

SPRING 2025

# UNCG

MAGAZINE

## ROOTED IN SCIENCE, THRIVING IN SERVICE

UNCG's culture of access opens  
doors for medical careers.

PG. 18

NEW STRATEGIC PLAN:  
'FORWARD TOGETHER'

PG. 2

HURRICANE HELENE  
RECOVERY

PG. 28

MINERVA AND SPIRO  
EMBODY UNCG SPIRIT

PG. 34

Mia McDonald '15,  
Physician Assistant  
at WakeMed Hospital





SPIRO loves the Minerva statue sculpted by artist James Barnhill '82 MFA! For good luck, students leave apples at the statue's feet. Who's inside the Spartan suit? Many students have worn the costume over the years, but the identity of our current Spiro will remain a secret until May!



## contents

### 2 news front

University and alumni news and notes

### 14 studio

Animation makes its mark, North Carolina Heritage Award winner, the Wind Ensemble's barnstorming tour, and 2025-26 UCLS

### 16 out take

Women's Basketball gets pumped up before a game in the Southern Conference Tournament

### 18 Rx for Success

Whether propelling today's students toward medical school or helping WC-era women find careers in science, UNCG has a tradition of finding the prescription for success.

### 28 Still here. Still strong.

Six months after Hurricane Helene, UNCG alumni from across the University are helping rebuild their communities. They face tough challenges, but they're not going anywhere.

### 34 Minerva and Spiro

Minerva, the goddess of wisdom, has symbolized our academic mission almost from the start. Since the 1970s, Spiro the Spartan has led our rallying cry around sports and school spirit. Together, they're brains and brawn.

### 38 legacies

The Arch MI Scholars, the Barbara Davis Berryhill and Leigh Berryhill Teacher Education Scholarship Fund, and the Thurston Family Opera Theatre Production Endowment

### 40 grad tidings

Lots of class notes and photos, too

Cover photography: Mia McDonald '15,  
Physician Assistant at WakeMed Hospital in  
Raleigh, N.C.

By Sean Norona '13

#### Check out the magazine website

Visit [magazine.uncg.edu](https://magazine.uncg.edu) to enjoy the digital version of the magazine in both photo-rich stories you can easily share on social media and in PDF format. While there, you can also submit a class note, view video clips, or click on archives to see previous issues.



LEARN MORE



**R**esponding to the changing times is nothing new for UNCG. Faculty and University leaders have been adapting educational programs, outreach, and admissions policies since the first class developed the motto of “service.” These continued efforts enable UNCG to broaden its impact and prepare students for a workforce that serves the state’s needs.



FRANKLIN D. GILLIAM, JR.  
CHANCELLOR

In this issue, you’ll read about alumni serving as trusted medical professionals and others helping to pull ravaged Western North Carolina communities out of destruction. You’ll discover innovative research initiatives and unexpected faculty creativity and outreach. And you’ll be reminded of our symbols of strength and academic leadership in Spiro and Minerva. UNCG’s success builds on traditions that evolve to reflect the world around us.

Our new strategic plan, “Forward Together,” is a blueprint of the latest evolution of our mission. The plan was created by a 22-member Strategic Plan Advisory Committee, led by Professor Wade Maki, who gathered perspectives from across the University to ensure that “Forward Together” is authentic to who we are. It centers our priorities by outlining ambitious but achievable goals and key measurements to track our progress toward those goals.

In a word, it’s about responsibility: our responsibility to steward the University’s financial future, to facilitate faculty and research success, and to propel our students into successful careers. As we work together with a unified purpose, we will lift UNCG to new heights over the next five years by focusing on the initiatives, programs, and investments that hold the most promise for us all.

# newsfront

## ‘FORWARD TOGETHER’

“Forward Together” is an ambitious plan that outlines our institution’s vision for at least the next five years. In short, the goal is to do more: more for our students, more for our community through research and creative activities, and more for our faculty and staff.

Our state’s demographic changes mean business as usual will not be enough. North Carolina’s economic growth depends on getting students from underrepresented backgrounds into the middle class and beyond. Developing the talents of the next generation benefits everyone.

### PILLAR 1 UPWARD MOBILITY FOR STUDENTS FROM ALL BACKGROUNDS

We commit to fully supporting our students from matriculation to graduation and beyond. That’s why our first goal is enhancing student wellbeing and achieving the highest rates of degree attainment.

Among public Research 2 universities, our graduation rates are above the mean. We are also significantly less expensive than average, which supports much lower loan debt for our students. That’s good because a larger proportion of our students are from low-income families than at many similar institutions.

We want to lead the nation

among access-focused regional comprehensive universities by holding costs down, controlling student loan debt levels, and increasing four-year graduation rates from 39% to 45% on the way to pushing six-year graduation rates from 59% to 65% by 2030.

### PILLAR 2 RESEARCH AND CREATIVE EXCELLENCE TO SUPPORT SOCIETAL IMPACT

Our expansive idea of research and creative scholarship leads to discovery, knowledge creation, and innovation to transform the

world and its people. Nearly 40 UNCG faculty were recently cited by their peers as being among the world’s most influential researchers. We’re also home to talented scholars, artists, and creators across disciplines.

This plan aims to elevate faculty research, discovery, and creativity. We’ll build on our strength in community-focused scholarship while forging new partnerships with local, regional, national, and global organizations and industries. Our target for 2030 is to achieve R1 Carnegie

classification and \$70 million in research expenditures.

### PILLAR 3 OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE AND RESPONSIBLE STEWARDSHIP

It is important that UNCG retain and develop its workforce, ask how a university of our size should be resourced, ascertain how its operations can be optimally supported, and find ways to align its financial and human capital to address budget realities. We also must look toward future innovations.

The next five years will be a time of political, cultural, demographic, and economic change that will continue to pose challenges. So, financial sustainability must be at the heart of how UNCG’s future is charted and realized. The ability to invest in high-performing programs where we can compete and earn distinction requires creating a reinvestment

fund. Our target for 2030 is to achieve a strategic reinvestment fund worth 5% of the annual operating budget.

UNCG is the best in the state at creating economic mobility and social impact through education. “Forward Together” allows us to continue that work.

Nationwide, the Carnegie Foundation’s “RESEARCH 1” and “RESEARCH 2” designations define an institution’s investment in graduate programming and faculty research. UNCG is an “R2” school, but it’s striving to become “R1.” The requirements? Invest \$50 million in research and create 70 Ph.D. graduates annually.

With “Forward Together,” UNCG will build on its strengths while facing today’s challenges. Learn more about the three pillars of the new strategic plan at [strategicplan.uncg.edu](https://strategicplan.uncg.edu).





# ‘YOU BELONG HERE’

**Marcus T. Johnson ’99** has made a historic commitment to UNCG. His gift will ensure that the Alumni House remains a vital, welcoming space for students, alumni, faculty, staff, and friends – a center for all in the University community.

His support will also have a lasting impact on the Bryan School and Black Excellence initiatives at the University.

In recognition, the Alumni House will be named the Marcus T. Johnson Alumni House at a ceremony during UNCG’s 2025 Homecoming in October.

This marks a first: no building on campus has been named for a person of color before.

“I love UNCG and want to give back to the school that has meant so much to me,” he said. “It is truly an honor that UNCG has chosen to recognize this commitment in such a meaningful way.”

Johnson earned his UNCG bachelor’s degree in business administration from the Bryan School of Business and Economics in 1999 and currently serves on the Bryan School’s advisory board.

Johnson leads Johnson Automotive Group, carrying forward its legacy of excellence and service. As a prominent dealership group in the U.S., the company was founded by his father, whom he proudly regards as his mentor and hero.

A member and supporter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc., Johnson also founded MJonPurpose, which offers mentorship programs for aspiring entrepreneurs.

“My mother was a teacher and school counselor,” he said. “Being raised by an educator helped fuel my passion for closing the opportunity gap for all young people. I see what UNCG is doing to elevate students from historically underserved populations, and my desire is to help bolster that work and make a real impact in their lives.”

Johnson has witnessed firsthand how welcoming and inclusive today’s UNCG is. When he joined the Bryan School’s advisory board, he received a button that read, “You belong here.” That message resonates deeply with him and reflects his hope that all students at UNCG feel empowered to thrive.

“I want all students at UNCG to feel empowered to thrive.”

— MARCUS T. JOHNSON ’99



## BEST FOOT FORWARD

### SUIT UP!

**THE BRYAN SCHOOL** partnered with JC Penney for its 9th annual Suit Up event. Thanks to the partnership, students can build a professional wardrobe without breaking the bank.

One student who took advantage of the event is

Kimberly Alvarado. The business administration major says resources in the Bryan School helped her find a career path that matches her “passion for helping others and for problem-solving.”

“Suit Up is an amazing resource because it gives you the tools to boost your

confidence. Being a young professional comes with challenges, especially as a first-generation student,” she adds.

Alvarado is on track to graduate in 2026. What then? She’d like to use what she has learned “to make it easier for others to strive for excellence and flourish within themselves.”

### CAREER CLOSET POP-UP

**UNCG’S CAREER** and Professional Development office held a Career Closet Pop-Up Shop so students can look their best. Over two days, 456 students attended, and 87% of them got at least one professional garment. With over 1,000 garments donated, there was something for everyone.

Employer Relations Specialist Bianca Smith ’05 says, “Career readiness is an important aspect of transitioning from

college to career. We want to provide students with free access to professional attire to help them succeed.”

Today’s students understand professionalism. “It’s showing up and providing your best even when you’re not asked to,” says Jasmine Renner, a dietetics major.

For pre-nursing student Yael Ortiz-Martínez, professionalism “shows you’re capable of handling big tasks.”

This event can lead to success



after graduation, says Smith. “This attire will boost their confidence and enhance their professional image as they enter the world of work.”

### PEPSI’S IRIS PHOTOBOOTH

**IN TODAY’S JOB MARKET**, a professional headshot is a great way to make a first impression. Thanks to a partnership with Pepsi Bottling Ventures, CPD is

making this photography available to students at no cost.

The self-service Iris Air Photo Booth uses high-quality studio lighting and photography

equipment to provide students with instant professional results, including posing tips and touch-up capabilities. Say cheese!

## EXTRA! EXTRA!

The **ASTERA SCULPTURE**, part of the campus’ Woman’s College Tribute, received an international Collaboration of Design & Art honor. The sculptor is Michael Stultz.

Since 1999, UNCG has managed portions of the **NORTH CAROLINA STAR RATED LICENSE** process – that’s 25 years of ensuring quality in early childhood education across the state and beyond! Read about it in our Fall 2023 issue, available online.

Thanks to an anonymous donor, UNCG Student Success has presented **151 RESCUE GRANTS** to students in good academic standing who were at risk of enrollment cancellations. The grants, which range from \$100 to \$2,500, will support hundreds more students over the next three years.





“North Carolina has an opportunity to become a world leader in electrification and battery technologies.”  
— DR. HEMALI RATHNAYAKE

As part of the UNCG BRIGHT Institute, Dr. Hemali Rathnayake and her lab members conduct battery and next-gen energy harvesting research.

# Transformational RESEARCH

“Universities have always produced the ideas and innovations that have changed the world in which we live,” says Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement Dr. Sherine Obare.

As a researcher, Dr. Obare has received many awards including the National Science Foundation

CAREER award, the Mary McLeod Bethune Award for Science and Technology, and the American

Competitiveness and Innovation Fellowship of the National Science Foundation.

She’s also the former dean of the Joint School of Nanoscience and Nanoengineering (JSNN). Now, she’s heading up new efforts.

“There are ambitious goals for research laid out in our University’s strategic plan,” she says. “To this end, we introduce the Chancellor’s

**BRIGHT is the Battery, Research, Innovation, and Green Energy Harvesting Technology Institute.**

- new job creation
- domestic development of clean energy
- [bright.uncg.edu](http://bright.uncg.edu)

Initiative for Transformational Research.”

The initiative will welcome proposals with the goal of securing external funding, producing high quality scholarly publications, and supporting regional and national innovation.

“This program seeks to fund a new wave of groundbreaking projects that have the capacity to be scaled up to demonstrate long-term sustainability,” says Obare.

How to achieve this remarkable change? Fostering partnerships inside and outside the University.

Research awards will be distributed in amounts up to \$75,000. The number of awards will depend on the quality of the submissions. Projects should focus on advancing new knowledge and finding new ways to solve societal problems, Obare adds.

For example, the initiative is interested in research that addresses societal challenges such as housing, poverty, education, and mental health; solves critical and urgent health and wellness needs; or, develops critical technologies in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, energy, and other innovations.

“By doing this we can elevate the stature of the campus and provide our students with the rich experiences that make our campus distinctive,” says Obare.

## CARLISLE, KITCHEN HONORED

UNCG’S DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARDS, the University’s most prestigious honors, were conferred again this spring.

LINDA ARNOLD CARLISLE ’72, a businesswoman and philanthropist, was presented with the Charles Duncan McIver Medal. She has impacted the state through both public service and engagement with the business community – from creating Copier Consultants to leading the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources to holding a co-chair position for the Students First capital campaign here at UNCG.



ED KITCHEN received The Holderness/Weaver Award. After a three-decade career with the City of Greensboro that included 10 years as

city manager, he joined the Joseph M. Bryan Foundation, where he is currently vice president and chief operating officer. He was also the founding chair of Gateway Research Park and a leader of the funding, design, and development of the Union Square Campus.

At the ceremony, UNCG Chancellor Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr., said, “Both award recipients have honored the past, cultivated strong visions of a bright future, and worked hard to make those visions a reality. That’s an amazing legacy.”



## FIRST IN THE FAMILY! WHO’S NEXT?

WHEN YOU ARE THE FIRST in your family to graduate from college, the impact is monumental. It leads to upward mobility and the American dream. Juan Santos ’11 told UNCG, “As a first-generation immigrant from the Dominican Republic, graduation carried even more weight, symbolizing both personal growth and a family legacy of progress.” He now owns a business with his wife, Elizabeth ’11, who is an alumna herself! Here are three more first-gen success stories!



MARIS  
JONES ’22

While my journey as a first-gen student is a personal achievement, it also inspired my sisters to attend a four-year institution as well. Being able to see and hear about my experiences and the opportunities that higher education gave me motivated them to pursue their own college paths, and I am happy to say that both of them will be graduating this year!



JALEESA  
WHITLEY ’10

Being a first-generation college graduate is one of my proudest accomplishments. I remember very early in life being encouraged by my family to pursue higher education, especially from my mom and grandfather. I was surrounded by incredibly supportive friends who helped me through so many difficult moments of my college journey. Now I am enjoying my career and my life thanks to someone believing in me.



BARRON  
THOMPSON ’01

After being a first-generation college student and teaching high school social studies for five years, I became a first-generation law student, attorney, and I am the first in my family to be an elected official – a North Carolina District Court Judge! It all started with UNCG’s excellent professors, mentors, and nurturing environment. Thank you, UNCG, for all you have done for me!



# HONOR ROLL

## FOR MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

**When it comes to ensuring the mental health** and well-being of our students, UNCG is one of the best. UNCG is one of just 16 schools in the United States named to The Princeton Review's inaugural 2025 Mental Health Services Honor Roll.

"We understand the connection between how students are feeling and their ability to do well academically and personally," says Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs Dr. Cathy Akens. "We provide an abundance of resources

to ensure all students have every opportunity to thrive as Spartans."

UNCG's mental health services, many of them organized by Counseling and Psychological Services, let students choose from one-on-one interventions, group sessions, and engaging activities. They can develop good mental health habits, tackle the anxieties that are common with earning a degree, or turn to specialized programs for personal challenges like trauma and addiction.

**"It's important that we are paying attention to all our different dimensions of health."**

— DR. JENNIFER WHITNEY,  
DIRECTOR OF MENTAL HEALTH  
& WELLBEING IN STUDENT  
HEALTH SERVICES

**LEADING THE WAY IN RESEARCH** UNCG faculty also advance understanding of mental health through research. They have been awarded millions of dollars in grant funding from federal and state agencies, nonprofits, and private companies that recognize the benefits of mental well-being. Some examples:

► **Dr. Rebecca Mathews** (School of Education) trains others to recognize warning signs in order to prevent suicide. "I want to be a voice that helps individuals understand that even if they're surrounded by darkness, there really is a pathway forward," she says.



► **Dr. Anne Parsons** (College of Arts and Sciences) cares deeply about the history of mental health treatment. Her exhibition, "Care and Custody: Past Responses to Mental Health," has traveled to multiple states. "It's important to take the history seriously, because it can lead to change," she says.



► **UNCG's Center for Youth, Family, and Community Partnerships** (Office of Research and Engagement) has emerged as a leader through programs across North Carolina. From "Bringing Out the Best," which helps children overcome behavioral, social, and emotional challenges, to its "High Fidelity Wraparound" training process, the 20-year-old center has received a record-breaking \$6.8 million in funding.

# ON THE HORIZON

## COLE LEVIN CENTER FOR ART AND HUMAN UNDERSTANDING

**A GIFT FROM ARTIST, COLLECTOR,** and philanthropist Carol Cole Levin will transform the Weatherspoon Art Museum's first-floor wing into the Cole Levin Center for Art and Human Understanding. This major gift of close to \$5 million comprises artwork from her extensive collection as well as funding for building renovations and programming.

As part of her gift, some 270 artworks by more than 140 artists, including works Levin created, will become part of the museum's collection.

The center, which will open in 2026, will place humanist inquiry at the core of the museum's mission to be a resource for object-based teaching and learning that extends throughout the University and into the community. The Cole Levin Center for Art and Human Understanding is jointly named in tribute to Carol's late husband, Seymour Levin.

"It aligns with UNCG's mission to foster inclusive excellence and community engagement," remarks Juliette Bianco, the museum's Anne and Ben Cone Memorial Endowed Director. "We are honored to expand the museum's collection with works of art that will impact how we think and talk about personal and collective experience."

Upon its completion, the center will comprise teaching,

study, and exhibition spaces that will expand the museum's capacity to offer students, faculty, and community members rich opportunities to learn together with original works of art. The center will offer robust programming designed to engage learners from across diverse fields of study in the humanities, sciences, and social sciences.

Levin's ties to the Weatherspoon Art Museum and UNCG run deep. As a longstanding member and former president of the museum's advisory board, she has championed the Weatherspoon's work on campus and in the community for many years. Through gifts of art and funding to support students' engagement with visiting artists and curators, she has demonstrated her belief in the power of art to impact lives.

"The Weatherspoon Art Museum has meant so much to me living in Greensboro," says Levin. "Bringing artists from the bigger art world to speak to students is all part of my mission, too. The collection at the Weatherspoon is something to be proud of, and I feel like the museum will be a good home for so many of the artworks from my own collection. And if they inspire students and visitors from the community to accept and be who they are, I will be forever grateful."

Carol Cole  
Levin



**Top:** Portrait of Carol Cole Levin in her studio with her artwork (created under the name Carol Cole), photo by Carolyn de Berry. **Left to right:** Mother Earth (after Lee Lozano), 2008; The Grand Nanny, 2015; and When the Saint Goes Marching In, 1996. Photography by Carolyn de Berry. All images courtesy of the Weatherspoon Art Museum, UNC Greensboro.

**Above, left:** Marcel Duchamp, Le Surrealisme en 1947, 1947. Multiple of foam rubber breast, velvet, and printed label mounted on cover from an illustrated book of lithographs, etchings, woodcuts, photogravure, and ready-made object, 10 x 8 1/2 x 2 1/2 in. Promised gift to the Weatherspoon Art Museum from the Carol Cole Levin Collection © Association Marcel Duchamp / ADAGP, Paris / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York 2024

**Above, right:** Carol Cole, The Dissection of ANI, 1993. Clay, embroidery thread, linen, silk, and satin, 10 5/8 x 13 x 4 in. Promised gift to the Weatherspoon Art Museum from the Carol Cole Levin Collection © Carol Cole, photography by C. Timothy Barkley

**Bottom, left:** Judy Chicago, Marie Antoinette, 2017. Four color lithograph on cotton paper, 26 1/2 x 26 in. Promised gift to the Weatherspoon Art Museum from the Carol Cole Levin Collection © 2024 Judy Chicago / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York



# Optimistic about academics

**Dr. Alan Boyette** became UNCG's provost and executive vice chancellor last fall after serving as interim provost since spring 2024. His history with the University goes back more than three decades.

Boyette began as a valued faculty member in political science and then served important administrative roles, providing leadership in academic program planning, institutional research, learning assessment, and budgetary oversight for the Academic Affairs, Student Affairs, and Research divisions.

This is an exciting time for academics at UNCG, says Provost Boyette.

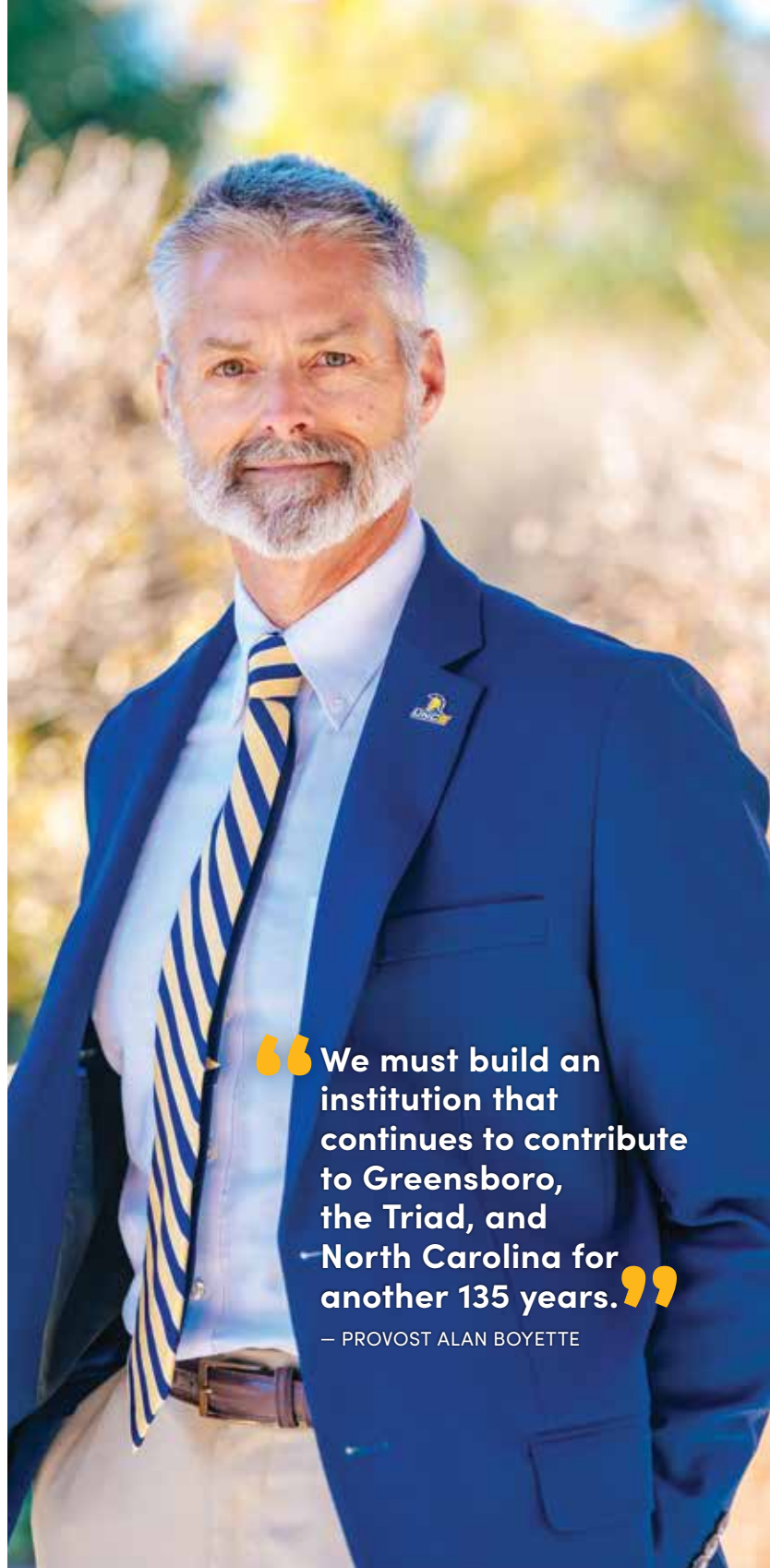
"National changes are pushing all of higher education to think more about the value it offers. One result is that there are new and important conversations happening on campus about ways we can better marry our newest research foci with learning opportunities for students that directly connect with promising career paths."

He's been looking for new talent to guide UNCG forward, actively directing searches for academic deans in multiple schools within the University. UNCG attracts top-level candidates, he says. "We find that faculty from across the nation are interested in and energized by our identity and our mission. We are very much a research university, but we have maintained a strong focus on excellent teaching and excellent mentoring of students."

Chancellor Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr. agrees that the future of academics at UNCG is in good hands.

"Dr. Boyette is unwavering in his dedication and commitment to UNCG's mission and values. Likewise, he is dedicated to our students, faculty, and staff," says Chancellor Gilliam. "He is trusted across our community and will be able to make tough decisions that are in the best interest of the University."

With a new strategic plan, "Forward Together," in place, UNCG is ready for the future. So is Provost Boyette. "It's exciting to know that we are on our way to best-in-class graduation rates even as we reach for Research 1 status. We want every student who works hard to graduate on time. There's more to do, but that's already happening for more and more students every year."



“We must build an institution that continues to contribute to Greensboro, the Triad, and North Carolina for another 135 years.”

— PROVOST ALAN BOYETTE

**SUSTAINED  
STRENGTH**

**U.S. News and World Report's best colleges for 34 straight years • Princeton Review's best colleges for 25 straight years • #1 in North Carolina for Gilman Scholarships, which enable students with limited financial resources to study abroad**

## UNCG ESPORTS IS EPIC

EPIC GAMES is the maker of the Unreal Engine 3D computer graphics tool and Fortnite, one of the world's most popular video games. Now, they've selected UNCG as one of just three North Carolina universities to participate in an Unreal Academic Partnership.

"Our faculty are using Unreal Engine in their own research and productive or creative works. It's the recognition that we're leading the way with this kind of technology," says Dr. John Borchert, director of UNCG's Network for the Cultural Study of Videogaming.



## NATIONAL LEADER

**EARLY THIS YEAR**, Cheryl Holcomb-McCoy '96 PhD became president and CEO of the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE), which elevates educator preparation through research, professional practice, advocacy, and collaboration.

How did she get there?

In the 1980s, as a young teacher, she was intrigued when a colleague came to her room to deliver lessons about making friends and identifying feelings. Holcomb-McCoy earned a master's degree in counseling from the University of Virginia and returned to the school system as a school counselor.

She then enrolled at UNCG to work with the late Dr. William Purkey in the University's nationally top-5 ranked Counseling and Counselor Education program. Purkey, a recipient of the UNC Board of Governor's Award for Excellence in Teaching, was an excellent mentor.

Holcomb-McCoy credits UNCG with helping her recognize that counseling and education go hand in hand. "UNCG



“I’ve witnessed the power of education: it can inspire people to achieve their dreams, enhance our society, and help address some of the injustices in the world.”

— CHERYL HOLCOMB-MCCOY '96 PHD

impacted my development as an educator," she says. "I worked with so many wonderful professors – including DiAnne Borders, the late Jane Myers, and the late Nicholas Vacc. From Jane, I learned about the importance of overall wellness."

She went on to hold faculty positions at

Brooklyn College, the University of Maryland, and Johns Hopkins University, where she rose to the position of vice provost for faculty.

Prior to her new position with AACTE, Holcomb-McCoy was the dean of the School of Education at American University.

"Throughout my time in higher education, it became clear to me that we must incorporate mental health and social-emotional learning into our discussions about how to instruct students," she says. "You could have a spectacular mathematician who comes in to teach math

at a high school, but if that teacher is unaware of a student in distress, then that teacher is probably not going to be effective."

Leading the AACTE, Holcomb-McCoy hopes to build on her strong connections to create more pathways for students.

"I've been in education for over 30 years, and I've witnessed the power of education: it can inspire people to achieve their dreams, enhance our society, and help address some of the injustices in the world," she states. "I want to do now what I aimed to achieve in that first year I taught kindergarten. I want to improve the world through education."



# PHILOSOPHY FOR ALL



Dr. Jeffrey Kaplan  
takes philosophy  
beyond the classroom.

**“There are millions of people** out there who appreciate the kind of philosophy we teach at UNCG,” says Dr. Jeffrey Kaplan. “I just have to get it out there.”

Kaplan grew up in New Jersey and lost his mother to the 9/11 attacks. She worked in the North Tower. He traces his passion for philosophy to hard questions he wrestled with in the days and long nights afterward.

Now he reaches others who have philosophical questions of their own. And his reach extends beyond the classrooms of Curry Building.

This desire to go above and beyond has earned him the highest honor a state employee can receive, a 2024 North Carolina Governor’s Award for Excellence. Only two are presented to UNC System employees each year.

It recognizes the impact of Kaplan’s philosophy videos on YouTube and his development of the UNCG Prison Education Program.

Three years ago, he searched the internet for videos that could help people understand complex topics like Russell’s paradox.

He decided to make his own. Today that video has more than 8 million views.

In total, he’s posted about 100 philosophy videos on YouTube that have garnered over 25 million views.

Kaplan gets emails every day from viewers. “It says something about the enthusiasm that people have for philosophy.”

In 2022, Kaplan gave his first monthly philosophy lecture in the Butner Correctional Facility. Earlier in his career, Kaplan taught courses at San Quentin Rehabilitation Center, where he witnessed the positive impacts, such as reducing recidivism.

UNCG professors and students have volunteered their time as well.

Recently, Lloyd International Honors undergrads participated in a writing workshop with Butner inmates.

Joe Dunne, a creative writing teacher in the English department, is also associate director of the prison education program. “Jeff has an amazing commitment to making this grow,” he says.



Kaplan teaching  
students



Kaplan speaks with an inmate  
at San Quentin Rehabilitation  
Center in California.

Learn more about  
Kaplan’s viral  
YouTube videos and  
prison education  
program.



## ALSO GOING VIRAL ...

**FILM MAGIC** A large group of students – now alumni – decided to create a shot-for-shot, lovingly tongue-in-cheek remake of the first Harry Potter film. That’s 2,335 shots. It took three years, and it was a blast. “We had a ton of doubts about it going anywhere online,” says Cooper Atkinson ’23, an arts administration major. “In the end, we’d made it for ourselves.” But it made the front page of /r/videos on Reddit, and it now sits at 2.5 million views on YouTube.

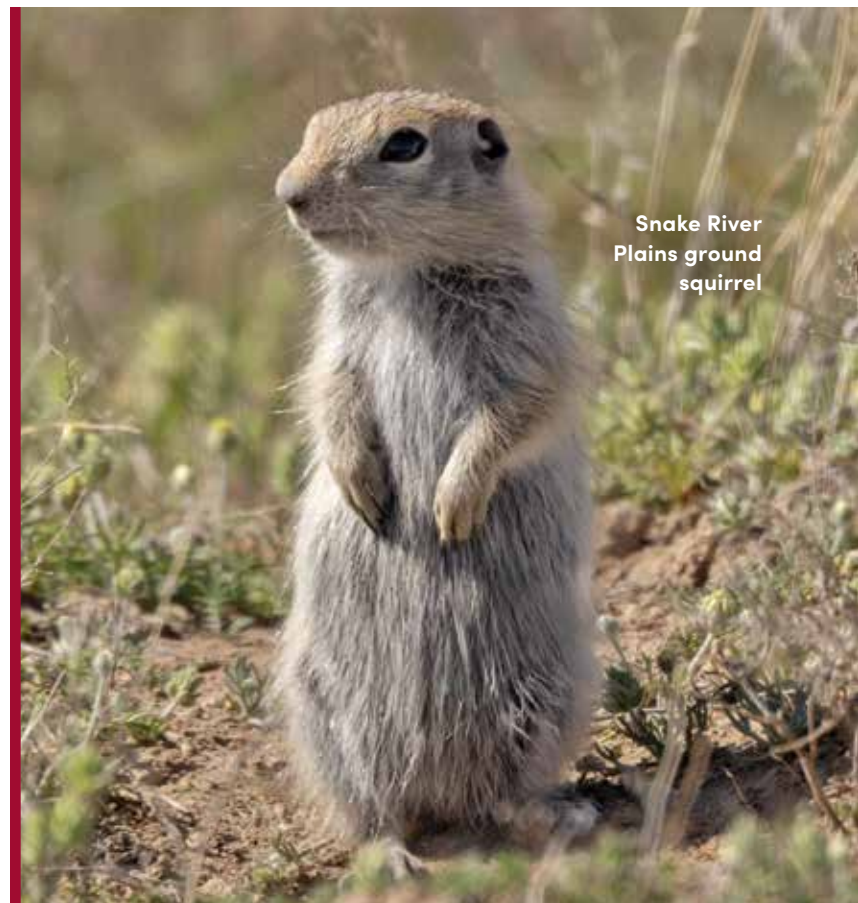


SLAKE RIVER PLAINS GROUND SQUIRREL PHOTOGRAPHY FROM  
MYWORLDREIDPHOTOGRAPHY VIA INSTAGRAM

## LIBRARY LAUGHS

She’s the most followed librarian on TikTok, and she only started her account in 2023. Now Jennifer Miller, a Master of Library and Information Science student, has more than 752,000 followers. After spending nearly 20 years as a teacher,

Miller took on her role as the media specialist at Northern Guilford Middle School. With the handle “MeetMeInTheMediaCenter,” her videos are informative and lighthearted, whether she is repairing books or shelving them.



Snake River  
Plains ground  
squirrel

# SQUIRREL!

**YOU MAY HAVE FAMILY ALL ACROSS THE NATION.**  
So do your local tree squirrels!

The squirrel family includes down-to-earth rodents like chipmunks, groundhogs, and prairie dogs – collectively known as ground squirrels.

UNCG’s Dr. Bryan McLean and his collaborators have identified a new mammal in North America, the Snake River Plains ground squirrel, in Idaho.

How did it go unnoticed for so long?

“They were hiding in plain sight, mostly because they look the same as their close relatives,” says McLean. To the untrained eye, the Snake River Plains ground squirrel and another, the Piute ground squirrel, may seem identical.

The sand-colored mammals are built to burrow. “They have really tiny ears, like a chipmunk, short limbs but elongated claws for digging, and a really short tail.”

Forming underground colonies of up to a hundred individuals per acre, these squirrels are quieter than their tree-climbing cousins, making single or multi-syllabic squeaks and chips. Most of their vocalizations are alarm calls, as they perch like meerkats outside of their burrows on watch for predators.

While discovering new species doesn’t happen every day, it is not unheard of. “There are approximately 430 identified mammals in North America,” McLean says. New species are still being described, but the process takes years.





Far left, UNCG's Animation Lab ribbon cutting with Director of the School of Art Barbara Campbell Thomas and Associate Director Heather Holian; left, students in Animation Lab; below, animation professor Dan Hale; bottom left, work by UNCG student Rachel Witzel; bottom right, work by UNCG student Finley Lewis



## ANIMATED – AND EDUCATED!

**THE SCHOOL OF ART'S ANIMATION LAB** opened last fall. It's all part of the plan to make UNCG a "destination" school for the next generation of animators, says Associate Director Heather Holian, a Disney and Pixar scholar who teaches the history of animation.

In the new lab, UNCG student animators create 2D and 3D projects using industry standard equipment. "This is a professional training program, so we need to offer a professional workspace," Holian says.

Created just over two years ago, the major has grown rapidly. So has the cam-

eraderie. The new lab is a professional space as well as "home base" for students, says animation professor Dan Hale. "As our program has grown, we've built this wonderful sense of community," he adds.

Animation undergraduates Amelie Novio and Finley Lewis praise the professional-grade technology. "It's so nice to see that as the animation program is growing, the technology is, too," says Novio.

Recent graduate Vincent Vang '24 BFA agrees, saying, "This lab will definitely prepare students for future jobs."

Holian says the department is going to

keep dreaming big: "Walt Disney used to say 'It's kinda fun to do the impossible.' I think back to a time when we were told that an animation program wasn't going to happen here. We just weren't going to take that answer."

Holian believes UNCG's education can rival the best available. "We give a top-notch education, and with this new lab we are very competitive. That is going to continue as we add faculty and expand our curriculum."

Meanwhile, Hale says, interest from young animators continues to grow. "The more we offer, the more students seem to want it."

## HERITAGE HONOR

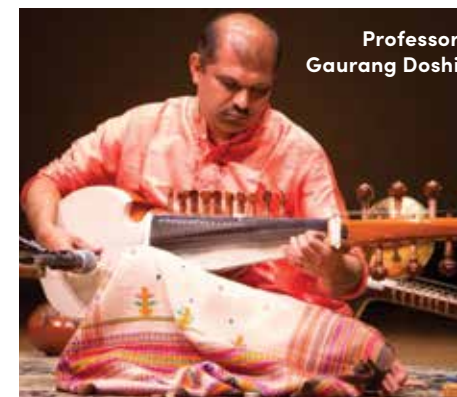
**Gaurang Doshi** is a recipient of the 2025 North Carolina Heritage Award, presented by the North Carolina Arts Council. "It's the highest honor given to a traditional artist in the state," he says.

For Doshi, instructor of UNCG's Indian Music Ensemble, Indian classical music is not simple entertainment. "Music is a means of personal expression and cultural preservation." His musical tradition is built on the deep relationship between guru and shishya. Who was his guru? His father, Dr. Laxmikant Doshi.

"He taught me for more than 30 years, even to his last breath, in a way. He sang in the hospital bed to teach me. That's what we're trying to preserve."

UNCG is the only university in the state that offers Indian classical music. That's important, says Dr. Gavin Douglas. "We offer our students the unique opportunity to actively participate in a musical tradition that operates very differently from Western music," he explains.

The 2025 awards ceremony will take place on June 7. **Learn more at [ncarts.org](https://ncarts.org).**



## UCLS returns for 113th season

UNCG's University Concert and Lecture Series offers a lineup of world-renowned artists for its 2025-26 season:

- **The Count Basie Orchestra**, which has won 18 Grammy awards and performed at every major jazz festival in the world, visits UNCG.

- **Ephrat Asherie Dance**, a New York City-based company rooted in African American and Latinx street and club dances, investigates breaking, hip hop, house, and vogue to tell stories and find new modes of expression.

- **Leslie Odom Jr.** is a Tony and Grammy award-winning vocalist, songwriter, author, and actor who has received recognition for his achievements in theatre, television, film, and music.

- **Lawrence Brownlee**, a leading figure in contemporary opera, has graced the world's stages, captivated audiences, and been a voice for activism and diversity in the industry. For more information, visit [ucls.uncg.edu](https://ucls.uncg.edu)

## Wind Ensemble performs across the South

**This spring**, UNCG's Wind Ensemble barnstormed across more than 1,000 miles of the American South. From North Carolina to Texas, this elite ensemble packed their instruments and hit the road for a nine-day-long whirlwind tour.

The Wind Ensemble is a highly select concert band of fifty performers majoring in music at the UNCG School of Music. They range from first-year students to master's and doctoral candidates.







## Outtake

IN IT TO WIN IT! Women's Basketball gets pumped up before a SoCon Tournament game. This year, #15 Khalis Cain surpassed milestones: 1,000 career points and 1,000 career rebounds!

PHOTOGRAPH BY DENISE ARCHETTO

**"Unity is strength. When there is teamwork and collaboration, wonderful things can be achieved."**  
– MATTIE STEPANEK, AMERICAN POET



# R<sup>X</sup> TO SERVE

WHETHER PROPELLING MOTIVATED UNDERGRADS TO MEDICAL SCHOOL IN RECENT YEARS OR PREPARING WOMEN FOR SCIENCE CAREERS IN EARLIER ONES, UNCG ALWAYS MATCHES STUDENTS WITH NORTH CAROLINA WORKFORCE DEMANDS. AS HEALTHCARE EVOLVES, UNCG PROVIDES A REMEDY.

BY MIKE HARRIS '93 MA AND BECKY DEAKINS • PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN NORONA '13, ARCHIVAL VISUALS COURTESY UNCG'S UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

## R<sup>X</sup> EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE MIA MCDONALD '15

Late at night while most of Raleigh sleeps, the Raymond L. Champ Center for Emergency Medicine at WakeMed Hospital bustles with activity. The exam rooms are full of patients who are sick, weak, and in pain. Their families crowd into the waiting area hoping for good news. Staff move from room to room – observing, listening, running tests, and reassuring worries.

“You never know what’s going to roll in the door or how the night is going to go,” says Physician Assistant Mia McDonald '15. “I treat patients from all walks of life and it’s often the worst day of their lives. I’m here to guide my patients through that experience and hopefully make it easier.”

McDonald wasn’t always so clear about her calling. She graduated from Marshall University in 2007 with a degree in journalism. Over the next decade, she made her home in Greensboro working in public relations and later at Apple, Inc., helping customers with early models of the iPhone and iPad. They praised her as a great communicator, listener, and problem-solver.

“One of the things I loved about working for Apple was breaking down complicated and intangible concepts and explaining how technology could be useful in customers’ everyday lives,” McDonald says. It made her want to help others in a more profound way, which led her to contemplate a career in health care.

Knowing this dramatic career change would require a strong

science background, she enrolled at UNCG as a post-baccalaureate (post-bacc) biology major to complete the credits she needed for physician assistant (PA) school applications.

Even as a nontraditional student, McDonald took full advantage of extracurriculars that UNCG offered. She participated in the Bronze, Silver, and Gold Leadership program through UNCG’s Office of Leadership and Civic Engagement, served as a teaching assistant, worked in a psychology research lab, and took a job as a medical scribe at Moses Cone Hospital’s emergency department, where she shadowed physician assistants.

“I found the University to be welcoming and I loved being actively involved in campus life,” McDonald says. “My experience at UNCG made me more well-



“I treat patients from all walks of life and it’s often the worst day of their lives. I’m here to guide my patients through that experience and hopefully make it easier.”

— MIA MCDONALD '15, PHYSICIAN ASSISTANT AT WAKEMED HOSPITAL IN RALEIGH, N.C.



rounded. The opportunities here really set me apart when I applied to PA school."

McDonald earned her master's in the PA program at Radford University Carilion (formerly Jefferson College of Health Sciences) before returning to Greensboro for her first PA position at Moses Cone Hospital, thanks to connections made during her time at UNCG.

Today, McDonald is a physician assistant at WakeMed Health System and loves the pace of the emergency department, where she has exclusively worked night shifts for the past five years.

"I may walk into one room and treat somebody who's actively having a heart attack, then walk in the next room and pull a foreign body out of someone's eye, and then go two doors down to diagnose a woman with pain in her second trimester of pregnancy."

No matter the age or condition of her patient, McDonald draws on her listening skills and supportive nature. Every interaction requires leadership, critical thinking, and other skills that were reinforced by UNCG.

"We're lucky to have the pre-medical advising program we have," McDonald says. "UNCG helped me build my transcript and resume but also gave me the confidence to chase my dream."

## RX PROSTHETIC SOLUTIONS JASON BAITY '15

Jason Baity '15 helps amputees live their lives without limits.

A prosthetic clinician at Hanger Clinic in Durham, Baity develops care plans for patients missing lower or upper extremities. He begins by determining the functions they hope to regain with

a prosthesis, fitting patients with a customized limb replacement, and then training them to use the prosthesis for optimal function.

It's a noble, yet unexpected, profession that came to pass after a few career detours.

In his late twenties and early thirties, Baity was a beer and wine salesman. Before that, he'd worked for Nintendo, traveling around the nation as a Pokémon instructor. Although he still loves gaming and a good beverage, neither felt like his life's calling, he says.

Baity was laid off in 2009 and looked to UNCG for a recession-proof career in health care. He reached out to Dr. Rob Cannon, UNCG's medical pre-professional advisor at the time, for more information about medical career paths that would match with his skill set.

"I knew that I wanted to get into something involving physical well-being, enabling people to move and live healthy lives," says Baity. "Going to UNCG with its large web of resources, and the helpful advice of professors, helped me focus my goals."

Baity was 35 when he enrolled at UNCG as a kinesiology major with an eye on pre-medical or pre-dental school. Kinesiology professors Dr. Aaron Terranova and Dr. Allan Goldfarb made an impact, but a conversation

with his eventual mentor, Dr. Randy Schultz, put him on his current path.

"Dr. Schultz mentioned 'prosthetist' and something clicked," Baity remembers. "Fitting prosthetics would combine science, math, art, and psychology and those were all my fortes. That was it!"

He contacted a Greensboro Hanger clinic to shadow a prosthetist, and the experience fueled his enthusiasm for the career. He excelled in his classes, assisted in Dr. Goldfarb's research lab, earned the JoAnne Safrit Kinesiology Scholarship, and gave the student address at the May 2015 Commencement.

Following graduation, he received a master's in Prosthetics and Orthotics from Georgia Institute of Technology and has been a certified prosthetist for seven years. He has seen patients from four-to-94 years old, and each one is different. Keeping up with new technology is critical for him to find the right prosthesis to return patients to a high level of function.

"We see patients at a very difficult time. Losing a limb is traumatic," Baity says. "But the goal is to enable them to feel like themselves again. I'm proud to be making a difference in people's lives."



**Mia McDonald '15, in the Pediatric Emergency Department at WakeMed Hospital**



**Jason Baity '15, prosthetic clinician at the Hanger Clinic in Durham, consulting with a patient and fine-tuning a prosthesis**



**“At UNCG, I was able to find my niche and carve my unique path.”**

— JASON BAITY '15, PROSTHETIC CLINICIAN



See video of Jason Baity discussing his journey.





## RX CARDIOLOGY DEPLOYMENTS NODIA ROBINSON '17

Ten years ago, Nodia Robinson was deployed to Afghanistan. A convoy commander and transportation officer, she managed gun trucks and ran rotary and fixed wing fuel and water supplies. The captain, linked to U.S. Special Forces, never lost sight of her plan: becoming a cardiologist.

A native of Charleston, S.C., Robinson was motivated to make a difference by her grandmother who had poor health access and health literacy even though great hospitals were nearby. "Affording insulin, accurately measuring it in vials, improving her diet, and getting to and paying for medical appointments were major hurdles before she died at age 83," she says. "Those final years were so hard, but her heart disease led me to my focus."

Robinson attended Furman College as an undergraduate and East Tennessee State for her master's, but says she never had an advisor that guided her about what it takes to be a doctor. All that changed when she met Robin Maxwell in a biology class during a one-year post-baccalaureate program at UNCG to prepare for medical school.

"I was an older student, and Robin Maxwell knew exactly what my plans were and what I could do," Robinson explained. "And she understood the 'why.' She reassured me that I was qualified and could do it. These were magic words."

She felt out of the loop when she saw others accessing opportunities like conferences and extra training, but with Maxwell's mentorship she found opportunities, including a free-of-charge Medical College



Dr. Nodia Robinson '17,  
medical resident at  
Walter Reed Hospital  
in Bethesda, Md.

Admissions Test (MCAT) course at nearby NC A&T. She finally felt seen and valued as a scholar at UNCG.

After completing the biology program in 2017, she returned to her hometown of Charleston for medical school at the Medical University of South Carolina on a military scholarship. Today, she is a second-year internal medicine resident at Walter Reed Hospital, near Washington, D.C. By the time she completes her residency, the captain will likely be a major.

"Sports cardiology will be my focus," she explains. "Not just for athletes, but for people

in positions like emergency medical technicians, and of course anyone in the military."

Once her military service is over, Robinson hopes to make a real impact serving rural areas in the South through mobile health, specifically identifying and helping patients with heart issues like her grandmother. She speaks about it with a confidence that her journey has built: "I know I can help them."



“When it’s hard to find opportunities, you hope some find you.”

— DR. NODIA ROBINSON '17,  
U.S. ARMY CAPTAIN



Dr. Trey Bateman '08,  
professor and  
neurologist at  
Wake Forest Baptist

## RX NEUROLOGICAL ADVANCEMENTS TREY BATEMAN '08

When Trey Bateman '08 arrived at UNCG, he had more on his mind than the typical college student. He believed excelling academically would provide an answer to his family's financial problems, but a medical career in behavioral neurology was far from his radar.

Bateman's mother had just lost her job at Pillowtex, a casualty of North Carolina's textile industry decline, so she decided to enroll in the local community college to improve her job skills just as Bateman was heading to UNCG. To keep costs down, he commuted from their home in Eden, parking near the First Horizon Coliseum and taking the bus to class every day.

"It was a really tough time," he explains. "We were struggling financially, so I had a Pell grant my first two years. At UNCG, I found opportunities and a college that never felt overwhelming. It was a big school, but it had a small program feel, which was the best of both worlds for me."

Bateman thrived at Lloyd International Honors College as a double major in biology and psychology with two minors, sociology and chemistry. He was

inducted into Phi Beta Kappa and graduated summa cum laude. During his time at UNCG, medical school morphed from a lofty goal to an achievable reality.

"Navigating the hard prerequisites can be daunting, but it's remarkable how many UNCG students reach their dream," Bateman says. "The premed advising program is a real jewel at UNCG."

Attending medical school at UNC-Chapel Hill, he was thankful for how UNCG "set him up for success" as he kept up with classmates from prestigious schools like Harvard and Middlebury. He noticed peers changing their interests as they were exposed to different specialties in medical school, but Bateman was focused from the start.

"I chose my specialty because of a biological psychology class I took at UNCG, and from sophomore year though the end of my training, my path was a direct arrow," he says. "I was fascinated by understanding how our brain provides the foundations for our daily behaviors, and how those behaviors go awry in the context of disease."

Today, Bateman is a clinical researcher treating and studying neurodegenerative causes of cognitive decline and dementia in adults. He works at the Salisbury Veterans Affairs Medical Center and Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist. He's also the Clinical Core Leader of the Wake Forest Alzheimer's Disease Research Center and a faculty member at Wake Forest University.

As our population ages, caring for people in cognitive decline and developing better treatments and understanding of diseases like Alzheimer's is critical. Without the opportunities he found at UNCG, Bateman wonders if he'd be serving this important cause today.

"We need people in health care with diverse backgrounds, and UNCG serves the needs of all kinds of students," Bateman explains. "Instead of being told 'You don't get to be a doctor,' I was asked 'What can we do to help you?'"

“I want to communicate in a down-to-earth way that makes patients feel heard and valued and comfortable. We don’t always do that in medicine.”

— DR. TREY BATEMAN '08,  
PROFESSOR AND  
NEUROLOGIST





## MAKING MED SCHOOL POSSIBLE

Some walls keep people out, but the one outside Professor Robin Maxwell's office is a portal leading students like biology major Daniel Araya '24 to their dream destination.

"It's packed with invaluable resources, including year-to-year course advising, summer internship opportunities, and extensive information on what medical schools seek in prospective students," Araya said just before graduation, gesturing to the wall. "This was my transformative place on campus."

Maxwell uses this space, and the advising that happens in her office, to improve access to medical schools. She believes that UNCG's student body and its longstanding commitment to health care makes it the perfect launchpad for future doctors that med schools and hospital systems are looking for.



Robin Maxwell '81, '83 MA advising Daniel Araya '24 in UNCG's pre-professional program

UNCG's health-related Pre-Professional Advising program, led by Maxwell, is often called the "pre-med program," but it also covers veterinary, dental, occupational and physical therapy, and pharmacy. She advises motivated undergraduates and "post-baccs," who take extra classes after obtaining their undergraduate degrees to prepare for med school.

Her enthusiasm for connecting students with the right medical schools is infectious, and it works. In 2024, UNCG undergraduates' acceptance rates were higher than the national average for med

school, physician assistant school, and physical therapy school.

Since UNCG doesn't restrict access to pre-professional programs with prerequisites or a minimum GPA, any student – or even alumnus – is welcome to participate. Further, the University's "Goldilocks" size (not too large, not too small) gives students optimal research opportunities and meaningful mentorship with faculty, both great assets for med school applications.

"We have the most flexible and efficient post-baccalaureate program in not only the state, but the nation," Maxwell says.

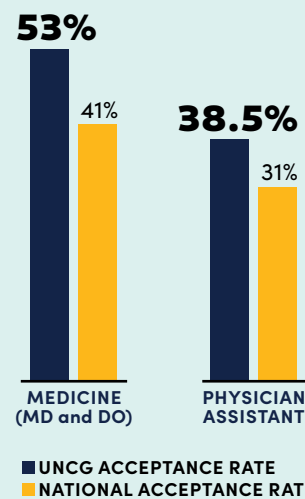
**What makes the difference?**  
**Access, advising, and opportunities!**

### MED SCHOOL APPLICATION PREP

A transcript with a high GPA is only a piece of today's medical school applications. What else are med schools looking for?

- Extracurriculars showing leadership roles and a commitment to service
- Clinical experience shadowing professionals and practicing patient care
- Undergraduate research
- Strong letters of recommendation from faculty members
- A unique personal statement that illustrates a candidate's commitment to the challenging medical training ahead

### UNCG GRADS BEAT NATIONAL RATE



"We first sit down and talk about your commitment to this career path and what you need to reach your goals. High grades and appropriate courses are a key part of the discussion, but med schools are looking for much more than a high GPA."

In 2016, the Association of American Medical Colleges changed their acceptance criteria and adopted 15 core competencies they value in incoming medical students.

"Science skills are just part of them," Maxwell explains. "Teamwork, communication, ethics, desire for service, cultural competence, critical thinking,

reliability, resilience, the ability to improve – these are among skills that med schools are looking for."

Currently, UNCG has 2,535 students in health-related pre-professional tracks. Many are biology majors, but others major in kinesiology, nutrition, psychology, or recreational therapy. Maxwell advises them to choose a major they can excel in and focus on leadership positions and extracurriculars that showcase their well-rounded experience.

"Our philosophy is everybody has a chance," she says. "If they make the decision to commit themselves to this goal, we'll do our best to help them reach it."



Robin Maxwell with Nodia Robinson in 2017

**"We're in the trenches with them. That one-on-one relationship is so important if no one in your family has been to college, much less medical school."**

— ROBIN MAXWELL,  
BIOLOGY LECTURER, CHAIR OF HEALTH CAREERS ADVISORY COMMITTEE



## A LEGACY OF GUIDANCE

Before Robin Maxwell became chair of the Health Careers Advisory Committee, **DR. ROB CANNON** was the advisor to many UNCG students with dreams of becoming a physician.

From 1974 to 2014, he chaired the committee, known as the Premedical Advisory Committee before it was broadened to include more medical careers. Cannon recalls that chemistry professor Dr. John Graves was chair of the committee before him, and he taught Maxwell as an undergraduate and graduate student before she became his colleague.

Even after entering phased retirement, Cannon continued to advise UNCG students and serve on the National Association of Advisors for the Health Professions. "If you count all this, I have been a premed/health professions advisor for 52 years and counting," he says.

He remembers building relationships with students over many years and striving to keep resources and advice current. This was especially important when the Medical College Admission Test (MCAT) was revised in 2016.

"I visited all the relevant department heads to discuss the new content in the revised MCAT," he explains. "This included not only the science department heads, but also psychology and sociology departments."

This commitment and his open-door policy for advisees made a difference that students and alumni still reflect on.

### SUPPORT & REPRESENTATION

The student club **MELANIN IN MEDICINE** creates a supportive space for underrepresented students pursuing medicine and health care fields. Zariah Johnson, its founder and president, says it has helped her grow as a leader and mentor. "It's taught me the importance of advocacy and representation in medicine," she says.





## A HISTORY OF SCIENCE ACCESS

“It’s what this campus has done from the start,” says Dr. Alice Haddy, professor of chemistry. “We create opportunities for those who might otherwise not be allowed to reach their dream and to make their mark.”

In UNCG’s earliest days, those opportunities were created for women at North Carolina State Normal and Industrial School and later at The Woman’s College of the University of North Carolina, and for many it was an opportunity for science education.

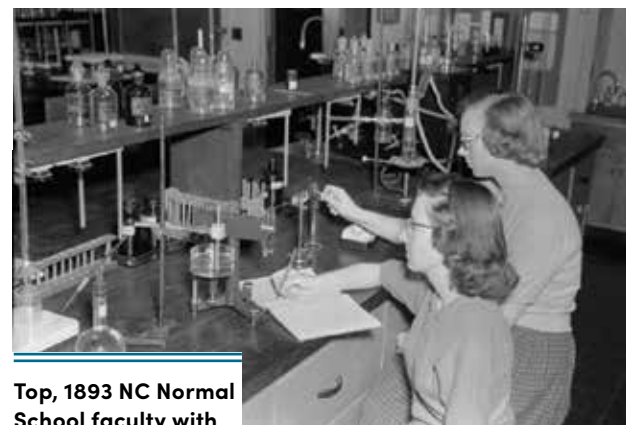
Dixie Lee Bryant led the science department for the first students to attend “State Normal” in 1892. She set up the first science labs and became the first professor on campus – male or female – with an earned PhD. She taught geography, botany, chemistry, physics, zoology, and geology to female students, who in some cases had never studied science before.

Mary Macy Petty joined Bryant in teaching science in 1893. She was responsible for chemistry and physics classes and became head of chemistry until 1934 when she retired. In 1960, the science building was renamed in her



honor and continues to be known as the Petty Building.

In recent years, Florence Schaeffer has been lauded as the most impactful science professor and mentor in campus history. She joined the chemistry department in 1922, succeeded Petty as head of chemistry at Woman’s College, and served the University until 1972.



**Top, 1893 NC Normal School faculty with DIXIE LEE BRYANT in the top row. Left, FLORENCE SCHAEFFER was the first UNCG faculty member to be honored with a named professorship. Above, Woman’s College chemistry classroom c. 1950.**

“Florence Schaeffer was incredibly impactful for this campus and its science students,” says Dr. Alice Haddy. Haddy has heard praise from faculty members – and alumni – about Schaeffer since she joined the chemistry department in 1994, which led her to begin researching Schaeffer’s career. Last fall she



“Miss Schaeffer helped Woman’s College develop the sciences, while trying to offer more opportunities for women in general.”

— DR. ALICE HADDY,  
UNCG PROFESSOR OF CHEMISTRY

**Mary Katsikas ’62 recalls every one of the sciences being led by women and every chemistry professor being a woman.**

delivered a talk on her findings at the UNCG Archives’ Hodges Reading Room.

According to Haddy, Schaeffer’s long tenure at the University expanded her impact: “The campus has been blessed with outstanding mentors in the health and science realm – Mary Petty, Eloise Lewis, Anna Gove, Anna Joyce Reardon, and Mary Channing Coleman come to mind. But a five-decade career in bringing science to mostly female students is what sets Schaeffer apart.”

After having received a master’s

She provided opportunities for and was supportive of women faculty, many with advanced degrees.”

Schaeffer’s leadership took advantage of a critical shift in women’s interest in science. Data shows the number of majors in chemistry spiked in the 1940s, despite a relatively steady overall school enrollment. Haddy speculates this was partly due to perceived demand in the field during wartime, and partly because women developed a different attitude toward the necessity of their careers.

from Mount Holyoke, Schaeffer came to Woman’s College wanting to emulate Mount Holyoke’s commitment to educating female scientists and encouraging them to conduct research, leading to publication. She guided many students on their path to advanced degrees and establishing careers in science, teaching, and medicine.

“Schaeffer had high standards,” Haddy says. “And under her leadership, the department did too.

Mary Katsikas ’62, who worked at Vick’s Chemical before returning to campus as a lab manager, remembers chemistry graduates being in high demand from top companies in the 60s: “We had people from pharmaceutical companies like Smith, Kline, and French and chemical corporations like Monsanto and Union Carbide who wanted to hire people from the department because of our training. We really were trained strictly.”

Schaeffer set that bar and brought opportunities and science careers to women who might not have discovered them otherwise, Haddy says. “She helped position this University for growth in the sciences for the years to come, as we became UNCG, became coed, and developed a greater emphasis on research in all of the science departments.”

Without Schaeffer, and Bryant and Petty before her, UNCG wouldn’t have the history of access, excellence in science education, and tradition of preparing students for evolving workplace demands. It’s a history that continues today as UNCG matches students with medical, physician assistant, and physical therapy programs. It’s a prescription to serve, rooted in science, and for the benefit of communities in North Carolina and beyond.

## ‘THANK YOU, MISS SCHAEFFER’

IT’S NOT UNCOMMON, upon retirement, for former students to reach out with congratulations, but the outpouring at Schaeffer’s retirement was voluminous. Students sent messages of gratitude. A scrapbook album preserved in UNCG Archives tells the tale.

In page after page of cursive notes and snapshots, students from the 1920s and five decades afterward describe their careers and the impact Schaeffer had on their lives and their families.

“The learning process was an exciting, thrilling, and entertaining experience, because you, Miss Schaeffer, have the gift of inspiring and awakening a student’s ability to learn.”

— ETHEL SLEDGE BARKER ’31

“A friend told me ‘she’s hard but she’s good’ – and she was right. Thank you for being the best ‘teaching’ teacher I ever had.”

— JULIA HILL GUNN ’45

“I was employed in Idaho by Phillips Petroleum Co., Atomic Energy Division at the National Reactor Testing Station. The PhDs that I worked with (not for!) were great, and I have several publications in professional journals to show for my efforts.”

— LIB MOONEY WHITENER ’53

“I was one of your first students. Since my husband’s death, I have had a job as instructor, teaching chemistry lab at NC State University. I’m not the teacher you are. I’m still trying, though!”

— ELIZABETH HINES MANNING ’29

“I have worked for the past 8½ yrs for Nassau Hospital of Mineola, Long Island, in the chemistry department. Prior to this I worked in a clinical lab headed by Dr. H.S. Van Nostrand of Johns Hopkins. I stayed 25 years in this position.”

— JOSEPHINE BATEMAN HINTZE, ’33



IN SEPTEMBER 2024, HURRICANE HELENE CAUSED UNPRECEDENTED FLOODING LEADING TO A STATE OF EMERGENCY. SIX MONTHS LATER...

# Still here. Still strong.

THE STORM DAMAGED MORE THAN 70,000 HOMES, UPENDED LIVES, AND CAUSED BILLIONS IN DAMAGES. ACROSS THE HIGH COUNTRY, UNCG-TRAINED PROFESSIONALS ARE REBUILDING THEIR COMMUNITIES. THEIR WORK ISN'T FLASHY, BUT IT'S THEIR TIME TO SHINE.

BY MERCER BUTTER '11 MA • ILLUSTRATION BY TENLEY DOUGLASS

In the UNCG community, there's a spirit of service that goes back to 1893, when the first 10 graduates of the State Normal and Industrial School for Women adopted the one-word phrase "service" as the school motto. That spirit has persisted through the days of Woman's College up to the present.

Today, Spartan graduates in High Country communities are facing vast challenges after the historic destruction caused by Hurricane Helene. But they're not going anywhere. In fields like public administration and public health, positions that don't often get big headlines, Spartan alumni can see the impact of their work in the success and security of their neighbors.

"The common theme in rural communities is collaboration," says Jodi Brazil '89, who graduated with a UNCG nursing degree and now works in public health with the Madison County Health Department. "Our church in Mars Hill was the only place that had Wi-Fi. We would go down and work, and there were usually around 50 people working there. It was quite the little hub."

What does it mean to make real-world impact? For Hugh Sandoe '15, '17 MPA, it means creative problem solving. He's the strategy and performance manager in the Burke County manager's office. Burke County is home to around 89,000.

"I always thought I would go work for a big city," he says, "but I realized when you're in a large community, you're one of a million

**"The work we do is literally changing the lives of people and propelling them forward. That's what government is supposed to do."**

— MAGNOLIA LONG '20

people. Our county government is about 26 departments, and I know all the department heads by name. I know their wife's name, their husband's name, their kid's name. There's a strong sense of relationship, which is important to me."

Wilson Hooper '06 MPA is city manager in Brevard, N.C. What does he like most about public administration? "Local government suits a curious personality like me, because you get to have your fingers in everything," he says, for example, planning, finance, communications, and law.

Hooper sees two "big picture" tasks for municipal managers. "I facilitate the work of the elected officials. That's one of the main responsibilities of a manager: to advise their city council so that the decisions made on behalf of their constituents are as good as they can be."

Next, he helps everyone else understand those decisions. "I take the elected official's language of stories, hopes, and dreams, and I translate it to the technicians on the ground in their technical language." Communications is more important than ever, he says.

That sounds good, but what happens when a crisis hits?

## A 1,000 YEAR FLOOD

"That Wednesday and Thursday of the storm, so much was already happening," says John Carrico '23 MBA, business development coordinator at Mission Health, a six-hospital system that serves Western North Carolina. "We had seven or eight inches of rain even before the hurricane hit."

**"It's a long road to recovery for a lot of communities. Having the entrepreneurial spirit and the ability to help people navigate the path is where a lot of opportunities exist."**

— JOHN CARRICO '23 MBA

were severely damaged."

At Mission Hospital in Asheville, some staff had been asked to stay the weekend. They were ready to respond.

Other local citizens and officials got to work as soon as they could. Some of these were trained in areas like public administration, public

Then, beginning Wednesday, September 26, 2024, Hurricane Helene brought record-breaking rainfall. According to a state assessment, in several counties it was a 1,000 year flood event.

People woke up to realize they'd lost power. Sandoe says, "In Burke County, we had about a third of our county without water for a week. We had about 160 structures that were destroyed, and another 300-400 that

View from the Opera Box at Chimney Rock State Park overlooking the village of Chimney Rock along the Rocky Broad River







Volunteers, National Guard, and more came to MARSHALL, N.C., after Hurricane Helene.



Magnolia Long (left) of the REGIONAL FOOTHILLS COMMISSION—and many others—unloaded food deliveries at an airport. “The hurricane was heartbreaking in ways I’ve never experienced. Doing something direct was absolutely incredible,” she says.



health, nursing, and business at UNCG. They brought their professional skills to serve the common good.

REMARKABLE RESPONSE

After Burke County’s emergency response, which prioritized lifesaving efforts, Sandoe and his colleagues prioritized distributing supplies and establishing communications. Sandoe led the phone bank. The goal: connect need with relief. “If someone called and said, ‘My mother-in-law needs oxygen and food, but her driveway is blocked by a tree,’ I’d say, ‘Oh, well, Steve just called to volunteer – he has a four-wheel-drive truck and a chainsaw. Let me ask him to go solve his neighbor’s problem.’” The relationships and skills within the community went a long way.

Especially at first, many had no cell phone or internet access. In Brevard, Hooper and his colleagues collected information and shared it with the

public the old-fashioned way. “If you didn’t have a public safety radio, you had to communicate in person. We had city employees driving around all weekend updating one another on the latest.”

But how to get that information to the citizens they served? “I and a staff person and the mayor would put our heads together and throw down on a sheet of paper everything we had heard. We’d take out stuff that was unsubstantiated and put together a report. Then, the mayor would literally walk up and down the street delivering information to the people.”

Once the radio station was up and running again, the mayor gave updates regularly, Hooper explains. “We were proud that we were able to fill that information vacuum, at least somewhat, for our constituents.”

UNCG’s Dr. Jeff Milroy is associate professor in the Department of Public Health Education and associate director of the Institute to Promote Athlete Health and Wellness. He says serving clients is one basic goal of public health professionals. “They seek to better understand the needs

of the community and coordinate efforts to specifically address those needs.” In practice, that means initiating and maintaining many projects with many community partners.

In Madison County, Brazil works with health promotion, community health, community collaboration – anything that gets the job done. For example, the county had a population of around 22,000, but only two dental practices. So, her department met the need by creating a third dental center for uninsured and underinsured residents.

Sandoe, Hooper, and Brazil reported huge outpourings of support and supplies from volunteers who sent resources or traveled to lend a hand.

Hope Niedrich, a UNCG gerontology student, volunteered in Marshall, N.C., by the French Broad River, where the water crested

at around 23 feet. She says she found a mostly grassroots effort that provided hazmat suits and transportation to the cleanup sites. “I went to a little hub, put on the hazmat suit, and got shuttled down to Marshall. I worked at the Presbyterian church every day.”

Community leaders organized volunteers and made the cleanup happen.

THE SPIRIT OF THE REGION

Magnolia Long ’20 is the senior planner and rural planning organization director at the Regional Foothills Commission, a governmental body serving Cleveland, McDowell, Polk, and Rutherford counties. It fills a role between local government and state government.

Foothills assists with disaster training, code enforcement, farmland

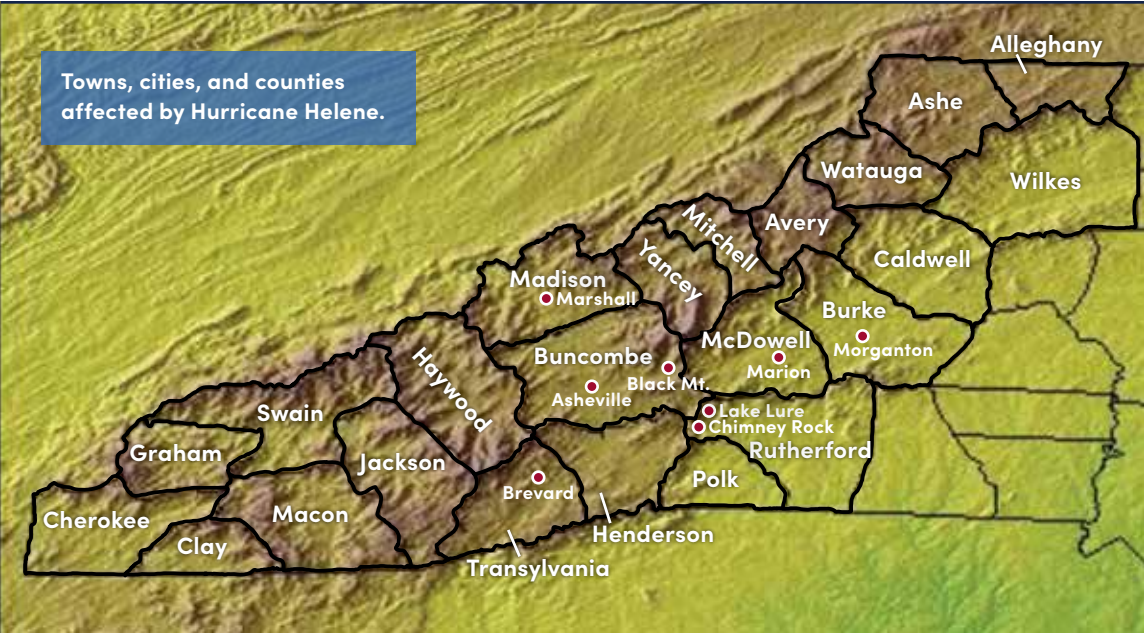
**\$44 BILLION**  
IN DIRECT DAMAGE

**73,000 HOMES**  
DAMAGED (ESTIMATE)

**39 COUNTIES**  
DESIGNATED FOR  
FEDERAL DISASTER  
ASSISTANCE BY FEMA

**\$850 MILLION**  
IN FEMA INDIVIDUAL  
AND PUBLIC ASSISTANCE  
(DEC 2024)

SOURCE: OFFICE OF STATE BUDGET AND  
MANAGEMENT, DECEMBER 13, 2024



MARSHALL, N.C. PHOTOS COURTESY OF HOPE NIEDRICH; REGIONAL FOOTHILLS PHOTOS COURTESY OF MAGNOLIA LONG; PHOTO OF JOHN CARRICO BY BERT VANDEVENTE

FLYING HIGH

JOHN CARRICO ’23 MBA has over two decades of combined experience as both a 9-1-1 and flight paramedic. But after Helene, the skies were more crowded than usual. “There could have been as many as 50-55 helicopters in the air in the disaster area,” he says. “We’re not used to seeing other helicopters.”

Carrico is business development coordinator for the Mountain Area Medical Airlift (MAMA), a division of Mission Health that serves rural Western North Carolina. With the MBA, he says, “I was able

to have a seat at the table with CEOs and presidents of hospitals. I help us partner with EMS agencies, rural fire departments, and hospital systems to ensure our helicopter is offering the best that we can to our partners.”

During the crisis last fall, he reported to Mission Hospital in Asheville for work as soon as he could. The whole staff did. “It was overwhelming, but we knew what to do to take care of people. That was at the forefront all the time, from the hospital administration down to the custodial service.”

Lack of phones and internet weren’t the only problems the

team faced. “The hospital didn’t have running water at first. They were trucking in about 200,000 gallons of water every day.” Carrico was flying in the helicopter on a variety of missions. “We started not only flying patients, but also resources to hospitals,” he says. “We were flying doctors to smaller hospitals so they could be ‘boots on the ground.’”

It came down to commitment, and it came down to

community. “I’m intimately connected with all the EMS departments throughout Western Carolina, and knowing the impact that had happened, I needed to be helping them.”



John Carrico  
'23 MBA



preservation, and more. After the storm, it helped municipalities coordinate with state and federal bodies effectively. “Local governments were having to provide basic service delivery and manage a natural disaster on top of that. That’s where we came in and filled those gaps,” she says.

For Long, drive and determination are part of her personal story as much as her professional one. “I feel like I’ve always had the cards stacked against me, but I also feel called to go out and make the world a better place.”

UNCG was part of that story, she says. “I was diagnosed with cystic fibrosis when I was six months old, and I got really sick after I started college. I had to get a transplant during spring break, but I stayed in school, made Dean’s List, and was able to graduate. I don’t let anything stop me, and UNCG was exactly where I needed to be.”

### REAL-WORLD LESSONS

As a doctoral student, Adam Hege ’15 PhD “fell in love” with the faculty at UNCG. “I could just tell I was getting the training that was going to help me long term.”

Today, he’s associate dean for research and graduate education in the Beaver College of Health Sciences at Appalachian State University. When he gives his own students a broad definition of public health, it comes down to one word.

“The key word is ‘prevention,’” he says. While medical doctors focus on immediate problems, “in public health we direct our attention to trying to address problems before they happen.”

### UNPRECEDENTED RESPONSE

**THE NC NATIONAL GUARD’S** response to Hurricane Helene was the longest in its history. Like many Spartans, Major SaQuang Lam, assistant director of student health services at UNCG and longtime member of the National Guard, answered the call to help. He was activated to Avery County and led missions around Grandfather Mountain.

At UNCG, over 8% of enrolled students are military-affiliated, and the University continues to be recognized as a Top 10 Military-Friendly School. Many current students participated in recovery efforts through the National Guard.

Corporal Carisma Schoen

had just begun her first semester, but she was ready to answer the call. “The way I was raised was very service-oriented,” she says. “If you’re going to get a job done, you better work your hardest.”

Private First Class Lamin Nyeekpee says that, for him, giving back feels natural. “I’m from Liberia, West Africa. I’ve seen poverty, so I understand what it’s like when you lose your home, or you lose a lot of resources you were used to.”

Nyeekpee delivered water to daycares and preschools, then worked in a “silo” – a place where people could drive up and get resources. “We’d stay out there from seven in the



**CHIMNEY ROCK (left), where roads and bridges washed away, and LAKE LURE (right), which filled with debris from trees and shattered docks, were devastated by the storm.**



**“In the Master of Public Health program, much of the work we do focuses on prevention, but in the face of disasters like Hurricane Helene, our students are prepared to act.”**

– DR. JEFF MILROY



**Major SaQuang Lam (far left), assistant director of student health services at UNCG and member of the National Guard in Avery County, NC.**

morning to seven at night,” he says. “People would see that, and they would be thankful.”

Specialist Foday Mami had similar experiences during Helene. “We would go on missions to get supplies to the pod sites where people needed them. You know, 500 cases of water go into this building or 600 boxes of food for this place.”

During his time in the Bryan School, Mami has been a leader. “I’ve really enjoyed my experience and the tools and resourc-

es that the Bryan School provides to allow you to succeed in the workforce.”

Each of these Spartans embodies what Lam himself saw in Western NC: “What struck me most was the impressive display of selfless community spirit.”

**BLACK MOUNTAIN, N.C., public meetings were held outside while there was no power, but the town hall was reopened just one week after the storm, sources say.**



And if a crisis has already happened, public health professionals study it to better prepare for the future. “A lot of public health training is looking at examples like Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans: What went wrong then, and what can we learn from that?”

Events like the Covid-19 pandemic make it clear how crucial public health can be, he says. “My students are thinking, ‘We’re at the forefront. We can lead. We have the skills and abilities to be involved with these issues.’”

Likewise, programs at UNCG prepare leaders and decision-makers.

In the Master of Public Health (MPH), Milroy says preparation is key. “The program gives students the skills they can use to face the effects of disasters like Hurricane Helene. They learn project development skills that are necessary to manage logistics related to community disasters.”

They also learn how to work with trauma, he adds. “People don’t enter the field of public health without a passion for service.”

UNCG’s Master of Public Administration (MPA) program is also focused on real-world success, says Graduate Program Director Hunter Bacot. “Nearly every course provides opportunities for students to incorporate what they are learning to solve active, real-time problems at their work or in communities that reach out to us for support.”

In jobs that deal with public issues, he says, it’s all about results. “Our alumni perpetuate the excellence in our MPA program by modeling it every day in their work throughout communities.”

### A LONG RECOVERY

Niedrich recalls seeing Helene’s fresh devastation. “You’re just shocked and silent because it’s overwhelming, and it’s crazy to think that this is literally right in the state of North Carolina.”



Longterm challenges remain. “There are still people that are really struggling,” she says. In Burke County, 411 residents were displaced. In Mars Hill, 70 families were left without homes. That loss is repeated across the region. And after citizens of all ages have suffered such deep losses, mental health may be a pressing need in the years to come.

Shuttered businesses, crop losses, and unrealized tourism revenues add to the economic hurt. Plus, as state and national efforts wind down, finding resources for needed infrastructure projects can be challenging.

How to fill the gaps? Carrico observes that long after the water receded, people continued to step up and find ways to contribute. “Having the entrepreneurial spirit and the ability to help people navigate the path to recovery, I think that’s where a lot of those opportunities exist,” he says.

“It will take everyone joining together to rebuild Asheville,” says Morgan Daniels ’17. She’s working with nonprofit Asheville Rising, which sent the work of four Asheville artists to

the 2025 GEM Show in Tucson, Ariz., which had 350,000 attendees, she says.

There are no easy answers, Bacot admits, but he says UNCG students and alumni have the skills and values to make an impact. “Our students and alumni are in the public sphere because it’s in their DNA to be of service to others. They are equipped to do so by having a command of strategies that allow them to engage complex issues with confidence.”

It’s been six months since Hurricane Helene. Recently, sections of I-40 that connect North Carolina and Tennessee opened for the first time since the storm. Even still, uncertainty and suffering remain. Across the High Country, the hard work of recovery continues.

See video of the Chimney Rock illustration being created.





# BRAINS & BRAWN

MINERVA IS THE GODDESS OF WISDOM, AND SPIRO LEADS THE CRY AT SPORTING EVENTS AND BEYOND. TOGETHER, THESE UNCG ICONS ARE BRAINS AND BRAWN!

BY MIKE HARRIS '93 MA • PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN NORONA '13, MARTIN W. KANE, ARCHIVAL VISUALS COURTESY UNCG'S UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

**J**ust as NC State were once the "Farmers," Elon the "Fighting Christians," and Georgia Tech the "Golden Tornado," this campus' iconography is shrouded in lore and some mystery. Minerva has been a symbol of our academic mission almost since the start and has appeared on every diploma. With the emergence of men's athletics, Spiro the Spartan has been a rallying point for school spirit. Let's trace their evolution.

1894



Minerva first appears on campus on the diploma's seal. The artist is unknown. It's believed that founding president Charles Duncan McIver chose Minerva as the school's symbol.

## MID-CENTURY

The number and variety of Minerva profiles is staggering. In Pine Needles, on alumni magazines, on class jackets, and elsewhere, talented student artists put their own stamp on campus icon history.



1908



A plaster Minerva statue placed in the Students' Building was a gift of the Class of 1907. The original statue, Minerva Giustiniani, is in the Musei Capitolini in Rome. That original statue was a Roman copy of a Greek statue of Athena (perhaps 5th century BCE).

1931

The UNC System was born when state-sponsored institutions in Raleigh, Chapel Hill, and Greensboro were consolidated. With this, a new seal appeared at Woman's College. "It's completely unlike any image before," says Scott Hinshaw, a University Libraries archivist. He has determined its origin: a c. 460 BCE krater that is displayed in the Louvre Museum.



1950

A "Minerva Mystery"! Before the Students' Building was razed, the plaster Minerva was removed for safe-keeping. But where did it go? It remains a mystery to this day. An undated photo published in the mid-1980s shows the statue in poor repair.

1963

The University seal – still used today – appears. Fun fact: As the school prepared to admit men, Hinshaw reports, "Suddenly even Minerva's gender was challenged. Helen P. Yoder, administrative assistant to Chancellor Singletary, said, 'Some people thought Minerva looked too much like a woman,' and Hoyt Price, a longtime registrar (1960-87), agreed that one objective of the 1963 redesign was to make Minerva 'less feminine.'"



## CAST IN BRONZE

JAMES BARNHILL '82 MFA designed and created the campus' bronze statue of Minerva, which was installed in 2003. It was a gift of the Class of 1953. His inspirations? Michelangelo, the green tint of the Mediterranean Sea, and the idea that wisdom is power. Barnhill fashioned Minerva with one arm welcoming, and one arm leading to the horizon, and this defining gesture has been a key element in the University's identity ever since.





1967

Just in time for the first Men's Basketball game, **"THE SPARTAN"** is selected as mascot for the men's teams. Soon enough, Pine Needles was calling the women's team the Lady Spartans. WHY SPARTANS? An article by UNCG News Bureau's Wilson Davis at the time lays it out: Something masculine was wanted before the Men's Basketball season began. There was fear a name like "Daisies" may emerge. Many local teams used animal names. Only one college in the nation used "Spartans." So there you have it.

“We were looking for a name which had a masculine ring, and one also which had associated with it a tradition of courage. And we think we’ve made a good choice.”

– DR. FRANK PLEASANTS (ATHLETICS) QUOTE IN THE CAROLINIAN

1977



First-place winner

The Student Store suggests a student “create-a-character” contest to design a mascot – “for example, the Spartan” – to appear on jackets, caps, and more. They wanted a “design that would represent the Spartans and help to increase their (Spartans) identity with UNC-G,” the Carolinian reported. First prize went to Robin Kester, who designed “a Roman-type helmet.”

1990



The first full costume for the Spartan is introduced at Homecoming.

2004



A new Spartan mascot is unveiled. It was designed by Sherry Lyon, a professor in the School of Textile Products Design and Marketing, per Athletics' records. The face is visible. As far as people can remember, this mascot suit was always worn by a male student.

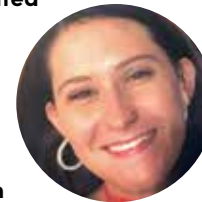
2011

The mascot gets a name for the first time: Spiro the Spartan. “I saw a flyer. There was a contest, and we decided that we should name it. It’d be our mark on UNCG,” says Regan Treichler '12. She and two friends went to all the games, she recalls, and came up with the name together. Sometimes you can make history without trying: Treichler marvels that the name has stuck!

2017

### WHO'S INSIDE THE HELMET?

Since the Spartan mascot was created for men's sports, you might be surprised to know that one enthusiastic and celebrated Spiro is Lexi Brinegar, a 5' 7" Spartan woman. She wore the suit 2017-21.



“I wore the old suit for more than a year. It was a bushy-eyed dude,” she jokes. She also wore the newer version of the outfit, which was launched in 2019.

Brinegar even helped with the design. “I advised about the inside of the head. Before, the inside was wool on your face and neck. Now, it's much more comfortable.”

As Spiro, she collaborated with the dance team, climbed to the top of cheerleader pyramids, and even did James Brown-style splits. Brinegar also wore the suit outside the arena: “I did four commercials as Spiro for Ingles supermarkets.”

It all started her freshman year.

“I shadowed the earlier Spiro, Daniel. We won the SoCon in Asheville. Then, two weeks later, Daniel couldn't go to Idaho for the NCAA first round. It was my first time in a plane. And my first NCAA game – and I was Spiro!”

She'd do it all again, she says. “Spiro was an awesome part of my life. To be on the court and to see people all around you in the stands cheering for what you're doing is amazing.”

2020

Illustrations of Minerva and Spiro created by alumna Jiyoung Park '18



2018



New Spartan logo unveiled

2019

New mascot, with a face that is half-blue, half-gold



SPIRO IS THE GREEK WORD FOR “SPIRIT.”

Show us your “Spartan Spirit!” Upload photos with Minerva or Spiro to [alumni.uncg.edu/class-notes](https://alumni.uncg.edu/class-notes)







Sarah Robinson,  
computer science  
major, first Arch  
MI Scholar

## Arch MI Scholarships are a win-win

**Greensboro's Arch Mortgage Insurance Company** (Arch MI) has established the Arch MI Scholars at UNCG with a pledge to award scholarships to four deserving students in either the Bryan School or the College of Arts and Sciences during their junior and senior years.

The first Arch MI Scholar to be named? Sarah Robinson, a computer science major. "Thanks to my Arch MI Scholarship, I will be able to spend more time purely focusing on my academic goals and truly immerse myself in my studies," she says.

The company is seeking a reliable employee talent pipeline, and the demographics of UNCG's undergraduate student body are a good fit for this program. Arch MI CEO Michael Schmeiser says, "By providing scholarships, internships, and fellowship opportunities for these students, we can help make a difference in leveling the playing field for need-based students within our local community."

**"Thanks to my Arch MI Scholarship, I will be able to spend more time purely focusing on my academic goals and truly immerse myself in my studies."**

— SARAH ROBINSON, COMPUTER SCIENCE MAJOR, FIRST ARCH MI SCHOLAR

Arch MI Scholars will be considered for paid internships and/or a one-year fellowship at the company post-graduation: a full-time, paid-with-benefits, entry-level position within the areas of actuarial, data analytics, accounting/finance, information technology, pricing, risk management, information systems analytics, business management, or economics.

Arch MI has a longstanding connection to UNCG, having offered its financial support to the University for more than 40 years. The company is also home to many UNCG alumni. Now, by funding the Arch MI Scholars at UNCG, the company continues to affirm this special partnership.

"The Arch MI Scholars program at UNCG is a win-win for both the University and Arch MI," says Chancellor Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr. "UNCG's students offer excellent talent that our region's corporations value, and this innovative program will help propel many of our students to outstanding careers."

### BERRYHILL SCHOLARSHIPS TO GROW

UNCG's School of Education makes a profound impact on classrooms in North Carolina. Teachers trained at UNCG, who often have more than 1,000 hours of hands-on experience in classrooms by the time they graduate, are ready for successful careers.



Now, a testamentary gift to the Barbara Davis Berryhill and Leigh Berryhill Teacher Education Scholarship Fund from Barbara Berryhill '57 will add to the original endowment and support even more students.

"UNCG meant a lot to my family," she says. "I believe UNCG has the best School of Education, and I believe in its goals. We also want to fund scholarships to deserving students who may not otherwise be able to afford an education."

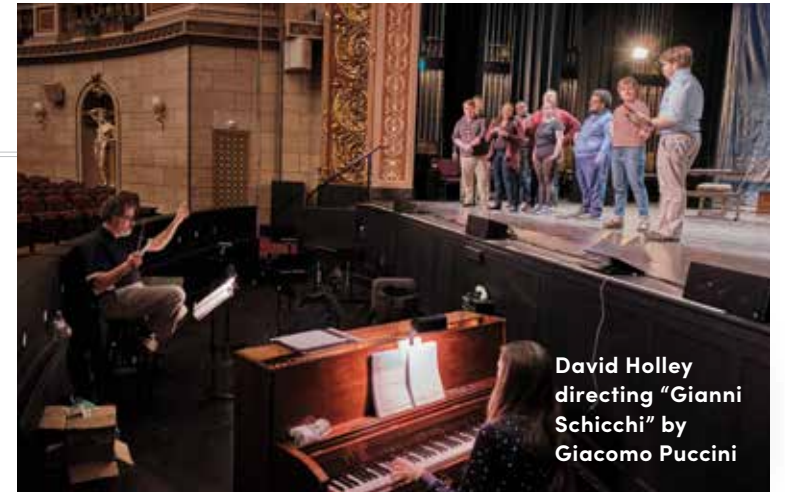
Philanthropy can increase student access to education, says Dr. Randall Penfield, UNCG's senior vice provost and former dean of the School of Education. "Alumni support for scholarships and student support services is essential to ensuring a future pipeline of highly qualified educators in our region."

This gift represents a new chapter in a wonderful story of generosity from Barbara Berryhill and her family. She was a student at Woman's College in the 1950s, where she excelled academically and became a member of Golden Chain honor society. As an alumna, she remained active in Class of 1957 reunions. On their 50th class reunion, she said, "WC gave me a foundation for service to others that I have tried to maintain."

That commitment to service is clear. In 2007, Mrs. Berryhill and her husband established the scholarship – named for her and their daughter Leigh, also an alumna.

Barbara Berryhill, above middle, a student at Woman's College in the 1950s

Since that time, it has funded 19 students. They have gone on to become highly impactful educators, administrators, and university faculty.



David Holley directing "Gianni Schicchi" by Giacomo Puccini

### Opera is elevated

The curtain is rising on a new endowed fund for opera in the College of Visual and Performing Arts. The Thurston Family Opera Theatre Production Endowment will provide production support including resources for set design, carpentry, scene painting, lighting design, costume, and sound design for top-notch opera productions. The endowment comes from Bob Thurston, who was a faculty member in theatre at UNCG between 1974 and 1984, and his wife, Nancy.

Opera is an art form that has it all, he says. "It's the one medium that shows all of the visual and performing arts at once: the orchestral accompaniment, the singers on stage, the costuming, the scenery, and the lighting."

Under the direction of Professor David Holley, UNCG Opera Theatre has excelled, says Dean Bruce D. McClung. "Alumni of the UNCG Opera Theatre regularly appear with regional and national opera companies. This endowment will ensure that UNCG's

School of Music can produce opera at the highest level, continue to provide outstanding arts for Greensboro and the state, and strive to be a national program of choice for some of this country's best opera students and faculty."

The commitment of retired faculty is also a point of pride, he adds. "I am grateful to CVPA emeriti faculty members such as Bob Thurston and others, who have made such lasting contributions and investments in this college."

The feeling is mutual. As Thurston puts it, "At UNCG, the college is training students in an art form and placing people into jobs. So, they're doing it all right."

**"At UNCG, the college is training students in an art form and placing people into jobs. So, they're doing it all right."**

— BOB THURSTON,  
FORMER FACULTY  
MEMBER AT UNCG

Read more stories about  
gifts and their impact at  
[lighttheway.uncg.edu](http://lighttheway.uncg.edu).





# gradtidings

COMPILED BY THE OFFICE OF ADVANCEMENT COMMUNICATIONS

## 1950s

Class of '59 alumnae **ALETHEA MASSEY BOOTH, SYLVIA J. WILLIAMS KERCHER, MARGARET MARTIN, and RENNA MCNAIR MASSEY** reunited at the Cypress Retirement Center in Charlotte. 📍 2

## 1960s

**JUDITH B. TANKARD '63**, an authority on the history of landscape architecture and garden design, donated her professional research files to the Cherokee Garden Library in Atlanta.

**BONNIE JEFFREYS BROWN '64** received the Health Care Heroes Lifetime Achievement Award, which honors her forty years as executive director of the New Hanover-Pender County Medical Society. She was profiled in the magazine Wilma.

**MARY ELLEN SNODGRASS '66** has had her work cited by Library Journal as among the best reference books of the year multiple times, most recently for "Asian Women Artists: A Biographical Dictionary, 2700 BCE to Today," published by MacFarland.

**YVONNE BARNHARDT '67**, who celebrates a 32-year career at Thornton Elementary School, received the Red Blazer Award from Newton-Conover City Schools. The award honors people who have made significant contributions to the school district. She also received the DAR Excellence in Community Service Award, which recognizes persons who demonstrate outstanding volunteer service, in 2020.

**THOMAS BARTHEL '68 MFA** published his tenth book, "Legends of the Manhattan Roaring Twenties," a nonfiction portrait of four powerful

and secretive men in the worlds of politics, the police, and organized crime.

**LINDA SCALES DARK '68** published "William Samuel Scales: African American Businessman in a Segregated Town," about her grandfather W.S. Scales (1879-1949), who opened multiple successful businesses in early twentieth century Winston-Salem, even without a formal education. He joined others who created a "village" that sheltered and protected African Americans from segregation at that time.

## 1970s

**ROXANNE HAYWARD '70** married Kenneth Bryan Kalichak on November 22, 2022, in Addison, Texas. 📍 19

College mates **DR. MARY BATTLE BALDWIN '74, '89 MED, '01 PHD; LAURANN BROWN-PIERCE '74, '77 MED; AUDREY ANDERSON RAY '74, '81 MED; and WANDA WILEY THOMAS '74** attended the Class of 1974 Brunch at the Alumni House during Homecoming. 📍 17

**DR. KATHY WILLIAMS '74** received the Lifetime Legacy Award in the School of Health and Human Sciences. This is reserved for alumni who have been pioneers in their field of study and have given back to their profession.

**WILLIAM J. POOLE '76, '81 MED** retired after working as assistant director of admissions and liaison to the School of Drama at UNC School of the Arts for 21 years. He subsequently worked at many schools, universities, arts councils, and theatres. He plays drums around Winston-Salem in a jazz quartet.

**DR. ROBIN BARTLETT '78, '87 MSN** was the School of Nursing's 2024 Distinguished Alumni Award recipient. She taught at the school from 1992 to 2019 and served in roles ranging from

clinical assistant professor to program director. She has been a professor at the University of Alabama since 2019.

📍 14

**H. WAYNE DRUMHELLER '78 MED**, a photojournalist and bestselling author of 12 nonfiction and fiction Amazon books, discussed "Wayne's Amazing Apple Recipe Book & The American Revolution in Virginia" at Virginia's Oakland Museum. He is a graduate of the US Army Photography School, a distinguished service alumnus of the US Army Pictorial Center/Paramount Studio in New York, N.Y., and a member of many writers' networks, including the Virginia Blue Ridge Writers Club, Rockfish River Valley Writers, North Carolina Writers' Network, and the Burlington North Carolina Writers Club.

**RICHARD GRIFFITHS '78** was inducted into the National Freedom of Information Coalition Hall of Fame for his work with the Georgia First Amendment Foundation.

**REBA GREEN-HOLLEY '79 MS** was inducted into the National 4-H Hall of Fame. A retired director of Gates County Cooperative Extension and an early pioneer of AmeriCorps, she was also instrumental in helping with the State 4-H Program's Performing Arts Troupe for many years.

## 1980s

**HARRY WALTON BOONE '83 MFA** was awarded associate professor emeritus status from Georgia Gwinnett College. Additionally, his paintings have been accepted into juried exhibitions including the Gertrude Herbert Art Institute's Annual National Juried Exhibition and the Annual National Juried Exhibition of the Southeastern College Art Conference.

**NATALIE SCHORR '83** has been the solo or featured artist in 10 exhibitions, most recently at North Carolina A&T and in Jackson Hole, Wyo. Her mixed-media work "Exquisite Corpse #5" was displayed in digital kiosks in downtown Greensboro.

**JOHN BENNETT '84 MPA** released his latest book, "The Manager's Guide to

Coaching for Change," with publisher De Gruyter.

**CHRISTOPHER GILLISPIE '88** celebrated his 55th anniversary in August 2024.

**LAURIE JAMISON '88** has over three decades of experience in the financial services industry and recently joined Piedmont Federal Bank as director of business deposits. She is also an active member of the North Carolina Treasury Management Association. 📍 10

**DR. WANDA WILLIAMS '89 MSN, '10 PHD** was selected as a fellow in the prestigious Academy of Nursing Education by the National League for Nursing.

## 1990s

**DR. MICHAEL KOLSTAD '90 MM, '96 DMA** was featured in a WXII television story about composer Leo Arnaud and "Bugler's Dream," which is known as the Olympic theme song. He is chief of staff and executive vice president at Evangel University.

**DR. DENISE RHEW '92, '99 MSN, '16 PHD** received the North Carolina Emergency Nursing Association's 2024 Lifetime Achievement Award.

**BENJAMIN BILLINGSLEY '93, '95 MFA** judged the 9th annual ARTFall Juried Show and Sale exhibition in Wilmington. He has taught art classes at Cape Fear Community College, curated a museum exhibition, and exhibited work in several countries. He also exhibited in BIG PRINT: Steamroller Block Party Art Exhibition at the Greensboro Project Space.

**SHEILA FORD DUNCAN '93 MS** was inducted into the NC Sports Hall of Fame in Charlotte for women's basketball.

**NIKKI SAVITT-SPARROW '93 MFA** married Tom Sparrow at the Chicago Court House with close friends Julianne Jackson and Rob Pileckis in attendance. The couple now resides in Illinois. 📍 24

**KIMBERLY COUNCILL '95, '97 MM** was named distinguished alumna for the School of Music. She is director and professor of music at the University of Utah and the recipient of numerous awards for teaching excellence and service to students, including the Citation of Excellence Award for Outstanding Contribution to Higher Education from the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association.

**JOSEPH DEANGELIS '95** was inducted into the UNCG Athletics Hall of Fame for baseball.

# ALL TOGETHER

THROUGHOUT THE YEAR, SPARTANS MET TO CELEBRATE MEMORIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS.



Alumni of 1974 gathered at Alumni House.



The 2004 Men's Soccer team, which earned the No. 1 ranking in the country for multiple weeks, celebrated its 20th reunion at Homecoming.



Director of Military-Affiliated Services Chris Gregory '17 MEd and dozens of women veteran alumnae gathered at the Women Veterans Luncheon. Pictured (l-r): Tawnya Gier, Elysia Taniguchi, Nelisa Chamorro '21, Chris Gregory '17 MEd, Adriana Barrera Ramirez, AJ Ross, Audrey Dobson



Former Jamison Hall classmates Charlotte Roth Wolfe, Louise K. Miller '55, and Jean McIntire Smith had a wonderful visit and recalled their days at WC.



The Physical Education Class of 1974 celebrated its 50th reunion.



The School of Nursing Advisory Board. Top: (l-r) Jana Welch Wagenseller '76; Vi-Anne Antrum; Philip Julian '77, '79. Bottom: (l-r) Kathy Foster '84, '92 MSN; Vivian Dennis '85; Glenda Schillinger '82; Bridgett Byrd Sellars '95, '09 MSN

Here in Spring 2025, we send our best wishes for each of you. Reach out and share your news.

Visit us at [alumni.uncg.edu](http://alumni.uncg.edu) and click on "Submit a Class Note."

You can also mail your information to **Class Notes, UNCG Alumni Engagement, PO Box 26170, Greensboro, NC 27402-6170.**



**KAREEN QUALLY NELSON '96**, was inducted into the UNCG Athletics Hall of Fame for women's golf.

**WENDY WARD '96 PHD** was named distinguished alumna in the Department of Psychology. She is a professor at the University of Arkansas's Medical Sciences College of Medicine and an APA Fellow with 30 years of professional experience. 🎓 15

**ANGEL SWINDELL NIX '97**, CEO of The National Institute of Leadership & Organizational Development, returned to the School of Nursing to lead the staff in a special team-building retreat.

**DR. ELIZABETH VAN HORN '98**

**MSN** was selected as a fellow in the prestigious Academy of Nursing Education by the National League for Nursing.

**REBECCA POTTS '98** was recently profiled by UNC School of the Arts, where she attended high school for two years. She also completed an artist residency at Greenwich House Pottery in New York, N.Y., that concluded with the group exhibition "Ceramics Now" in the Jane Hartsook Gallery.

## 2000s

**CALANDRA HACKNEY '00** was named distinguished alumna for the School of Theatre. She has performed on stage in both Chicago and New York City and is currently assistant executive director for the eastern region at Actors' Equity Association, where she supervises its Discrimination and Harassment department, Diversity and Inclusion department, and contract administration for several departments.

**JOE PAN '00** published his debut novel, "Florida Palms," with Simon and Schuster.

**CARMYN GLYNN '01** received the Public Service Award in the School of Health and Human Sciences. This award is given to individuals or groups who make an extraordinary contribution to the mission and advancement of HHS.

**DR. BARRON L. THOMPSON '01** was re-elected to a second term as a North Carolina District Court Judge, representing District 37.

**DR. BRIGIT CARTER '02 MSN** was an inaugural fellow of the Academy of Diversity Leaders in Nursing, which was established by the National Black Nurses Association and recognizes nurse leaders for their contributions to advancing justice, equity, diversity,

and inclusion in nursing and health care. She is chief diversity, equity, and inclusion officer at the American Association of Colleges of Nursing.

**MICHELLE LANTERI '02, '13** was promoted to museum head curator/head of the curatorial department at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in Albuquerque. She has been the managing curator for exhibitions such as "Pueblo Baseball: Stitching Our Community Together," "Reflective Presence: The Art of Jesse Littlebird & Jonathan Loreto," and "Desert Stories: The Art of Kelly Frye & Jazmin Novak."

**JACQUELINE SPRINGFIELD '02**

**MFA** made her acting debut at the Warehouse Theatre in Greenville, S.C. playing the role of Wileta in Alice Childress's play "Trouble in Mind," which was originally written in 1955 and received its Broadway debut in 2021.

**DR. ASHLEY LEAK-BRYANT '03, '05 MSN** was recognized at the 36th Annual NC Great 100 Gala, which honors nurses who make a difference across North Carolina through their leadership and dedication to healthcare. 🎓 23

**JEREMY KEEVER '03**, an attorney with the Office of General Counsel at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, recently completed a six-month detail to the White House. He worked there as senior deputy associate counsel in the Office of Presidential Personnel, where he vetted nominees for Senate-confirmed Presidential appointments.

**CHRISTINE A. MILLS '03 MSW** became a licensed clinical social worker and is now employed as a clinician with Monarch ACT (assertive community treatment).

**ROSEMARY WILLIAMS '03** received the 2023-24 Professional Academic Advising Excellence Award for Exemplary Academic Advising Services at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. The award was presented to her at the A&T Celebration of Faculty Excellence. 🎓 3

**BENJAMIN BALLOU '04, '11 MPA** completed the following civic education and engagement programs: Guilford County Citizens' Academy (2019 class), City of Greensboro City Academy (2022 class), Greensboro Fire Department Fire Citizens' Academy (2023 class - inaugural class), Guilford County Sheriff's Citizens Academy (Winter/Spring 2024 class), and the Greensboro Police Department Police Citizens' Academy (2024 class).

**DR. JERONO ROTICH '04 PHD** was named distinguished alumnus for the School of Health and Human Sciences and was recognized for exercise and sport science. 🎓 7

## IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL



One of the attendees was Dr. Wilsonia Cherry '70 (top, far left). She's currently deputy director in the Division of Education Programs at the National Endowment for the Humanities. Does she have Spartan spirit? Well, some say she never takes her UNCG class ring off!



Alumni gathered in Washington, D.C.

**SHAYLA JACKSON WARD '04 MA** received tenure and was promoted to assistant professor of English at Brookdale Community College in Lincroft, N.J. 🎓 20

**LATOYA WINSLOW '04** was selected for Creative Greensboro's 2025 GROW Residency series, which provides studio space for the creation of new work and offers opportunities for the public to engage in the creative process. She will blend design, illustration, and creative writing as she guides participants to develop journals using low-cost resources.

**ELIZABETH DANIELS '05 MS** is a Pacesetter Award recipient in the School of Health and Human Sciences. This honors alumni who have attained local, state, or regional recognition through their achievements.

**STARLEANA GREEN '05** is the founder/CEO of the nonprofit Real Life Inc., whose mission is to enhance self-sufficiency and the well-being of Americans by providing financial assistance, resources, and gifts. She is also an IT professional and a BMI singer/songwriter with songs on Apple Music. Her song "Vibrate Higher" was released through the Empire label last fall.

**ROBERT MAXWELL '05 MA** is a Pacesetter Award recipient in the School of Health and Human Sciences. This honors alumni who have attained local, state, or regional recognition through their achievements.

**MARIA ATILANO '06** was promoted to the rank of university librarian at the University of North Florida's Thomas G. Carpenter Library, where she has worked since 2006. As a UNCG undergraduate, she worked in Jackson Library for three years. She earned her MLIS from Florida State University. 🎓 18

**TALANI TORRES '06 MFA** was named distinguished alumna for the School of Dance. She danced professionally with Mia Michaels' Miami Movement Dance Company and several notable South Florida choreographers, and she is currently dean of humanities at Florida State College at Jacksonville.

**LINH NGUYEN '07 MS** was inducted into the UNCG Athletics Hall of Fame for cross country and track coaching. He coached for 12 seasons at UNCG and was named SoCon Cross Country Coach of the Year for the 2011-12 season.



1 Karl Kassel '17 2 Top (l-r): Margaret Martin '59, Sylvia J. Williams Kercher '59, Alethea Massey Booth '59, bottom: Renna McNair Massey '59 (deceased), at the Cypress Retirement Center in Charlotte. 3 Rosemary Williams '03 4 Page Turner '22 5 Carrie Gooden '24 MA 6 Dr. Jamila Minga '14 PhD 7 Dr. Jerono Rotich '04 PhD 8 Holly Miskey '13 PhD 9 Ana Isabel Gil '22



**JOE LOWE '07** was inducted into the UNCG Athletics Hall of Fame for wrestling. As an undergraduate, he was a three-time individual SoCon Champion in his weight class.

**DR. TONY LAMAIR BURKS '08 EDD** received the President's Lifetime Achievement Award, which was established by President George H. W. Bush, for completing over 7,000 hours of volunteer service. 🏆 21

**AMANDA PARSONS COOK '08** is the founder of the nonprofit The Teacher's Edge and serves as the state officer advisor for South Carolina Future Business Leaders of America. She has organized and presented at local and national conferences, including TEDxHighPoint, the Creative Problem Solving Institute, and the Florida Creativity Conference. She stepped down as secretary of the High Point NAACP after being elected to High Point City Council. 🗳️ 19

**KYLE HINES '08** was inducted into the UNCG Athletics Hall of Fame for men's basketball. He was a perennial SoCon All-Conference team member and went on to play professional basketball in Europe 2009-24.

**MICHAEL SCHIETZELT '08** serves in the North Carolina General Assembly, representing the 35th District in the NC House of Representatives. He is a Marine Corps veteran and an attorney in Raleigh with Michael Best & Friedrich LLP. 🏠 11

**RYAN TAHMASEB '08** published his debut picture book, "Rostam's Picture Day Pusteen," based on a memorable experience his father had as a young

Iranian immigrant. The book, published by Charlesbridge, received a starred review from School Library Journal. 📖 22

**DR. TERRY WARD '08 PHD** was selected as a fellow in the prestigious Academy of Nursing Education by the National League for Nursing.

**RYAN COUTINHO '09** was named director of fundraising and finance for the East Chapel Hill High School Alumni Association. 🏆 16

**BRAD JOHNSON '09 PHD** received the 2024 Melvne Draheim Hardee Award.

**ALEXIA MITCHELL '09 MSW** is a Pacesetter Award recipient in the School of Health and Human Sciences. This honors alumni who have attained local, state, or regional recognition through their achievements.

**SHERRILL ROLAND '09, '17 MFA** exhibited "Processing Systems: Bonding" at the Ackland Art Museum. A related exhibition was displayed at the Nasher Museum. He gave an artist talk at the Weatherspoon Art Museum in January 2025.

## 2010s

**NICHOLAS WESTFALL '10** was named one of the 2025 California Teachers of the Year and is the first physical education teacher to receive this recognition. He's committed to promoting the importance of physical activity and inspiring young individuals to consider education as a career path.

## TALENT FOR TABBIES

He captured his cats on canvas, and he was hooked.

**DAVID HAYNES '82** began painting almost by chance in 2019. "I attended a pet portrait beginner class at Creative Aging Network – NC. The goal was an acrylic painting of my two cats, Pip and Squeek – a birthday surprise for my wife.

We don't have children, so they are our boys."

He hasn't looked back – and he's expanded his palette, painting 20 churches in the North Carolina mountains.

At UNCG, Haynes majored in parks and recreation and met his wife, Amy Haynes '81, who was a piano major. In 2009 he became the first president of the School of Health and Human Performance Alumni Board. He has also served on the UNCG Alumni Board.

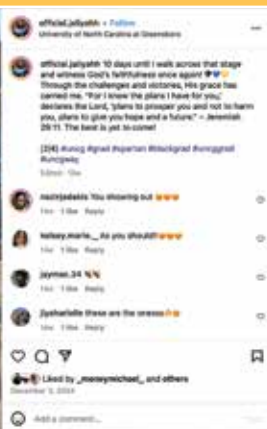
Today, Haynes loves his new passion. That's as it should be, says Elise Eifert '14 PhD, a professor in UNCG's gerontology department and Creative Aging Network – NC board member. "Exercising our creative selves can affect us in positive ways. We all are creative – not just a select few and not just the young."

Haynes' paintings are on exhibition in the Creative Aging Gallery of UNCG's Ferguson Building through April.



10 Laurie Jamison '88 11 Michael Schietzelt '08 12 Raven Yasmine Sanders '20, '23 MLIS 13 Amanda Parsons Cook '08 14 Dr. Robin Bartlett '78, '87 MSN 15 Wendy Ward '96 PhD 16 Ryan Coutinho '09 17 (l-r) Audrey Anderson Ray '74, '81 MEd, Wanda Wiley Thomas '74, Laurann Brown Pierce '74, '77 MEd, and Mary Battle Baldwin '74, '89 MEd 18 Maria Atilano '06 19 Roxanne Hayward '70 married Kenneth Bryan Kalichak 20 Shayla Jackson Ward '04 MA 21 Dr. Tony Lamair Burks '08 EDD

## LIKE! SHARE! FOLLOW!



Share your posts using #UNCGWay





**ERIC DURHAM '11** passed the CFP Exam.

**DR. JINNI SU '11 MS, '15 PHD** is a Pacesetter Award recipient in the School of Health and Human Sciences. This honors alumni who have attained local, state, or regional recognition through their achievements.

**THOMAS MENDOLIA '12** wrote and directed his feature film debut, "Henry's Ebb." He previously directed multiple shorts including the horror pic "Mr. Thisforthat," which premiered at the Fantasia Film Festival.

**DR. LINDSEY OAKES '12 MS, '20 PHD** is a Pacesetter Award recipient in the School of Health and Human Sciences. This honors alumni who have attained local, state, or regional recognition through their achievements.

**KYLE GUTIERREZ '13** was promoted to associate director of property management with Link Logistics Real Estate. He has been with the company for four years and oversees approximately 65 large industrial buildings in the Memphis, Greensboro/Winston-Salem, and Raleigh/Durham markets.

**CANDICE JACKSON '13 MS**, assistant vice chancellor of Student Affairs for Health and Well-Being at Winston-Salem State University, is the

principal investigator of a grant to use culturally specific approaches to promote safety and awareness while addressing and preventing stalking, domestic and dating violence, and sexual assault on campus.

**HOLLY MISKEY '13 PHD** was named distinguished alumna in the Department of Psychology. She is a board-certified neuropsychologist with the Salisbury VA Medical Center, where she is also co-director of the psychology training program and the MIRECC Advanced Psychology Fellowship. 📍 8

**STEPHANIE WOODS '13, '15 MFA** was named distinguished alumna for the School of Art. She is a multi-disciplinary artist and assistant professor of interdisciplinary art at the University of New Mexico. Her work is featured in permanent collections at the Virginia Museum of Fine Art, the Gibbes Museum of Art, and the Mint Museum, among others.

**PAUL CHELIMO '14** was inducted into the UNCG Athletics Hall of Fame for cross country and track. He was the first U.S. Olympian in UNCG history, winning silver and bronze medals in 2016 and 2020, respectively.

**REBECCA LOMAN '14 MS** is a Pacesetter Award recipient in the School of Health and Human Sciences. This honors alumni who have attained local, state, or regional recognition through their achievements.

**DR. JAMILA MINGA '14 PHD** received the Emerging Leader Award in the School of Health and Human Sciences. This award recognizes exceptional achievements and significant contributions to the profession, community, or University. 📍 6

**MATTHEW JOHNSON '15, '19 MA** published his third collection of poetry, "Too Short to Box with God," with Finishing Line Press. In 2023, he received nominations for the Pushcart Prize and the Best of the Net awards. Recent poems have appeared in Heavy Feather Review, The San Antonio Review, and Thimble Literary Magazine.

**CHRISTOPHER REED '16** is first vice chair for the North Carolina 11th District Democratic Committee.

**KARL KASSEL '17** moved to Shanghai to continue working for the Walt Disney Company. Having completed four international contracts as a performer with Disney Cruise Line, he now performs at Shanghai Disney Resort. 📍 1

**SUMMER WOODARD PHILLIPS '17** married Trey Phillips, and the couple recently celebrated their first anniversary by bringing home a new puppy, Clover the corgi. Both are excelling in their careers, with Summer working as a graphic designer at Virginia Tech.

**SHELBY RODRIGUEZ '17** is a Pacesetter Award recipient in the School of Health and Human Sciences. This honors alumni who have attained local, state, or regional recognition through their achievements.

**ALEXIS STEPTOE '17 MPH** is a Pacesetter Award recipient in the School of Health and Human Sciences. This honors alumni who have attained local, state, or regional recognition through their achievements.

**DR. BETHANY UHLER THOMPSON '17 MM, '20 DMA** continues to be recognized for her work in strings education with underserved populations. The Tampa Bay Times wrote about the violin/cello programs she directs with foster-involved children and teens in juvenile detention.

**LUCAS BERRINI '18 MLIS** began a new role as the collection development librarian at NC Wesleyan University in Rocky Mount, N.C. He and his family live in Greenville.

**TAMMY HALL '18 MSN** became director of the RN to BSN Program at UNCG. A nurse educator with over 30 years of experience, she has expertise in maternal-child health, leadership, and online learning.

**DR. TYESHA NEAL '18 DNP, '24 DNP** completed her second doctoral degree at UNCG. She was also in the inaugural Doctor of Nursing Practice, Adult-Gerontological Primary Care Nurse Practitioner cohort, which graduated in 2018. 📍 25

mission of sustainably producing battery-grade lithium with a positive impact on water resources, a rarity among mining and refining operations, he says.

## 2020s

**DARLENA GLENN '20 MLIS** received the Durham Public Schools Mary Gray Leonard Media Coordinator of the Year award. She has served as an elementary school educator since 2008 and has worked at R.N. Harris Elementary since 2009.

**SEAN MULCAHY '20 BM, CAITLYN SCHRADER '22 MFA** and **BJORN BATES '23** presented "Intercession," a durational performative experiment, at the Black Mountain College Museum and Art Center's {Re}HAPPENING event.

**RAVEN YASMINE SANDERS '20, '23 MLIS** was hired as a manuscript librarian at the Moorland-Spangarn Research Center at Howard University. 📍 12

**ANA ISABEL GIL '22** hosts a newly launched Spanish-language podcast, Talk City En Español, in collaboration with the City of Greensboro's Communications and Marketing Department. She also serves as the city's senior community relations specialist. On the podcast, she interviews fellow city employees and community members. 📍 9

**DR. PETER O. SWANSON '21 DMA** was appointed visiting assistant professor of music at Benedictine College in Atchison, Kan. He teaches music theory, music history, low strings, and conducts the Benedictine College Orchestra.

**BRIAN FRANCO-WINN '21 MFA** was appointed assistant professor of dance in the Department of Theatre and Dance at Winthrop University.

**ALLISON BEATY '22 MFA** was appointed assistant teaching professor in the Department of Performing Arts and Technology at North Carolina State University.

**EMMARUTH SILER '22** was appointed junior high choir chairperson for the White Mountain Music Teachers Association in northeastern Arizona.

**PAGE TURNER '22** attended the Longleaf Alliance Conference in Destin, Fla. She's excited to bring strategies for landscape regeneration back to North Carolina and work with regional partners to fortify ecosystems in the Sandhills and Coastal Plain. 📍 4



22 Ryan Tahmaseb '08  
23 Dr. Ashley Leak-Bryant '03, '05 MSN  
24 Nikki Savitt-Sparrow '93 MFA married Tom Sparrow  
25 Dr. Tyesha Neal '18 DNP, '24 DNP

## MILITARY-AFFILIATED SUCCESS

**BRYAN SCHOOL ALUMNUS ZIN MAUNG '23** values UNCG's commitment to supporting military students and veterans. "When I had military commitments, I would send my professors an email to let them know my situation, and they helped me," Maung says.

He's also earned his success every step of the way.

When he was eight years old, Maung's family emigrated to the U.S. after fleeing Myanmar. Grateful to be here, Maung carried a desire to give back – and to achieve.

He joined the Army, and, as his junior year at UNCG began, he juggled both commitments. He even needed to study online while completing military obligations. "I had 4 a.m. wakeups for PT training; did Army school from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; then more athletic training; and from 7-8 p.m. and on the weekends, I did as much UNCG school work as I could," he says.

Maung was nominated as a 2024 Student Veteran Athlete of the Year from GI Jobs Magazine. Today, he serves in the Army Reserve while furthering his career. He's also working toward an MBA!



SEND US  
YOUR  
PHOTOS  
WE WANT TO  
HEAR FROM YOU.  
WE'D LIKE TO  
SEE YOU, TOO.

UNCG Magazine publishes pictures of your milestones, such as weddings, births, and reunions. All you have to do is send us your photos. Please send your pictures using the "Submit a Class Note" form at [alumni.uncg.edu](https://alumni.uncg.edu). Or you can mail a print to Class Notes Photo, Alumni Engagement Office, Alumni House, P.O. Box 26170, Greensboro, NC 27402-6170. Mailed photos cannot be returned.



PUBLICATION’S EDITORIAL ADVISORS
Vice Chancellor for University
Advancement
Beth Fischer
Interim Vice Chancellor for Strategic
Communications
Myla Edmond
Executive Director of Alumni Engagement
and Advancement Communications
Alejandra Merheb
Director of Advancement
Communications
Amy Newland

PUBLICATION’S STAFF AND
CONTRIBUTORS
Editor
Mike Harris ’93 MA
Art Director
Lisa Summerell
Assistant Editor for Features/Newsfront
Mercer Buffer ’11 MA
Contributing Writers
Nikkola Brown
Brian Clarey
Mary Daily
Becky Deakins
Mackenzie Francisco
Christine Garton
Janet Imrick
Dawn Martin
Loring Mortensen
Chris Rash
Terri W. Relos ’86
Sangeetha Shivaji
Alice Manning Touchette
Elizabeth Witherspoon
Production Facilitator
Laura Pearce
Web Manager
Matthew W. Johnston
Illustrator
Tenley Douglass
Photographers
Denise Archetto
Grant Evan Gilliard
Martin W. Kane
Rudy Marsh
Aura Marzouk
Mike Micciche
Sean Norona ’13
David Row ’09, ’16 MFA
Bert Vanderveen ’93, ’97 MA

This publication may be accessed at
magazine.uncg.edu. If you receive
too many copies or would like to be
removed from the mailing list, please
contact umagaddr@uncg.edu or
call 336-334-5371.



DR. TI’ERA WORSLEY ’22 appeared on
the podcast “The Color of Success: The
Black Academic Experience,” where
she discussed her journey from Peace
Corps volunteer to PhD.
DESTINY KING ’23 accepted a position
as marketing and communications
administrative assistant at Arena
Stage in Washington, D.C., following
a fellowship as the Allen Lee Hughs
Marketing and Media Fellow.

ISABEL WARD ’23 began work at a
nonprofit in her hometown, where she
is a case manager for teen parents.
She is also pursuing a birth doula
certification and has opened up a
business as a doula serving Western
North Carolina and Upstate South
Carolina. Her goal is to serve and
create a safe space for all family
structures, including those in
LGBTQIA2S+ communities, she says.

NATHAN DANG ’24 received the Intern
Excellence Award from the North
Carolina Hmong Women Association
for his work locating and organizing
data to better characterize the
community’s health status, strengths,
and contributions to the region. He did
this as research assistant for UNCG
professor Dr. Sharon Morrison.
DR. PATRICIA GARCÍA GIL ’24 DMA,
’24 PBC was appointed postdoctoral
associate and artist in residence at
the Cornell Center for Historical
Keyboards at Cornell University’s
Department of Music.

CARRIE GOODEN ’24 MA returned to
UNCG to complete the final semester
of a master’s degree in elementary
education. She is now an instructor
with a local community college. She’s
grateful to be working in education and
helping students learn and improve
their lives.

DR. JEWEL PARKER ’24 PHD published
an article in the journal “American
Nineteenth Century History.” She is a
full-time lecturer at Appalachian State
University.

DR. REHAM YASIN ’24 PHD received
the George and Beatrice Goldman
Fisher Gerontology Dissertation Prize
from UNCG’s School of Health and
Human Sciences for the dissertation,
“An Exploration of the Associations
Between Polypharmacy and Frailty
among Hospitalized Older Adult
Patients.”

IN MEMORIAM
ADELE PEELE CLARK ’38
ANNE O’LEARY BEAM ’44
CECIL SEVERANCE GRIFFIN ’44
NANCY SADLER STOWE ’44
VIRGINIA HABBERSTAD WESTBY ’44
REBECCA TURNER MOONEY ’45

MERRYL WHISNANT ANTHONY ’46
FRAN THOMPSON GRAY ’47
SALLIE RICH JAMES ’47
DORIS ROBBINS ARZONICO ’48
EMILY BALLINGER ’48
HELEN HUNTER HERNDON ’48
MARGARET HYMAN JOHNSTON ’48
EVELYN BRIGGS WILSON ’48
BETSY LARIMORE BERTOLINO ’49
MARTHA HEGE GLASS ’49
CLARA COOKE GRIFFIN ’49
LORA CRUTCHFIELD HOPKINS ’49
ANNAIONETTE BOBBITT LILLY ’49
SIDNEY LANDON MEDDING ’49
RACHEL HARTGROVE
SHACKELFORD ’49
LELA SAUNDERS JONES ’50
ANN PENDER SNYDER ’50
DORIS WALKER STAUFFER ’50
EMILY RANSON BAESEL ’51
ANN WHITE BAKER ’51
MARIE AVERITT BAUCOM ’51
FRANCES HOWELL BURGIN ’51
NELLIE JOYCE CALLAWAY ’51
NADIA DAUGHTRIDGE COBLE ’51
ELIZABETH OUTLAW DINKLER ’51
GERALDINE PEARCE DUNHAM ’51
DOROTHY COPELAND FREMD ’51
JANE DAVIS HUTCHENS ’51
CATHERINE CAMPBELL KING ’51
CORINNE ETHERIDGE LANDIS ’51
ANN JOHNSON LUNDHOLM ’51
ZILPHIA POOL O’HALLORAN ’51
EVELYN BLALOCK REAVES ’51
FLORENCE JACOBSON ROSENBERG ’51
CHARLOTTE BUNCH WEBB ’51
FRANCES SMITH BUCKLE ’52
ELIZABETH BRACKEN COLEMAN ’52
MARY-VIRGINIA LEWIS CYPHER ’52
MILLCENT SIMON GINBURG ’52
BETTY HARRINGTON GRIFFIN ’52
NANCY BARTON LYNCH ’52
MARIE BLAKE SINCLAIR ’52
ANN ZACHARY COMPTON ’53
ANN HEAFNER GAITHER ’53
MARLENE MULLER GILLIKIN ’53
LAURA MACNAIR HARRISS HEAD ’53
CAROL MILLER HOPPER ’53
SUE CAUSBY PIGG ’53
JANE MCDUFFIE ALLEN ’54
LINDA CARROLL DOERY ’54
ASHLEY HOLLAND DOZIER ’54
RUTH SUTHERLAND JACKSON ’54,
’78 MED
NANCY NEILL KEFAUVER ’54
AVIS IRVIN PRESSON ’54
JUNE GREENE REICHLE ’54

LEGACY



ANNE HAYES TATE ’68
died on March 18, 2025.
She served the University
as assistant director of
admissions, Alumni
Association Board
member (1987-95), and
president of the Alumni
Association (1992-94). She
also helped bring
Chancellor Pat Sullivan to
UNCG. In 2023, Tate was a
recipient of the University’s
WC Legacy Award, which
honors individuals who
embody characteristics
that were important
during the Woman’s
College era. At the time,
she told UNCG that she felt
truly “rewarded” when
helping others.

SARAH HENKEL SCHELL ’54
JUNE LONG TRIVETTE ’54
EARLENE VESTAL WARD ’54
FRANCES CAROL ALEXANDER
CAMPBELL ’55
PATTY WILHELM SAWYER ’55
JO JOHNSTON SPRINK ’55
ALICE JOYNER THOMPSON ’55
BARBARA JEAN BURKETT ASKEW ’56
SARAH COLE JORDAN ’56
LOUISA MORDECAI ODOM ’56
BETTY BELL SMITH ’56
TINA BATY SMITH ’56
ELEANOR BUTLER ’57
WARD HUFFMAN ’57
CAROLYN HUGHEY ’57
BESS BACH KANE ’57
ANN CARLSON PATTERSON ’57
ANNA OWENS RUFFIN ’57
JANICE MANNING BROWNING ’58

SHIRLEY PEARMAN HUNTER ’58
GLADYS JACOBS LOCKE ’58
DOROTHY STANLEY MCGOOGAN ’58
SARAH WHITLOCK SMITH ’58
JEANNE JENKINS BOSWELL ’59
MARY LOU SMITH BUCK ’59
MARY JANE PHILLIPS DICKERSON ’59
ANNE BROWN DOLAN ’59
SALLY BROWN FRYAR ’59
WILLIE JOHNSON GAY ’59
RENNA MCNAIR MASSEY ’59
LYNN WALL SCARBOROUGH ’60
DORIS GUILL BROWN ’61
KATHRYN FEREBEE FAGG ’61
SYBIL ELLIS GREENE ’61
SHIRLEY BERNAU HAMILTON ’61
SARA WRIGHT HILES ’61
CAROLYN WALL KNOTT ’62
LILLIAN LOVINGS ’62, ’65 MED
PATRICIA MORING EMORY ’63
DIANA DAVID KILPATRICK ’63
KAYE TAYLOR HOUSE ’64
TANYA UPCHURCH NIX ’64
DR. BETTY BAKER REITER ’64
SONJA WATSON STRAUGHAN ’64
DORIS PATTERSON BROWN ’65
BRENDA MEADOWS COOPER ’65,
’73 MA
RUTH TOMS EARWOOD ’65
VIRGINIA PENNINGTON ROBINSON ’65
ELLA L. ROSS ’65
JUDITH KARTT SCHWARTZ ’65
BARBARA BORNEMAN CROOM ’66
LINDA SHOFFNER ISLEY ’66
DR. QUINTON “CURT” LAMAR ’66 MA
MILDRED SAWYER ’66
FRANCES HATCHER FULLER ’67
SYLVIA COLEMAN HARRISON ’67
ANNE DICKSON FOGLEMAN ’68
ROSEMARY ALEXANDER RAYNAL ’68
JANET NEWSOME ABBOTT ’69
KARENN GERAGHTY COX ’69
JENNIFER LOWE MARTIN ’69 MFA
CAMILLA LOWE HENDERSON ’70
CONSTANCE BROWN LEONARD ’70,
’81 MBA
LULA MCDUFFIE GARDNER ’71
MARY HELEN GORDON ’71, ’83 MED
BARBARA LEE LITWACK ’71
BONNIE WAGONER AMOS ’72 MA
ALVA WALLACE CULPEPPER ’72
LINDA LUPTON JACKSON ’72
MARY SESSOMS MORGAN ’72 MED
GARLAND E. PASCHAL ’72
ROBERTA WINTON PENN ’72 MFA
DR. MICHAEL M. LOMBARDO ’73 MED,
’75 EDD

JOHN H. LYTTON JR. ’73 MFA
BRENDA POPLIN CRIPLIVER ’74 MED
S. JEFFREY JONES ’74, ’76 MA
DR. JOHNNY E. PRESSON ’74 EDD
GINGER GIBSON CALHOUN ’75
MARY BOWLES KOLODZIEY ’75 MED
DR. MARY E. MARSHALL ’75 EDD
DAVID O. NEWSOM ’75
WINNIE “LIBBY” DEESE ’76
DR. VIRGINIA HART ’76 EDD
GERALD W. KENNINGTON ’76
DR. EDWARD RAY LAKEY ’76 EDD
DOUGLAS A. SCOTT ’76 MA
DOYCE TILLERY AMOS ’77
PEGGY WELBORN GRAY ’77
JAYNE LEVY GALLINGER ’78 MLS
DR. JAY A. MANCINI ’78 PHD
DR. PATRICIA SATTERFIELD PADGETT
’78, ’87 EDD
GEOFFREY W. GILLESPIE ’79, ’81 MFA
BARTON L. HELLMUTH ’79 MS
DAVID H. WILCOX III ’79 MS
FRANCES DANLEY BRYANT ’80 MED
GALE JOHNSON FARLOW ’80 MA
KAREN JOB HAGLER ’80 MED
DR. OTIS MCNEIL ’80 EDS
CHARLES S. JENKINS ’81 MBA
JOHN S. POLICKOSKI ’81
RICHARD A. CRUTCHFIELD ’82, ’85 MA
DR. DENNIS L. MCKNIGHT ’82 MA ,
’86 PHD
TANYA FERGUSON MOORE ’82
LINDA NAUMAN SIRMONS ’82 MFA,
’11 MA
LILLI MOORE AMBRO ’83 MA
ROSEMARY FLYNN HORNE ’83
FREDERICK G. LAMPE JR. ’83 MBA
NANETTE ALTIER NAPPI ’83 MSN
LYNN LOVETTE SAZAMA ’83
GEORGE E. TANAHEY ’83
VIRGINIA E. NASH BLEW ’84
PAGE TEMPLE CROCKER ’84 MED
DR. SAMMY R. OXENDINE ’84 EDD
FRANCES FERGUSON PULLIAM ’84
DR. EDWIN BELL ’85 EDD
DR. MICKIE R. MCCORMICK ’85 EDD
CAROLYN BRYANT RACKLEY ’85 MBA
GREGORY D. FULTON ’87
MILDRED L. MCCLURE ’87
CHARLES L. EDWARDS ’88 MED
DR. MARTHA J. SELBY ’88 EDD
ROBERT C. WRENN ’88
FREDDIE A. CHILTON ’89 MM
PENNY RAI SHORT ’89 MED
TRUDY MONEYMAKER COOK ’90
BRIDGET SZCZECZ PASCHAL ’91
MARK ANTHONY SCOTT ’91
TRUDY BETH TYSOR DAVIS ’92


MARGARET R. MITCHELL ’92
HELEN WILLIAMS AYRES ’93 MBA
SYVIE LANDIS CLONINGER ’93
PATRICK EVANS WHITE ’93
STACY GORDON MITCHELL ’94
REUBEN GANNON COUNCILL ’95
JANE KNICK LAWRENCE ’96
JACKIE PRYGA CARATTINI ’97
MYLA PINN ROGERS ’98
DANIEL CAMERON WAGONER ’00
JULIE FULP GAMMONS ’01 MED
MARGARET HATTER ’03 MSN
JAMES GREGORY LEWIS ’03
WILLIAM RAULERSON JR. ’04, ’07 MFA
TIMOTHY P. BOHN ’05 MFA
SANDRA NALANI BOWLES ’07 MA
BRIAN AARON CLARK ’07
RYAN C. RODD ’09
DR. QUEENETH CHIBUZO MBEMENA
’10, ’18 DNP
STEVE BONNER BILLINGSLEA ’18
DANIEL IBRAHIM MOSHIR ’20
TRAVIS JERMAIN JEFFORDS ’22 MS
DOMINIC WALKER ’24

FORMER FACULTY/STAFF
JANE KNICK LAWRENCE ’96 died on
September 4, 2024. From 2005 to
2013, she worked at UNCG and rose to
the position of director of development
for the School of Health and Human
Sciences and interim associate vice
chancellor of central development.
Earlier, she had worked for several
Fortune 500 companies. She was a
longtime basketball season ticket
holder and regularly supported a
number of funds across campus.

BRENDA JOYCE died on September
24, 2024. She worked at Wrangler for
over 40 years and then joined UNCG,
where she served in the cafeteria.
Patrons called her “Ms. Brenda,” and
she received numerous awards for her
dedicated service. Upon her retirement
in 2022, University Communications
looked back at the connections she
made with students. “They always
encourage me, so therefore I encourage
them,” she said in an interview. News
of her retirement drew hundreds of
comments from students and alumni
on social media.

DR. JAY A. MANCINI ’77 PHD died
on October 10, 2024. He was the
inaugural recipient of the School of
Health and Human Sciences’ Dean’s
Award for Excellence and also received
the Outstanding Alumnus Award from
the School of Human Environmental
Sciences in 2002 and the Distinguished
Alumni Service Award in 2007. His
research interests included family
gerontology and military family support

ALUMNI AFFAIRS



BRENDA MEADOWS
COOPER ’65, ’73 MA died
on December 1, 2024. In
1968 she was hired as
assistant director of
alumni affairs by Barbara
Parrish ’48. She became
executive secretary of the
Alumni Association and
director of Alumni Affairs,
succeeding Parrish, in
1990. She led Alumni
Affairs and the UNCG
Alumni Association until
her retirement in 1995.
Her late husband, Jim ’68,
was a UNCG graduate,
too. When she retired in
1995, her story was the
cover feature of the fall
alumni magazine. “If
Brenda Cooper is Gone,
Will Mclver Statue Be
Next?” read the story’s
headline.

systems. In 2008, he established the
Jay A. Mancini Graduate Award in the
Department of Human Development
and Family Studies.
DR. SUSAN AYERS BEESON ’73, ’77
MSN died on December 14, 2024. She
was a nursing faculty member for 26
years and retired in 2003. She was
recognized with the School of Nursing’s
Distinguished Alumni Award in 1999.
GENEVIEVE BARTOL died on January
3, 2025. She taught at multiple
institutions, including UNCG, where
she served as the division chair of
psychosocial nursing. As a researcher,
her work examined the use of story
for cultural competence, mind-
body-brain interactions, and the
application of alternative modalities
in nursing practice.





UNC  
GREENSBORO

*Office of Alumni Engagement*

404 College Avenue  
Greensboro, NC 27402

Non-Profit Org.

US Postage Paid

Greensboro, NC

Permit 533



# HOMECOMING 2025

**OCTOBER  
17 & 18**

From the Marcus T. Johnson Alumni House naming to the Spartan Street Fest along College Avenue and men's soccer game, it's going to be a Homecoming to remember! Join us for hot music, a hotter bonfire, and great times!  
[HOMECOMING.UNCG.EDU](https://homecoming.uncg.edu)

