at Ragsdale Liggett in Raleigh.

2000s

Cameron Williard Hogg (01) was appointed associate dean for graduate clinical programs at The George Washington University School of Nursing. She was also selected as a member of the George Washington Academic Leadership Academy.

Meghan Guerrero Honesto (01) was named managing director of partnership development at Maryland Public Television. She was a senior account executive at ADG Creative before joining MPT in 2024 as a production funding consultant. She has also worked on creative and sales teams

at WTOP Radio, National Geographic Channel and Travel Channel.

Heather Leach (MBA '01) was named associate director of membership and program operations for the Wake Forest University Center for Private Business. She previously worked for the Forsyth Backpack Program, Hanesbrands, the Wake Forest School of Business and the Family Business Center, which was the predecessor to the Center for Private Business. She and her husband, **Mark Leach (JD '96)**, live in Winston-Salem and have two children, Emma and David, a student at Wake Forest.

Robert Mullinax Jr. (01, JD '04) was appointed chief district court judge for North Carolina's Judicial District 36, which includes Burke, Caldwell and Catawba counties. He has been a district court judge since 2009.

Gavin B. Parsons (JD '01) joined law firm Ward and Smith PA in Raleigh, where he focuses on business and intellectual property litigation.

Dalton Green (JD '02) was elected to shareholder in Ogletree Deakins law firm's Raleigh office. She counsels employers on all aspects of employment law.

Michele Kitson Ikusz (MBA '02) was named vice president of advancement at Alverno College in Milwaukee, WI. She was director of mission advancement at St. Marcus Lutheran School in Milwaukee.

Stefan Palys (02) joined Fox Rothschild in Washington, DC, as a partner in the litigation department.

Bo Walker (02) was named to Business North Carolina magazine's 2025 Legal Elite lists in litigation and construction. He was also recognized in the 2025 North Carolina Super Lawyers magazine in civil litigation defense. He is a partner at Ragsdale Liggett in Raleigh.

Jason W. Wenzel (JD '02) was elected president of the District Bar of the 13th Judicial District of North Carolina and the Johnston County Bar Association. He is managing partner of Narron Wenzel PA in Raleigh and Smithfield, NC, and is board certified by the North Carolina State Bar as a specialist in commercial real property law.

Kristin Johnson Davin (03, MAEd '04) is a professor and director of foreign language education at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. She is also co-editor of Foreign Language Annals,

the research journal of ACTFL, the national association for world language educators.

Krishnauna Hines-Gaither (MAEd '03) is president-elect of ACTFL, the national association for world language educators. She is vice president for strategic initiatives and partnerships at Mount Saint Mary's University Los Angeles.

Scott Seedorf (03, JD '06) was appointed general counsel to the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada, AFL-CIO. He is a managing partner of O'Donoghue & O'Donoghue LLP in Washington, DC, and serves on the board of directors and lawyers advisory panel of the AFL-CIO Union Lawyers Alliance.

Kyle Olson (04) wrote a children's book, "Sleep Like a Polar Bear." Olson, senior legal counsel at The Boeing Co. in Chicago, wrote the book for his twin 8-year-old daughters, after one of them, who has a rare chromosomal condition, endured a four-month hospitalization in 2022. The story is told from the perspective of his hospitalized daughter and her twin sister.

Eric F. Werrenrath (04) was named a shareholder in law firm Winderweede, Haines, Ward & Woodman PA in Winter Park, FL. He specializes in commercial lending, commercial real estate, creditors' rights and corporate mergers and acquisitions. He was recognized by The Best Lawyers in America in 2024 and 2025.

Eric A. Boden (JD '06) joined Duane Morris LLP as a partner in the trial practice group in New York and New Jersey, specializing in white-collar criminal defense, regulatory enforcement and complex commercial litigation. He was previously an assistant United States attorney for more than 10 years for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania and the District of New Jersey, most recently as attorney-in-charge of the Trenton branch office.

Meredith Poe Martin (06) was named chief program officer at Thompson Child and Family Focus in Charlotte. The organization focuses on early childhood development, family stability, foster care and mental health services throughout the Southeast.

Amy Holbrook Wooten (06, JD '09) was reappointed to the professionalism committee of the Wake County (NC) Bar Association and Tenth Judicial District Bar. She is a litigation lawyer at Ward and Smith PA in Raleigh and a member of Wake Forest School of Law's Board of Visitors.



Werrenrath
(’04)



Boden
(JD ’06)



Martin
(’06)



Selin
(JD ’07)



Wolfe
(JD ’08)



Chung
(’09)



Farrell
(’09, MBA ’15)

Brendan S. Cox (JD ’07) was promoted to partner at law firm Laredo, Smith & Kane in Boston. He is a litigator and criminal defense attorney.

Jennifer Selin (JD ’07) joined the faculty of Arizona State University’s Sandra Day O’Connor College of Law as an associate professor. She teaches administrative and constitutional law. Her research has been cited by the Obama, Trump and Biden administrations, Congress, the Supreme Court and media outlets.

Brittany Chappell Farner (’08) was awarded the Federal Reserve Board of Governors’ Special Achievement Award for her work in consumer protection and supervision enforcement. She is a lead financial institution policy analyst at the Federal Reserve Board. She lives in Winston-Salem.

Meredith Mack (JD ’08) was promoted to partner at law firm Husch Blackwell. She lives in Media, PA.

Jeffrey Robert Wolfe (JD ’08) joined Davis Hartman Wright LLP as a partner in the business and labor and employment practice groups. He lives in Winston-Salem.

Carolyn (Conklin) Zulantz (’08) was named interpretive fellow at the Wake Forest Historical Museum in Wake Forest, NC. She will guide development of a new interpretive plan for the Calvin Jones House near the original Wake Forest campus. Previously she was a historian at Cuyahoga Valley National Park in Ohio and a market research analyst. She lives in Wake Forest, NC, with her husband, **Daniel Zulantz (’08)**, and their daughter.

Doowon Chung (’09) was promoted to partner at Faegre Drinker law firm in Minneapolis. He is on the firm’s intellectual property team.

Katharine Williams Farrell (’09, MBA ’15) was named head of marketing, managed travel, at Serko, a business travel technology company. Previously, she led Delta Air Lines’ sales digital marketing communications team. She also founded a marketing agency, Dots & Lines Inc., for corporate travel clients. Farrell serves on the board of directors of the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA). In 2021 and 2023, she was honored on GBTA’s WINiT Top 50 list of women in travel.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

By the time you receive this magazine, the University will have said goodbye to one of its most devoted staff members and loyal Deacs.

Senior Editor Kerry M. King ('85) of Wake Forest Magazine retired on June 2 after working 35 years and 11 months in various communications roles at Wake Forest.

After seeing his brother, Kevin P. King ('80), have a good experience, Kerry applied early decision to Wake Forest when he was a high school student in Sanford, North Carolina. He found his place early on as a writer and a leader at the Old Gold & Black, becoming editor in chief his senior year. After graduation, Kerry worked at the local newspaper in Asheboro, North Carolina, and then as program director at the chamber of commerce in Laurinburg, North Carolina — as Kerry says, “good Wake Forest towns back then.”

A return visit to campus in 1989 brought new opportunities. On a bulletin board outside the treasurer's office was a job advertisement for a capital campaign staff writer. Kerry got the job, and Wake Forest raised \$173 million in the Heritage and Promise capital campaign. Coincidence? I smile and think probably not.

“That's really all I wanted to do after the Old Gold & Black was to come back to Wake Forest and write about Wake Forest,” he says.

Through the decades, Kerry did just that. He wrote campaign communications and eventually news service releases, admissions materials, alumni publications, magazine stories and assignments for the president's office and Com-

mencement. In 2004, the University named him the employee of the year. In that decade, King was both the associate editor of Wake Forest Magazine and associate director of Creative Services. In the summer of 2011, he rejoined a revamped Wake Forest Magazine.

From the time we began working together in 2011, I can attest to Kerry's myriad, valuable contributions to the magazine and his can-do, professional attitude. Kerry brought a love of history and the ability to recall University milestones and provide context for his teammates. He quickly gathered a following for his Friday social media posts that commemorated University historic moments, serious and funny and sometimes just quirky, a la the prank that landed a picture of

“I'm especially grateful to the literally hundreds of alumni I've met the last three decades who have let me tell their stories.”

Mickey Mouse on the face of Wait Chapel's clock in the '70s.

He took special care in crafting obituaries for faculty members. “Most of them were giants who built Wake Forest in the last 30 to 40 years, and it's important to remember them in the right light,” he says.

Kerry relished meeting and writing about Wake Foresters who exemplify Pro Humanitate and show a love for their alma mater. His favorite stories? Here are a couple. Syd Kitson's ('81, P '08) dream come true of building a “Town for the Future” focused on sustainability and community in South Florida.



Kerry M. King ('85)

Botanist Frank Telewski (Ph.D. '83), who became a keeper of secrets for one of the world's oldest scientific experiments involving seeds. (Kerry's story won silver in the international competition for the Council for Advancement and Support of Education.)

Kerry was part of our team that won the award for the best university magazine in the CASE international competition in 2019 and multiple awards for our team's writing and overall magazine issues since 2011. He will be missed for his talent, his collegiality and his loyalty to his alma mater.

“I hope my love for Wake Forest has come through in my stories,” Kerry says, and I can assure you it has.

Look for Kerry around Winston-Salem with his wife, Heather Barnes King (MA '97), whom he met one day in Reynolda Hall and married in 2000. May his retirement bring happy days and Wake Forest football wins. The Kings will be in the stands cheering, or you might spot them walking around the neighborhood with their two Shetland Sheepdogs, “the boys.”

— Maria Henson ('82)



Jones
(’11, MSM ’12)



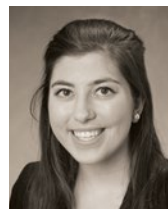
Payne
(JD ’11)



Cassidy
(JD ’14)



Quillian
(’14)



Kerns (’15,
MSM ’16, MSA ’19)



Henry
(JD/MDiv ’16)



Devon
(’18)

2010s

Luke Farley (JD ’10) was elected North Carolina’s Commissioner of Labor. At 39, he was the youngest labor commissioner elected in a century. Before entering public service, he was a lawyer focused on workplace safety. He lives in Raleigh with his wife and their three young sons.

Kia Hood-Scott (MDiv ’10) was elected senior pastor of Greater Galilee Baptist Church in Charlotte.

Rebekah Bray Rankin (MAEd ’10) was elected to the board of directors of ACTFL, the national association for world language educators. She is a French teacher and exchange coordinator at Lexington High School in Lexington, MA.

Jerri Simmons (JD ’10) was recognized as a Rising Star in workers’ compensation in the 2025 edition of North Carolina Super Lawyers magazine. She is a partner at Cranfill Sumner LLP in Charlotte.

Lia Flur Jones (’11, MSM ’12) was promoted to manager of community impact and investment at Capital One. She lives in Fairfax, VA.

Liz Keating (’11) received a 2024 Grand Clio Entertainment Award for her work on the marketing campaign for HBO’s “House of the Dragon.” She is most proud of putting a life-size, inflatable dragon on top of the Empire State Building. She lives in New York.

Claire O’Brien (’11), Rose O’Brien (’18) and their sister Anne O’Brien corralled about 30 friends to participate in a “Run for Freedom,” raising money and awareness for The Linda Norgrove Foundation, a nonprofit started by Norgrove’s parents, John and Lorna Norgrove, to continue the work of their daughter, a Scottish aid worker in Afghanistan who was kidnapped and died a month later during a rescue attempt. The foundation recently helped 19 women medical students leave Afghanistan to continue their education in Scotland. *More at bit.ly/ClaireOBrien*

Ronald D. Payne II (JD ’11) joined Tuggle Dugins PA in Greensboro, NC, as of counsel. He handles estate planning and probate matters. For the past 13 years, he ran his own law firm, Apple Payne Law PLLC.

Stephen Bell (JD ’12) was recognized as a Rising Star in business litigation in the 2025 edition of

North Carolina Super Lawyers magazine. He is a partner at Cranfill Sumner LLP in Wilmington, NC.

Kevin Smith (’12) joined global law firm Holland & Knight LLP as a senior associate in its corporate practice area. He and his wife, **Kristen Bryant Smith (’12)**, and their two sons live in Charlotte.

Matthew T. Houston (JD ’13) was appointed a judge on the North Carolina Business Court in Raleigh. Previously, he was a special superior court judge.

Mark Huffman (’13, JD ’18) was named counsel for Frisco Independent School District in Texas. He was previously an associate attorney at Munsch Hardt Kopf & Harr PC in Dallas.

Mackenzie Connellee Kozak (’13) won the Iowa Poetry Prize for her poetry collection, “no swaddle,” published in April. Kozak is an associate editor at Orison Books and a therapist specializing in grief counseling. She lives in Asheville, NC.

Thomas Sallah (MSA ’13) was promoted to partner at CohnReznick LLP, an advisory, assurance and tax firm. Sallah is a certified public accountant and a member of the firm’s mergers and acquisitions insurance advisory team. He is based in Boca Raton, FL.

Jenica Cassidy (JD ’14) was promoted to partner at law firm Helsell Fetterman LLP in Seattle. She is a member of the firm’s estate planning and trust and estates litigation groups.

Destin Hall (JD ’14) was named speaker of the North Carolina House of Representatives. Hall is a native of Caldwell County and represents the 87th district, which includes Caldwell and Watauga counties. He is a lawyer with Wilson, Lackey, Rohr & Hall PC in Lenoir, NC.

Celia Quillian (’14) wrote “AI for Life,” which explores how generative AI tools like ChatGPT, Gemini and Microsoft Copilot can improve productivity and enhance daily life. She works in technology in Atlanta, where she helps teams with AI education.

Garin Paul Scollan (JD ’14) was elected partner at Rivkin Radler LLP. He works in the firm’s Uniondale, NY, office and is a member of the compliance, investigations and white collar and insurance fraud practice groups and the strategic alternative defense team.

Heidi Hoover (JD ’15) was named executive director of Bridge of Hope Harrisonburg-Rocking-

ham in Harrisonburg, VA. The organization works with single-parent families facing homelessness to provide housing and support. Hoover lives in Dayton, VA.

Hannah Kerns (’15, MSM ’16, MSA ’19) was promoted to assurance manager in the banking and capital markets group at PwC in Charlotte.

Daniel Crispino (JD ’16) was promoted to counsel at Boies Schiller Flexner LLP in the law firm’s Fort Lauderdale, FL, office.

Lance Henry (JD/MDiv ’16) was named to Super Lawyers magazine’s 2025 Rising Stars list. He is a shareholder at law firm Allen Vellone Wolf Helfrich & Factor PC in Denver. He represents clients in commercial transactions, bankruptcy proceedings and litigation.

Maggie Sandy (’16) is assistant director of marketing & communications in Duke University’s Alumni Engagement & Development office. She and her husband, **Carlo Ballesteros-Flores (’18, JD ’23)**, live in Morrisville, NC.

Madeline Stone (’16) joined advertising agency GSD&M as a social strategist. She lives in Austin, TX.

Eric Jones (JD ’17) was named partner at intellectual property firm Patterson + Sheridan LLP in Greensboro, NC. He prepares domestic and international patent applications in artificial intelligence, communications technologies and medical devices.

Will G. Tennant (’17) completed a residency in anesthesiology at UVA Health University Medical Center in Charlottesville, VA. He moved to Providence, RI, to work for Brown University Health and join his fiancée, **Jess Miele (’18)**, who is completing her residency in OB/GYN. They are parents of a “fur baby,” Kiki.

Claire Bennett Devon (’18) is a director of Front Street Capital, a real estate private equity and development firm in Winston-Salem. She is also chair of the Winston-Salem board of Heart Math Tutoring, a nonprofit that provides one-on-one math tutoring to students at two elementary schools in Winston-Salem. *More at bit.ly/HeartMathWS*

Rose O’Brien (’18), Claire O’Brien (’11) and their sister Anne O’Brien corralled about 30 friends to participate in a “Run for Freedom,” raising money and awareness for The Linda Norgrove Foundation, a nonprofit started by Norgrove’s



Cox
(MDiv '19)



Hamilton
(JD '20)



Brzozowski
(JD '24)



Hopkin
(JD '24)

parents, John and Lorna Norgrove, to continue the work of their daughter, a Scottish aid worker in Afghanistan who was kidnapped and died a month later during a rescue attempt. The foundation recently helped 19 women medical students leave Afghanistan to continue their education in Scotland. *More at bit.ly/ClaireOBrien*

Morgan Briggs ('19) was promoted to senior research associate at The Alan Turing Institute, the United Kingdom's national institute for data science and artificial intelligence. In August, she co-taught an AI ethics master class at the AI4Good Incubator hosted by Teens in AI. She lives in London.

Justin Cox (MDiv '19) was named senior pastor of Emerywood Baptist Church in High Point, NC. He returned to his home state after serving two Baptist congregations in New England.

2020s

Kylie L. Hamilton (JD '20) joined Smith Debnam law firm in Raleigh as an associate in its construction and leasing practice group.

Lillian Johnson ('20) joined the Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine as director of communications. She was previously a reporter for Triad Business Journal. She lives in Winston-Salem.

Sarah Bowen Jones ('20, MBA '24) was promoted to vice president and talent development client manager at Bank of America. She and her husband, **Seth Jones ('19)**, live in Winston-Salem.

Luke Shapiro (MA '20, JD '24) joined law firm Robinson Bradshaw. He and his wife, **Jamie Shapiro (MA '22)**, live in Charlotte.

Lillianna Sheppard ('20) earned her doctorate in clinical psychology from Nova Southeastern University. She is a resident in Adult Compassionate Substance Care at Denver Health Medical Center in Colorado.

Wubetu Shimelash ('20) won a grand prize award in the Best Documentary Student Filmmakers category at the Directors Guild of America's 2024 Student Film Awards for the film he wrote and directed, "Shepherd's Calling." The film was also selected for the Essence Film Festival in New Orleans and the Pan African Film & Arts Festival and the Micheaux Film Festival in Los Angeles. The film celebrates Shimelash's Ethiopian heritage and the country's beauty. Shimelash lives in Los Angeles.

Anna Hogewood Cole ('21) was named assistant director of reunion programs in University Advancement at Wake Forest. She joined University Advancement in 2023 and was previously a senior leadership gift officer. She and her husband, **Jackson Cole ('22)**, live in Winston-Salem.

Grey Hyatt ('21) and **Marcos Lammel Knebl ('23, MS '25)** started Folkknot, an indie-folk-pop-rock band, in 2020 after a conversation



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at the North Dining Hall on campus. The band released a professional studio record called "All Good Things" in 2024 and embarked on a tour around North Carolina and Virginia this spring.

Gwyneth Lonergan ('21) joined the board of directors of the Radnor Conservancy, an environmental nonprofit based in Radnor Township, PA. She majored in politics and international affairs and theatre at Wake Forest.

Matthew Mondello ('21) was promoted to legislative assistant in the office of U.S. Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho. Mondello is responsible for health care, labor, veterans, small business and education issues. Previously, he was a legislative aide. He lives in Arlington, VA.

A. Carson Easterling (JD '22) joined law firm Buchanan Ingersoll & Rooney PC in the international trade and national security practice group in the litigation section. Her practice includes pursuing trade remedies, such as antidumping and countervailing duties. She lives in Philadelphia.

Walker Helms (JD '22) joined Akerman LLP in Winston-Salem as an associate in the litigation practice group. He serves on the Rose Council, Wake Forest School of Law's young alumni group.

Leah Wyrick ('22) received the Dr. Anthony Atala Innovator of the Year Award from Allegacy Federal Credit Union. She founded Three Strands Recovery Wear to provide post-surgical bras for breast cancer patients when she was a freshman at Wake Forest. The award is named for **Anthony Atala (P '24, '24)**, director of the Wake Forest Institute for Regenerative Medicine.

Parker Beverly ('23, MFA '25) joined Wake Forest Athletics as a game day creative content coordinator. She recently graduated with a Master of Fine Arts from Wake Forest's documentary film program.

Taryn Douglas ('23) was named Beginning Teacher of the Year by Chatham County Schools (NC) and a district Beginning Teacher of the Year by the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching. She is a first grade teacher.

Kate Hilsabeck ('23) was named a 2025 Beginning Teacher of the Year finalist by the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching. She is a kindergarten teacher at Bradford Preparatory School in Charlotte.

Marcos Lammel Knebl ('23, MS '25) and **Grey Hyatt ('21)** started Folkknot, an indie-folk-pop-rock band, in 2020 after a conversation at the North Dining Hall on campus. The band released a professional studio record called "All Good Things" in 2024 and embarked on a tour around North Carolina and Virginia this spring.

Luke Brzozowski (JD '24) joined Delaware law firm Morris, Nichols, Arsht & Tunnell LLP in the bankruptcy and restructuring group.

C. Isaac Hopkin (JD '24) joined Delaware law firm Morris, Nichols, Arsht & Tunnell LLP in the corporate and commercial litigation group.

Marriages

Scott A. Thacker ('77) and Keeman Wong, 10/19/24 in Palm Springs, CA. They live in San Francisco. The wedding party included Marc Miller ('77).

Lloyd Tarver Henderson ('96) and **Amy Lampert Brandt ('01, MSA '02)**, 11/2/24 in Nashville, TN. They live in Berkeley, CA. The wedding party included Allen Strum ('95), Jimmy Casey ('96), Kelly Cleary ('96), Chris Evensen ('96), Jeff Miller ('96), Shawn Randall ('96, P '27), Fred Tangeman ('96), Ken O'Brien ('98), Anil Atluri ('99), Paige Arrington ('01), Catherine Barr McLester ('01, MSA '02), Trisha Eyler Victor ('01) and Laura Pridgen Taylor ('02).

Jennifer Reid Burgess ('04) and David Bradley Arnold, 12/31/24 in Kernersville, NC. They live in Lewisville, NC.

Lukia Eleni Kliossis ('09) and John Tucker O'Brien, 1/25/25 in Charleston, SC, where they live. The wedding party included Austin Hester Creviston ('09) and Caroline Sutton Vogler ('09).

Hannah Waddell ('13) and Wayne Davis, 10/26/24 in Beaufort, SC. They live in Columbia, SC. The wedding party included Ting Jiang ('13).

Nina Oterea Foster ('15) and **Joseph Ligason LeDuc ('15)**, 7/13/24 in Chapel Hill, NC. They live in Durham, NC.

Courtney Lang ('15) and **Matthew Haddad ('16)**, 6/29/24 in Brooklyn, NY. They live in New York. The wedding party included Hana Choi ('15), Kelsey Neville Gannon ('15), Nathan DeHorn ('16), Patrick Doyle ('16) and Greyton Gawaluck ('16).

Corina Wixon ('15) and Kevin Calenzani, 11/2/24 in Durham, NC. They live in Charlotte. The wedding party included Justyna Rzucidlo O'Connor ('13), Amanda Brocki ('15), Arielle Swett Schwartz ('15), Alex Wilkins ('15), Margaret Sargeant Wolpert ('15), Camille Wixon ('19) and Reed Wixon ('21).

Christina Nichole Benedict ('18) and **Nikko Richard Martins ('20)**, 11/2/24 in Washington, DC, where they live. The wedding party included John "Jack" Beyrer III ('20) and Anthony Ioffredo ('20).

Price Dawson ('18) and **Ria Matheson ('20)**, 10/11/24 in Winston-Salem, where they live. The wedding party included Ian Winek ('19) and Emma Szuba Winek ('21).

Births

John Stuart Fitch ('91) and Andrea Milagros Fitch, Alexandria, VA: a son, Alexander Stuart Fitch. 6/19/24

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Dylan McLean Heck ('98) and Erin Kennedy Heck, Bryn Mawr, PA: a son, Emmett Harrison Heck. 11/22/24. He joined his sister, Andie Josephine (3) and brother Rhodes McLean (2). He is the grandson of the late Andrew Wallace Heck ('67).

Stephanie Pavlis Timpe ('03) and Neal Timpe, Durham, NC: a daughter, Lily Mary Timpe. 11/19/24

Sean Vincent Dolan ('05) and Caridad Dolan, Newton, MA: a daughter, Rebecca Marie Dolan. 9/11/24. She joined her brother, Nicholas (3).

Susanna Fields Kron ('07) and **Benjamin E. Kron ('08)**, Seattle: twin sons, Oliver Mathew Kron and Samuel Elliot Kron. 3/8/24. They joined their sister, Isabelle (4). They are the grandsons of Thomas Eric Fields (JD '73) and Professor Emerita of Biology Kathleen A. Kron.

Neubia LeChelle Williams Harris (JD '10) and Michael Jarell Harris, Knightdale, NC: a daughter, Leila Amari Harris. 6/27/22. She joined her brother, James Preston Harris (5).

Kirsten Weegar McCarty ('10) and **Troy Shane McCarty Jr. ('12)**, Santee, CA: a son, Ashford Scott McCarty. 9/13/24. He joined his brothers, Everett (9), Case (5) and Brenner (3), and sister Dawson (7).

Henderson Whitener Trefzger ('11) and **Abbey Gensch Trefzger ('12)**, Belmont, NC: twin sons, Connor Baron Trefzger and Oren David Trefzger. 9/5/24. They are the grandsons of Charles Trefzger (JD '84), nephews of Eleanor Trefzger Morales (JD '10) and Francisco Morales (JD '11) and great-grandsons of Baron Elrod ('59).

Ted Barton (MA '12) and **Katie Wolf ('13)**, Winston-Salem: a daughter, Lillian Wolf Barton. 12/13/24

Keeley Trimble Lawner ('12) and Benjamin Mark Pape, Chevy Chase, MD: a daughter, Eloise Lawner Pape. 12/28/24

Kevin Michael Smith ('12) and **Kristen Bryant Smith ('12)**, Charlotte: a son, Miles Faison Smith. 10/19/24. He joined his brother, August Bryant Smith (3).

Joseph Michael Bolton ('14) and **Melissa Amelia Picco Bolton ('16)**, Royal Oak, MI: a son, Henry Thomas Bolton.

Jordan Sykes ('14) and Annelise Sykes, Charlotte: a son, Colin Hammer Sykes. 1/15/25

Laura Jurotich Danze ('15) and John Danze, Atlanta: a son, Paul Michael Danze. 2/27/25

Matille Gibbons Bowden ('16, JD '19) and **James Duncan Bowden Jr. ('17)**, Great Falls, VA: a daughter, Charlotte Byrd Bowden. 2/5/25

Kinsey Pridgen Szucs ('17) and **Matt Szucs ('18)**, Richmond, VA: a daughter, Samantha "Sammie" Dene Szucs. 8/31/24. She is the granddaughter of Ginger Heflin Pridgen ('83).

Rebecca Selby Meagher (MSBA '20) and **Tristan Meagher (JD '20)**, Baltimore: a son, Bennett MacKenzie Meagher. 1/26/25

Deaths

Robert L. Means ('45, MD '47), March 14, 2025, Winston-Salem. He served in the U.S. Army Medical Corps and was a general surgeon in Winston-Salem.

Francis L. Newton ('47, MA '48), Feb. 14, 2025, Chapel Hill, NC. He was a professor of Latin and classical studies and a scholar of South Italian manuscripts at Vanderbilt University and Duke University. As an undergraduate at Wake Forest, he studied Virgil with Professor **Hubert Poteat (1906, MA 1908)**.

Mae Bell Cox ('49), Dec. 3, 2024, Roanoke Rapids, NC. She was an English teacher for 25 years.



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Cletus Thomas "Pinky" Funderburk ('49), Dec. 6, 2024, Rock Hill, SC. He was a B-17 bomber co-pilot in the U.S. Army Air Forces during World War II and retired as a major in the U.S. Air Force Reserve. He worked in sales and management.

Mary Susan Piper Koch ('49), March 1, 2025, Silver Spring, MD. She was a nurse, teacher and pianist. Survivors include her three children and their partners, including her son-in-law, **Adam Bean ('82)**.

Frances Carter Tyndall ('49), Dec. 24, 2024, Peachtree City, GA. She was a high school English teacher in Goldsboro, NC. She was preceded in death by her husband, **Clarence Odell Tyndall ('58)**.

Melba Pate Wyche ('49), Feb. 7, 2025, Whiteville, NC. She taught high school English for 30 years and served on the Poteat Scholarship committee at Wake Forest. Survivors include daughter **Kathleen Bailey Wyche (MA '76)** and grandson **Byron James Wyche ('07, MSA '08)**. She was preceded in death by her husband, **Ray Byron Wyche ('50)**.

Carolyn Dees Brown ('50), Feb. 21, 2025, Raleigh. She was a teacher and media specialist. She was preceded in death by her husband, **Morris C. Brown ('53)**, and her twin sister, **Gladys Dees Lanier ('50)**.

Robert Roswell Tate ('50), Dec. 17, 2024, Lexington, NC. He was in medical sales for more than 50 years. After retiring, he earned a degree to become a pharmacy technician and worked until he was 90.

William Blair Bryan ('52), Feb. 4, 2025, Charlotte. He served in the U.S. Navy as a flight surgeon before becoming a pediatrician in Charlotte. Survivors include daughter **Ruth Bryan Hicks ('82)**.

Doris Anne Link Helvey ('52), March 1, 2025, Winston-Salem. She was a pastor's wife and high school English teacher. Survivors include son **Jay Helvey III ('81)**.

Henry James Carr Jr. ('53), Feb. 22, 2025, Clinton, NC. He served in the U.S. Air Force as a physician and surgeon and practiced internal medicine in Sampson County (NC). He received The Order of the Long Leaf Pine, North Carolina's highest award for service. Survivors include granddaughter **Anna Marie Carr-Reinhard ('12, MA '22)**.

Irvin Grigg Sr. ('53), Dec. 7, 2024, Kernersville, NC. He was a student photographer on Wake Forest's original campus and operated a photography studio on the Reynolda Campus in the mid-1950s and early 1960s. He later opened an RV dealership in Guilford County (NC). He was preceded in death by his wife, **Ruth Anne Weathers Grigg ('51)**, and his brother, **Kenneth A. Grigg ('54, MD '57)**.

Rheta Wood Holt ('53), Jan. 1, 2025, Indianapolis. She was a community volunteer.

JEANETTE WALLACE HYDE ('58, LL.D. '10)

Life Trustee



From modest roots in rural Yadkin County, North Carolina, Jeanette Wallace Hyde ('58, LL.D. '10) grew up to become a U.S. ambassador, political activist, business leader and philanthropist. Hyde, who was 86, died Feb. 10, 2025, in Raleigh.

For decades, Hyde and her late husband, Wallace Hyde, were a power couple in state and national Democratic party politics.

Hyde was co-chair of the Clinton-Gore campaign in North Carolina in 1992. After he was elected, President Bill Clinton appointed

Hyde as U.S. ambassador to Barbados and six other Caribbean nations in 1994. She was the first North Carolina woman appointed to an ambassadorship.

She strengthened diplomatic relations, promoted economic development and fought drug trafficking during her four years as ambassador to Barbados, Dominica, St. Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, Grenada, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and St. Kitts and Nevis.

Hyde credited her childhood church and her father, who ran a country store and was on the local school board, for instilling in her a commitment to public service. He took her, when she was 13, to see President Harry Truman speak at the groundbreaking ceremony for Wake Forest's campus in Winston-Salem in 1951.

After attending Wake Forest for two years, Hyde graduated from Delta State University in Mississippi, but she maintained strong ties with Wake Forest. She served on the Board of Trustees for 12 years and was named a life trustee in 2008.

Hyde had a special love for education and made numerous gifts to universities. She established an undergraduate scholarship at Wake Forest in the 1980s. In 2013, she gave \$2 million to endow a scholarship in the School of Divinity, the largest scholarship commitment in the school's history at the time. She received Wake Forest's Distinguished Alumni Award in 1995 and the divinity school's Bill J. Leonard Distinguished Service Award in 2016.

Before becoming involved in politics, Hyde was a teacher at an American school in Greece, a counselor and social worker in Fayetteville, North Carolina, and owner of The Foxy Lady clothing stores in Fayetteville. She was instrumental in the early success of the Golden Corral restaurant chain and was a co-founder and board member of Triangle Bank (later Centura and RBC) and North State Bank.

Hyde promoted the role of women in politics and government and was the first woman on the North Carolina Board of Transportation. She received numerous awards, including from the U.S. Defense and Justice departments, and twice received North Carolina's highest award for service, The Order of the Long Leaf Pine.

Albert Leath ('53), Feb. 6, 2025, Charlotte. He was a Baptist minister, a chaplain for the Mint Hill, NC, police and volunteer fire departments and a chaplain with the North Carolina National Guard.

James "Jim" Wilson Overton ('53), Feb. 22, 2025, Chesapeake, VA. He played football at Wake Forest and co-owned and managed a Days Inn and a discotheque. He managed Bill Deal's Original Rhondels and was a member of the Virginia Shaggers Hall of Fame.

Beatrice Adams Blanton ('54), March 14, 2025, Varnville, SC. She was preceded in death by her husband, **Demuth Blanton ('53)**.

Julia "Judy" Horne Church ('54), Feb. 26, 2025, Atlanta. She was a national debater at Wake Forest and a middle school teacher.

Sarah Ann Thomas Coppedge ('54), Feb. 26, 2025, Winston-Salem. She was a high school English teacher. Survivors include brother **Jack Thomas ('52)**. She was preceded in death by her husband, **Tom D. Coppedge Jr. ('53)**.

Willard "Bill" Thomas Cox ('54), March 7, 2025, Shallotte, NC. He served in the U.S. Army and founded Cox Subscriptions Inc., a library services company. Survivors include son **Michael T. Cox (JD '83)**.

Sylvia Miller Hoffner ('54), Jan. 18, 2025, Matthews, NC, and Holden Beach, NC. She volunteered for Meals on Wheels.

Coy Marshall Long Sr. ('54), April 3, 2024, Whiteville, NC. He worked for Lowe's.

Danny Blanton Wortman ('55), Nov. 30, 2024, Lenoir, NC. He served in the U.S. Navy and was a member of Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity at Wake Forest. He was vice president of human resources at Bernhardt Furniture Co. He was awarded The Order of the Long Leaf Pine, North Carolina's highest award for service. Survivors include his daughters, **Danna L. Wortman ('80)** and **Jackie Wortman Reynolds ('83)**.

E. Lee Anglin ('56), Feb. 15, 2025, Nashville, TN. He was a third baseman on Wake Forest's 1955 national championship baseball team. He was a pastor for 47 years and marched with Martin Luther King Jr. in Selma, AL.

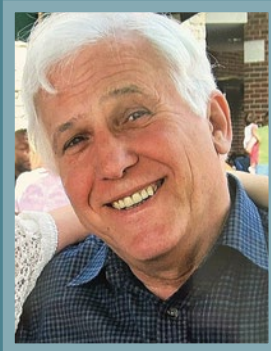
LeRoy Joseph Dare ('56), Feb. 3, 2025, Southern Pines, NC. He served in the U.S. Navy. He was an administrator and professor of history at Sandhills Community College (NC).

Carol R. Kasten ('56), Dec. 8, 2024, Eden, NC. She worked at Fieldcrest, then a large textile manufacturer, for 42 years and retired as a vice president.

Henry D. Kerfoot Jr. ('56), Jan. 30, 2025, Boynton Beach, FL. He played golf at Wake Forest and was on the 1955 ACC Championship team. He went on to play competitively and founded The First Tee, a youth development organization. He served on the Alumni Council and was

HUGO C. LANE JR.

Professor Emeritus of Biology



During his 40 years at Wake Forest, Hugo Lane's influence extended far beyond classrooms and labs in Winston Hall. A beloved biology professor, Lane was also the longtime adviser for the health professions program and Alpha Epsilon Delta, the pre-medical honor society. And, in a nod to his English roots, he started a club rugby team and coached and played on the team.

When Lane retired in 2013, biology department Chair Jim Curran (P '09, '14, '20) said simply, "Hugo loved his students ... and his students loved him."

Lane, who was 81, died Jan. 30, 2025, in Winston-Salem. He is survived by his wife, Nancy Martin Lane ('84), daughters Samantha Lane Englerth ('92) and her husband, Ford Englerth, and Amanda Lane Long ('95) and her husband, Andrew Long, and four grandchildren.

"Hugo made people feel seen and heard," his family wrote in his obituary. "He believed in forgiveness and second chances. As one of his dear friends said, Hugo was one of those rare men who never lost the little boy in him, which could be seen through the mischievous twinkle in his eye and his constant desire to make people laugh with his jokes."

Lane taught vertebrate physiology, endocrinology and biomedical ethics. For 30 years, he counseled thousands of students as they pursued paths to medical, dental and veterinary schools as he developed the health professions program that became a model for programs at other universities. He received the Excellence in Advising Award in 2000.

Alumni remembered Lane as a "fantastic professor" and a "wonderful man" in online comments. "I was lucky to be a part of the Wake Forest biology department under Dr. Lane during my time," one alumnus wrote.

Born to an English family living in India — at the time his father worked for a United Nations agency based in Geneva, Switzerland — Lane was educated in India, England and Switzerland. In Geneva, he met his future wife, Nancy Martin, daughter of U.S. diplomat Graham Martin ('32, LL.D. '69), who was later ambassador to Thailand, Italy and South Vietnam.

Lane received his doctorate of the biological sciences from the University of Geneva. He came to Wake Forest in 1973 as a research associate in otolaryngology at the School of Medicine and a lecturer in biology.

a member of the Wake Forest Legacy Society. Survivors include daughter **Margaret Kerfoot ('82)** and grandson **Duncan Henry McDonald ('18, MSBA '19)**.

Ernest "Ernie" Linwood Moore Jr. ('56), Feb. 21, 2025, Greensboro, NC. As an undergraduate, he was manager of Wake Forest's 1955 national championship baseball team. He served in the

U.S. Marine Corps and retired from Fireman's Fund Insurance Co. He established the Gail Sawyer Moore Scholarship at Wake Forest in honor of his late wife.

David Francis Morrow ('56), Feb. 22, 2025, Matthews, NC. He was a Baptist minister for seven decades. Survivors include his son, **Joe Morrow ('84)**.

David "Dave" Lee Toothman ('56), Feb. 17, 2025, Canal Winchester, OH. He retired from the Metropolitan Washington Airport Authority.

Cleo "Clark" Drake ('57), Dec. 6, 2024, Bakersville, NC. He was a member of ROTC at Wake Forest and served in the U.S. Army for two decades. He was a telecommunications manager at UNC Charlotte.

Frank E. Garver ('57), Jan. 8, 2025, San Antonio. He served in the U.S. Navy for 20 years, retiring as a commander and chaplain. He was a Southern Baptist missionary in Japan and Thailand. Survivors include son **John Garver ('88)**.

John Henderson Hasty ('57, JD '60), Nov. 15, 2024, Gastonia, NC. He was a member of Kappa Alpha fraternity and a DJ on the student radio station at Wake Forest. He practiced law in Charlotte with his late father, **Fred Henderson Hasty (JD 1927)**, and tried a case before the U.S. Supreme Court. He supported the Margaret S. and Fred H. Hasty Memorial Scholarship, established by his father.

Marjorie "Marji" Thomas Warlick Tate ('57), Jan. 18, 2025, Charlotte. She was an advocate for children, families and child care at the local, state and national levels. She was the founding executive director of Child Care Resources Inc. in Charlotte, and she helped develop North Carolina's Smart Start initiative to address child care and education. She was awarded The Order of the Long Leaf Pine, North Carolina's highest award for service.

Gail Klutz Beck ('58), Jan. 11, 2025, Lenoir, NC. She taught at Valmead Elementary School in Lenoir for 31 years.

Jack Leonard Gentry Sr. ('58), Jan. 10, 2025, Advance, NC. He served in the U.S. Navy. He was a pastor and missionary who directed the Church Education Center in Taichung, Taiwan, for 30 years. After returning to North Carolina, he was interim director of missions for several Baptist associations. Survivors include his wife, **Ruby Hickman Gentry ('59)**, and son **Jack "Jay" Gentry Jr. ('89)**.

Robert "Bob" Ledford Alphin ('59), Jan. 31, 2025, Winston-Salem. He served in the U.S. Air Force and worked at Wachovia Bank for 40 years. He was a member of the Wake Forest Legacy Society and established two scholarships. Survivors include his wife, **Stephany Painter Alphin ('59)**, and his sister, **Patricia Alphin Boyce ('54, P '79, '81, '89)**.

Caroline Greene Hamrick ('59), Nov. 28, 2024, Apex, NC. She taught piano for 30 years.

Bobby James Lawrence ('59), Dec. 23, 2024, Burlington, NC. He served in the U.S. Army and played baseball at Wake Forest. After retiring from Horace Mann Insurance, he was the lead attendant for Amtrak at the Burlington train station.

William "Bill" Tuggle Long ('59), March 9, 2025, Raleigh. He served in the U.S. Army and worked in banking.

Douglas Ray Smith ('59, MD '63), Jan. 25, 2025, Charlotte. He was a family medicine physician. Survivors include son **Douglas Randall Smith (MD '87)**.

Camille Orr Johnston White ('59), Dec. 17, 2024, West Chester, PA.

William "Bill" Robert Curtis Jr. ('60, JD '65), Dec. 26, 2024, Abingdon, VA. He served in the U.S. Air Force and was a lawyer for more than 40 years.

Jerry Albert Johnson ('60), Dec. 24, 2024, Charlotte. He cofounded an information technology company.

Donald Burton Miller ('60), Dec. 16, 2024, Elgin, SC. He served in the U.S. Army and was a New York Life insurance agent for 44 years.

Gayle Edward Ramsey ('60), March 5, 2025, Brevard, NC. He served in the U.S. Army and practiced law for 50 years. Survivors include daughter **Katherine Clarke Ramsey Knight ('91)**.

Robert Louis Bright ('61), Jan. 23, 2025, Kingston, NC. He was a member of Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity at Wake Forest. He was a pharmaceutical sales representative for 40 years.

Peter Albert Chiacchio ('61), Feb. 16, 2025, Delran, NJ. He was a baseball commissioner and coach.

Alley L. Hart Jr. ('61), Feb. 12, 2025, Wilmington, NC. He helped lead the Wake Forest basketball team to its first ACC regular season championship in 1960 and the ACC Championship and the NCAA Elite Eight in 1961. After serving in the U.S. Army National Guard, he founded a company specializing in life insurance and group planning. He competed in the National Senior Olympic Games and won five state gold medals. He was a past member of the Wake Forest Alumni Council.

Joyce Huneycutt Higham ('61), Jan. 13, 2025, Oakboro, NC. She worked for the federal government and was an English teacher.

Carl White Hoffman Sr. ('61, MS '64, MD '67), Dec. 19, 2024, Wilmington, NC. He was president of Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity at Wake Forest. He served in the U.S. Army and was a radiologist. He was a member of the Wake Forest Legacy Society. He was preceded in death by a son, **Carl White "Toby" Hoffman Jr. ('84)**.

Clyde Templeton Wilson ('61), Dec. 31, 2024, Davidson, NC. She was an adviser at Jacksonville State University School of Nursing in Alabama. She was preceded in death by her husband, **Jerry Wilson ('61)**.

Stephen "Steve" Franklin Dalton ('62), Jan. 18, 2025, Jamestown, NC. He was a retired Guilford County (NC) high school principal and an education professor at Gardner Webb University. Survivors include his wife, **Hilda Cabiness Dalton ('60)**; daughter **Mary M. Dalton ('83)**, Wake Forest Professor of Communication and Film and Media Studies; and son-in-law **David**

Middleton ('81). He was preceded in death by his brother, **Brenard Dalton ('60)**.

Walter Jackson "Jack" Hooks III ('62), Dec. 6, 2024, Wilson, NC. He served in the National Guard and was a pilot for BB&T and the federal government.

Brenda "Bo" Dowell Hutchins ('62), Nov. 22, 2024, Winston-Salem. She taught seventh grade social studies and English for 30 years. Survivors include her husband, **John E. Hutchins ('61)**.

Robert "Bob" G. McGreevy Jr. ('62), Feb. 6, 2025, Pequannock, NJ. He served in the U.S. Air Force. He was a police officer and volunteer firefighter.

David Seth Walker ('62), Nov. 22, 2024, St. Petersburg, FL. He was a member of Sigma Chi fraternity and the golf and swim teams at Wake Forest. He was a circuit court judge in Florida and an adjunct history professor at the University of South Florida.

William James Beighey ('63), Dec. 24, 2024, Jamestown, PA. He played football at Wake Forest. He was a school guidance counselor and teacher.

Richard Harold Gibson ('63), Jan. 26, 2025, Winston-Salem. He served in the U.S. Army and founded an accounting firm in Winston-Salem.

David Rader ('63), March 11, 2025, Morganton, NC. He retired from Henredon Furniture.

Neal King Cheek ('64), Dec. 13, 2024, Chapel Hill, NC. He served in the U.S. Army. He was assistant director of the North Carolina State Education Assistance Authority. He was a member of the Wake Forest Legacy Society and helped establish the Waldo Clayton Cheek and Evelyn King Cheek Scholarship Fund at Wake Forest. Survivors include son **Clayton Williams Cheek ('95, JD/ MBA '02)** and granddaughter **Mary Neal Cheek**, a sophomore at Wake Forest. He was preceded in death by his father, **Waldo Cheek ('34, LLB '37)**.

William Frank Moser ('64, JD '67), Jan. 5, 2025, Laurinburg, NC. He was a lawyer. Survivors include daughter **Elizabeth Ashley Moser Comer ('93, P '25)**, granddaughter **Hollis May Comer ('25)** and brother **Robert Moser ('66)**.

Andrew Page Terrell ('64), Dec. 8, 2024, Raleigh. At Wake Forest, he was on the diving, tennis and swimming teams and a member of Kappa Alpha fraternity. He served on the North Carolina parole commission. He received The Order of the Long Leaf Pine, North Carolina's highest award for service. He was preceded in death by his twin brother, **Alva Terrell ('62)**.

Samuel Allen Wilson Jr. ('64), Feb. 11, 2025, Macon, GA. At Wake Forest, he was a member of Kappa Sigma fraternity. He was a lawyer and retired from the U.S. Justice Department.

Melodie Lotz Hardham ('65), Aug. 28, 2023, Pompano Beach, FL. She volunteered with the Cape Hatteras Anglers Club, the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service and the National Park Service. Survivors include her husband, **Larry Hardham ('64)**.

Karl "Kirky" Kirkman Jr. ('65), Jan. 15, 2025, Troutman, NC. He served in the U.S. Army and owned his family florist, Johnson Greenhouses, in Statesville, NC. Survivors include daughter **Mary Ruth Kirkman Hunt ('91)**.

Stephen Lloyd Martin ('65), Jan. 9, 2025, Atlanta. He served in the U.S. Navy.

David L. Prentice ('65), Dec. 29, 2024, Pawleys Island, SC.

Donald "Duck" Lewis Bobbitt Sr. ('66, P '90), Dec. 19, 2024, Rocky Mount, NC. He served in the U.S. Air Force and worked in the automobile industry. Survivors include son **Donald "Donnie" Lewis Bobbitt Jr. ('90)**.

Stephanie Teague Brooks ('66), Dec. 26, 2024, Winston-Salem. She retired from the Wake Forest admissions office. Survivors include daughters **Sarah Brooks Corsaro ('99)** and **Emily Brooks Garner ('05)**.

Sarah Margaret Few Hallum (MA '66), Jan. 4, 2025, Bruce, MS. She taught English at Mississippi State University.

David S. Himmelsbach ('66), Jan. 27, 2025, Athens, GA, and Watkinsville, GA. He served in the U.S. Army and U.S. Army Reserve and was a research chemist for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Athens.

Michael Richard Kirby ('66), Jan. 27, 2025, Annapolis, MD. He served in the U.S. Army in Vietnam. He worked for the Internal Revenue Service for 33 years and was special assistant to the CFO of the government of the District of Columbia. Survivors include his wife, **Carolyn Powell Kirby ('66)**, and daughter, **Lauren Kirby Winther-Hansen ('96)**.

Robert Bradford Leggett Jr. ('66, JD '69), Jan. 13, 2025, Raleigh. He was a member of Theta Chi fraternity. He practiced law for 50 years with Allman Spry Leggett Crumpler & Horn PA in Winston-Salem and at one time was one of only 10 lawyers in North Carolina listed as a fellow in the American College of Bankruptcy. Survivors include his wife, **Sandi Foshee Leggett (MAEd '83)**.

Harold "Buzzy" Edward Russell Jr. (JD '66), June 1, 2024, Raleigh. He practiced law for more than 50 years.

Wally Shoup ('66), March 5, 2024, Seattle. He was a jazz saxophonist who co-founded the Seattle Improvised Music Festival. He was named one of the 50 most influential musicians in the city's history and was inducted into the Seattle Jazz Hall of Fame.

Richard Lawrence Thomas ('66), Jan. 8, 2025, East Bend, NC. He served in the U.S. Navy and was a Southern Baptist minister.

Patricia McCall Carlton ('67), Dec. 31, 2024, Clemmons, NC.

Sarah Morris Johnson ('67, JD '79), Feb. 10, 2025, Pfafftown, NC. She was a lawyer. She was a member of the Wake Forest Legacy Society and established the Eunice and Frank Johnson Scholarship in honor of **Ed Wilson ('43)** and **Emily Herring Wilson (MA '62)**.

Farris Martin Nelms ('67), Jan. 5, 2025, Batesville, AR. She was a school counselor.

Louis Burruss Seaman ('67), Feb. 12, 2025, Forestville, CA. He served in the U.S. Army and was an artist.

Peyton Llewellyn Early Bruns ('68), Nov. 11, 2024, Palm Beach, FL. He served in the U.S. Navy and led the trust department at Whitney National Bank in New Orleans.

Sheila Sizemore Hutcherson ('68), Dec. 5, 2024, Pilot Mountain, NC. She taught French, German and Italian.

Philip Carl Shaw (JD '68), Jan. 2, 2025, Four Oaks, NC. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps and practiced law for 55 years.

Kenneth Dwain Beamon ('69), Dec. 17, 2024, Wrightsville Beach, NC. He was a dentist in Tarboro, NC, for more than 40 years.

Daniel Edward White ('69), Jan. 30, 2025, Simpsonville, SC. He played football at Wake Forest and was a member of Kappa Sigma fraternity. He served in the U.S. Army National Guard and the U.S. Army Reserve. He founded a printing company and was later an OSHA and hazmat compliance manager. Survivors include his wife, **Linda Barrick White ('68)**.

Jacqueline Andrews Allison ('70), Dec. 15, 2024, Evans, GA. She was a math educator.

Eldon Elmore Eckard (MS '70, PhD '73), Dec. 29, 2024, Bainbridge, GA. He taught math, physics and chemistry at Bainbridge College and was a minister.

Willard "Buz" Henry Leavitt Jr. ('70), Nov. 13, 2024, Blythewood, SC. He played football at Wake Forest. He worked for Procter & Gamble for 32 years and coached youth sports.

Roberta Stewart DeLay Smith ('70), Dec. 11, 2024, Winston-Salem. She was a nurse.

Dallas Henderson Cheek ('71), Nov. 4, 2024, Boone, NC. He taught at The College of New Jersey.

Joy Charlene McKinney Hicks ('71), Feb. 4, 2025, Sanford, NC. She was a potter, real estate agent and teacher.

Hazel Watson ('71), Dec. 28, 2024, Winston-Salem. She was a social worker for more than 30 years.

William "Bill" Oliver Johnson Lynch (JD '72), Feb. 17, 2025, Wilmington, NC. He served in the U.S. Army Reserve. He was a lawyer for more than 50 years.

James Bryan Northrup ('72), Jan. 23, 2025, Richmond, VA. He worked at a management consulting company and a restaurant.

Danny Olander Solomon ('72), Jan. 3, 2025, Winston-Salem. He served in the U.S. Army. He retired from Salem Academy and was an organist and trumpet player in several bands.

Richard Thomas Vernon Jr. ('72), Feb. 23, 2025, Winston-Salem. He was a member of Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity at Wake Forest. He managed his family business, Walnut Cove Fuel Supply. Survivors include his wife, **Ann Kelly Vernon (MAEd '74)**. He was preceded in death by his father, **Richard Vernon Sr. ('42)**.

Audley Livingston Bell ('73), Dec. 7, 2024, Baldwin, NY. A native of Jamaica, he played tennis for Wingate University, leading the team to two junior college national titles, before coming to Wake Forest. He was the first Black tennis player in the Atlantic Coast Conference and was the No. 1 singles player at Wake Forest his senior year. He left Wake Forest to briefly pursue professional tennis before returning to school and graduating from Boston College. A certified public accountant, he spent 35 years in internal audit positions and led audits at several organizations, including two global organizations. He also taught accounting. He was posthumously awarded Wake Forest's Robert Grant and Kenneth "Butch" Henry Trailblazer Award in February.

Janice Head Kornegay ('73, JD '77), Jan. 3, 2025, Mount Olive, NC. She was a lawyer.

Janice Reynolds Adams ('74), Feb. 13, 2025, Pfafftown, NC. She was the departmental administrator for the Section on Comparative Medicine at the Wake Forest School of Medicine for 37 years. Survivors include daughter **Susan Adams ('02)**. She was preceded in death by her husband, Michael Adams, a professor at the medical school.

Thomas Robert Alm ('74, MBA '82), Oct. 15, 2024, Silver Spring, MD. He was captain of the swim team at Wake Forest and head coach from 1978 until the program ended in 1980. He was in real estate management. Survivors include his wife, **Sharon Boothe Alm ('83)**, daughter **Jillian Alm ('13)** and son Alex Alm.

Percy Benton "Ben" Honeycutt Jr. (MBA '74), Dec. 9, 2024, Winston-Salem. He served in the U.S. Army and was an engineer.

Kathleen "Kathy" Munro Jones ('74), Dec. 15, 2024, Powder Springs, GA. She was a teacher. Survivors include her husband, **Steve Jones ('74, MA '79)**.

Allen Wilton Wood III ('74), Dec. 12, 2024, Newton, NC. He was a lawyer for nearly five decades.

Richard Wesley Slate Sr. ('76), Feb. 12, 2025, Hickory, NC. He owned a leather goods company, RWS Associates Inc., for more than 40 years. Survivors include his brothers, **John Slate III ('69)** and **Robert Slate ('74)**.

Dennis Clark Tesh ('76, MBA '84), Feb. 18, 2025, Winston-Salem. He was a pilot and software consultant. Survivors include his wife, **Becky Murphy Tesh ('74)**.

Deborah Power Carter ('77), Dec. 23, 2024, Lancaster, PA. She was a computer science teacher.

Shelley Hammond Provosty ('77), Dec. 1, 2024, Metairie, LA. She played on the tennis team at Wake Forest and was a lawyer.

Anne Turpin Cody (MBA '78), Jan. 6, 2025, Houston. She was an accountant and CPA with Gulf Oil. Survivors include son **Claude Carr Cody ('16)**. She was preceded in death by her brother, **Charles Braxton Turpin Jr. ('73)**.

Warren Edward Kasper (JD '78), Feb. 13, 2025, Clemmons, NC. He practiced law in Clemmons and was the village's attorney.

Steven "Lowell" Easter ('79), Jan. 18, 2025, Greensboro, NC. He developed a number of office and retail holdings in Greensboro and High Point (NC).

David M. Furr ('80, JD '82), Feb. 12, 2025, Charlotte. He began his law practice in Gastonia, NC, in 1983, but he spent the next 40 years roaming the world, working with NASCAR, advising on financial services with CapGemini and cybersecurity initiatives with Palo Alto Networks, and, most recently, life sciences. He was a longtime member of the Wake Forest School of Law Board of Visitors. In 2024, he established the premier endowed scholarship at the law school, the David M. Furr Law Scholarship. In 2018, he established the David and Pam Furr Law Scholarship named in part for his late wife. He was one of the lead donors to the law school's commons renovation effort, which helped transform Worrell Professional Center. He also supported the Levine Cancer Institute's research into blood cancers. Survivors include his wife, Mindy Miralia Furr.

Susan Ray Sanders (MBA '80), Jan. 2, 2025, Beaufort, NC. She started Harbor Specialties stores in North and South Carolina and was mayor pro tem of Oriental, NC.

Percy "Poss" Watson Echols (JD '81), July 4, 2024, Crozet, VA. He was a senior patent examiner at the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office.

Susan Eileen Cunningham Jonas (JD '81), Dec. 31, 2024, Alexandria, VA. She was a tax lawyer and community volunteer. Survivors include her husband, **Wayne Boice Jonas (MD '81)**, and son **Christopher Cunningham Jonas ('04)**.

William Oliver Moseley Jr. (JD '81), Jan. 4, 2025, Greensboro, NC. He served in the U.S. Army and was a lawyer.

CLAUDIA THOMAS KAIROFF

Professor Emerita of English



With an infectious laugh and spirit, Claudia Thomas Kairoff shared a joy of life and learning with her students, colleagues and friends across campus for 36 years. As an English professor, department chair and associate dean of the College, she exemplified the best of Wake Forest.

Kairoff, who was 73, died April 4, 2025, in Winston-Salem. She is survived by her husband, Professor Emeritus of Music Peter Kairoff, and two stepchildren.

"All who were lucky enough to have met her remarked on her unwavering kindness, thoughtfulness and joyous sense of humor," her family wrote in her obituary.

That sentiment was shared on social media by alumni who remembered their teacher, mentor and friend. "She changed the course of my college career for the better, insisting that I must study abroad, which I did," Rev. Ann Haywood-Baxter ('95) wrote on the Wake Forest Magazine Facebook page. "She was a brilliant professor who loved her students. She encouraged, mentored and brought out the best in generations of students. Her laugh was amazing and free. She was a kind and generous human."

Kairoff joined the faculty in 1986 and retired in 2022. In 2023, the English department began awarding the Claudia Kairoff Award for Excellence in Scholarship and Service to outstanding English students.

Kairoff received the University's highest honor, the Medallion of Merit, in 2024. President Susan R. Wenthe recognized her as a "gifted and inspiring teacher-scholar, a pioneering and internationally recognized academic, and a model servant-leader of the University who made Wake Forest a better place to teach, learn and live."

A native of Baltimore, Kairoff received her master's degree from the University of Virginia and her Ph.D. in English literature from Brandeis University. She taught at Brandeis, Phillips Academy in Andover, Maryland, and the University of Michigan before coming to Wake Forest.

She was recognized as one of Wake Forest's finest teachers in 1993 when she received the Reid-Doyle Prize for Excellence in Teaching. She chaired the English department for a number of years and was interim chair of the art and theatre departments. As associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences from 1996 until 2004, she led a commission charged with improving the hiring and promotion of female faculty members and addressing concerns of female faculty, staff and students.

Kairoff specialized in 18th-century British literature and wrote two books about 18th-century British female poets. She also co-edited the definitive work on poet Anne Finch, "The Cambridge Edition of the Works on Anne Finch, Countess of Winchelsea."

When Kairoff retired in 2022, Jessica Richard, associate professor and then-chair of the English department, wrote about Kairoff's devotion to her students, colleagues and the campus community: "How lucky have we been here at Wake Forest to hear her laughter and to benefit from her celebratory scholarship, teaching, administrative acumen, dedication and friendship."

DAVID S. WEAVER

Professor Emeritus of Anthropology



Dave Weaver, who taught in the anthropology department for 25 years, died Jan. 9, 2025, in Lewisville, North Carolina. He was 77.

Weaver came to Wake Forest in 1977 and chaired the anthropology department for a decade. After retiring in 2002, he and his wife, Frances Lusso, moved to the Albuquerque, New Mexico, area, before returning to North Carolina last year. In addition to his wife, he is also survived by his son and daughter-in-law, David Weaver and

Amie Weaver, two grandsons and a step grandson.

In comments posted online, former students remembered Weaver as a challenging, inspiring and kind teacher. He received the Reid-Doyle Prize for Excellence in Teaching in 1981.

"He was a wonderful and engaging teacher, and an all-around thoroughly decent individual," wrote one. Another alumnus wrote that Weaver "expanded my interest in anthropology and archeology. When I see documentaries that cover his area of study, I remember details from that class."

Weaver was a physical anthropologist specializing in the evolutionary history, development and treatment of human bone diseases. He was also director of the physical anthropology laboratory, which houses a large collection of non-human primate skeletons for research use. He had a joint appointment in comparative medicine at Wake Forest School of Medicine.

Weaver lived in Wilmington, Delaware, as a boy, but he spent his formative years in Tampico, Mexico. His interest in anthropology grew as he traveled around Mexico, especially to indigenous ruins. After graduating from The University of Arizona in Tucson, he joined the U.S. Army and served two years in Vietnam.

He returned to Tucson when he left the Army. A single parent at the time, he made ends meet as a banker, donut baker and ambulance driver. He earned his master's degree in anthropology from The University of Arizona and his Ph.D. from The University of New Mexico, where he met his wife. He soon joined the Wake Forest faculty.

When he retired, he wrote in the *Old Gold & Black*: "It has been my honor to work with many talented, interesting and challenging students."

Jane Naylor Roberson ('81), Feb. 2, 2025, Winston-Salem. She worked for Wake Forest for 35 years as an assistant in the News Bureau and in the Public Affairs office. Survivors include son **David Roberson ('77)**.

Diane Penegar Furr (JD '82), Dec. 28, 2024, Charlotte. She practiced law in Charleston, SC, and Charlotte for more than 40 years.

Warren Ashton Hutton (JD '82), Feb. 20, 2025, Winston-Salem. He was a lawyer and chief operating officer and president of Healthstat Inc. until retiring. Survivors include his wife, **Julie Schweig Hutton (MBA '82)**.

Doris L. Walters (MA '82), Dec. 9, 2024, Wilmington, NC. She was a minister and author, a missionary and teacher in Japan, and the founder of Missionary Family Counseling Services Inc. in

Winston-Salem. She was a member of the Wake Forest Legacy Society and a past member of the Wake Forest Alumni Council.

William Alexander "Alex" Miller (MBA '83), March 15, 2025, Lewisville, NC. He served in the U.S. Army in Vietnam and was executive vice president/COO at a warehousing and distribution company.

Lloyd Wade Stokes Jr. ('83), March 9, 2025, Winston-Salem. He was student body president and a member of Delta Kappa Epsilon at Wake Forest. He returned to Wake Forest as director of development for the School of Divinity in 1997. He continued his career in University Advancement at Wake Forest for nearly two decades before becoming assistant dean of advancement at Virginia Tech and executive director of development for the Arizona State University Foundation. Most recently, he was assistant dean of advancement for the School of Arts and Sciences at The Catholic University of America in Washington, DC. Along with his wife and children, he established the Stokes Family Scholarship at Wake Forest. He was a member of the Wake Forest Legacy Society. Survivors include his wife, **Tara Raines Stokes ('83)**; daughters and sons-in-law, **Anna Stokes King ('10)** and David King and **Carrie Stokes Holst ('12)** and **Daniel Holst ('12)**; son and daughter-in-law **Bradley Stokes ('15)** and Elizabeth Sukut; three grandchildren; and his mother, Doris Stokes.

Billy G. Whitaker (MBA '83), Dec. 12, 2024, Snellville, GA. He was president of Goodwill Industries of Northwest North Carolina for 20 years. Survivors include son **Keith Whitaker (MBA '92)**.

Ruth Dudley Turner Camp ('84), Feb. 16, 2025, Raleigh. At Wake Forest, she was a member of Fideles society. She worked in business development and community relations for 30 years and was president of the World Trade Center North Carolina. Survivors include son **William Camp (MBA '23)**, and her siblings, **James "Jim" Turner III ('73)**, **Ann "Dida" Turner Parrott ('74, MBA '79)** and **Frank Turner ('77)**. She was preceded in death by her father, **Jim Turner Jr. ('42)**.

Carl "Toby" White Hoffman Jr. ('84), Feb. 26, 2024, Columbia, SC. His father, **Carl White Hoffman Sr. ('61, MS '64, MD '67)**, died Dec. 19, 2024.

Henry Clark Earnhardt ('85), Dec. 8, 2024, Gold Hill, NC. He was a national sales representative with health insurance company Humana.

John Hall Hart ('85), Feb. 28, 2025, Davidson, NC. He served in the U.S. Army and worked at land surveying firm Piedmont Design Associates PA in Mooresville, NC.

Kathryn "Kay" Dean Rogers ('85), Dec. 30, 2024, Winston-Salem. She was a sales manager with Maslo Company.

Arthur E. Davis III (JD '86), Jan. 17, 2025, Brooklyn, NY. He was a lawyer, CPA, consultant and spokesperson for the American Escrow Association.

Caroline Murray McMahon ('87), Jan. 21, 2025, Raleigh. She was a member of the Fideles society at Wake Forest. She was a project leader for GE Mortgage Insurance Co. and served on the Cal-loway School of Business Board of Visitors. Survivors include her husband, Timothy M. McMahon; son Jefferson Grey McMahon, an incoming first year student at Wake Forest; sister **Laura Murray Case Taylor ('81, P '09, '18)**; sister **Llew Ann Murray King ('83, P '08, '12)** and brother-in-law **Matt King Sr. ('82, P '08, '12)**; brother **Elwyn Grey Murray III ('89, MBA '94, P '18, '20, '25)** and sister-in-law **Wendy Lewis Murray ('89, MBA '94, P '18, '20, '25)**. She was preceded in death by her parents, **Anna Rae Johnson Murray ('58)** and **Elwyn Grey Murray Jr. ('60)**.

William "Bill" Lyman Orr (MBA '87), Dec. 2, 2024, Winston-Salem. He worked in accounting and finance. He was preceded in death by his brother, **Lynn Huie Orr Jr. (MD '74, P '98)**.

Reuben Lee Wilbur (MBA '87), Nov. 11, 2024, Loveland, CO. He was a conference treasurer in Montana and Missouri for the United Methodist Church.

Daniel "Dan" R. Baker ('88), Dec. 13, 2024, Palm Beach Gardens, FL. He was a director of the PGA of America.

Michael E. Gerwe ('88), Jan. 31, 2025, Tampa, FL. He was president of RES Marketing in Tampa.

Barbara Scott Morrison (MAEd '88), Dec. 31, 2024, Lake Waccamaw, NC. She retired as a teacher from Bladen Community College (NC). She helped organize the North Carolina Community College Faculty Association.

Laura Meyer Sims ('89), Dec. 28, 2024, Waxhaw, NC. She was in banking.

Paul Marshall Weekley ('89), Dec. 4, 2024, Tampa, FL. He was a lawyer.

Edmund Bryan Garris ('90), Feb. 3, 2025, Jacksonville, NC. He was a pitcher on Wake Forest's baseball team. He was senior vice president at First National Bank. Survivors include sister **Lou Garris Reynolds ('96)**.

James "Jim" Edwin Johnson III ('91), Feb. 10, 2025, Little Rock, AR. At Wake Forest, he played golf and was a member of Kappa Sigma fraternity. He was chief administrative officer of investment banking at Stephens Inc., a financial services firm, and director of Stephens Europe Ltd. Survivors include his wife, **Suzanne Twardeck Johnson ('91)**, sisters **Anne Johnson Hitch ('82)** and **Jane Johnson White ('87, JD '92, P '23)** and brother-in-law **Dunlop White (JD '91)**. He was preceded in death by his parents, **Nancy Beck Johnson ('56)** and **James E. Johnson Jr. ('55, JD '56)**.

Fred Lane Jr., also known as **Mustafa Qasim Faruq Rashid ('91)**, Dec. 14, 2024, Fayetteville, NC. At Wake Forest, he worked in the library and was a member of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity. He was a judicial clerk, lawyer, chief administrative

officer and legal analyst. Survivors include his wife, **Meleisa C. Rush-Lane ('92)**.

A. Scott Nelson (MBA '94), Dec. 5, 2024, Myrtle Beach, NC. He was ride director for the Blood Sweat and Gears cycling event, which supports nonprofits in North Carolina's High Country.

Charles "Chuck" Emmett Elyea (MBA '95), Dec. 10, 2024, Troy, NC. He was an entrepreneur who founded two businesses and cofounded a nonprofit.

Felicia Simone McCrary ('95, MAEd '96), Nov. 14, 2024, Atlanta. She was upper learning principal at The Galloway School in Atlanta.

Tina Evans Wood ('95, MD '99), Dec. 19, 2024, Birmingham, AL. She was an oncologist. Survivors include children William Wood and Caroline Wood; her parents, **Austine Odom Evans ('68, MAEd '69)** and **Ernie Evans ('66, JD '69)**; brother **E. Bradley Evans ('98, JD '02)** and sister-in-law **Elizabeth Watson Evans ('99)**; and nephew **Meade Evans**, a rising junior at Wake Forest.

Ronald Percy Davis Sr. (MA '96), Jan. 24, 2025, Bowie, MD. He was a pastor, hospital chaplain and professor, who retired from Bowie State University in 2024.

Owens Franklin (MBA '99), Jan. 3, 2025, Wadsworth, IL. He was an executive supply chain director for several international corporations.

David "Eric" Carpenter (MBA '04), March 6, 2025, Mount Pleasant, SC. He was a chemist and entrepreneur who most recently worked in the fitness industry.

William "Will" Alexander Dow Jr. (MBA '11), Dec. 15, 2024, Birmingham, AL. He worked in financial analytics.

Stephanie Ruth Marcum ('12, PA '14), Nov. 22, 2024, Fort Lauderdale, FL. She was a physician assistant.

Alexander Gene Francis ('15), Dec. 5, 2024, Charleston, SC. He served in the U.S. Army. He was preceded in death by his father, **Donald Meek Francis ('76)**.

Alyssa Beth Valdez (MBA '16), Feb. 18, 2025, Raleigh. She earned her undergraduate degree from UNC-Chapel Hill in business administration. At Wake Forest, she was a member of Beta Gamma Sigma honor society. She was an avid traveler who had gone bungee jumping and skydiving.

Friends, Faculty, Staff, Students

Bruce Babcock, Dec. 14, 2024, Winston-Salem. He served in the U.S. Navy and founded investment counsel firm Saybrook Capital. He served on the Mary Reynolds Babcock Founda-

tion board, the Reynolda House Board of Directors and the Wake Forest Board of Visitors. He founded the S. Pope Babcock Foundation in honor of his son, who predeceased him. Survivors include his wife, Anne Burroughs Babcock, and sons **Thomas B. Babcock ('05)** and **Luke M. Babcock (P '24, '28)**. He was preceded in death by his parents and uncle and aunt, Charles H. Babcock and Mary Reynolds Babcock.

Richard Gordon Bell, Jan. 16, 2025, Winston-Salem. A native of Ohio, he served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He graduated from the University of Kentucky and Case Western Reserve University School of Law. He practiced law with his father for 14 years until joining the law faculty at Wake Forest in 1965. He retired as professor of law in 1990. Survivors include sons **Kenneth Bell ('80, JD '83)** and Gordon Bell. He was preceded in death by his wife, Evalyn C. Bell, and daughter Lavonn Bell.

Charles "Charlie" Hall, Feb. 8, 2025, Rural Hall, NC. He was a data integrity specialist in University Advancement at Wake Forest. He was a singer and musician who played piano, guitar, saxophone and drums. Survivors include his partner, Eliese Ashline, administrative coordinator in Wake Forest's Office of Diversity and Inclusion; his children, Olive and Haddon; his former wife, Jasmine Hall; and brother **Anthony Hall ('08)**.

Ruth Hutchens Hartgrove, Dec. 30, 2024, Rural Hall, NC. She was a registered nurse at Wake Forest for more than 25 years.

Myrtle Ledbetter Lytle, Feb. 9, 2025, New Bern, NC. She was 103. She was a secretary in the N.C. Baptist Collection in the Z. Smith Reynolds Library at Wake Forest until retiring in 1992.

Ernie Nestor, Jan. 26, 2025, Hampstead, NC. He was a longtime assistant men's basketball coach at Wake Forest under Carl Tacy (1979-85) and Dave Odom (1993-2001) and a special assistant to Danny Manning in 2018. He helped lead Wake Forest to ACC Championships in 1995 and 1996, numerous NCAA appearances and the 2000 NIT Championship.

Victor Pauca, Dec. 13, 2024, Winston-Salem. He was 19 and the son of computer science professor **Paul Pauca ('94, MS '96)** and Theresa Pauca. Diagnosed with Pitt-Hopkins syndrome, a rare genetic disorder that makes it difficult to communicate, Victor was the inspiration behind the Verbal Victor app. His father and a team of Wake Forest students developed the app as an affordable alternative to expensive communication devices. Wake Forest Magazine featured Victor's story in 2011. *More at bit.ly/VictorPauca*

Samuel Stevenson, Feb. 13, 2025, Kennesaw, GA. He was a Presbyterian minister and a former adjunct faculty member at the Wake Forest School of Divinity.

Henrienne "Henny" Kishie Wakefield, Feb. 12, 2025, Pfafftown, NC. She was coordinator for the Institutional Review Board for six years before retiring from the University in 2008.

Don't think of creativity as a final product

By Sarah Slappey ('06)

I AM OFTEN ASKED, "What do you do if you get to your studio and don't feel inspired?" My answer is always the same: "I get to work."

Artists cannot sit around waiting for a bolt of creative lightning to strike, or we wouldn't get anything done. When creative work is your job, it must be approached like a job — you need to set aside time, make boundaries and **show up**.

Once I get started on something, anything, in the studio, I will eventually tap into a flow state and actually create. Inertia is the creative's best friend. Cultivating subject matter is its own kind of work, and it takes practice. You have to become a sponge, soaking in what's around you and *within* you that piques even a little bit of interest.

As a Wake Forest student, I was secretly convinced I had no ideas and that this would be my eventual downfall as an artist. But I look back on the works I made then and the artists and ideas I was interested in, and nearly two decades later, it's virtually unchanged — simultaneous desire, beauty, shame, repulsion — this is what it felt like to be a woman born and raised in the South, and I am still that same person examining those same feelings.

Creative discipline is probably the hardest skill I've ever cultivated. When I arrived at Wake Forest in 2002, I knew I would still be within the cozy embrace of class deadlines and structure. I came to Wake Forest almost by default — I looked around at universities all over the Southeast but couldn't find a place that seemed to put much (or any) emphasis on its art department. Then I discovered Wake Forest had something called the Presidential Schol-

arship for Distinguished Achievement for students with exceptional talent in art, and I decided if the University is willing to put that much funding into an art student, then this had to be the place for me.

At that time, Page Laughlin was an acclaimed painting professor and academic leader. I was nervous to begin Painting I, and rightfully so. The first

did once, you can do again. And probably much better the second time. Creativity is not about a final product. It is not a bolt of lightning. It is a muscle to be torn apart and rebuilt. It is work.

I have been lucky to stay in touch with Page since I graduated and am even luckier to now call her a colleague and friend. I don't have an easy answer for students looking to start a career in the arts; my own path was winding and difficult. But if you have a passion for creation, know that you are very, very lucky. So few have a singular, urgent dream, and the willingness to dump all of your spare time into your pursuit will inevitably yield results. Mine your life for subject matter, invest in your community of peers and take chances. Oh, and don't forget to keep in touch with your own Page when you need a reminder to stop being precious. Now, let's get to work!



NICHOLAS CALCOTT

Born in Columbia, South Carolina, Sarah Slappey ('06), is a painter in Brooklyn, New York, and is represented by Bernheim Gallery. She has exhibited in the United States and internationally. Her paintings are in the permanent collections of the Hirshhorn

assignment was one of the most painful and valuable painting lessons I've ever learned. We were to complete a still life painting to bring to class the following week. I worked so hard on that little painting. When we arrived, Page asked us to mix up a pile of black paint and then, to my horror, paint an enormous X across the surface from corner to corner. The point was this: Anything you

Museum in Washington, D.C.; the Albertina Museum in Vienna, Austria; the Pérez Art Museum Miami; the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts; the Columbus Museum of Art in Columbus, Ohio and the Institute of Contemporary Art, Miami, among others. Her work has been reviewed by *Artforum*, *The New Yorker*, *T Magazine*, *Time Out London*, *Vogue Italia*, *Observer* and *Cultured magazine*.



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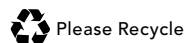
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Champions!

For the second time in seven years, the men's tennis team claimed the NCAA National Championship — with a 4-2 victory on May 18 in Waco, Texas, over No. 2-seeded Texas Christian University.

The Demon Deacons finished the season with an ACC record 40 wins, including their first ever perfect regular season with a remarkable record of 33-0.

"We're thrilled to get this done. What a tournament, what a season. Just incredibly happy for our players, our entire program, our fans, our families, our administrators and our support staff. So many people to thank,"

said Head Coach Tony Bresky, who was named ACC Coach of the Year and led the team to its fourth ACC regular season title.

Debate had cause to celebrate, too. Sophomores Destiny Hale and Hanna Shakarov won the 2025 ACC Debate Championship by defeating Southern Methodist University in the tournament's final round on April 27 in Washington, D.C.

Hale was voted the tournament's top speaker, and Shakarov the second overall speaker. This was Wake Forest's 15th ACC Debate Championship victory.

