FALL 2026

UNCG MAGAZINE



Evenson Scholars at the newly named Evenson Building

A TEACHER'S LEGACY

A WC alumna had more to give than she ever imagined.

PG. 22

FLY RIGHT WITH NEW INDUSTRIES PG. 2 ■ TREASURE TROVE OF T-SHIRTS PG. 32 ■ HOLLYWOOD & HORROR PG. 36



32 **MEMORIES SEWN TOGETHER**
Dean Emerita of Health and Human Sciences Celia Hooper '74 MA once fashioned a quilt from HHS T-shirts to display in her office. Nursing professor Jacqueline Kayler DeBrew '91, '96 MSN, '08 PhD met her future husband Clint DeBrew '91 when they were students, and their Spartan memories are now displayed in a creative quilt (seen here) made of special Spartan T-shirts they kept over the years. Each one tells a cool story, while the quilt keeps them warm.

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Lots of class notes and photos, too

Cover photography by Sean Norona '13.
Evenson Scholars: (l-r) Yariana Ramos Perez, Ellen Thore, Cierra Murphy '16 MS, Scott Walker, Andrea Dela Cruz Pelen

Check out the magazine website
Visit **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 submit a class note, view video clips, and click on archives to see previous issues.

LEARN MORE

bigpicture



FRANKLIN D. GILLIAM, JR.
CHANCELLOR

This fall, we welcomed our largest first-year class since before the COVID-19 pandemic, achieved the highest first-year retention rate in our history, and enrolled our largest graduate class ever. Philanthropic support continues to grow as well.

That growth is worth celebrating. But true success extends beyond statistics and numbers. It's found in what happens when people learn here, invest here, and put their Spartan experiences to work.

You'll see what that looks like throughout this issue of UNCG Magazine. A transformational investment in our School of Education is creating new possibilities for preparing educators across North Carolina. Images of T-shirts collected by our University Archives offer a colorful look at Spartan life across the decades. And two alumni brothers who built successful careers in Hollywood are also sharing their talents at home, where their work contributes to the economy and community of central North Carolina.

What I appreciate about these stories is that none of them ends at UNCG. They connect us to the traditions and experiences that have shaped generations of Spartans, show how our alumni are using their skills to build communities, and demonstrate how investments made today can open doors for those who come next.

What happens at UNCG matters far beyond our campus.

I recently met with a group of alumni who asked: "What should our legacy be?" My answer was simple: Helping the next generation of Spartans thrive. And there are simple, countless ways to do this. Recommend UNCG to a prospective student. Hire a Spartan intern. Share your expertise. Volunteer. Mentor. Attend a student research expo or cheer from the stands. And philanthropic support can give students opportunities they might not otherwise have.

There are countless ways to be part of UNCG's story, and each one helps ensure the impact of what happens here doesn't end here.

CHANCELLOR'S PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY BY AURA MARZOUK

newsfront

HIGH FLYING

JetZero is landing in Greensboro.

Its $4.7B investment in an 8 million-square-foot factory in Greensboro will create an estimated 14,500 jobs as JetZero reinvents how aircraft are designed and built. UNCG will help train its workforce.

JetZero's Z4, with a 250-passenger capacity on a range of up to 5,000 nautical miles, will be built at this facility. It is designed to be up to 50 percent more fuel efficient than typical passenger jets.

High-tech jets rely on advanced manufacturing facilities and a workforce schooled in STEM fields and other emerging technologies. JetZero engaged Deloitte, one of the world's largest professional services networks, to develop its workforce. Now Deloitte is expanding its Believers program, which equips students with STEM proficiencies.

Deloitte's collaboration with UNCG, Guilford County Schools, the Greensboro Chamber of Commerce, and the National Math + Science Initiative is designed to create a workforce pipeline ready to take on these advanced aerospace roles.

"UNCG has always been deeply connected to the community it serves, and this partnership reflects that commitment," says Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement Sherine Obare. "UNCG sits at a unique intersection of STEM expertise and teacher preparation, which makes this partnership a natural fit. We are proud to play a role in preparing the workforce that will define Greensboro's economic future for generations to come."



IMAGES COURTESY OF JETZERO AND TEXTRON

JetZero chooses Greensboro as the location for its newest facility.



RUNWAY TO FAA

Esports can take students into exciting careers. In an effort to expand its air traffic control workforce and training pipeline, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) is looking to hire gamers from universities like UNCG.

UNCG offers a major and minor in video gaming and esports studies. Dr. John Borchert, UNCG's director of Applied Research in Computer Arts, Digitization, and Esports, says the skills students learn in team-based games like Overwatch and Valorant are directly applicable to air traffic control.

"Competitive gamers are moving through digital space incredibly quickly, navigating digital interfaces, and communicating their location, intentions, and needs to others," he says.

Because players need to function as a team to win, they develop trust. "That's similar to a pilot and an air traffic controller," he says. "They need that same level of trust even though they are not physically in the same space and may not necessarily know each other in person."



ELEVATING CUSTOMER SERVICE

UNCG is helping the area's private aviation industry take off. Textron Aviation, which designs, builds, and services high-performance aircraft, partnered with MBA students from the Bryan School of Business and Economics to identify ways to strengthen customer experience.

As part of their MBA capstone, four students analyzed the Textron Greensboro Service Center's operations and developed recommendations to improve service consistency, communication, and customer comfort.

Ken Gilgeours '23, '25 MBA is technical service manager at Textron Aviation. He also completed a capstone project before launching his own career. "The opportunities that the Bryan School offers are extremely impactful for both students and our business community," he says.

Ultimately, projects like this one benefit everyone involved. Students gain hands-on experience, while companies receive fresh perspectives backed by research and analysis.

Mycology ON MARS

Fungi could do more than you think.

The Oberlies Research Group, led by Patricia A. Sullivan Distinguished Professor Nicholas Oberlies, is focused on revealing the biological potential of compounds from nature. One example? The possibilities of building structures on Mars.

In conjunction with Luna Labs, a Charlottesville-based product development company with expertise in advanced materials testing and structural analysis, UNCG researchers are exploring fungus as a building material.

"When you think about building on the moon or Mars, you're not going to fill up a rocket ship with bricks and mortar," Oberlies says. "The goal is to explore whether we can create materials using what's already available on site."

They want to find out whether fungi and the loose soil of another planet's surface could be combined, sterilized, and compressed. The results, resembling bricks, could be used to build structures.

The researchers are particularly interested in species like shelf fungi. "If you're hiking in the woods and see fungi growing on the side of a tree in little steps, those fungi are actually pretty strong," says Oberlies.

He hopes the project will lead to results that are literally out of this world.

Patricia A. Sullivan Distinguished Professor Nicholas Oberlies has published over 250 research articles, been cited over 19,000 times, and acquired millions in research funding from the National Institutes of Health, the American Cancer Society, and others. He received UNCG's Senior Research Excellence Award in 2024.





> **"When you think about building on Mars, you're not going to fill up a rocket ship with bricks and mortar."**
>
> — DR. NICHOLAS OBERLIES



THE CECH RESEARCH GROUP, led by Patricia A. Sullivan Distinguished Professor Nadja Cech, uses chemistry and biochemistry to explore new treatments for drug-resistant infections. Their work is inspired by molecules from plants, fungi, and bacteria. Postdoctoral research fellow Ingrid Y. Martinez Aldino (center), along with Cech and Mass Spectrometry Core Facility director Warren Vidar '22 PhD, published a Journal of Natural Products article this fall honored as an American Society of Chemistry Editors' Choice for its broad appeal.

FUNGI BLOCKS IMAGE COURTESY OF LUNA LABS



$2M INVESTMENT, 1M NEW JOBS

UNCG has received a $2 million award to launch NC BioMISSION, a bioindustrial workforce training and research program in North Carolina. The initiative is funded by BioMADE, a federal manufacturing innovation institute designed to secure U.S. global leadership in industrial biotechnology.

NC BioMISSION's self-paced certificate of completion, opening to all majors in January 2027, will combine in-person instruction, online modules, and immersive virtual reality experiences. The UNCG project will be housed in iCOMMAND, the University's research institute for military advances and national defense.

"Leveraging North Carolina's strong agricultural base and aligning academic training with industry demands, NC BioMISSION represents a strategic investment in North Carolina's future," says Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement Sherine Obare. "This initiative will accelerate bioindustrial manufacturing across North Carolina, creating clear pathways to employment, advancing sustainability, and driving economic growth."

Bioindustrial manufacturing uses biological systems to generate high-value chemicals, materials, textiles, fuels, bioplastics, and other products, often using agricultural feedstocks and waste streams as starting materials. The program will prepare students to convert biomass into high-value, industry-ready materials that strengthen supply chains, advance sustainability, and drive economic growth.

Coursework will be developed in conjunction with an industry advisory board. "Rather than people at the University saying, 'These are the skills people need,' it will be the industry telling the University the skills they require in order to hire these individuals," says Obare.

The program will also include opportunities for capstone projects with industry partners. "The goal is for students to gain practical experience and professional preparation for immediate workforce entry," says Obare. "We want to develop high-level critical thinking in these students."

The U.S. bioindustrial economy is projected to support at least 1 million jobs by 2030, but qualified biotechnology workers are already in short supply. NC BioMISSION will help address this gap by equipping students with skills for careers in the sector.

THE EMERGENCE AND EVOLUTION OF GOAL-DIRECTED BEHAVIOR IN COLLECTIVE ENTITIES PROJECT WAS MADE POSSIBLE THROUGH THE SUPPORT OF GRANT #63464 FROM THE JOHN TEMPLETON FOUNDATION.



DEEP DIVE INTO SYMBIOTIC ORGANISMS

Millions of coral polyps form massive underwater reefs, but they couldn't do it without symbiotic algae partners and the bacteria and viruses that live among them.

Corals embody a host of conundrums for the scientific thinker. How do we define an individual "coral"? Where does one organism begin and another end? What can corals teach us about other organisms where the whole is greater than the sum of its parts?

Assistant Professor of Philosophy Derek Skillings is the lead investigator on a $600,000 grant from the John Templeton Foundation for a project titled "The Emergence and Evolution of Goal-Directed Behavior in Collective Entities." It is the largest grant ever received by UNCG's Department of Philosophy.

"A holobiont is a term for a host organism and all of the things that live inside of it and on it," Dr. Skillings explains. "We used to think these weird things like corals, lichens, and maybe certain insects, which are amalgamations of symbioses, were the exception in nature. But now we are realizing no, actually, it's probably everything. Everything is a holobiont."

He points to the bacteria in our guts and on our skin, even the mitochondria in our cells, as evidence that humans – like coral – are holobionts.

See more news on UNCG researchers and projects.

‘I’LL WALK *you home’*



Hope Niedrich ’26 MS designed hospice guides after listening to aging patients.

“How would you like your mom or dad or your grandma or grandpa to be treated?”

That question summarizes the ideology of Hope Niedrich ’26 MS.

Personal and professional experiences drew Niedrich to UNCG’s master’s program in gerontology so that she can be the one who shows up in someone’s final days. For her capstone, she created educational guides for volunteers to bridge cultural and religious differences and ensure end-of-life patients receive the utmost comfort and dignity.

Niedrich’s interest in healthcare began with the untimely loss of her brother.

“We had some real rock star healthcare professionals,” she says.

After work in the caregiving sector, she was an activity director for a memory-care center in Raleigh, then she worked for in-home care company Arosa in Greensboro.

Then a personal experience affirmed her calling.

Niedrich and her sister became their father’s power of attorney when he was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer’s. They had to learn how to make decisions on his behalf.

She decided to continue her education and focus fully on gerontology.

She chose UNCG because it offered one of two accredited gerontology programs on the East Coast. As an online program, it also offered her flexibility.

Niedrich drew a parallel between newborns and how easily family and friends surround them with support and comfort.

“Older adults are oftentimes tucked away and forgotten in facilities,” she says. “I hope to inspire people that work with older people to always approach their work with empathy and respect.”

UNCG faculty like Dr. Elise Eifert, the program director, and Dr. Chantelle Caro, Niedrich’s faculty advisor, impressed upon her how aging adult care should be a holistic service.

“People don’t like to talk about getting older. They definitely don’t like to talk about dying,” she says. “But the guarantees in life are getting older and passing away. Hopefully, I can reduce the stigma around it, just by having conversations with people.”

Niedrich did a lot of talking and even more listening, broaching complicated topics with people who wanted to spend the time they have left sharing their wisdom.

For her capstone, Niedrich focused on religious and spiritual beliefs about life and death. She spent last summer shadowing the staff and chaplains at Hospice of the Piedmont.

They told her they wanted more guidance for volunteers to connect with the patients.

She designed three educational guides for the hospice, including the “Volunteer Cultural Sensitivity Guide,” which explains different religions’ approaches to death. It contains a checklist of cultural expectations about religious practices, modesty, and family decision-making.

Another guide she created gives prompts for conversation such as, “Are there people you would like to thank, forgive, and connect with?” and “How would you like to be remembered?”

Her research came from the patients themselves. Niedrich sat with them and listened to them talk about their beliefs and much more. “I was most moved by the peace and acceptance shared by these patients despite also feeling some uncertainty or still having questions about death.”

She feels prepared to be others’ “rock star” professional, preferably in a hospice organization or long-term care center.

Her guiding star is a well-known quote by psychologist and spiritual teacher Ram Dass: “We’re all just walking each other home.”



PHOSPHORUS FOUND

WHEN EATING A MEAL, you probably don’t think about phosphorus, but it’s present throughout our food system.

It’s used in fertilizer, absorbed by plants, and it’s essential to all life, from healthy bones and teeth to DNA and cell structure.

However, about 80% of phosphorus used in fertilizer is lost along the way either in the soil or in water runoff. That’s a problem because phosphorus can fuel algal blooms that reduce oxygen in water and harm aquatic life.

As one of 11 partner institutions in the Science and Technologies for Phosphorus Sustainability (STEPS) Center, UNCG is helping solve this problem. STEPS is funded by the National Science Foundation.

Vice Chancellor for Research and Engagement Dr. Sherine Obare says detection is crucial. “The more easily we can measure where phosphorus is in a water system, the sooner we can act to recover it before it becomes waste or pollution.”

In a recent project by UNCG doctoral student Abed Alqader Ibrahim and researchers from the University of Florida, the Obare Research Group developed a gold-zinc ferrite nanocomposite sensor that detects different forms of phosphate in water through visible color changes, offering a path toward rapid, selective phosphate detection in environmental water samples that doesn’t require expensive machinery or an advanced degree.

The goal? To take this technology from the lab to the farm so that it can positively impact phosphorus sustainability.

IGNITING RESEARCH



An initiative is bolstering research networks across the campus. Established to spark new scholarly partnerships, the Ignite Transdisciplinary Research awards support collaborative teams whose work shows strong potential for external funding and broader academic impact.

Eligible projects are required to include at least two researchers from different academic units, one of whom must be a College of Arts and Sciences (CAS) faculty member, and to represent new research partnerships.

Christopher and Laura Braxton Tew (both Class of 1969) have funded this initiative. Their desire to invest in this collaborative initiative demonstrates the power of cross-disciplinary research to address cultural, scientific, and societal challenges.

“To pursue Ignite awards, faculty had to form new research teams that draw on the expertise of different disciplines. In the 21st century, transdisciplinary teams are crucial,” says Dr. Kelly Joyce, CAS dean. “They will create new ways of understanding our past, present, and future – ones that include but go beyond disciplinary forms of knowledge.”

SCAN TO SEE LIST OF RECIPIENTS.



ASLAN FREEMAN '11 on tour with Lainey Wilson

'ROUND THE WORLD *with Lainey Wilson*

Aslan Freeman '11 worked his way through small stages across the North Carolina music scene before he landed in major arenas as Lainey Wilson's bandleader and lead guitarist. He credits his rise to "stubbornness meeting luck" and the broad music skills he built as an honors student in UNCG's School of Music.

"I knew I wanted to be a touring musician with my own band, and if my mom hadn't insisted that I go to college, I may have gone straight to that," he explains. "But my back-up plan was producing for others, and the composition degree was much more helpful with that. Learning how to write sheet music and orchestrate for different instruments has come in handy. In addition to songwriting, I've been able to write string arrangements and choral arrangements for Lainey thanks to that foundation."

After graduating in 2011, he moved from band to band and, eventually, Nashville. There he reconnected with Lainey Wilson, whom he had met previously at City Limits Saloon in Raleigh.

He began producing for her, and after just a few months, they were recording new music in a studio space that Freeman rented. "It was basically the closet of a former optometrist's office," he recalls.

Freeman and Wilson connected creatively and found inspiration from many genres. "Meeting Lainey made me look at country music differently," he explains. "The songwriting is just insane. I love the meaningful stories you can tell."

> **"Whether it's a stadium with 50,000 people or a theater with 500, when we walk out there, we're doing the exact same job and treat it the exact same way."**
>
> —ASLAN FREEMAN '11

Since then, the "pinch-yourself" moments have continued for Freeman. Earlier this year, he and Wilson played the Carolina Panthers' stadium, opening for the legendary Chris Stapleton.

What's his advice for young musicians?

"That desire to keep showing up is what you need to find success, especially in an artistic field. Once you're good enough to do the work you want to do, it's about waiting for the opportunity to present itself. Be stubborn enough to wait and then say yes to the scary thing that you're not sure you can do."

Freeman's success can be attributed to thorough preparation, the connections he made along the way, and the hard work he put in for a profession he was unwilling to give up. And he still seems like that eager young musician performing in venues like Greensboro's Blind Tiger.

"The job is exactly the same, genuinely," he says. "Whether it's a stadium with 50,000 people or a theater with 500, when we walk out there, we're doing the exact same job and treat it the exact same way."





Scenes from Freeman's college days include playing the Somewhere Else Tavern in Greensboro (top) and graduating with friends (left, above) who also played in bands with him all over the Triad (second from right, below).





Freeman (right) shares the stage with fellow alumnus Tommy Scifres in Lainey Wilson's band.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF ASLAN FREEMAN; PHOTO OF LYNN BLAKEY BY RUSTY MOORE



Lynn Blakey

TRADING ROCK & ROLL FOR PEACE & CONFLICT STUDIES PROGRAM

LYNN BLAKEY had an accomplished career as a musician. But she felt like something was missing. In Fall 2024, she returned to UNCG to earn a degree in Peace and Conflict Studies.

More than three decades earlier, the Spartan was working toward a degree in communications, planning to be a documentary filmmaker. She learned to play guitar and started a band.

Her junior year, she joined Let's Active and left school at age 24. The band made its mark regionally and toured as an opening act for R.E.M. She was later a part of the female trio Tres Chicas and toured the U.S. and Europe. "Music has been my life since I made the decision (to leave school)," Blakey said. "It's a life of touring and recording and learning about the world. I've made six records in various bands and sung on more than 50 others."

Her music career still left her wanting more.

"All this time, I thought about going back to school," she said.

In 2022, she was diagnosed with cancer. After chemotherapy and surgery, Blakey slowly felt like her old self and was ready to return to singing and song-writing. But she also looked at other jobs and saw that a bachelor's degree was required for most of them.

"I looked to see what UNCG had online, and the first thing that popped up was Peace and Conflict Studies. I thought, 'That's my thing: helping to solve problems,'" she said.

UNCG allowed most of her previous credits to transfer upon her return.

Blakey, the inspiration for The Replacements' 1985 rock anthem "Left of the Dial," died earlier this year from complications of cancer. She was honored at May's Commencement.

Her personality and voice inspired countless fellow musicians and fans. In early summer, musicians across the state paid tribute to Blakey at Chapel Hill's Cat's Cradle, playing her songs. A tribute compilation of her songs, "Dreams Are Lovers: A Retrospective," was created to help support mental health and wellness charities in North Carolina close to Blakey's heart.

BAKED *fresh*

Since graduating from UNCG, Lindsay Hancock '03 has found success where food and business meet.

Her path started when former Director of Athletics Nelson Bobb gave her a job with Spartan Athletics managing the concession stand for home games. After graduation, she worked at the corporate office of The Fresh Market, a startup called Creative Snacks, and Kind Snacks.

In 2023, she took a risk: founding My Better Batch, which makes premium cookie mixes. "My Better Batch is made with clean, simple ingredients – ingredients you'd find in your own kitchen pantry. We're Non-GMO Project verified, and we're a certified women-owned business."

The success has been great. "We have grown by leaps and bounds, not just regionally here in the Southeast, but nationally. About a year ago, we started with 90 stores, and we are in about 3,500 retail stores today."

Hancock is proud to offer a better baking shortcut. "We're making it easier to bake delicious, premium-quality cookies without compromising on taste or ingredients."

Lindsay Hancock '03, creator of premium-brand baking mix My Better Batch

See Lindsay Hancock at UNCG Connects on Dec. 2

MAIN STREET, YOUR STREET

In downtown districts across North Carolina, the NC Main Street Program refreshes historic buildings and enlivens communities. This year marks the 10th anniversary of its partnership with UNCG. Liz Parham '85 is director of the NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center.

Parham has worked with the NC Main Street Program for nearly 40 years in a variety of roles. Today, she manages a staff of nearly 20 that works statewide. Last year alone, there was more than $500 million invested in 81 NC Main Street Program cities.

At UNCG, Parham was a student of professor emerita Jo Ramsay Leimenstoll, a longtime leader of UNCG's Main Street Fellows program and the recipient of Preservation North Carolina's 2026 Ruth Coltrane Cannon Award.

Kista Mansell '22 MFA of the Interior Architecture Department now leads UNCG's Main Street Fellows program projects. "Mostly what we do are façade designs. We prepare design renderings that update, refresh, or sometimes completely rebuild the front of buildings," she says.

For Spartan students, this means professional development and relevant work experience. It's work that community members can be proud of, says Parham. "When you see projects that have come to fruition from the work we've done, that's very rewarding."

MANTEO, N.C.



BEFORE

This project peeled back layers of history, removing an Elizabethan façade added to The Pioneer Theatre in the 1970s and revealing the building's original Art Deco form.



AFTER

The doors, canopy, marquee, and ticket booth were rebuilt or repaired according to their original designs.

EDENTON, N.C.



BEFORE

Upper-story projects transform interiors. In this Edenton building, the second-floor storage space was reclaimed as a picturesque lodging, the first floor as a new business venture.

PROPOSED



ELKIN, N.C.



BEFORE

Royall's Soda Shoppe closed after 100 years in business, but "The Royall's Building" had more to give downtown Elkin. After the project, it hosted a restaurant and new office space.

PROPOSED

Façade projects reimagine building exteriors. Extensive research goes into these designs, which are often influenced by a building's history.



Male nurses SHINE


School of Nursing White Coat Ceremony, August 2026

UNCG's School of Nursing offers innovative paths to nursing careers. That is as true for its male nursing students as its women. What's more, UNCG's program is above the national average when it comes to male representation in the field.

For the past three years, about 16.3% of the school's students have been male. According to the 2024 National Nursing Workforce Survey by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing, the percentage of men in nursing nationwide declined from 11.2% to 10.4% between 2022 and 2024.


Nursing student Sebastian Rodriguez

At UNCG, innovative pathways into the profession such as the BSN First-Year, Direct Admit, Prelicensure Entry-Level MSN, and the Veterans Access Program are producing results. In Fall 2026, the School of Nursing had 213 male students enrolled across all programs, including 87 in prelicensure pathways.

One such student is Sebastian Rodriguez. He first interacted with the healthcare community as an aspiring professional tennis player. Then he saw the possibilities of nursing as a profession.

"I became interested in the science behind health problems and helping patients make sense of their conditions," Rodriguez says.

Rodriguez was drawn to UNCG's strong reputation and the size of its nursing program. His nursing cohort included approximately 25 male students out of 135 nursing students total, and he quickly found a sense of belonging within the program.

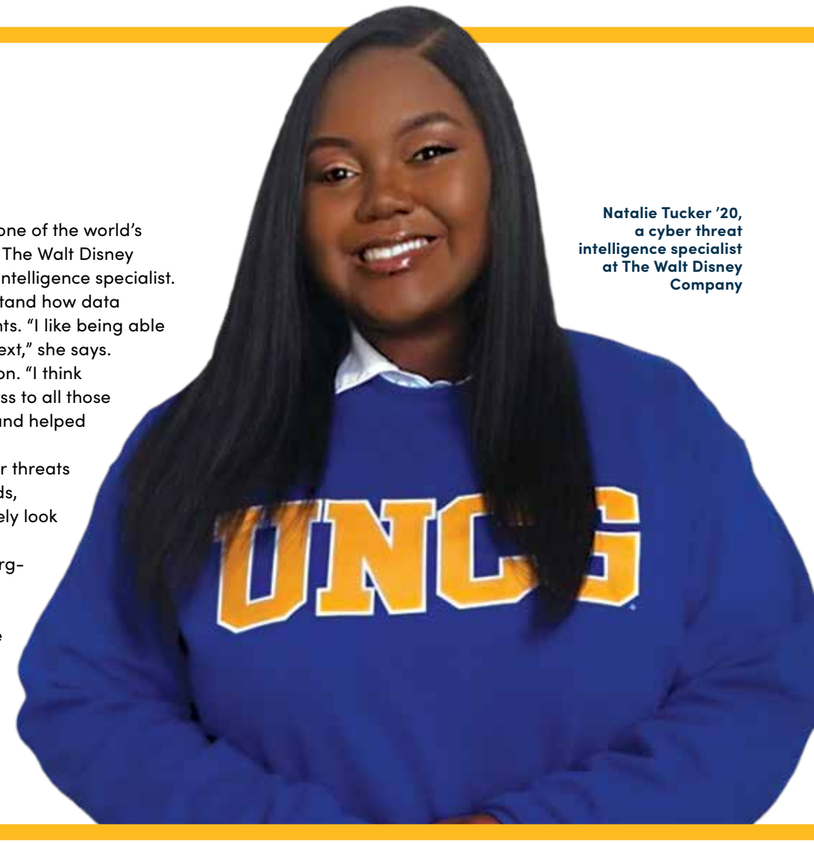
No matter a student's background, the UNCG School of Nursing answers the call to solve the nursing workforce shortage in the state. Says Dean Debra Barksdale, "Our goal is not to recruit students to nursing because of their gender. It is to break down outdated stereotypes about who can be a nurse and ensure that talented people can see themselves in this extraordinary profession. We open doors to a profession that can transform not only the lives of our patients and communities, but also the lives of our graduates and their families."


Ernest Grant '93 MS, '15 PhD with Dean Debra Barksdale

NURSING'S LIVING LEGEND

ERNEST GRANT '93 MS, '15 PhD was honored this year by the American Academy of Nursing as one of its 2026 Living Legends. He was cited for distinguished leadership and legacy in nursing. His renowned career, from the aftermath of 9/11 to the COVID-19 pandemic, has transformed burn care and prevention, health policy, and equity.

DISNEY DEFENDER


Natalie Tucker '20, a cyber threat intelligence specialist at The Walt Disney Company

NATALIE TUCKER '20 found a career protecting one of the world's most recognizable companies. She helps protect The Walt Disney Company from data breaches as a cyber threat intelligence specialist.

A business analytics course helped her understand how data collection can lead to meaningful business insights. "I like being able to paint a picture for people who need that context," she says.

Tucker gained confidence in her career direction. "I think that's what college is for," she says. "Having access to all those experiences really solidified my career decision and helped me know where I wanted to go next."

Today, Tucker helps identify and evaluate cyber threats that could affect Disney and its portfolio of brands, including ABC and Hulu. Two days on the job rarely look the same.

"We're constantly monitoring for new and emerging threats," she says. "Much of the role involves research, staying on top of trends, and ensuring we have the necessary information to protect the organization."

Just as important as analyzing data is interpreting it. She credits her academic background. "Pulling information from multiple sources to create a bigger picture is a skill I developed early on at UNCG and use every day," she says.

PHOTO COURTESY OF NATALIE TUCKER

DECADES OF MILESTONES


10TH ANNIVERSARY

Sixty-two campers attended the first **CHANCE camp** in 2017. Ten years later, 876 students have participated. About 40% became Spartans. "The secret sauce of CHANCE is the people who came together to dream it, plan it, and deliver it," says Director of the Office of Intercultural Engagement Gus Peña.


20TH ANNIVERSARY

Since 2006, audiology graduate students from across the country have come to **UNCG's Speech and Hearing Center** for the final step between the classroom and professional practice. These externs who come as visitors often stay. Forty-one percent get jobs in North Carolina afterward.


30TH ANNIVERSARY

For 30 years, **Outdoor Adventures** has offered opportunities for day hikes, overnight excursions, goat yoga, Pilates, backpacking, kayaking, rock climbing, challenge-course activities, and recreation at Piney Lake, which reopened in 2018 after being mostly closed since 2001. Today, there are more UNCG activities available than ever.



Allan Jimenez Leandro '21, owner of Astro Dogs food truck

ASTRO DOGS, *all the way*

You may not know entrepreneur Allan Jimenez Leandro '21 by name, but you might recognize his truck.

His Astro Dogs food truck is covered in colorful illustrations with K-pop influences, much like the "flavored-up" Korean corn dogs he serves out of its window. Students and alumni can easily spot him at campus events like Homecoming or on Spring Garden when they need a late-night bite on weekends.

Leandro arrived at UNCG with his mind set on a career in health sciences. Scholarships and grants made UNCG an excellent choice. His languages, literatures, and cultures major allowed him to explore his heritage: "I was born in Yadkin County, but when I was 6 years old, I moved to Mexico City for about seven years," Leandro explains. "Although I knew a lot about my Mexican culture, the major opened my mind to other Hispanic nationalities and Spanish influences that I didn't know about."

Leandro was taking science courses for a pre-dental pre-professional track and was even the president of the pre-dental club at UNCG. Then the COVID shutdown made him want to try something different: exploring business.

As Leandro was discovering his calling, UNCG faculty and fellow students propelled him along the way. He began to understand the critical role that food plays in building community, further enticing him toward a career in the food industry.

"I just love the way food creates memories and brings people together," he says. "I had worked as a server and a manager, and my family has restaurant businesses, but I wanted to try something on my own. I always loved street food from a young age, but it was a fellow UNCG student who introduced me to my first Korean corn dog."

He loved it. Before long, he was trying them everywhere he could. Some were sweet, some were savory, and he began to visualize how he could put his own spin on this trending street food.

Like many entrepreneurs, Leandro had a dream and settled most of the details of the business through trial and error.

"I placed the order for the food truck and decided to figure out the rest as I went," he explains. "I tried different recipes until I found the best ones for our menu. It's been a fulfilling process for me to get Astro Dogs to where it is right now."

He credits the Spartan community with getting his business off the ground and launching the best seller on his menu: a hot dog-on-a-stick covered in French fries and fried, then topped with Astro sauce and spicy mayo.

READY FOR THE TANNENBAUM CENTER?



The University's Jeanne Tannenbaum Center for Creative Practice opens this month. And its inaugural director is ready to bring to life a bold vision.

Dr. Amanda Graham comes from UNC Chapel Hill's Carolina Performing Arts (CPA), where she was the associate director of engagement. She also held adjunct appointments in the departments of American Studies and Communication.

She has organized master classes and workshops with Alvin Ailey Dance Theater and Martha Graham Company and a DJ "turntable" with Kid Koala. At CPA, she supported productions like "Affordable Housing: The Musical" as well as artist residencies with Nina Chanel Abney and UNCG alumna Rhiannon Giddens.

Earlier, she served as director of the Hartnett Gallery, University of Rochester, visiting assistant professor of media and society at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, and Andrew Mellon postdoctoral fellow in dance studies at Northwestern University.

The Tannenbaum Center's main objective? That's to bring campus and community together to work on interdisciplinary projects and programs that they couldn't do anywhere else. They do that through conversation and through practice.

Your experience with that? Among the interdisciplinary partnerships in Chapel Hill, I collaborated with the Carolina Center for Neurostimulation, the UNC School of Medicine Planning Office, and various community-based organizations. Earlier, I co-organized the city-wide Ecology, Art, and Media Festival in Toronto.

In its first months, what will the public see? We're excited that culinary historian and musician Justin Robinson will be exploring the region's axis of foodways and music in a work in progress he calls German Soul. Among many other things, there'll be a program called Creative Community Connector. Shanté Renee, former manager of The People's Market in Glenwood, will be our connector this first year. The center's really intended to break down silos between disciplines and between campus and community.

SEE DETAILS AND SCHEDULE.



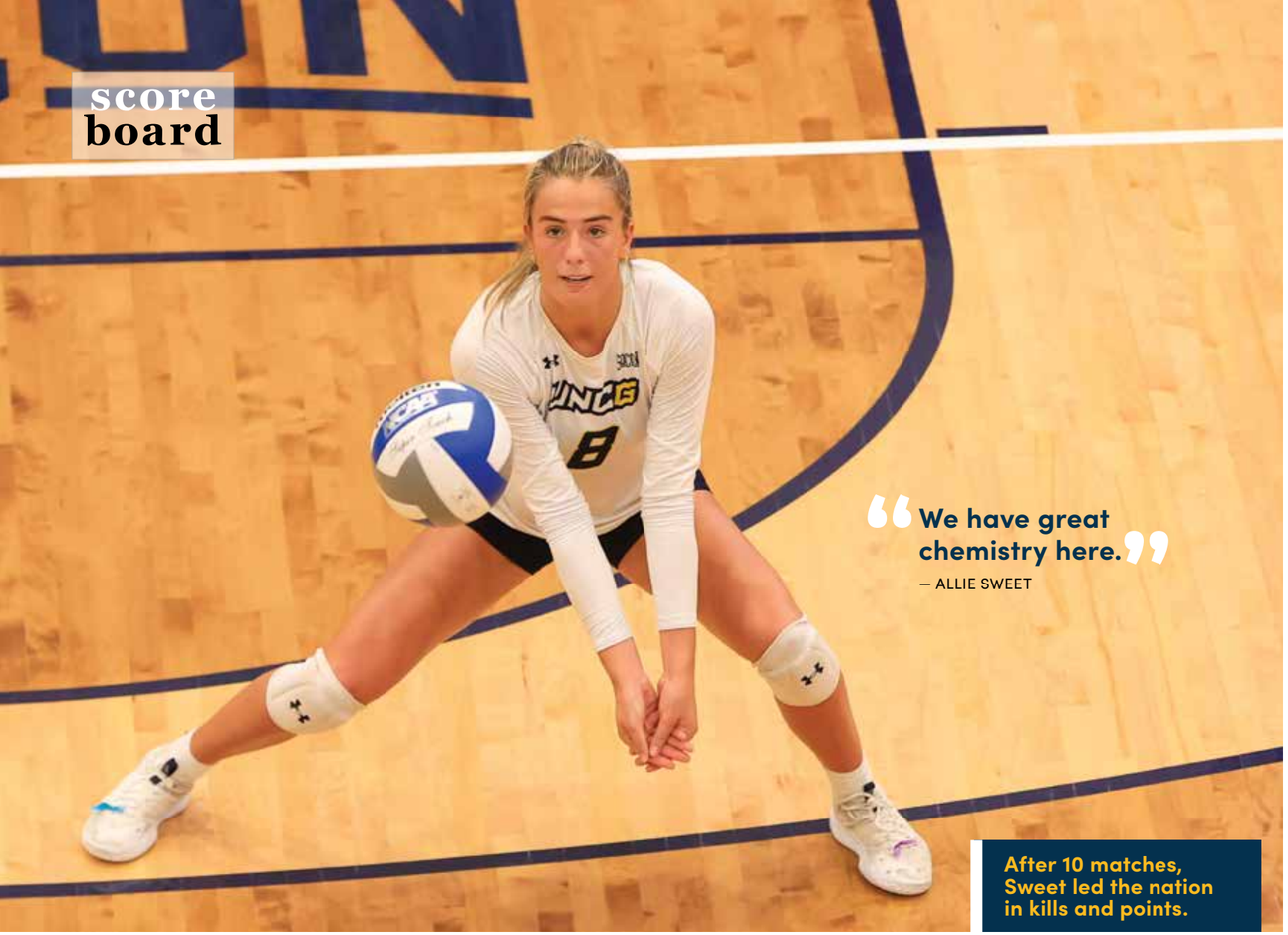
9 ALUMNI HONORED

SERVICE AND ACHIEVEMENT were well celebrated at the Alumni Awards event on Homecoming Weekend.

- The Minerva Award for Distinguished Service was presented to **Alan Overbey '86**. The vice chair of the UNC Greensboro Foundation has served on the Bryan School's Advisory Board as well as the United Way of Greater Greensboro Board.
- The Professional Achievement Award was presented to **DePaul Mittman '78** and **Angela Polk-Jones '89, '07 MSA**.
- **Kathy Foster '84, '92 MSN** and **Wayne Foster '01 PhD** received the WC Legacy Award.
- **Anjan Basu** received the Honorary Alumni Award, and the Young Alumni Award was given to **Preston Blakely '17, Cordara Harper '20 MM, '21 PMC**, and **Clinton Wilson '07**.

Have alumni in mind for next year's awards? Submissions are due by Feb. 1, 2027. Visit alumni.uncg.edu/alumni-awards for details and criteria.

SEE FULL STORY AND VIDEOS



"We have great chemistry here."
— ALLIE SWEET

After 10 matches, Sweet led the nation in kills and points.

SWEET SCORER *killer competitor*

Georgia native Allie Sweet was selected to the All-SoCon First Team last year. She finished the season atop the conference with 501 kills and tops on her team with 34 service aces. The elementary education major also was named to the SoCon Academic All-Conference Team.

This fall has been even stronger. After the season's first ten matches, the outside hitter led the nation in kills and points. She notched 36 kills in one game – a new program record.

With nearly $4M in support from donor James Dutton earlier this decade, UNCG Volleyball is on a strong streak. "I am excited to see where this growth leads us with this program," Coach Trent Dunahoo says.

Sweet played basketball in her earlier years, but volleyball became her passion. "My favorite aspect is definitely my teammates and that bond on and off the court."

She loves another thing: "Hitting it hard and getting a kill."

The energetic crowds at the matches are a favorite, too. She breaks down who you see from the court. There are the students, then there's a bunch of alumni and people from around Greensboro. "Our parents also get into it a lot. They like to stand up and have pom poms and stuff. So there's never a quiet moment in the arena."

This year, she is enjoying classes with her fellow aspiring teachers and her internship at High Point's Oakview Elementary. Next year, as a senior, she will be student teaching. After graduation, she hopes to play overseas. And after volleyball is over? "I want to live somewhere near my family and be a teacher."





Team Norway's star player, Erling Haaland.

Team Norway fans doing the viral "Viking Row" in the stands.

WORLD CUP RUN

Team Norway, a fan favorite in the World Cup, trained at UNCG and stayed in Greensboro last summer. City leaders estimate the pre-World Cup residency resulted in more than $5 million in new economic activity. In an ABC News45 report, Greensboro Sports Foundation President James Beard said that Grandover Resort hosted more than 80 people with the Norwegian Football Federation and noted the large number of international media staying downtown in hotels for the month of June. The experience elevated UNCG, its soccer programs, and the city's profile on the international stage. Team Norway superstar Erling Haaland became a viral sensation via social media, generating more than two billion impressions during the World Cup, according to local leaders.

Hundreds of people flocked to LeBauer Park for viewing parties as Team Norway propelled its way to the World Cup quarterfinals. Those fortunate to get tickets to the UNCG Soccer Stadium to see the team practice and revel in the team's "Viking Row" celebration – imitating Norsemen longboat rowers as a drum counts off the cadence – will never forget the fun.



SPARTAN STATS

UNCG's student-athletes averaged a 3.46 GPA in 2025-26.

Spartan Softball secured its FIRST NCAA TOURNAMENT WIN last spring, with a 1-0 shutout vs. Clemson.

3-TIME SOCON COACH OF THE YEAR Trina Patterson has completed 10 seasons leading UNCG Women's Basketball.

Men's Golf won September's BRYAN NATIONAL COLLEGIATE AND ROD MYERS INVITATIONAL.

VIEW ATHLETIC EVENTS CALENDAR





Allan Rohan Crite, "Winter Scene from My Window," 1933. Oil on canvas board, 16 x 12 in. Weatherspoon Art Museum. Purchase with funds from the Laura Weill Cone Acquisition Endowment: 2025.6 © Estate of Allan Rohan Crite



Above left, Norman Akers, "Inverted Home," 2022. Monoprint and chine collé on paper, 10 1/16 x 7 5/8 in. Weatherspoon Art Museum. Purchase with funds from the Warren Brandt Acquisition Endowment for the Dillard Collection; 2024.12.3 © Norman Akers, photograph courtesy of the artist

Magdalena Abakanowicz, "DYBY," 1993. Wood, burlap, and resin, 63 x 82 5/8 x 25 5/8 in. Weatherspoon Art Museum. Purchase with funds from the Tannenbaum-Sternberger Foundation in honor of Leah Louise Tannenbaum; 2000.28.a-f © Magdalena Abakanowicz, reproduced with permission of the artist

BODY AND SOUL

ON VIEW AT THE WEATHERSPOON ART MUSEUM through Feb. 13, "Body and Soul, Humanist Visual Languages" invites visitors to approach art through two modes of interpretation: "body" – a work's physical qualities and "soul" – the ideas, emotions, and experiences it may evoke.

"Together, these approaches demonstrate how close looking at works of art can enable deeper insight," says Juliette Bianco, the museum's Anne and Ben Cone memorial endowed director and associate vice chancellor for museums and creative practice.

Lead Museum Preparator Susan Taaffe '94, who retires this fall, installed "Body and Soul." She has worked to deliver powerful experiences for 35 years. "A great exhibition collapses the time and space between an artist's expression and the viewer's observation, resulting in a deepening of connections and understanding," she says.

This exhibition complements the opening of the museum's Cole Levin Center for Art and Human Understanding in early 2027.



Taylor Takeback '27

Taylor Theatre has been home to UNCG Theatre for 60 years. It'll reopen on Feb. 6-7 with a major makeover – and two celebratory performances.

"We're celebrating the power of coming home," says Jennifer Vellenga, UNCG Theatre director. It will be an unforgettable evening of scenes and songs as current students bring to life excerpts from plays and musicals that have shaped Taylor's artistic legacy.

More spring productions include "Urinetown" in Sprinkle Theatre and "Romeo and Juliet" in Taylor Theatre.

PURCHASE TAKEBACK TICKETS



MUSIC CON CORAZÓN

For Dalia Razo '20 MM, '24 PhD, "folk music is as human as it gets."

With her band d.a.l.i.a., she performs music that draws on many influences: Western classical, Mexican folk, and even '90s bands like Radiohead. Offstage, Razo is assistant professor of music education at UNCG. Likewise, her band members are UNCG affiliated: Zach Baker '20 on drums, Professor of Music Composition Alejandro Rutty on electric bass, Cameron Rabb '24 on guitar, and Assistant Professor of String Music Education Scott Glasser on violin. Jennifer Aikey '26 PhD joined the band on electric bass for the NC Folk Festival.

Razo's musical influences are so diverse, you might ask whether d.a.l.i.a. is folk music. She says, "My use of the Spanish language and storytelling definitely makes my music folk music."

Razo's Mexican-American background is important. "I feel a responsibility in representing not just my Mexican culture, but my Latin-American peers and my Latin-American colleagues," she says.

This fall, she was the winner of the 2026 Not Your Average Folk contest and performed at both the NC Folk Festival and UNCG Homecoming.

Dalia Razo '20 MM, '24 PhD performing at the NC Folk Fest in September.



BY JUSTIN HIGUCHI - BEN FOLDS @ THE WILTERN 08/16/2023, CC BY 2.0, HTTPS://COMMONS.WIKIMEDIA.ORG/W/INDEX.PHP?CURID=19544316

SPRING SHOWS ON HORIZON

UNCG's Concert and Lecture Series (UCLS) offers an exciting lineup of world-renowned artists this year. Get your tickets for the upcoming part of the series.

WHO'S UPCOMING?

SAMARA JOY - FEB. 5, 2027
An American jazz singer, Samara Joy has received six Grammy Awards, including Best New Artist in 2023.

FINAL SHOW

BEN FOLDS - MARCH 20, 2027
After studying music as a Spartan in the mid-80s – he credits Robert Darnell as a favorite music professor - the Emmy-nominated singer-songwriter established himself as a major musical influencer and genre-bending artist. He received a UNCG honorary degree in 2021.

PURCHASE UCLS TICKETS HERE.

Outtake

DURING UNCG HOMECOMING 2026, alumni, students, and friends of the G gathered on Stone Building Lawn to enjoy musical performances from Colin Cutler '16 MA, Dalia Razo '20 MM, '24 PhD, and Tymain Robbins '18.

They also caught dance performances from the Spartan G's and UNCG Dance Team alumni. Stephanie Jojokian '95 (left), creator of the first UNCG dance team, and Ericka Hampton Collins '95 (right), another inaugural member, grabbed their pom-poms, brought their Spartan spirit, and helped make the day unforgettable!

PHOTOGRAPH BY SEAN NORONA '13

"Happiness is knowing how to celebrate."
— FRANÇOIS LELORD

A RECORD GIFT FOR

Learning

EDUCATION WAS KEY TO TEACHERS HARRIET AND JEROME EVENSON. THE COUPLE'S ASTONISHING $14 MILLION+ ESTATE GIFT TO UNCG REFLECTS THEIR ENDURING DEVOTION TO TEACHING'S TRANSFORMATIVE POWER.

BY JO CAROL TORREZ AND CHRIS RASH • PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN NORONA '13 • ARCHIVAL IMAGES COURTESY OF THE MARTHA BLAKENEY HODGES SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES



Harriet Shain '53 and Jerome Evenson met as youngsters in Wilmington, N.C. Both were the children of successful merchant fathers whose downtown businesses were across the street from each other.

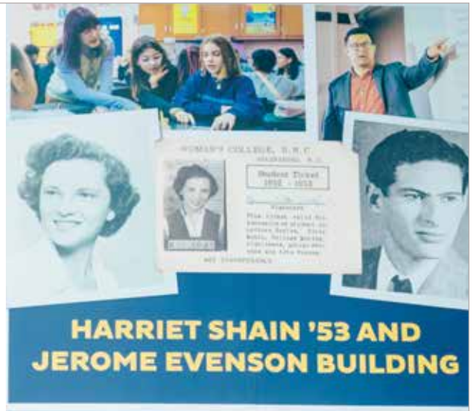
Both families attended the same synagogue, B'nai Israel Congregation, and the same high school, New Hanover on Market St. Jerome, whom Harriet called Jerry and colleagues called Jack, graduated in 1947. She finished in 1949. Both were high-achieving, honor-roll students active in scholastic and religious societies.

College honed their talents as scholars and led them to become teachers. Jerome, then 17, chose Duke University, graduating at 19 with a pre-med degree. He entered graduate school at East Carolina College in Greenville, N.C. His 1951 class of 16 men and two women each earned a master's in education and were offered teaching jobs in North Carolina. Jerome returned home to teach biology.

Harriet chose Woman's College, developing a deep love for her school. The connection was so strong she kept her 1952-53 ID card and student event admission ticket in her wallet for the next 73 years. In May 1953, she graduated with a degree in history and was recruited by Virginia's Arlington Public School System to teach history and English that fall. She joined Stratford Junior High School's faculty in Arlington. In 1954, Jerome became a science teacher at the same school.

Harriet and Jerome fell in love while she was at Woman's College and were married on Dec. 26, 1955. They began married life in a one-bedroom apartment near Stratford and saved to buy their only home. On Jan. 7, 1959, their son, Alan Michael, was born, and Harriet became a full-time homemaker. In 1961, they moved into their new home in Arlington, minutes from downtown Washington, D.C.

> "She would tell me very clearly over and over that what she and Mr. Evenson wanted to do was to make more teachers."
>
> — BETSEY WILDHACK, ESTATE ATTORNEY





WHEN FRIEND AND ADVISOR BETSEY WILDHACK notified UNCG that long-time donor Harriet Evenson '53 had died, she estimated Evenson's estate gift at just over $10 million. Evenson's final bequest of $14.3 million, the largest in UNCG's history, is now funding more scholarships, establishing a professorship in artificial intelligence, and expanding knowledge of Jewish history and culture.

Jerome remained with the Arlington school system for 35 years and retired as an assistant principal at Key Elementary. In addition to teaching at Stratford Junior High, he was also an assistant principal there and at Williamsburg Junior High.

Harriet's estate attorney, Betsey Wildhack, who attended Stratford, remembers Jerome as a brilliant, beloved teacher. Local Northern Virginia alumni Facebook forums describe him as a firm but fair administrator "who balanced the energetic, chaotic environment of middle schoolers with a calm, science-minded discipline."

Jerome was teaching at Stratford on Feb. 2, 1959, the school's most historic day. That morning, four African American seventh-graders walked unescorted through nearly 100 helmeted police officers into Stratford, making it the first public school in the Commonwealth of Virginia to desegregate.

Many expected violent confrontations, but none occurred because the school committed to protecting all its students. The faculty and staff had planned and practiced how they would act, and the Washington Post noted how peaceful this milestone was.

The Evensons were well acquainted with living through trying times. They were born in the Great Depression, lived through World War II, and moved to Virginia at the height of the Cold War and the beginning of the Civil Rights movement. They saw the federal government's growing economic impact in the region and the national surge in groundbreaking technological discoveries. Witnessing this high-tech boom may have prompted Jerome's decision to invest early in tech titans IBM and Microsoft. His shrewd choices, matched with living modestly and investing wisely, helped build the fortune that the Evenson estate later bequeathed to UNCG.

The couple led a quiet life devoted to their family, their faith, and their love of learning. They filled their home with books on many subjects. They celebrated their son's achievements and prominently displayed his multi-state table tennis championship trophies. Their lives flourished until Jerome suffered a heart attack in 1982. Alan came home from Old Dominion University to help his mother care for him. Then tragedy struck in 1983.

Alan, 24, was killed in a car crash blocks from their home. To navigate this agonizing loss, the Evensons joined Compassionate Friends and formed a support group for parents like them whose only child was deceased. In 1999, Jerome died and was buried next to their son at B'nai Israel Cemetery in Wilmington.

Harriet lived another 26 years, worrying no one would remember them. To cope, she helped others. She comforted grieving parents, donated money to the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, contributed to her local synagogue, and savored UNCG alumni events in Washington, D.C.

In 2005, Harriet began building her legacy with Wildhack's advice, and today, UNCG is the grateful beneficiary of the Evensons' remarkable generosity. "She would tell me very clearly over and over that what she and Mr. Evenson wanted to do was to make more teachers," Wildhack says. "I think she'd be so damn proud of what she's able to accomplish here. She just wanted to make more teachers, and we're going to do that."

The last line in Harriet's 2025 obituary is, "May the memory of Harriet Shain Evenson be for a blessing." Today, the names Harriet Shain and Jerome Evenson endure, and the blessings of their legacy will be remembered for generations.





Harriet at Woman's College, 1953; Jerome's senior portrait at New Hanover High School.





Left, Harriet in the Scribblers Club at New Hanover High School; below, Jerome in the Alpha Hi-Y club at New Hanover High School.

WWW.DIGITALNC.ORG FOR PHOTOS OF JACK AND HARRIETT FROM NEW HANOVER HIGH SCHOOL YEARBOOKS

THE CHARLIE CLARK CENTER FOR LOCAL HISTORY, ARLINGTON PUBLIC LIBRARY, FOR YEARBOOK PHOTOS OF JACK AND ALAN EVENSON FROM STRATFORD MIDDLE SCHOOL AND YORKTOWN HIGH SCHOOL





Gloria Thompson, Lance Newman, Ronald Deskins and Michael Jones walk into Stratford Junior High on Feb. 2, 1959.





Left, Alan Evenson, 1977; right, Jerome "Jack" Evenson, vice-principal.

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION THROUGH THE YEARS

1891–1899
The State Normal and Industrial School opens primarily as a training facility for teachers in North Carolina public schools.

1900–1909
The first Curry Building opens as a practice school for education students.

1910–1919
The school's educational programs are among the largest in the South.

1930–1939
School enrollment surges despite the Great Depression.

1940–1949
A master's in elementary education is established.





1950–1959
An emphasis on research and publication increases.

1960–1969
A doctor of education degree is announced.

1970–1979
Enrollment and faculty grow significantly.



1980–1989
The school's endowment grows substantially.

1990–1999
The Teachers Academy is established, and partnerships and technology use expand.

2000–2009
The new School of Education building opens.

2010–2015
The school receives a $7.7M TQP Grant for tech-enhanced teaching.

2016–2026
The Hooked on Books program is established. The Evenson estate donates millions to the school.



Evenson Scholars



CIERRA MURPHY '16 MS

PhD in Counseling and Counselor Education (former counselor at Smith High School)

"This gift is a legacy. I'm going to use the word "access" because when people are able to receive additional education, it can change everything for them."



SCOTT WALKER

PhD Educational Studies with a Concentration in Cultural Foundations, Currently high school English teacher at Northwest Guilford High School

"To have someone say, 'I have this chunk of money, and I want to give it away so that we can educate people … is an incredible investment in the community. It makes me want to work much harder."



ELLEN THORE

MS in Counseling – Couple and Family Counseling (former fourth and fifth grade teacher)

"This gift speaks to the commitment that (Harriet) had to education. She was really an amazing person and was passionate about creating the next generation of educators."



JULIANA MAYER REIS RIBEIRO

MEd in Birth-Kindergarten Education and Development, Currently kindergarten teacher at Forest View Elementary (Durham)

"It is because of this scholarship that I can achieve my dream. This scholarship is not just meant for me. It's meant for me and the 18 or 20 children in my class. And then those 20 will pay it forward everywhere. That's the impact."



YARIANA PEREZ

Sophomore | Dual Elementary Education and Special Education

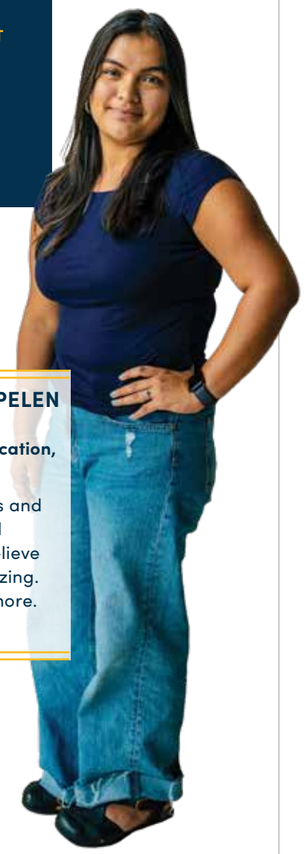
"I want to be a support for my students. Harriet made an impact on people. I want people to know that you can still make a difference."

MADEIRA BILLINGSLEY

MEd with a Concentration in Literacy Education, Currently third-grade teacher at Mary C. Williams Elementary (Wilmington)

"To know that this is coming from an educator herself, passing it along to us, it makes it more special, more meaningful. It makes me want to do my best, too."

HARRIET SHAIN AND JEROME EVENSON ENDOWMENT IN EDUCATION Bestows scholarships to UNCG graduate and undergraduate education students from North Carolina. Since 2006, 77 Spartans have received Evenson scholarships.



ANDREA DELA CRUZ PELEN

Senior | Dual Elementary Education and Special Education, First-generation Spartan

"It is inspiring how generous and selfless people can be, and inspiring that people do believe in teachers. I think it's amazing. Honestly, it motivates me more. It just makes me happy."



ALLEN JOHNSON

Senior | BS in Middle Grades Education with a Concentration in Mathematics

"I see the students in my classes with me, and it's all they want. They want to teach. They're so passionate about it. The future of teaching is bright because they love and care for the profession."

School of Education building named for Harriet Shain and Jerome Evenson



University Advancement Vice Chancellor Beth Fischer, left, and Betsey Wildhack hold a "Headed to the Harriet" T-shirt, commemorating Wildhack's nickname for the building. Far right, Chancellor Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr., at the naming ceremony.

UNC Greensboro named its School of Education building for educators Harriet Shain '53 and Jerome Evenson during a ceremony at the school on Sept. 24. The UNCG Board of Trustees unanimously voted to name the building in honor of the late philanthropists for their extraordinary estate bequest of more than $14 million, the largest gift in the University's history.

Board Chair George Hoyle '90 led the naming ceremony and discussed the gift's impact in supporting scholarships, faculty excellence, educational innovation, and the preparation of future educators. He said the gift will also deepen the understanding of Jewish history and culture at UNCG.

Family friend and estate attorney Betsey Wildhack of Arlington, Va., described her bond with Harriet Evenson, saying, "I get to help people figure out what they want their legacies to be. And Harriet's vision for hers was crystal clear: 'Make more teachers.'"



UNCG Chancellor Franklin D. Gilliam, Jr., said the ceremony was about far more than naming a building. "It is about honoring two educators whose lives reflected the very best of what education can accomplish," he said. "May this building stand as a reminder that the greatest legacies are not measured by what we keep for ourselves, but by what we make possible for others."

Dean Morgan Chitiyo discussed how deeply honored he is that the School of Education building now bears the Evenson name and that more students will have the opportunity to become teachers.

The ceremony ended with the unveiling of the Harriet Shain and Jerome Evenson Building sign and the ringing of the University bell.



Gov. Josh Stein, Dean Morgan Chitiyo and Provost Alan Boyette (l-r)

INSPIRED TO TEACH

North Carolina **Gov. Josh Stein** visited UNCG's School of Education on Sept. 8 to discuss with students, alumni, and educators what motivates people to become teachers and how the state can strengthen the profession. Participants cited UNCG's hands-on learning opportunities, supportive faculty, and early classroom experiences as key sources of inspiration. Other sources are career growth, technology needs, mentorship, and the importance of building strong relationships with students. During a tour, Stein, a former teacher, heard about UNCG's innovative teaching resources and programs and learned that the school is the Piedmont Triad's leading producer of education professionals. For example, over the past three years, nearly 400 UNCG graduates have earned teaching licensure, with almost 80% now teaching in North Carolina schools. Stein's visit highlighted UNCG's longstanding role in preparing educators for North Carolina's schools.

THE EVENSON GIFTS' IMPACT

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION DEAN MORGAN CHITIYO says the Evensons' passion for education is encouraging and believes their gifts will transform the school, its students, and the University, beginning with the establishment of a forward-looking professorship.

JEROME EVENSON DISTINGUISHED PROFESSORSHIP IN ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN EDUCATION This new AI professorship for the master's in informatics and analytics will be in the Department of Information, Library, and Research Sciences.



Dean Morgan Chitiyo speaking with students

Q What does the Jerome Evenson Professorship in Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Education mean for your school?

The professorship is an investment that positions UNCG's School of Education at the forefront of an evolving field. The endowment will allow the school to lead rather than follow, strengthening research, curriculum development, and educational innovation.

Q What will the professorship do, and how will it impact graduate and undergraduate students?

The role is a catalyst for interdisciplinary research, curriculum innovation, faculty support, and student success. The professor will provide leadership in integrating AI into education while helping prepare students for a rapidly changing workforce.

Graduate students will gain direct mentorship from a leading scholar in AI and education and opportunities for hands-on research. Undergraduate students will benefit from enhanced teaching, curriculum, and learning experiences.

Q How will the AI professorship affect our recruiting and our institutional reputation?

While rankings are not the primary goal, investments like this elevate the school's profile nationally and internationally. The professorship signals to prospective students that UNCG is investing in the future and can help recruit and retain outstanding students and faculty.

Q How does this named professorship compare with others in the school?

The School of Education currently has five named professorships, making this the sixth. The focus on AI is particularly exciting because it addresses a field that is actively reshaping education.

Q What is the impact of the Harriet Shain and Jerome Evenson Endowed Scholarship?

The scholarship is already helping dozens of aspiring educators by reducing financial barriers and strengthening teacher preparation pipelines. The fund directly supports Harriet Evenson's goal of preparing more teachers. By 2030, the school expects the fund will support 92 students annually, including both undergraduate and graduate students.

Q What else is important about the scholarship?

The scholarship bolsters the School of Education's longstanding mission of preparing teachers. The Evensons' investment supports both continuity and innovation, helping the school remain responsive to future educational needs while advancing its historic mission.

Q How does this combat the teacher shortage in North Carolina?

There is definitely a teacher shortage at both the state and national levels. There are severe shortages in STEM and special education, and UNCG is focused on preparing highly qualified educators to meet these needs.

Q How will these investments affect North Carolina's schools and communities?

The impact starts at UNCG but extends far beyond campus. Teachers prepared through our programs will influence hundreds of thousands of students throughout these teachers' careers, creating a powerful, long-term effect on learners, schools, and communities.

Advancing knowledge of Jewish history and culture

The inaugural recipients of the Jerome Evenson Research Award and the Harriet Evenson Visiting Scholars Award have been announced. These awards, overseen by the College of Arts and Sciences Office of Research, are funded by the Evenson estate.





Top photo is a burial shrine in NYC, the Ohel piled with kvitlach, handwritten prayer notes left by visitors.

This shrine houses remains of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson (above).

Right, kvitlach wedged between the cracks of the Western Wall in the Old City of Jerusalem.



JEROME EVENSON RESEARCH AWARD

Rachael Hershon (English), "Bein HaMetim (Between the Dead): The Body, Reverence, and Ritual in Contemporary Jewish Burial Practices"

Professor Hershon will explore how Jewish tradition understands and treats the body at and after death, with particular attention to a central tension: burial practices that emphasize modesty and the erasure of hierarchy. This tension is seen in the context of exceptional reverence afforded to Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, one of the most influential Jewish leaders of the 20th century. Based on her research at the Ohel Chabad-Lubavitch mausoleum in Queens, New York City, interviews with Hevra Kadisha volunteers (who prepare deceased individuals for burial), and visits to Jewish enclaves in New York City, she will write a book of poetry that examines how ritual, grief, and reverence shape the understanding of the body in life and after death in Jewish tradition.

ABOUT THESE AWARDS

These two annual awards will foster new research and bring innovative scholarly perspectives to campus through faculty-led projects and visiting scholars.

Jerome Evenson Research Support Endowed Fund supports the creation of new knowledge and creative work related to Jewish history, religion, culture, health, migration, and identity by providing funding for faculty research projects.

Harriet Evenson Visiting Scholars Endowed Fund supports the recruitment of distinguished scholars from outside UNCG to visit campus for guest lectures, workshops, student engagement, faculty collaboration, and public programming.

HARRIET EVENSON VISITING SCHOLARS AWARD

Travis Hicks (Interior Architecture), "Renewing the Loewenstein Legacy"

Professor Hicks will focus on expanding knowledge about the Jewish architect Edward Loewenstein, who practiced in Greensboro from 1946 to 1970, through an extended visit with Dr. Patrick Lee Lucas. Lucas will work with undergraduate students to create a story map and an online exhibition to increase access to Loewenstein's archives, housed at UNCG Libraries.



Edward Loewenstein

Lucas will give guest lectures in classes, lead a workshop, meet with students and faculty, and present a public lecture during his two visits to campus to help further the understanding of Loewenstein's contributions not only to design but to gender and racial equality in architecture. Loewenstein's firm, for example, hired the first African American architects and design professionals in Greensboro, and Loewenstein taught at Woman's College from 1958 through the late 1960s. On campus, the Presbyterian House (300 Forest Street Building), built in 1963, and Coleman Gymnasium, built in 1952 on Walker Ave, were his firm's designs. Also, he led Woman's College students for two springs in designing and building a Greensboro house – each known as a Commencement House.

— TEXT BY AMANDA KENNISON

BURIAL PHOTOS FROM WIKIPEDIA/CREATIVE COMMONS



Presbyterian House on the campus of UNCG, designed by Loewenstein



Professor Loewenstein (far left) with students at the 1958 Commencement House



Coleman Gymnasium, designed by Loewenstein

Harriet's mantra: 'Make more teachers'

Harriet Evenson '53 met estate attorney Betsey Wildhack at an estate-planning session in 2000, and the two bonded immediately. Wildhack's aunt, Barbara French Brown '53, was at Woman's College with Evenson, but they did not know each other well. Meeting again 60 years later, Brown and Evenson became fond friends, reminiscing about their time as college students.

"She really was a loving, caring person who wanted to help people around her be better and be happier," Wildhack says. She describes Evenson as a "petite, feisty woman," who became angry when her wishes were not followed as instructed. When discussing the estate, Evenson knew exactly how she wanted her wealth distributed. "Their home was all about education and the power of education," Wildhack recalls.

> "She really was a loving, caring person who wanted to help people around her be better and be happier."
>
> — BETSEY WILDHACK, ESTATE ATTORNEY

Evenson's passion for teaching was irresistible. "She made me want to quit being a lawyer and become a teacher," Wildhack says. "Maybe I will someday."

Wildhack once asked Evenson why she became an educator. "She said, 'When you get the opportunity to see a child's mind open up, you can see it in their eyes. That's the best part of being a teacher.'"

See a video of the naming ceremony in the online magazine.

FIT TO A 'T' AT THE G

HOW MANY UNCG T-SHIRTS DO YOU HAVE STORED AWAY IN YOUR CLOSET OR IN A SPECIAL DRAWER? UNCG ARCHIVES IS LEARNING ALUMNI FROM RECENT DECADES HAVE A LOT. EACH ONE REPRESENTS A MEMORY THAT'S OUT OF SIGHT. ENJOY A SAMPLE OF SNAPSHOTS YOUR FELLOW SPARTANS HAVE SENT IN. BY MIKE HARRIS '93 MA • ARCHIVAL VISUALS COURTESY OF UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

Imagine a college campus without T-shirts. They are a standard part of every Spartan student's wardrobe these days. But take a glance through the Pine Needles yearbooks from the mid-1960s and earlier – that is, the Woman's College era – and you'll see none. Zero. What showed off your college affiliation? Your school spirit? Why, class jackets of course, each Woman's College class year having its own color! Go WC! Go Class of 1961! Or 1958! Or whatever the class may be!

If you're an alum of the past several decades, you know T-shirts tell a story. They present a patchwork of Spartan service events, of all-campus parties, of sports teams – fencing anyone? How about soccer or basketball championships?

UNCG Special Collections and University Archives is putting them on display, digitally, with the approximate year and a bit about the shirt's history.

Let's thread our way through the last decades, one shirt at a time.



1988

HARD HAT CAFE

The Chancellor Bill Moran years were known for construction throughout campus. The Caf was one building – and it earned the name "Hard Hat Cafe." Sharlene R. Forbes '91 and Sam Logan '22 MPA sent in samples. Forbes described her impression of campus during her years: "under construction."



1980s–2000s

RADIO, RADIO

18 watts is better than none, as a classic student radio station CD and poster once extolled. One T-shirt stated, "WUAG. The Music 103. Out of UNC Greensboro." Jack Bonney '02, '06 MALS, WUAG general manager from 2003 to 2011 and current manager of Durham's Carolina Soul record store, submitted that one, as well as the one you see here. It's a multicolored adaptation of the WUAG logo first introduced in 1981, says David Gwynn '09 MLS. Gwynn, who collected and posted the T-shirts this year for UNCG Archives, helped lead the station in 1983-84.

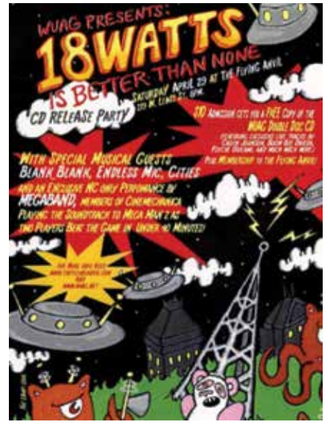




David Gwynn '09 MLS



Student staff in the WUAG studios, 1984: Tim Clever, Donna Alderman, Meral Ozerengin, Mark Gentry, and Bonnie Davis.



1980s

LET'S RAWK

The campus' best message board is The Rawk, donated by UNCG's Alpha Phi Omega service fraternity in 1973. Truth is, there was no Greek system at UNCG until the 1970s. By fall 1981, there were seven fraternities and seven sororities officially recognized. Today, more than a dozen fraternities and sororities are active on campus. These members' shirts show off their spirit at service events, at classes, and at ball games. Greek letters are a Spartan sign of school spirit.





1980s

WAIT! IS IT UNC-G OR UNCG?

The News & Record noted the hyphen's demise with an article headlined "UNCG's Hyphen Taking a Hike" on Jan. 22, 1986. Many couldn't let it go. This Spartan appears to be in love with the hyphen, too.



Jacqueline Kayler DeBrew '91, MSN '96, '08 PhD

1990s–2000s
STITCHES AND TIMES

UNCG nursing professor Jacqueline Kayler DeBrew '91, '96 MSN, '08 PhD cherishes her UNCG memories – many she shared with now-husband Clint Debrew '91 when they were students ... and they both continue to share through serving on campus and cheering on the basketball teams. Jacqueline took UNCG T-shirts that she and Clint had stored away and created a quilt. Each time they see it, it not only keeps them toasty, it reminds them of incredible times.



2008
SPORTS SUPPORTERS

Whether it's Men's or Women's Basketball, Baseball, or Softball, Club sports like Rugby, Quidditch, or Equestrian, or Intramurals – not to mention Women's Soccer or Men's Soccer – UNCG sports have their fiery fans. And their shirts show their allegiance. Remember when Basketball standout Kyle Hines '08 became the first Spartan to see their jersey retired before the season ended? What a night. And everyone in the stands was wearing a #42 Hines gold shirt! You still see fans wearing their #42 shirt to big games.



2015
GREAT WITHOUT GRIDIRON

UNCG now has a club football team, funded, coached, and led by students. But as for a Div. I team, with Saturday tailgating and marching band? Uhh no. At least we can take pride in our record. Zero losses. Contributor Sandra Bargamian Pace '65 says, "Because it was WC when I started, I found the shirt very humorous." Pace attended from 1961 to 1965 as Sandra Bargamian. We can enjoy some humor, as we watch the games on TV or our phones.



1980s–2020s
HAPPY HOMECOMINGS

Since the gone-but-not forgotten Falderal and the Fall Charlies gave way in the 1980s to the modern UNCG Homecoming, fall has been especially festive. In recent years, Chancellor Gilliam (below), has fired T-shirts into the Spartan crowd – if you're lucky you'll catch one. These shirts are in the collection of Emily Britt '15, '20 MBA, a former dance team member who submitted nearly a dozen shirts. "2016 was the first UNCG Homecoming I attended. I was invited to be on a Homecoming parade float," she recalls. How many remember that parade every year?





Left, UNCG's first Homecoming Queen, Elizabeth Ford '83, was crowned in 1982; Above right, Homecoming Parade 1987, as UNCG Men's Soccer defeated Virginia Tech with a score of 4 to 0.







Have a UNCG-related T-shirt you didn't see in this article? Send in a photo.



Dean Jones '84 and Starr Jones '87

HOLLYWOOD & HORROR

DEAN JONES '84 AND STARR JONES '87 WENT FROM BACKYARD FILMMAKING TO UNCG TO HOLLYWOOD. AT HOME, THE BROTHERS' ORIGINAL HOLLYWOOD HORROR SHOW HAS BEEN SCARING NORTH CAROLINIANS FOR ALMOST 40 YEARS. BY MERCER BUFTER '11 MA • PHOTOGRAPHY BY SEAN NORONA '13

Do you love movies? Did you and a sibling or friend ever make a movie in the backyard?

Alamance County natives Dean Jones '84 and Starr Jones '87 have made careers of it. Today, around four decades after completing their respective studies at UNCG, the Jones brothers have enjoyed long careers in which they've worked with both independent and big-budget filmmakers, earned Emmy nominations, and, closer to home, created a central Carolina tradition: The Original Hollywood Horror Show, open in Snow Camp, N.C., every September through October.

They just call it "the haunt." It features attractions like "Leatherface's Lair," "Bone Yard Cemetery," and "Dead Man's Cove."

They put on their first haunted house in 1989. "It was going to be a one-time event, but it went really well, so we did it again and again," says Starr. "Now we're here 37 years later."

Today, the haunt is more like a film set: Hollywood, N.C.

"We try to do something as realistic as we would do on the set of a movie," Dean says. "We create a totally immersive environment."

Starr adds, "Nothing we do here is left to chance. Everything from colors to the textures of things. We're big fans of Universal monsters and Hammer Productions movies from England, so a lot of our sets harken back to that."

The haunt makes an impact in the area in more ways than one. It drives economic activity for Alamance County with the influx of visitors. It's also a way for Dean and Starr to seed film projects in North Carolina and give local actors, students interested in film production, and everyday people the chance to learn something new, and maybe even find a new career.

Starr says, "We've had a lot of young kids who've gotten exposure to the film industry at the haunted house who are now working either in film and television or theater."

Dean adds, "A lot of people that work on the haunt end up working on our film crews. When we do a production, we try to hire as many local people, both in front of the camera and behind the camera, as we can."

The brothers were in elementary school when they had their first taste of special-effects makeup. One day, their parents took them to the on-location filming of "Killers Three" (1968), starring Dick Clark, in Ramseur, N.C.

The film's tagline was, "It started out as a country picnic ... but before it was over 37 men were dead." It was the Joneses' first look at movie makeup and special effects.

Starr remembers, "They were creating a bullet wound on the actor's face using the wax that you use when you install a new toilet." Their father, a Navy serviceman with a background in construction, figured out how to do the effect at home. "We were fascinated with that technique. We started trying to find things in our mom's kitchen to do makeup with."

After creating their first effects, Dean and Starr dug into a how-to book by Dick Smith, a legend who pioneered makeup effects in films like "The Godfather," "The Exorcist," and "Amadeus."

A Star Trek project was Dean's first big job after paying his dues – professionally and literally. "The day I got into the union they put me on 'Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country,'" he says. "That was with the crew from the 'Star Trek' original series."

Dean and Starr worked together in the Star Trek universe. "It was really neat to work on those shows because Dean and I both watched the original 'Star Trek' growing up," Starr says.

> **"People get worked up standing in line to get on a roller coaster. It's the same thing going through a haunted house."**
> — STARR JONES



Masks, makeup, thrills, and chills! In Snow Camp, N.C., the team of actors embodies characters from zombies to killer clowns.

BLOOD BROTHERS

"Star Trek: Deep Space Nine" brought Dean two Emmy Awards and six additional nominations for his makeup work. On that show, he worked with many characters, including René Auberjonois, who portrayed Chief of Security Odo.

For his first nomination, he flew his mom to L.A. "I didn't expect to win at all," says Dean. "That was a thrill. I let Mom take the Emmy home."

NEXT STOP, HOLLYWOOD

Dean and Starr both studied acting at UNCG. "We were always into method acting," Dean says. "Bill Wendt, who was the director of the program, had trained with Stella Adler and Bobby Lewis at the Actors Studio."

The brothers were even roommates during Dean's senior year when Starr was a freshman. "I have great memories," says Dean. "We had Taylor Theatre, and we had plays going on all the time."

Starr adds, "UNCG was a great program, and I really enjoyed being there."

In 1986, they worked on their first movie set. It wasn't Hollywood; it was Kernersville. Dean says, "There was an audition for a low-budget movie called 'The Dark Power' starring Lash LaRue. He was king of the bullwhip in the 1950s."

From the start, Dean and Starr were interested in everything, so they ended up not only acting, but also serving as all-around production help. Dean says, "We lived in the house we shot in. And our shop for makeup and effects was in the garage."

What was his attitude? "I wanted to be the art director, prop master, scene design, special effects, makeup, stunts. Whatever I could get into, I got involved in it."

> **"I loved UNCG. I thought, 'This is everything I ever wanted to do.' And that was my launching pad to Hollywood."**
> — DEAN JONES '84



(l–r) Starr doing James Earl Jones' makeup for "The Reading Room"; Starr and Dean on the set of their documentary "Skybound," directed by Dean; Starr on the set of "Day of the Dead," directed by Steve Miner; Dean and Starr on set for a concept trailer with Bill Moseley; Starr on set; Starr doing zombie makeup

Soon Dean got his big break.

David Lynch's "Blue Velvet" was filming in Wilmington, N.C. Lynch's dreamlike films often include elements of horror and thriller. In a key scene of "Blue Velvet," a severed ear sets the hero on a frightening journey.

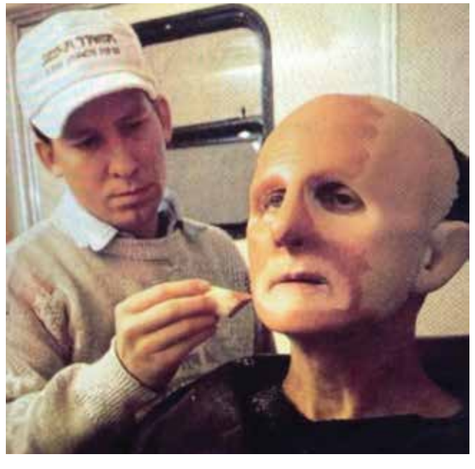
"I created the ear for 'Blue Velvet,'" Dean says. He worked closely with Lynch on that and other effects. "David loved anything that was organic. Little snakes, bugs, insects, anything that could be real and creepy."

Far past creating bullet wounds with wax, Dean worked to make his visual effects feel real. "David and I would talk about what he wanted. I had a book called 'A Medicolegal Investigation of Death.' It's about homicides and deaths and it had black and white and color pictures."

Dean also sourced a cadaver ear as a model. Lynch explained to him that the ear had to be as real as possible. "He said this ear is very important because it's going to fill the screen."



Dean and Starr each contributed to "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine,""Star Trek: The Next Generation," and "Star Trek VI: The Undiscovered Country." Starr also worked on "Star Trek: Voyager." Above, Dean on the set of "Star Trek: Insurrection" doing makeup for F. Murray Abraham as the villain Ahdar Ru'afo.



Above, Dean on the set of "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine," doing makeup for René Auberjonois, who portrayed Chief of Security Odo.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF DEAN JONES AND STARR JONES

Dean and Starr continued to rise in independent cinema, and opportunity took the Jones brothers to L.A.

LOW-BUDGET TO A-LIST

Their first stop wasn't the red carpet; it was what Starr calls "an old lumber yard at Venice Beach."

Dean and Starr were in L.A., and they began working with Roger Corman, a legend of low-budget cinema.

"We had a shop on site at this little dumpy studio. We started building creatures and doing effects. We did around two movies a month," says Dean. "Eventually, we moved from Roger's studio and opened up our own lab."

Starr says, "Working on a low budget, you learn how to make the most of what you're given and be creative about it and try to put the money that you have in front of the camera."

Corman's quick-and-dirty approach to the movie business was a training ground for many industry professionals, including James Cameron ("Titanic," "Avatar") and Janusz Kamiński, who worked with Steven Spielberg on films like "Schindler's List."

Soon, both brothers were on large-scale productions, including blockbusters like Gore Verbinski's "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest" and "Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End."

"The sets were amazing," Dean recalls. "The ship, the Black Pearl, was a working sailing ship. We were about 10 miles out at sea on the Black Pearl every day."

And the working crew that manned the sails? Dean and Starr did their makeup, too.

MAKEUP FOR PEACE OF MIND

Being a master of horror means telling frightening stories and creating images that shake viewers – and stay in their memories. The Jones brothers have done that.

In the 2000s, Dean and Starr worked on premier horror films like "Day of the Dead," "Night of the Living Dead: 3D," and Tobe Hooper's "The Toolbox Murders," which earned them a nomination for a Fangoria Chainsaw Award. Hooper, the director of "The Texas Chain Saw Massacre" and "Poltergeist," is a horror legend.

They also do something that many people wouldn't expect. They use their makeup expertise to make it easier to say goodbye to loved ones.

SPIELBERG CIRCUS

One year, as they were wrapping up the Original Hollywood Horror Show, Dean and Starr Jones got a call to work with the makeup team on the Steven Spielberg film "Lincoln." They went to Richmond, Va., worked hard, and still came home for Thanksgiving.

Dean says, "They had an enormous schedule, an enormous crew, art department, costuming, and makeup. It all had to be precisely timed and done really well with no room for error."

Starr adds, "We had hundreds and hundreds of extras that needed to be made up. They set up circus tents as makeup stations, and there were probably 50 or 60 makeup artists there."

"We're in the funeral business to some degree, because we started this company called Post Mortem Restorative Cosmetics," explains Dean.

It started with losses in their family.

After a cousin's death, Dean and Starr offered their expertise in makeup and prosthetics to the funeral director. This time, instead of creating a "haunt," they would create a sense of peace.

Since then, they've created a makeup kit and traveled to conferences and trainings for funeral directors in and out of North Carolina. "A funeral is a family's final image of a loved one, so we've made a difference in a lot of people's lives," Dean says.

LOCAL PRODUCTIONS

Throughout their film careers, Dean and Starr returned to Alamance County each fall for the haunt.

By the early 2010s, they had shifted their focus to writing and producing their own film projects. In 2014, they released "Dark Awakenings," with film icon Lance Henriksen. Recently, they've been promoting their film "Another Life," with Kevin Sorbo. It's based on the book "From 'Hear' to Forever," by North Carolina funeral director Danny Jefferson.

Dean says, "The story takes place in our hometown in the '60s, '70s, '80s, and '90s. I grew up in the '60s, so the story very much appealed to me."

They've also tried to bring a little bit of Hollywood to the Holly Hills Mall in Burlington, N.C.

Dean and Starr can often be found in the Americana Café, the restaurant owned and managed by Dean's wife. Images of Hollywood spots like the Pantages Theatre cover the walls.

The brothers are currently developing multiple projects from their home base. They want to create opportunities for local people who want to work in films.

Dean says, "We designed this place for artists, musicians, and actors. You can get discovered in the Americana Café."

See more photos and a video in the online magazine.



Hermann Trojanowski '98 MLIS, U.S. Air Force veteran

Women's Army Auxiliary Corps summer khaki uniform worn by Rachel Summers McGee during her 1942-43 military service.

Saluting women veterans

For Hermann Trojanowski '98 MLIS, supporting the Betty H. Carter Women Veterans Historical Project is a tribute to its founder and an investment in remembrance.

> **"UNCG allows me to pursue work I am passionate about, and supporting the University is a meaningful expression of my gratitude."**
>
> — HERMANN TROJANOWSKI

Housed in the Martha Blakeney Hodges Special Collections and University Archives, the project was founded in 1998 by the late University Archivist Betty H. Carter. She created it after hearing alumni discuss the impact of women veterans from Woman's College following World War II.

The project documents the experiences of women in the U.S. armed forces and the American Red Cross from World War I to the present. It features more than 750 individual collections containing more than 485 oral histories, photographs, letters, diaries, scrapbooks, uniforms, and insignia. Today, the collection is widely recognized as one of the nation's most significant repositories documenting women's military service.

Trojanowski, a faculty emeritus archivist who spent decades preserving the University's history, dedicated much of his career to collecting, recording, and sharing these veterans' stories, and still volunteers twice a week for the Women Veterans Historical Project.

As a U.S. Air Force veteran, he understands military service and believes women veterans deserve greater recognition for their contributions to the United States. He is committed to preserving their voices and ensuring that future generations understand the sacrifices, leadership, and resilience of these women.

The first woman Trojanowski interviewed was World War II veteran Virginia "Ginny" Gilbert Mattson, who served with the U.S. Navy WAVES (Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service). By the time he retired in 2013, he had completed nearly 100 interviews with female veterans, traveling across the nation to record their experiences. "Every woman I interviewed was so gracious and happy to share their stories," he says.

Trojanowski fondly remembers interviewing Daphine Doster Mastroianni (1906-2000) of Monroe, N.C., who graduated from the North Carolina College for Women (now UNCG) in 1927. She served in New Zealand, Fiji, and India with the Army Nurse Corps from 1942 to 1945. "While stationed overseas, she met Joe Mastroianni, who was with the American Red Cross, and they fell in love," he says. "He was married, and they went their separate ways; however, after his wife died, they married in 1992. Their story became part of the musical 'Star Spangled Girls' commissioned by the Women Veterans Historical Project in 2011."



Daphine Doster Mastroianni graduated from the North Carolina College for Women in 1927 and served in the Army Nurse Corps from 1942 to 1945.



Left, Caroline Morrison Garrett, who graduated from Woman's College in 1944. She then served in the Army Medical Corps from 1944-47.



World War II veterans photos: (left photo and group photo), Susie Winston Bain, Women's Air Force Service Pilots; (middle photo) U.S. Army Nurse Corps Brig. Gen. (Ret.) Clara Adams-Ender; and (far right) Millie Dunn Veasey, U.S. Women's Army Auxiliary Corps and U.S. Women's Army Corps.

Trojanowski says he has always wanted to leave something to the University that educated him and helped him discover a career he loves. In 2006, he established the Hermann J. Trojanowski Endowed Fund to honor Carter and sustain the project. Recently, he increased his planned estate gift to the fund to help the collection continue to grow.

His work showed him the power of personal testimony and the generosity of women veterans who entrusted their histories to this project. "That's what inspired me to start this fund and to keep it going," he says. "For me, the endowment is about more than preserving archival materials. It is an investment in remembrance."

SPARTAN NURSING CHAMPION

When Robbie Caddell Franks '83 arrived at UNCG in 1979, she followed her aunt, Gay Williams Martin '74, a nurse whose stories of compassionate care motivated Franks.

"My aunt was an inspiration and a trusted person in my life," Franks says. "I knew I wanted to be a nurse, and she told me there was nowhere to go but UNCG. She helped me through the application process and came with me to orientation."

Franks' career began in the Surgical Intensive Care Unit at the Durham VA Medical Center. She later moved into pharmaceutical and biotechnology clinical research to promote patient safety in the development of new medical therapies, including the first approved COVID-19 vaccine.

She credits her successful career to the help she got as a student. "I received a high school scholarship and later nursing school grants that helped me graduate," she recalls. "That support is a major reason I want to pay it forward."

Her strongest supporter was her husband, Marc. The couple met in high school and married after she graduated from UNCG. "Marc was always my biggest cheerleader," she says. "He was so proud of me that he cried on my graduation day."

> **"I want others to have the opportunities I had."**
>
> — ROBBIE CADDELL FRANKS '83

Franks turned her gratitude into a lasting impact in 2020 by establishing the Gay Williams Martin Endowed Scholarship. After her husband's unexpected death in 2023, she renamed the scholarship in his memory. In 2024, Franks increased her pledge, strengthening the Marc and Robbie Franks School of Nursing Endowed Fund, which supports undergraduate and graduate nursing students.

"College is not inexpensive," she says. "I want others to have the opportunities I had. I hope the fund allows people, whether young or older, to enter the wonderful profession I found."

Franks's impact extends beyond philanthropy. She is a member of the School of Nursing Advisory Board, where she furthers student engagement, mentoring, and retention. She also advances a new program pairing students with graduates and practicing nurses to encourage them through graduation.

Through her generosity, leadership, and advocacy, Franks is helping UNCG recruit and retain future nurses and build meaningful careers rooted in care, service, and opportunity.

Read more stories about gifts and their impact at giving.uncg.edu.

gradtidings

COMPILED BY THE OFFICE OF ADVANCEMENT COMMUNICATIONS

1960s

MARY ELLEN SNODGRASS '66 appeared on the American Library Association's 2026 Outstanding Reference Sources List for her newest book, "Business and Professional Women of Colonial America: 146 Biographies, 1585-1781" (McFarland & Co.).

1970s

DAVID L. BASS '75 MFA donated his painting "Table Array-Souk Raiba Qdima" (2022) to the permanent art collection of The American Legation in Tangier, Morocco. He traveled from Sante Fe, N.M., to present the painting, which was inspired by his years as a teacher at the Kenitra American School in Morocco. The presence of his former students Nancy Lukas-Slaoui, Majid Slaoui, and Douglas Smith made the event even more special, he says. 5

RHONDA HOLMES BLUE '76, '94 MALS received the Educator of Excellence Award from Delta Sigma Sigma Greensboro Alumnae Chapter of Sigma Gamma Rho Sorority, Inc. and was named Soror of the Year from Greensboro's Alpha Rho Chapter, Eta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc. She also recently placed gold in the basketball shoot and bronze in the football throw during the Roy B. Culler Jr. Senior Center's "Senior Games."

BONNIE BECKER '77 received the 2026 Backstage Legends and Masters Award presented by Purchase College, State University of New York's Broadway Technical Theatre History Project. Becker has worked as a Broadway stage manager for over thirty years. The award announcement reads: "Bonnie has taken a number of very large and complicated Broadway productions from the rehearsal room to the stage and demonstrated time and again that she has what it takes to make this possible."

SUZANNE EGGLESTON HENNEMAN '77 received the National Dance Education Organization's (NDEO) Lifetime Achievement in Dance Education – Service to the Profession. She has taught dance educators for 48 years as a classroom teacher and an administrator in the Central Office of Health, Physical Education, and Dance. She served on NDEO's board for 11 years, was president from 2018 to 2020, and retired in 2012. She continues to teach as a guest artist and lead the Maryland Public High School Dance Showcase. 8

DEBRA TURNER BAILEY '79, '81 MPA was named chief operations officer at WFAE 90.7 FM, where she previously served as chief people officer. Bailey will continue to manage human resources functions, assume responsibility for overseeing WFAE's events, and manage the Community Engagement team. Bailey joined the WFAE staff in 2022, after one year of service on WFAE's board of directors.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU

Please take a five-minute survey about this magazine issue. Let us know what you think, to help us in future issues. Thanks!

LEARN MORE

1980s

RICHARD HELMS '80, who previously won the Silver Falchion, Derringer, Thriller, Macavity, and Shamus Awards for his mystery fiction, was selected to appear in Mysterious Press's Best American Mystery Stories 2026, edited by Otto Penzler and Tess Gerritsen. Helms' story, "The Twenty-Fourth Canterbury," originally appeared in Alfred Hitchcock Mystery Magazine. This is his second appearance in this series. 29

BETH LEAVEL '80 MFA, '22 LITTD (Honorary) received the 2026 Distinguished Career Award from the Southeastern Theatre Conference in Chattanooga, Tenn. 12

ED SIMPSON '80 MFA joined the Board of Directors for the College of Fellows of the American Theatre. This community of distinguished artists, scholars, educators, and leaders is dedicated to advancing the vitality and integrity of the American theatre.

DAVID WELLS '80 MFA appeared on the Netflix show "Leanne" featuring comedian Leanne Morgan.

EDWIN CARLSON III '82 retired from Roofing Systems, Inc., in Loves Park, Ill., after 44 years of service. He ended the four-generation family business started in 1888. His two sons elected to pursue careers in finance. Carlson's degree from the Bryan School of Business and Economics allowed him to guide the company through many difficult financial times, including bringing the company out of insolvency twice and finishing his career with a strong balance sheet. He and his wife, Cindy, look forward to retirement.

STEVE WILLIS '83 MFA published "Anything's Possible: Diana Sands and Civil Rights on Stage and Screen" (BearManor Media) with Joel Lobenthal. It's the first full-length biography of Sands, known for her role in the Broadway and film versions of "A Raisin in the Sun." Willis is special assistant to the president and secretary of the Board of Trustees at Randolph College.

BRAD BARKLEY '84 published the novel "The Reel Life of Zara Kegg" (Regal House Publishing). He is the author of seven novels and story collections for adults and young adults, including "Money, Love, Dream Factory" and "Scrambled Eggs at Midnight." Barkley teaches creative writing and literature at Frostburg State University. 25

TY BUCKNER '84, communications and marketing administrator at Guilford College, was named chief communications and external relations officer. Since 2001, he has filled multiple senior roles at the college. Formerly, Buckner worked in athletics at UNCG.

JEFF COLBERT '84, '86 MPA received the 2026 UNCG College of Arts and Sciences Advising Award, which recognizes those who strive for excellence in advising and consistently go the extra mile for students.

JON HENSLEY '84 won the gold medal in men's doubles at the 2025 USA Pickleball National Championships in San Diego, Calif., with partner Duane Winchester. This is Hensley's fourth medal at the National Championships. Since being introduced to pickleball in 2021, Jonathan and his wife, Jodi, have traveled widely to compete in the sport. He has already secured his "Golden Ticket" for the 2026 National Championships.

DEBORAH ISLEY-ROGHELIA '84 retired from Durham Public Schools after serving 25 years as an educational interpreter for deaf or hard of hearing students. Prior to her work in public schools, she was in ministry for 15 years, serving as an associate pastor and as a hospital chaplain.

PERRY FLYNN '85, '86 MED became president-elect of the American Speech Language and Hearing Association Board of Directors. Flynn has previously served two terms on the Board of Directors as chair of the Speech-Language Pathology Advisory Council and vice president for planning. He is professor of communication sciences and disorders at UNCG.

RAYMOND VAN DYKE '85, a tech/IP lawyer in Washington, D.C., was a United Nations delegate at the U.N. in New York City. On behalf of the International Technology Law Association, Van Dyke participated in Working Group IV (electronic commerce) of the U.N. Commission on International Trade Law, crafting new laws regarding data.

URSULA ROBINSON '87 was featured on Triad Business Journal's Outstanding Women in Business list. Robinson is CEO of Pace of the Triad.

ANNA HARWELL CELENZA '89 published "On the Record: Music That Changed America" (W. W. Norton & Company). From "The Star-Spangled Banner" and "Lift Every Voice and Sing" to "Rhapsody in Blue" and the music of "Hamilton," Celenza, a professor of musicology at Johns Hopkins University's Peabody Institute, traces the story of America through its music.

Here in Fall 2026, we send our best wishes for each of you. Reach out and share your news.

Visit us at **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**.

ALL TOGETHER

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

LEARN MORE

HOMECOMING 2026

Alumni of all ages and their families had a blast at the bonfire and Spartan Street Fest.















The UNCG Alumni Leadership Board got together for a meet and greet to kick off the 2026-27 school year.



The Past Presidents of the UNCG Alumni Association/Alumni Leadership Board gathered to reconnect and hear updates from the University. (Back row, l-r): Jeff Collins '84, Dudley Bokoski '79, Tom Martin '70, Elisha Gutloff '92, Kevin Ayscue '91, Jennifer Mee Morris '86, Jeff Colbert '84, (front row, l-r): Ann Phillips McCracken '60, Beth Keever '72, Carol Matney '63, Sherita Warren Gatling '02, Jana Welch Wagenseller '76, and Candace Martin '10 (current ALB president)



(l-r) Caleb DeBrew '24, Clint DeBrew '91, Charles Webb '85, Jacqueline DeBrew '91, '96 MSN, '08 PhD



Brunch in L.A. with (clockwise from bottom left): Max Kirkham '14, Caroline Nash '11, Dean bruce mcclung, Trip Hope '94, '97 MEd, Randy Ball '70, Paul Elliott '69 MFA, Tequan Seabrooks '22, David Huskins, David Wells '80 MFA, Judy Clement '78, and Jay Bushman '97 MFA

RICHARD B. WATSON '89 starred in "The Net Will Appear" by Erin Mallon at the Bristol Riverside Theatre in Bristol, Pa. Watson was also recently featured in the world premiere of "Everything Beautiful Happens at Night" at Capital Stage in Sacramento, Calif., and in a film short, "Cain's Legacy," at the Big Apple Film Festival.

1990s

DAVID OVERTON '90, '97 MFA published four plays with Theatrical Rights Worldwide, three plays with Uproar Theatrics, and scholarly articles including "Leveraging Literature: Proposing the Ajax Complex as a New Framework for Analyzing Mass Shooters" in Essence and Critique: Journal of Literature and Drama Studies, "Exploring Ethics and Ethos in 'The Electric Boy'" in Performing Ethos: An International Journal of Ethics in Theatre & Performance, and "Pedagogy, Practice, and Performance: A Practical and Phenomenological Approach with Long Island Classics Stage Company's Classic Kids" in ArtsPraxis. 21

TIMOTHY MANGUM '92 retired after three decades with the Randolph County Planning Department, where he helped establish geographic information systems (GIS) for use in Planning Department functions and also became one of the first 500 GIS professionals in the United States to receive his Geographic Information System Professional credential in 2010. In 2013, he underwent a heart transplant with the support of his wife, Jennifer, and sons Grayson and Ethan. After both sons got married in 2025, Tim thought it was finally time to retire to spend more time at home being a full-time dog dad to Oakley.

TINNETTE SILER '92 celebrates the memory of reuniting with friends Dr. Meeshay Williams Wheeler '92 and Monique Heath Hyman '92 at the Neo-Black Society 50-year anniversary. 7

DID YOU MISS HOMECOMING 2026?

YOU CAN BRING THE HOMECOMING SPIRIT TO YOUR DOORSTEP WITH OUR FIRST-EVER HOMECOMING IN A BOX!

Each box includes **a Homecoming T-shirt, a UNCG alumni pennant, stickers, a magnet, and a mini poster** with a special message from the Alumni Engagement Team. And you will see a few additional surprises to help you celebrate the various activities of Homecoming weekend from afar!

Due to popular demand, we're extending the purchase deadline. Cost: $50 (includes postage).

PURCHASE YOURS TODAY WHILE SUPPLIES LAST
go.uncg.edu/hiab2026



MARIA ADAMS '93, president and owner of Maria Adams Designs, was featured on Triad Business Journal's Outstanding Women in Business list.

JOHN O'NEAL '93 was recognized as a 2026 North Carolina Super Lawyer. He is the owner of the O'Neal Law Office, which focuses on representing consumers in state and federal courts and arbitrations across North Carolina. Additionally, he presented at the 2026 National Association of Consumer Advocates Spring Training in Minneapolis, Minn.

STACEY GILBERT '94 joined ADVI Health, based in Washington, D.C., as director of their precision medicine practice. 11

SCOTT OWENS '94 MFA published his newest collection of poetry, "The Song is Why We Sing" (Redhawk). Owens is poet laureate of the City of Hickory, N.C. 15

JOEL WEISS '95 MM composed the music for the children's opera "Anna's Mystery History Bus," which was produced by FBN Productions in Columbia, S.C., last spring as part of its Children's Opera Festival.

NICOLE SAVINO-GERACE '96 earned a doctorate in clinical social work from the University of Kentucky. Savino-Gerace's capstone project was titled "Unseen to Unstoppable: Critically Redefining Care for Rural Women with Alcohol Use Disorders." Savino-Gerace owns and operates Serenity Counseling and Consulting located in Walton, N.Y. This group psychotherapy practice specializes in working with people with co-occurring mental health and substance use disorders.

REBECCA POTTS '98 opened a two-person exhibition at the Cheerleader Gallery in Dallas, Texas. Her ceramics were exhibited along with John DeSousa's textiles.

LISA BISHER '99 was promoted to vice president of multifamily operations at Apartment Dynamics. Throughout more than 25 years of experience in the multifamily housing industry, Bisher has been an accomplished leader. In her decade with Apartment Dynamics, she has helped oversee a portfolio of nearly 7,000 apartment homes and has led teams through lease-ups, acquisitions, value-add renovations, new construction communities, and operational growth initiatives. 33

2000s

MICHAEL HALL '00 DMA was appointed instructor of viola at Carthage College in Kenosha, Wis. Hall was in residence at Interlochen Arts Academy, working with composition students who wrote pieces that premiered on campus. His curated "Anthology of New Music: Viola, Vol. 1," which includes twenty pieces for viola or viola/piano composed since 2000, will be published by NewMusic Shelf. Additionally, Hall is the co-founder and artistic director of the Bandung Philharmonic in Indonesia. Earlier this year, he performed and taught at the 2026 Singapore Performers' Festival and founded the Indonesian Viola Festival.

WAYNE FOSTER '01 PHD received the inaugural Legacy in Leadership Award from the N.C. Speech, Hearing, and Language Association for his impact and advocacy in the field. Foster retired from working with public schools and currently works part-time with Cheshire Center of Greensboro, a pediatric speech and language clinic. 20

JEREMY LLOYD '01 MFA published "Forest Time: Footnotes to an Outdoor Education" (University of Tennessee Press). This memoir of Lloyd's time as an educator at

ALUMNI ALL ACCESS IN COMING MONTHS

NOV. 18
UNCG Division of Research and Engagement: a conversation with Dr. Sherine Obare

DEC. 2
(In-person) UNCG Connects event featuring Lindsay Hancock '03, cookie mix entrepreneur
(see p. 10)

SEE MORE AND REGISTER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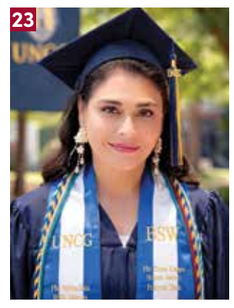
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24

1 Lexi Kier '24 MS 2 Yahira Robinson '22, '24 MEd 3 Kimberly Koontz '08 MPH 4 Laura Fehlhafer '09 5 David L. Bass '75 MFA 6 Ashley Lauren '11 7 (l-r) Meeshay Williams Wheeler '92, Chancellor Gilliam, Tinnette Siler '92, Monique Heath Hyman '92 8 Suzanne Eggleston Henneman '77 9 Warché Downing '17 MEd, '25 PhD 10 Alex Wolfe '11 11 Stacey Gilbert '94 12 Beth Leavel '80 MFA, '22 Hon. (second from left) 13 Emily Lawing-Roland '08 14 Grace Zayobi '24 MLIS 15 Scott Owens '94 MFA 16 Melissa Browning '09 17 Carla Fullwood '23 PhD 18 Rachel Stafford '09 19 Jennifer Burcham-Flores '03 20 Wayne Foster '01 PhD 21 David Overton '90, '97 MFA 22 Cynthia Wilkerson '11 PBC, '17 MS 23 Karla Canas '26 24 Dr. Airreia Pierce '08, '11 MEd

Tremont in Great Smoky Mountains National Park recounts how he has come to call the forest "a classroom, medicine, and home wrapped in one." 28

THOMAS NEVELS '02 was named network director of A+ Schools of North Carolina at the North Carolina Arts Council, bringing nearly two decades of experience in arts education, interdisciplinary learning, and community engagement. He has served as a theater arts educator and curriculum director in schools across North Carolina. He worked as an A+ coordinator in Wilmington and spent seven years as an A+ fellow delivering arts-integrated training statewide.

AMBER SEILER '02, '15 MSN was featured on Triad Business Journal's Outstanding Women in Business list. Seiler is a partner at CV Remote Solutions.

JENNIFER BURCHAM-FLORES '03 was featured on Triad Business Journal's Outstanding Women in Business list. She is the founding director of Le Petit Ballet Co., a dance education business that partners with around 60 preschools and elementary schools to offer ballet classes as an enrichment opportunity for students and to make dance accessible in the community. 19

EMILY FURR HOGAN '03 was promoted to vice president at Moseley, a nationally recognized architecture firm headquartered in Richmond, Va. Hogan, a licensed architect, is based in the Richmond office and serves as the construction administration manager. 30

PHIL FLEISCHMANN '05 MS, parks and recreation director for the City of Greensboro, completed the Public Executive Leadership Academy at the UNC School of Government and received the 2025 Meritorious Service Award from the N.C. Recreation and Park Association.

OTTO ANGULO '06 MBA joined Hudson Regional Health in New Jersey as chief marketing officer. Angulo, who also joined the advisory board for the Department of Marketing, Entrepreneurship, Hospitality, and Tourism at the Bryan School of Business and Economics, is teaching a Marketing Innovation course at UNCG this semester.

MEGGAN HOLLIS '06 marched in the 2026 Rose Bowl Parade as a member of the Band Directors Marching Band, a project of the organization Saluting America's Band Directors that includes over 300 music educators. Hollis was one of 700 applicants and was one of almost 40 piccolo players in the band.

AMERICA'S 250TH IN THE BIG APPLE

BETH CARLIN '14, '17 MA, '26 PHD is a Navy veteran, a member of the Navy Reserve, and a scholar of American literature. She participated in International Naval Review 250 this past July 3–8 in New York. It was the largest maritime and military event ever hosted by the United States and included over 100 ships. "We worked 14-22 hour days, but folks were in high spirits," said Carlin.

Carlin was engaged with the event personally as well as professionally. "The best event for me was an invitation-only reception onboard the U.S.S. Nimitz, where I did three cruises from 2005-07."

Carlin got to board the Nimitz one final time before it was decommissioned after 50 years afloat.



SEAN MCGINNIS '06 MBA joined the Bryan School this semester to teach courses in marketing. He's also founder of Chart Room Creative, a strategic brand and digital partner for brands in motion.

LESLIE WRIGHT '06, director and founder of Partiez by Leslie Event Planning Company, hit the road with her Color for Cash Tour 2026. Wright says she is dedicated to helping women, moms, and aspiring entrepreneurs gain confidence, skills, and financial tools to thrive.

BRANDON TESH '07 was promoted to chief programs officer at the Third Street Music School in New York, N.Y.

KIMBERLY KOONTZ '08 MPH was selected as the next president and CEO of HonorBridge, North Carolina's largest organ donation and tissue recovery organization. Koontz has dedicated more than 20 years to HonorBridge and brings over 25 years of experience in the organ and tissue donation field. She joined HonorBridge in 2004 as a tissue recovery coordinator and has held a variety of leadership roles, most recently serving as COO. 3

EMILY LAWING-ROLAND '08 earned a doctorate from Tulane University School of Social Work. Her dissertation, "Adapting Targeted Violence Threat Assessment Models for Integration into Comprehensive Clinical Assessments: A Conceptual Framework," is under review for publication. Lawing-Roland has worked at Youth Villages in Greensboro as a mental health clinician serving children and families in the community since 2010. 13

DR. AIRREIA PIERCE '08, '11 MED earned a doctorate in Reading, Literacy, and Assessment from Walden University. 24

ANGELA AUSTIN '09 was featured on Triad Business Journal's Outstanding Women in Business list. She is a partner at MM Interior Design Group.

MELISSA BROWNING '09 was honored in Triad Business Journal's "40 under 40" list for 2026. She is executive director of ambulatory operations and urgent care at Cone Health. During her tenure, she has led initiatives to increase urgent care visits at Cone Health by more than 200%, saving many community members a trip to the Emergency Department. 16

LAURA FEHLHAFER '09 was honored in Triad Business Journal's "40 under 40"list for 2026. She is director of communications at Impact Alamance. 4

RACHEL STAFFORD '09 was honored in Triad Business Journal's "40 under 40" list for 2026. She is an associate principal and interior designer at CJMW Architecture. 18

2010s

ASHLEY LAUREN '11 was featured on Triad Business Journal's Outstanding Women in Business list. She is a partner at MM Interior Design Group. 6

VINCENT RUSSELL '11, '17 MA received tenure and promotion to associate professor in the communication department at Western Carolina University.

CYNTHIA WILKERSON '11 PBC, '17 MS served on the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Inclusive Standard Setting Panel, which provided data-informed recommendations that directly informed the development of passing standards for 2026 social work licensing exams. Wilkerson hopes to ensure that future social work professionals are evaluated with fairness and cultural competence. Her work also reinforced the importance of gerontology's role in shaping inclusive social policies and practices, she says. 22

ALEX WOLFE '11 was honored in Triad Business Journal's "40 under 40" list for 2026. He is owner and COO of Wolfe Homes. 10

GRACE LEE '12 DMA was guest pianist at the Tutti Festival at Denison University in Granville, Ohio, last spring.

SAMANTHA LOY '12 was honored in Triad Business Journal's "40 under 40" list for 2026. Loy oversees a network of Always Best Care locations that serves Burlington, Greensboro, Chapel Hill-Durham, Winston-Salem, Concord, and Greater Charlotte. 32

KRISTEN PERRY '13 MPA was featured on Triad Business Journal's Outstanding Women in Business list. Perry is CEO of Senior Services, Inc.

JARROD RUDD '13 received the 2026 N.C. Campus Engagement Civic Engagement Professional of the Year Award. He is also on track to complete a doctorate in educational studies from UNCG this winter.

ASHLEI CHESTNUT '15 reprised her role as Dr. Naomi Howard in the eleventh season of NBC's medical drama Chicago Med.

TORREY ORLOPP '15, '19 PBC, '20 MFA was honored in Triad Business Journal's "40 under 40" list for 2026. Orlopp brings expertise and leadership to her work as a senior interior designer with the firm CPL. 26

GRANT SMITH '15 earned a master's of business administration from Yonsei University in South Korea, a top 50 global university. Smith graduated with a 3.9 GPA, he reports.

LINDSAY DRAPER '16 MBA, '16 MSN, '19 DNP received the 2025-26 Anna Maria Gove Alumni Teaching Excellence Award. Draper embraces innovative teaching practices, supports fellow faculty as a mentor, and contributes to her field as a textbook author and a lead faculty member of the UNC System's Nursing Open Educational Resources initiative.

TAYLOR GHOST '16 was featured on Triad Business Journal's Outstanding Women in Business list. Ghost is senior manager of design trade sales and marketing at Sunbrella, whose textiles and other products offer durable, high-quality solutions for indoor, outdoor, and marine applications.

TAYLOR POTTS '16 was honored in Triad Business Journal's "40 under 40" list for 2026. Potts is a regulatory compliance and risk specialist at Truliant Federal Credit Union. 31

ELLEN TRASTELIS '16 was honored in Triad Business Journal's "40 under 40" list for 2026. Trastelis is senior director of human resources at Pace Communications. 27

STONEY B. WOODS '16 played a lead role as Rozanda "Chilli" Thomas in "CrazySexyCool: The TLC Musical," which brought the story of 1990s R&B group TLC to the stage with high-octane choreography and multi-platinum Billboard hits like "Waterfalls," "Creep," "Unpretty," and "No Scrubs."

WARCHÉ DOWNING '17 MED, '25 PHD was honored in Triad Business Journal's "40 under 40" list for 2026. Downing is dean of student success and engagement at Greensboro College. 9

MICHAELA KELLY '17 received a Grammy certificate for singing with the Los Angeles Master Chorale under the direction of Maestro Gustavo Dudamel on Gabriela Ortiz's "Yanga," which won a 2025 Grammy award for Best Choral Performance.

WILLIAM LAKE JR. '18 DMA collaborated with Christopher Thompson '18 MM in the premiere of "Noctuary" by Will Healy with the George Mason University Wind Symphony. Lake is director of bands at George Mason University, and Thompson serves as lecturer of music at Kingsborough Community College in Brooklyn. Lake notes that their collaboration "reflects the enduring artistic excellence and professional impact of UNCG alumni."

NIA SADLER '19, a New York-based dance artist, performed an excerpt of a piece called "Dirty Laundry" with Katherine Paola De La Cruz and Company at Irondale Theatre as part of Keen Company's Mixtape Series curated by Monica Bill Barnes and Robbie Saenz de Viteri.

2020s

EMILI LANCASTER '20 reports that over the past six years, she has led marketing initiatives for nationally distributed, category-leading and No. 1 best-selling CPG brands, driving more than 100 million impressions through innovative campaigns, social media strategy, influencer partnerships, and brand storytelling. A first-generation college graduate, Lancaster has built a career defined by values of creative vision, strategic execution, and impactful storytelling, she says.

JORDAN SPEAS '21 played Buddy Bolden/Ensemble in "Jelly's Last Jam" at Bristol Riverside Theatre in Bristol, Pa.

JAMES STRYSKA '21 headlined his fifty-fourth concert at 54 Below in New York, N.Y. The performance featured Broadway actors Cole Thompson ("Into the Woods"), Nick T. Daly ("MJ the Musical"), and Pablo David Laucerica ("The Queen of Versailles").

PATRICK BALL '22 made his Broadway debut in a revival of Gina Gionfriddo's dark comedy "Becky Shaw." The play, which started out at Second Stage Theatre, ran at the Helen Hayes Theatre last spring.

CLAIRE GRIFFIN '22 was the featured soprano in a performance of Gustav Mahler's "Symphony No. 4" at the Washington National Cathedral with UNC School of the Arts.

YAHIRA ROBINSON '22, '24 MED received the UNCG Division of Student Affairs 2026 "Outstanding Mentor of the Year Award." Robinson says this recognition is about both mentorship and the strength it takes to keep showing up and supporting others. 2

DARIUS ANTHONY '23, who teaches at Millbrook Magnet High School in Raleigh, was recognized as a 2026 Outstanding Dance Educator by the North Carolina Dance Educators Organization.

CARLA FULLWOOD '23 PHD was selected as one of Triad Business Journal's "Leaders in Diversity." Fullwood is director of inclusive excellence education and development at Elon University. These awards celebrate companies and individuals who have worked to establish and advance diversity and inclusion efforts in their workplaces and communities. 17

FRANK JOLLEY JR. '23 published the poetry collection "Neon Haiku" (Bowker Publishers).

MARY-HELEN KOLOUSEK '23 was honored in Triad Business Journal's "40 under 40" list for 2026. Kolousek is student engagement manager at Action Greensboro.

JAMES DANIELS '24 MFA was named the City of Greensboro's second poet laureate. His appointment, affirmed by Greensboro City Council, runs through December 2028. Daniels is assistant professor and coordinator of creative writing in the English Department at North Carolina A&T State University.

LEXI KIER '24 MS received this year's student award from the Association for Applied Sport Psychology Inclusion, Diversity, and Excellence in Advocacy and Social Justice. Kier is currently a public health education doctoral student at UNCG. 1

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25 Brad Barkley '84
26 Torrey Orlopp '15, '19 PBC, '20 MFA 27 Ellen Trastelis '16 28 Jeremy Lloyd '01 MFA 29 Richard Helms '80 30 Emily Furr Hogan '03 31 Taylor Potts '16 32 Samantha Loy '12 33 Lisa Bisher '99

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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**. 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.

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UNC GREENSBORO
Find your way here

LOGAN SHERRILL '24 completed a master's in Persian and Iranian Studies from the University of Arizona. This fall, Sherrill began a doctoral program at the University of Toronto in its Department of Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations. He received the Connaught International Scholarship for Doctoral Students, one of the most prestigious graduate admission awards at the University of Toronto.

GRACE ZAYOBI '24 MLIS was hired as special collections and university archive librarian at UNC Pembroke. While at UNCG, Zayobi was a graduate assistant in University Archives.

ZAINAB ADAMOU-MOHAMED '25 had a photograph, "Swan Shadow," published in F-Stop Magazine as part of issue #135 (Object Image). F-Stop Magazine is an online photography magazine featuring contemporary fine art and documentary photography from established and emerging photographers from around the world.

KARLA CANAS '26 celebrates her graduation, a significant milestone for her as a first-generation immigrant student, mother of four, and advocate for social justice. At UNCG, Canas pursued academic excellence while balancing family, graduating with honors, and actively engaging in leadership, service, and advocacy. Her work focused on healthcare disparities, immigrant rights, restorative justice, and advancing equitable systems for underserved populations. She is proud to represent the impact of nontraditional students in higher education.

IN MEMORIAM

ALLIE TEAGUE FLETCHER '42
ALICE ALEXANDER FURR '43
MARTHA KIRKLAND WALSTON '43
SARA GRAVES SHORE '45
HILDA F. FOLGER '48
ALMA BULLARD THOMPSON '48
RITA HUNTER WADE '48
DR. BARBARA MOORE JORDAN '49
JACQUELYN WARD YOST '49
MARTHA JORDAN JONES '50
NAOMI MARRUS MARKS '50
EDITH HENDRIX HORNE '51
JEANNINE STANLEY JONES '51
CATHERINE OLIVER STEGER '51
DORIS HANCOCK ALLEN '52
BETTIE DIXON POWELL '52
BARBARA BECKNER GOODMAN '53
PATRICIA OWEN HEDRICK '53
CLARE FORNEY HIRATA '53
DR. HILDA BULLARD KENNEDY '53
LOIS NELSON SAUNDERS '53
EVELYN KIRBY YOUNG '53
NANCY DAIL CLARIDGE '54
EUNICE SILLIMAN HEILIG '54
ALICE CLARK JONES '54
PEGGY EDMONDSON MAMO '54
JANET PRICE MCFADDEN '54
DR. BARBARA MITCHELL PARRAMORE '54
GEORGIA NICOLAS WEST '54
JO BEASLEY BERNHARDT '55
JANE HORN CLINE '55
ANNIE ALLISON FOSTER '55
CAROLYN SPRINKLE SISK '55
MELISSA JONES VAN NOPPEN '55
DIANA BLEVINS CULBRETH '56
BETSY CASTELLOE ORMAND '56
SARA TRENT ANGEL '57
JANE WELLS DUFF '57
MARY FRANCES MCCRACKEN GRAY '57
ELIZABETH ADAMS KEHL '57
SHIRLEY JONES MALLARD '57
DIANE FARY '58
FRONA CONN GREENSPUN '58
JO ANN WALLER JESSUP '58
PHYLLIS KISTLER LEWIS '58, '80 MS
MARTHA RAINEY ROKAAR '58
IRENE DODSON SCHECTER '58
ILA GREY MCILWEAN WHITE '58
SUE THORPE ALLRED '59
SARAH WESTMORELAND BURGESS '59
BARBARA BRIDGERS GAREY '59
BARBARA DAVIS FODOR '59
ANNETTE CAGLE MAYFIELD '59
LINDA INMAN MCLESTER '59
BRENDA BEAL REYNOLDS '59
JANE BAUCOM STEPHENSON '59
ALICE MABE BARHAM '60
CAROLYN ROSS BRIGGS '60, '65 MS
MARIA LAMPRINAKOS COLLIAS '60
PATRICIA FISHER '60
ANN DUNCAN GURLEY '60
MARGARET HAMBRIGHT HUNT '60
BENNIE FORT WEAVIL '60
"DALE" GADD ABERNETHY '61
ELIZABETH JOHNSON AMOS '61
JUSTINE BARNES CORBETT '61
NORMA S. REID '61
HARRIET SCHNELL SLOAN '61
MARY MURPHY BERKELHAMMER '62
ANN FORD MADRE '62
KATHERINE KIMREY CLAYTON '63
ANN PENNINGTON DILLON '63
JUDITH WIGGINS PLOTT '63
GLENNETTE FRYE RANSON '64
DR. PAMELA PFAFF COCKS '65
ANGELA DAVIS-GARDNER '65 MFA
ANN DENNING HERRING '65
LINDA HOYLE MCSWAIN '65
RITA "DIANE" SINGLETON '65
BRENDA BARROW SULLIVAN '65, '68 MA
EMILY CHIEMIEGO ANDERSON '66
PAT BAKUTES-MITCHELL '66
EMMA HAIRSTON BELLE '66
NADINE WINTON FOX '66
MARGARET THRASHER PECKHAM '66
WALTER M. PULLIAM JR. '66
MELINDA LEE TREVORROW '66
JENNIE DODSON TUCKER '66, '80 MED
JOAN I. BREDE '67 MFA
DR. ATHELENE PAYNE CARTER '67 MED
WANDA KAY ELLIS '67
MARTHA GAINEY GRUNDMANN '67
ANN CAROL MERRITT '67
BRENDA TODD REAVIS '67
MARY EGBERT REED '67
ELAINE SELLS STILLER '67 MED, '79 EDD
MARGARET ALTMAN MCCLEES '68
MARY HOOPER GOLD '68, '81 MLIS
PATRICIA MERRIFIELD '68
DAWN DONAHUE MICHAUD '68
WILMA BARKER RUSH '68 MED
MARY FRANCIS SAYRE '68 MS
SUSAN COURVILLE BALDWIN '69
AVIS GOODSON RIDENHOUR '69, '72 MM
SANDRA MARTIN TAYLOR '69
TONI WITHERS ALEXANDER '70
DONALD LEE PROVO '70 MED
BRENDA BROWN CLARK '71
FRANCES TAYLOR JACKSON '71, '80 MED
DIANE ORR LUPARELLO '71
GERALDINE THOMPSON ROBINSON '71
CHERYL DIXON BYERLY '72
CHARLES W. CLONINGER JR. '72 MS
MAUREEN L. CONNOLLY '72 MS
CAROL DALTON DEATON '72
PATRICIA HOLLEMAN HARDISTER '72
SUSAN KING MARKUSON '72
JOE K. PICKETT '72 MS
DR. J.R. WOODWARD '72 MED
CHARLES R. BAILEY JR. '73
ROBERT N. FINE JR. '73
LINDA LEARY FURGURSON '73
KATHLEEN CAMPBELL LOLLI '73, '77 MED
CANDACE SIBBICK ROBERTSON '73
CAROL BOYKIN AMERSON '74
BEVERLY BYRD BORDERS '74
CAROL FISHER CARTER '74, '78 MED
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KIMBERLY D. HUNTER '16
TRINITY L. DEMPSEY '26

CORRECTIONS, SPRING 2026 ISSUE

- **On p. 33, Dr. Sue Stinson, who was on faculty 30 years, earned her EdD at UNCG in 1984.**
- **On p. 44, we misgendered Lara Amshay '12 in her Grad Tidings note. Amshay uses "she/her" pronouns.**

MOUNTAIN QUEEN



JULIA TAYLOR MORTON '45 died in July at the age of 100. In 1942, she enrolled at Woman's College, where she graduated in just three years and earned a place in the Phi Beta Kappa honor society.

She volunteered as a reading teacher and tutor in the North Carolina mountains and was known for her volunteer work across the state. Along with her husband, Hugh McRae Morton, she was a steadfast steward of the beautiful Grandfather Mountain near Blowing Rock, N.C. In the early 1970s, she was elected to the UNC System Board of Governors, where she served 16 years, including three years as vice chair. More recently, she helped create the Grandfather Mountain Stewardship Foundation.

PHOTO OF JULIA TAYLOR MORTON COURTESY OF THE NORTH CAROLINA COLLECTION AT UNC CHAPEL HILL LIBRARIES.

FORMER FACULTY/STAFF

DR. STUART "STU" ALLEN died on February 8, 2026. He first joined the Bryan School of Business and Economics in 1976 and gave 41 years of service before retirement. He served as head of the economics department from 1993 to 2013. Over the course of his leadership, he secured two endowed professorships in economics and oversaw the creation of a PhD program. Allen published more than 30 articles in top-ranked journals and made an impact through teaching and service, winning the University Alumni Teaching Excellence Award, the Bryan School Outstanding Faculty Award, and the MBA Association's Faculty Excellence Award.

SUE MANCHESTER '92 died on May 21, 2026. Her career at UNCG spanned over 40 years. In 1982, she began working with the University Publications Office as an editorial assistant. In 1993, she joined the Division of University Advancement as a prospect researcher. At the time of her retirement in 2010, she was assistant director of prospect management and research. A year later, she returned as a part-time prospect research analyst, a position she was still active in at the time of her death.

MARK SCHUMACHER died on July 1, 2026. A profile in an archived issue called him a "Hawaii native, French scholar, the best Frisbee thrower on Kaplan Commons, the loudest supporter at any UNCG Athletics game." Schumacher joined University Libraries in 1979, and for more than four decades, he helped thousands of professors and students locate the materials they needed. From the era of the card catalog and floppy disk through the demise of the old card catalogs, to peak Internet, he guided Jackson Library visitors toward the information they sought.

DR. VINCENT C. HENRICH died on July 8, 2026. At UNCG, Henrich built a distinguished research program in developmental genetics and helped expand biotechnology education at UNCG. His laboratory attracted continuous external support from federal agencies, the State of North Carolina, and private foundations, and his publications became widely cited in the fields of developmental biology and molecular genetics. Henrich recognized the growing importance of biotechnology and worked to integrate it into the curriculum. He also helped develop UNCG's Master's in Genetic Counseling program, which is a nationally recognized program today.

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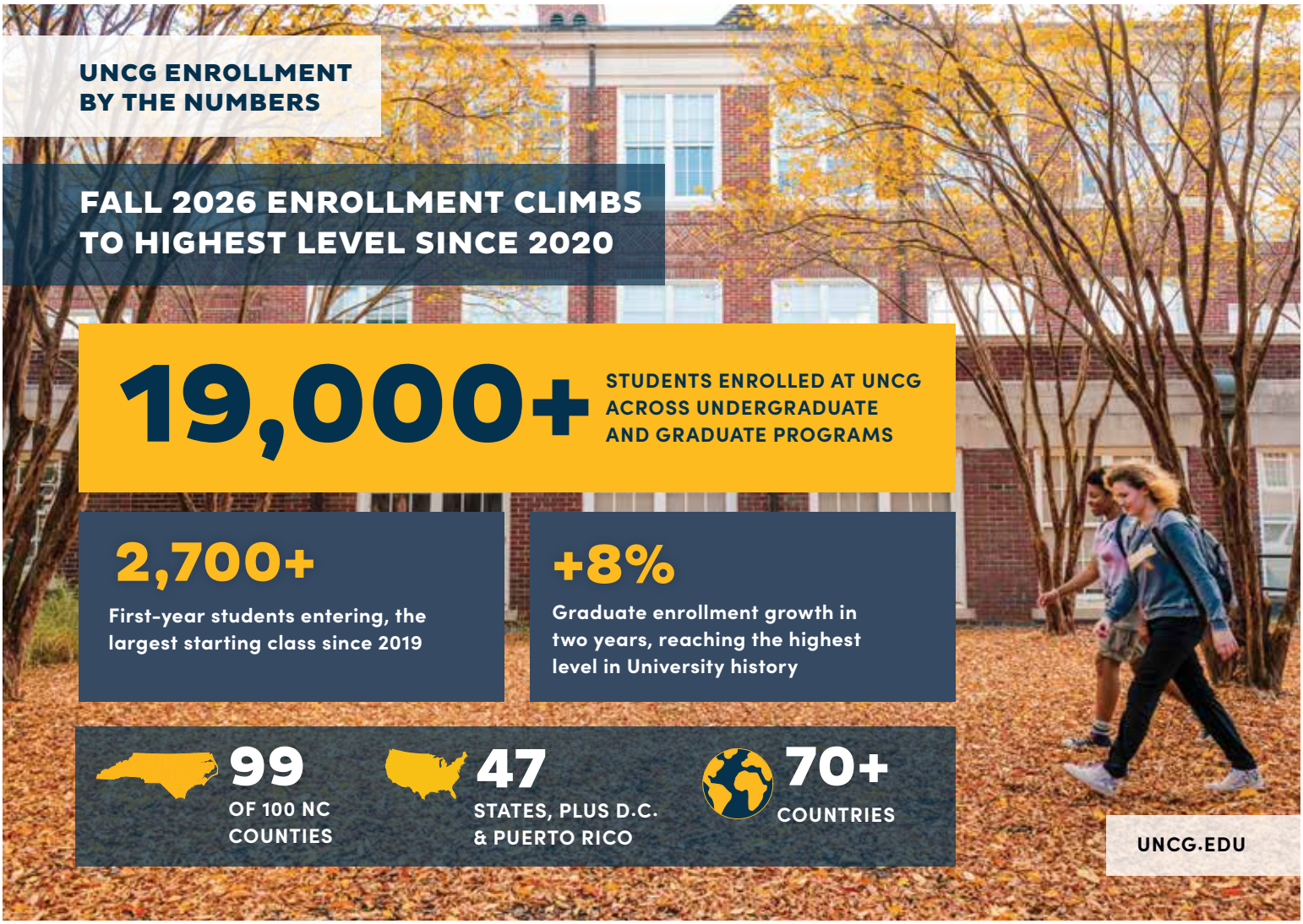

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