

THE MAGAZINE OF

ELON

SPRING 2021



LESSONS
LEARNED
DURING UNPRECEDENTED TIMES



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I AM ELON

BY KIM WALKER

As an Honors Fellow double majoring in computer science and engineering, **Haydn Stucker '23** wants to put a rocket into space. Or to be an astronaut on that rocket. Although that sounds like a dream, he may actually make it happen thanks to his tenacious work ethic.

After applying for close to 500 internships, Haydn's persistence was rewarded with a semester-long position in the spring as a manufacturing engineering intern at Precor in Whitsett, North Carolina. He impressed his supervisors and before the semester was over, he landed a three-month summer internship at the company's office in Seattle.

"I'm learning things that you don't learn in classrooms and making connections with really cool people who want me to succeed," he says. "I'm glad I'm doing it now rather than in my first job."

A self-described "math addict" since junior high, he worked as a math tutor through high school. At Elon he loves investigating how math can be used to solve real-world

problems. Haydn says that's basically what engineering and computer science really are: math concepts repurposed to help people and to build new things.

Haydn's interests aren't only tied to mathematics, and he gets excited when he talks about trying new things. In fact, he cites his first-year honors seminar course, Politics of Erasing History taught by Professor Laura Roselle, as his favorite course so far. Beyond offering insightful lessons about how history can be skewed by politics, the class broadened his thinking about teaching methodology.

"On day one, Dr. Roselle says, 'You guys are picking what you want to learn within this theme,'" he says. "In STEM, it's expected that a subject like thermodynamics is going to be about certain things in certain order. It was awesome to have a class that wasn't structured like that. I experienced learning in a totally new way, and my thinking went five feet wider on both sides."

Haydn is Elon.

Visit elon.edu/magazine to see more stories that are part of our "I Am Elon" series.





PREPARING FOR

“NORMAL PLUS”



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Two days before the Class of 2021 graduated, the university hosted an evening celebration in Rhodes Stadium.

The warm spring temperatures and beautiful North Carolina sunset offered the more than 1,000 students who attended an opportunity to take off their masks and enjoy an evening of games, food, music and fireworks. Smiles were everywhere and offered a sense of comfort and familiarity. The outdoor event was inspired by COVID in that it provided a healthy way to be mask free and together. The gathering was the second new event associated with graduation; the first was a “senior College Coffee” that allowed faculty, staff and students to offer congratulations before parents arrived and the festivities began.

We all agreed that we wanted to keep these new commencement events as “traditions” in future years. They are part of a growing list of lessons learned and new operational undertakings we want to carry forward out of the pandemic. I’ve recently called this new era at Elon “Normal Plus” operations, meaning that we will still hold firm to our residential model of higher education because we know and more fully understand the strength of being face to face for learning. But we want to “plus” it up with the important and valuable lessons we’ve learned in the past year. Lessons like the power of technology to bring alumni, employers and friends of the university into our classrooms to offer insights into professional and personal experiences. Or the importance of being together in smaller



{ President Connie Ledoux Book talks with students during the senior celebration. }

groups that allowed us to get to know one another more fully and created a less hectic environment.

Our future “Normal Plus” operations will also embrace what we witnessed about the Elon community. We looked out for each other. We masked, we tested and tested again, we vaccinated, cleaned our shared surfaces, and worked together to adopt practices and behaviors that kept our community healthy. We trusted each other and we celebrated together when the daily campus dashboard showed zero COVID cases and zero under quarantine on our final day of the 2020–21 academic year.

The new knowledge about ourselves will also be a part of “Normal Plus” operations at Elon. I learned how much I enjoy and need the company of others, even when those conversations are about the small stuff. Maybe especially when those conversations



{ Members of the Class of 2021 enjoy an evening of games, food, music & fireworks as part of a new senior tradition. }

We all agreed that we wanted to keep these new commencement events as “traditions” in future years. They are part of a growing list of lessons learned and new operational undertakings we want to carry forward out of the pandemic.

are about the small stuff. The everyday small talk of books, movies, trips to grocery stores and what we planted in the garden. Conversations about how my new puppy is giving me the run around and almost has me trained! The comfort of shared frustrations that, when together, you can laugh about.

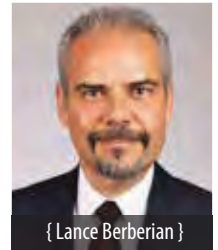
Standing on the field in Rhodes Stadium looking at the smiles of seniors and the joy of simply having fun with each other, we all felt their hope that soon we would be on the other side of the pandemic. Their smiles, the promise of a return to a post-pandemic life of normal, plus the power of what we now know to be true about ourselves, the Elon community and our world. Elon looks forward to “Normal Plus” in the year ahead. ♣

Connie Ledoux Book
PRESIDENT

Five new members join BOARD OF TRUSTEES

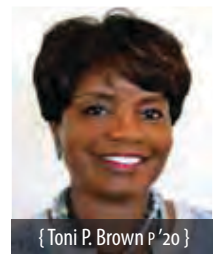
The Elon University Board of Trustees has elected four new members to serve four-year terms. Lance Berberian, Toni P. Brown P’20, Larry Clark P’19 and Debra Del Vecchio P’22 P’24 began their service as trustees on Feb. 5. The board also selected Chandler Vaughn ’21 to serve a two-year term as a youth trustee.

Lance Berberian is executive vice president and chief information and technology officer for LabCorp, one of the world’s largest clinical laboratories. He previously held roles at IDEXX Laboratories, Kellstrom Aerospace Defense, Interim Healthcare and Quest Diagnostics/Corning Clinical Laboratories. Berberian, who lives in Burlington, North Carolina, has been a member of Elon’s Engineering Advisory Board since September 2019.



{ Lance Berberian }

Toni P. Brown P’20 of Mount Laurel, New Jersey, is chief administrative officer and disadvantaged business enterprise liaison officer at the Delaware River Port Authority. An economist and lawyer, she created the authority’s first nondiscrimination programs for disadvantaged, minority and women-owned businesses. Brown and her husband, Michael, previously served as co-presidents of the Elon Parents Council. Their daughter, Rachel, graduated in 2020 with a degree in strategic communications and media analytics.



{ Toni P. Brown P’20 }

Larry Clark P’19 is the former chief operating officer and chief financial officer of Legendary Entertainment, a film production company based in Burbank, California. Clark and his wife, Anne, live in Palos Verdes Estates, and are the parents of William and Elizabeth, who graduated from Elon in 2019 with a degree in psychology. Larry and Anne Clark are members of the President’s Advisory Council and formerly served on the Parents Council.



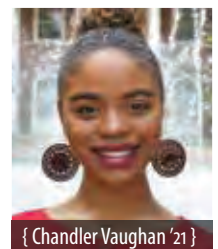
{ Larry Clark P’19 }

Debra Del Vecchio P’22 P’24 of Oyster Bay, New York, served as principal at Brooks Brothers and manages the Del Vecchio Family Foundation with her husband, Claudio. She is a board member for the East Side House Settlement, a New York City-based social services organization. The Del Vecchios are parents to Cristian ’22, who is majoring in entrepreneurship, and Angelica ’24, who is majoring in strategic communications. The couple are members of the President’s Advisory Council.



{ Debra Del Vecchio P’22 P’24 }

A Leadership Fellow, **Chandler Vaughn ’21** majored in policy studies with a minor in leadership studies at Elon. She held a number of leadership roles on campus, including president of the National Pan-Hellenic Council and mentor with the SMART Program. In 2019, she was selected to study at the University of Bristol in England through the Fulbright Summer Institute. She will spend the next year working with the City of Burlington Office of Economic Development as one of six Elon Year of Service Graduate Fellows. ♣



{ Chandler Vaughn ’21 }

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Celebrating

FACULTY & STAFF RETIREES

Elon bid farewell to 26 remarkable faculty and staff members who retired during the 2020-21 academic year. **With a combined 597 years of service to the institution**, these retirees were celebrated in May during the annual Faculty/Staff Awards Presentation and Staff Appreciation Day.

Started **1992**
Retired **2021**



KEVIN BOYLE
Professor of English

Started **1984**
Retired **2021**



KATHY GALLUCCI
Associate Professor of Biology

Started **1990**
Retired **2021**



VICTORIA FISCHER FAW Professor of Music

Started **1998**
Retired **2021**



TERRY BUCKLEY
Assistant to the Dean of the Carol Grotnes
Belk Library

Started **1985**
Retired **2020**



DON GRADY
Associate Dean of the School of Communications &
Associate Professor of Cinema and Television Arts

Started **2011**
Retired **2021**



JAN FULLER
University Chaplain and Dean of Multifaith
Engagement & Lecturer

Started **2001**
Retired **2021**



DAVID COPELAND
A.J. Fletcher Professor, Professor of Journalism
& Distinguished University Professor

Started **1999**
Retired **2020**



MARTIN LATTA
Mail Clerk

Started **2008**
Retired **2020**



ROBERT DAY
Floor Maintenance Worker

Started **1995**
Retired **2020**



RICHARD LEE
Lecturer in English

Started **2004**
Retired **2020**



GREG MARSHALL
Manager of First Shift Environmental Services

Started **1991**
Retired **2020**



GEORGE PADGETT
Associate Professor of Journalism

Started **1994**
Retired **2021**



BARBARA WALSH
Senior Project Manager for Provost and Academic Affairs

Started **1997**
Retired **2020**



GENE MEDLER
Adjunct Instructor in Dance

Started **1991**
Retired **2021**



SUSAN PATTON
Deputy Registrar & Assistant Professor

Started **2003**
Retired **2021**



BETH WARNER
Associate Professor of Human Service Studies

Started **2009**
Retired **2021**



WOODY PELTON
Dean of Global Education

Started **1989**
Retired **2021**



JON METZGER
Professor of Music & Artist-in-Residence

Started **1998**
Retired **2020**



GLORIA WILDER
Assistant in Human Resources

Started **2003**
Retired **2021**



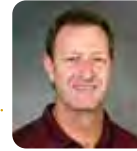
VIVIAN RATLIFF
Program Assistant for Corporate and Employer Relations

Started **2010**
Retired **2020**



CLAUDIE MITCHELL
Technology Construction Manager

Started **2004**
Retired **2021**



DAVID WORDEN
Director of Environmental Services

Started **1990**
Retired **2021**



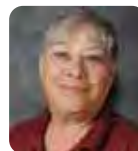
RICHARD RUSSELL
Automotive Service Writer and Parts Technician

Started **2006**
Retired **2021**



MARY MORRISON
Assistant Dean of Campus Life & Director of the Kernodle Center for Civic Life

Started **1985**
Retired **2020**



SUE WALKER
Custodian

Started **2000**
Retired **2020**



JAMANE YEAGER
Electronic Access Librarian & Assistant Librarian

CORNER

FACSTAFF



Four faculty and staff members were recognized for their contributions to the institution during a May 12 celebration. **Mary Morrison**, assistant dean of campus life and director of the Kernodle Center for Civic Life, was honored with the Periclean Award for Civic Engagement and Social Responsibility. The Steven and Patricia House Excellence in Mentoring Award went to **Kate Upton**, associate professor of finance and director of the William Garrard Reed Finance Center. **Jessie Moore**, director of the Center for Engaged Learning and professor of English, received the Distinguished Scholar Award, while Professor of Physical Therapy Education **Janet Cope** received the Daniels-Danieley Award for Excellence in Teaching.



A May 28 staff appreciation celebration recognized eight Elon staff members. Pictured above in the front row are **Marilyn Slade**, program assistant in the Center for Race, Ethnicity and Diversity Education, who received the Blanche Garrison Memorial Award; Solutions Architect **Joseph Rich**, who received the Phoenix Innovation Award; Business Intelligence Developer **Mary Heggie**, who received the Phoenix Rising Award; and Custodian **Barbara Turner**, who was named Physical Plant Staff Member of the Year. Pictured in the back row are Director of Building Trades **Tim Dengler**, who received the Phoenix Community Engagement Award, and Event Support Specialist **Dallas Smith**, who was named Professional/Hourly Staff Member of the Year. **Gabie Smith**, dean of Elon College, the College of Arts and Sciences, and **Kyle Wills**, senior associate athletics director for business and operations, were named Administrative Staff Members of the Year (in absentia).



Associate Professor of Anthropology Rissa Trachman received a \$290,000 grant from the **National Science Foundation** to support her and her colleagues' pursuit of transformational discoveries about ancient marketplaces in Belize. The grant funding will advance Trachman's archaeological excavation of the

Dos Hombres site, where Trachman is searching for the existence of a market. If located, it would be one of the first excavations of a market site from this era in Mesoamerica.



Mina Garcia, associate professor of Spanish, co-edited "**Social Justice in Spanish Golden Age Theatre**," a collection of original essays and interviews. Along with co-editing the volume, Garcia also contributed an essay titled "El Trato de Argel and the Immigrant Crisis."

Hal Vincent, lecturer in strategic communications and faculty director of Live Oak Communications, has co-authored a book with Pam Mickelson and Bruce Bendinger. "Brand Builder Workbook: Tools to Building Winning Campaigns" provides the guidance, skills and understanding to build businesses and brands.



Cherrel Miller Dyce, associate professor of education and executive director of diversity, equity and inclusion in the School of Education, is the first author of a new book in the Urban Education Studies series titled "Black Males Matter: A Blueprint for Creating School and Classroom Environments to Support Their Academic and Social Development." The purpose of the book is to help champion a paradigmatic shift in educating Black males.



LIFELONG CONNECTIONS

Associate Professor of Physician Assistant Studies Cindy Bennett brings dynamism and clinical relevance to all her courses. Her hands-on approach to teaching has inspired countless health care professionals throughout the years. An active scholar, she often mentors students on their research interests.

Cindy Bennett

BY MACKENZIE PRECHT G'17

In my health care journey, Dr. Cindy Bennett was one of the first people to treat me as a colleague instead of a student. Before joining Elon's Physician Assistant Studies program, I graduated from a large state university where professors were far removed from their students. I was used to large lecture halls and never imagined having a congenial relationship with my teachers. My time at Elon changed that notion. From day one, Dr. Bennett memorized our photos and referred to each of us by name. She desired to know us as individuals, our families and our career ambitions. She helped us transition into the rigors of the program while encouraging us to succeed and learn beyond what we felt possible.

It was due to that connection that when faced with a moral dilemma my first year in the program, I sought out Dr. Bennett. Part of the anatomy course she taught used human cadavers as non-living teachers, helping build a crucial anatomical cornerstone to our medical studies. In the lab, she encouraged us to approach the cadavers as our first patients. Concerned with the ethical practices of sourcing cadavers, I approached Dr. Bennett to discuss how they came to be a part of our lab. Rather than dismissing my concerns, she invited me to partner alongside her and others in the School of Health Sciences in the work they were already doing to change those practices.

Dr. Bennett oversaw my academic research on willed whole-body donation and connected me with other faculty investigating the same practices. These collaborations led to co-authoring three publications and presenting on the topic at multiple conferences. Shortly after my graduation in 2017, Elon officially announced its Anatomical Gift Program, which provides an ethical and self-sufficient future for anatomy education. It further connects Elon to the surrounding community, allowing residents to provide an incredible gift for the enrichment of knowledge for future health care practitioners. All cadavers in the anatomy lab can be referred to as donors because they have fully willed consent to participate.

Dr. Bennett taught me how to advocate for my patients, even my first non-living one, and that lesson is something I carry into practice every day. She encouraged me to stand up for the ethics and morals I believe to be a foundation of practicing medicine, and I try to live by that example with every patient visit. Her own passion for medicine and care for individuals, from her students to anatomical donors, helped mold me into the provider I am today. ✨



Mackenzie Precht G'17 is a physician assistant with Piedmont HealthCare in Statesville, North Carolina.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



{ Dory Boudett '21 }



{ Maggie Cornejo '21 }



{ Andrea Peters '21 }



{ Anneliese Daggett '20 }



{ Taylor Garner '20 }



{ Kathryn Gerry '20 }



{ Sara Gostomski '20 }



{ Kristen O'Neill '19 }

Eight Elon alumni have been selected for the 2021-22 Fulbright U.S. Student Program, the largest exchange program in the country that offers opportunities for recent graduates in more than 140 countries. The following alumni will spend a year teaching English in a foreign country or conducting research abroad:

- **Dory Boudett '21** (*elementary education major*), **Maggie Cornejo '21** (*strategic communications and Spanish major*) and **Andrea Peters '21** (*international business major*) - Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Grant to Spain
- **Anneliese Daggett '20** (*history major with teacher licensure*) - Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Grant to Vietnam
- **Taylor Garner '20** (*international and global studies major*) - Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Grant to Colombia
- **Kathryn Gerry '20** (*international and global studies and political science major*) - Fulbright Study/Research Grant to Bahrain
- **Sara Gostomski '20** (*elementary and special education major*) - Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Grant to Ecuador
- **Kristen O'Neill '19** (*elementary and special education major*) - Fulbright English Teaching Assistant Grant to Greece

In addition, **Griffin Barriss '21** (*public health studies and international and global studies major*), **Maggie Davis '21** (*elementary and special education major*), **Sydney Hallisey '21** (*anthropology and international and global studies major*), **India Kirssin '21** (*international and global studies major*) and **Angela Myers '21** (*professional writing and rhetoric major*) were named alternates for Fulbright awards.



{ Meghan Murray '21 & Alexandra Pirsos '21 }

Martha and Spencer Love School of Business alumnae Meghan Murray '21 and Alexandra Pirsos '21 were highlighted by the business education news outlet Poets&Quants in its annual "Best & Brightest Business Majors" list. Students were selected on factors such as "academic excellence, extracurricular leadership, personal character, innate potential, a striking personal narrative and overall impact on the program."

Ashlyn Crain '22 and Anna Altmann '23 have been named 2021 recipients of the prestigious Goldwater Scholarship. The highly competitive award is designed to advance the academic pursuits of sophomores and juniors in colleges and universities who are pursuing research careers in natural sciences, mathematics and engineering. Crain, a biology major, and Altmann, a chemistry and computer science double major, are among the 410 recipients selected this year from a pool of more than 5,000 applicants from across the country.



{ Ashlyn Crain '22 }



{ Anna Altmann '23 }

SYLLABUZZ

GEO 3460: Natural Disasters

BY KATELYN LITVAN '24

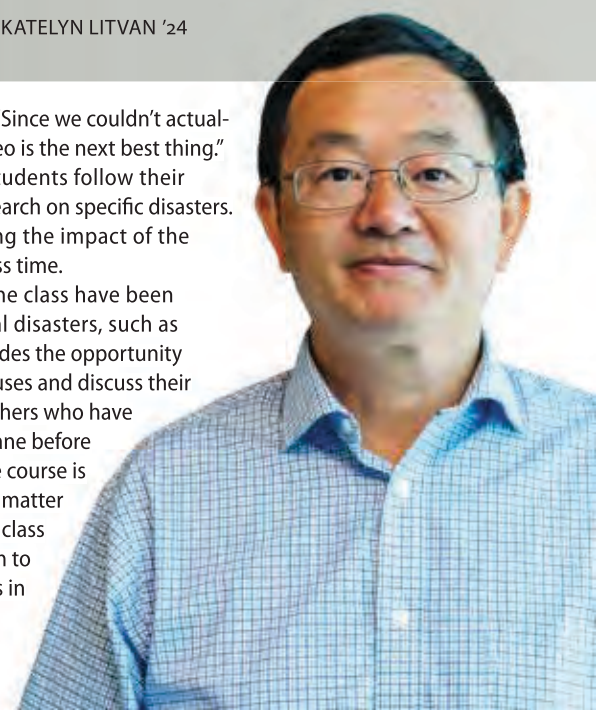
Whenever a report of a large-scale hurricane or earthquake reaches the news, the world takes notice. People watch their screens in awe as they learn of the damage these disasters have inflicted. While natural disasters are devastating, they offer humanity the opportunity to discover the unpredictable forces of nature. GEO 3460: Natural Disasters allows students to take an up-close look at a variety of natural disasters and examine their short- and long-term impact.

The class, which is taught by Associate Professor of Geography Honglin Xiao, was originally offered during the summer, but as more students became interested in the subject, it evolved into a spring semester course. For more than a decade, Xiao has been teaching the class intended to examine how humans evaluate and respond to natural disasters. Students learn about tsunamis, earthquakes, hurricanes, volcanoes, floods and other natural disasters through a variety of primary sources.

In addition to readings, lectures and small group discussions, Xiao enjoys incorporating documentaries and videos into the class so that students can better understand the effects of the disasters. "There are so many resources to go along

with the material," he says. "Since we couldn't actually see these disasters, a video is the next best thing." As the course progresses, students follow their interests and conduct research on specific disasters. They write essays comparing the impact of the same type of disaster across time.

Many students taking the class have been directly affected by natural disasters, such as Hurricane Sandy, so it provides the opportunity to learn more about the causes and discuss their individual responses. For others who have never experienced a hurricane before living on the East Coast, the course is especially eye-opening. No matter where they come from, the class aims to better prepare them to respond to natural disasters in



Six members of the Class of 2021 will spend the coming year as Elon Year of Service Graduate Fellows.

They are: public health studies major **Daniel Bascunan-Wiley** (Healthy Alamance); policy studies major **Chandler Vaughan** (City of Burlington Economic Development); political science major **Jewel Tillman** (Impact Alamance); French and international and global studies double major **Lucia Lozano Robledo** (Alamance Achieves); public health studies major **Caren Aveldañez** (Alamance Regional Medical Center); and strategic communications major **Abdul-Malik Harrison** (Alamance County Health Department).



{ Anna Gillespie '24 }

Campus Compact has selected Anna Gillespie '24 as Newman Civic Fellow. The fellowship is a yearlong program for students representing institutions that partner with the nonprofit organization that works to advance the public purposes of higher education. Gillespie has lobbied state lawmakers in her home state of Virginia to pass legislation to make mail-in voting more accessible and has worked to register voters in Elon and Alamance County.



{ Daija Rion '23 & Ariana Wilson '23 }

Daija Rion '23 and Ariana Wilson '23 were recently named recipients of 2021 LAGRANT Foundation scholarships, which support ethnically diverse college and university students interested in the fields of advertising, marketing and public relations. In the past five years, School of Communications students have secured nine such scholarships.

the future. Every spring, Xiao incorporates new material into the course. In the past few years, he has dedicated much of the class to addressing climate change. Class discussions connect human behavior to the changing climate, and students are eager to discover how people's actions can increase the severity of natural disasters. "Your personal behavior can have an effect on the global climate," says Xiao. "This is becoming a larger issue, and I am always glad to teach on how global warming can cause more natural disasters." ✨

ABOUT THE PROFESSOR

Associate Professor Honglin Xiao joined Elon's Department of History and Geography in 2002. His research interests include global climate change and human response to natural disasters.

RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

- "Fire in Paradise" (2019), PBS' "Frontline" documentary
- "Super Hurricanes and Typhoons" (2013), National Geographic documentary



LIFE IN COVID TIMES

The COVID 19 pandemic posed many challenges during the 2020-21 academic year. From weekly testing to vaccination clinics, the Elon community came together to ensure in person instruction remained uninterrupted. Below are some notable numbers from the past year.



95,533

The number of antigen tests administered to students, faculty and staff at Alumni Gym from Jan. 1 to May 22. Of this number, 339 resulted in positive test results.



155

The number of faculty and staff who volunteered to staff the Alumni Gym testing clinic.



1,466

The number of positive COVID-19 cases reported to the university during the academic year. This included 929 cases reported in the fall.



2,974

The number of undergraduates who were placed in isolation or quarantine at least once during the academic year, representing 47 percent of the student body.



78%

The percentage of campus community members who were vaccinated by May 31. That includes 80 percent of undergraduates, 83 percent of faculty and 71 percent of staff.



3,009

The number of calls received by the Ready & Resilient hotline.

Source: Elon's Ready & Resilient Committee

“

“Think of yourself as a creative, autonomous being who can do all kinds of different things. And you will try things and they won’t work out, and if you approach it in the right way, when they don’t work out, you will also be learning.”

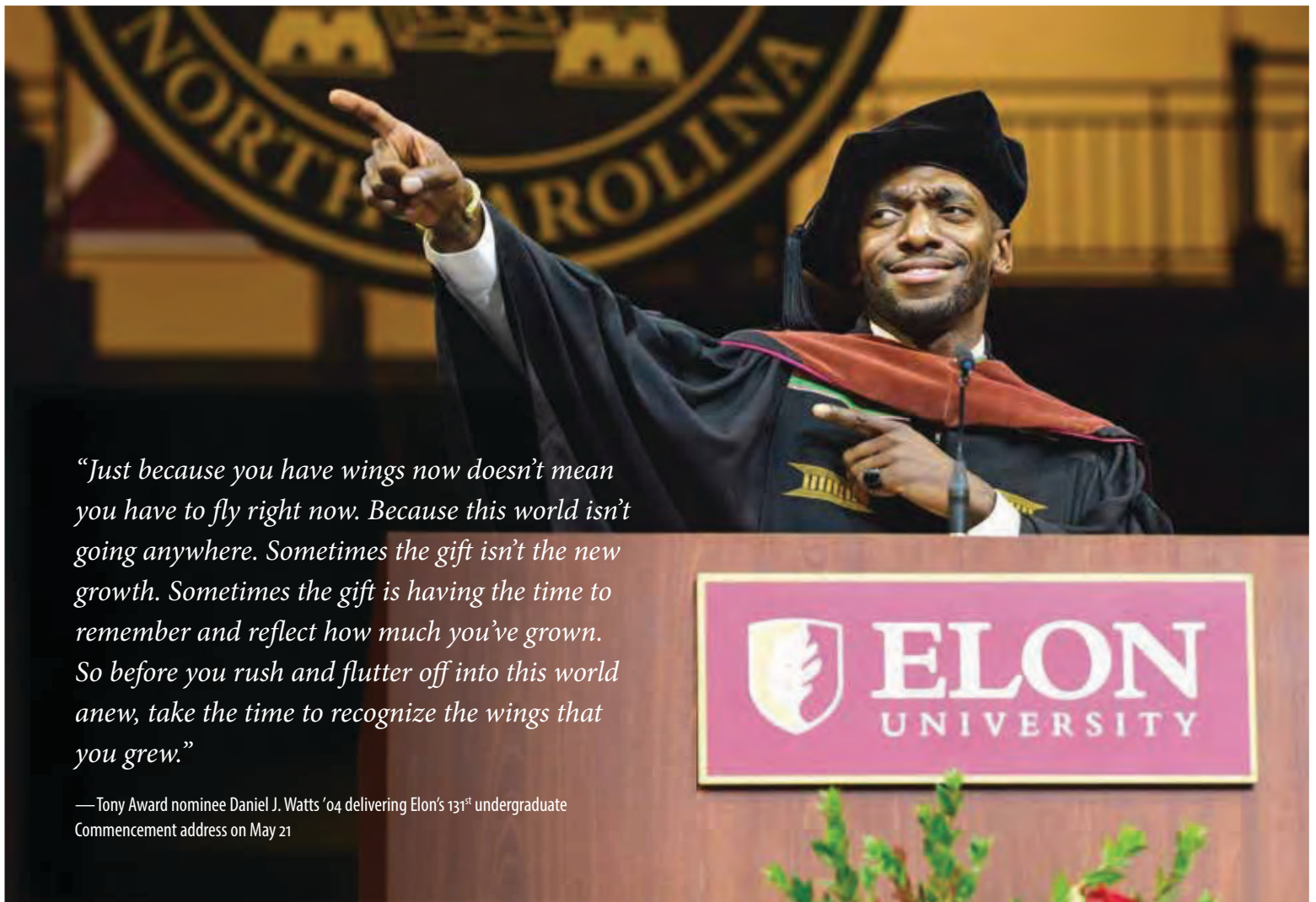


—Wikipedia founder Jimmy Wales during the 2021 Baird Lecture on April 8

“I invite you to measure your life, not by what you produce or how quickly you produce it. I invite you to measure your life by your faithfulness to the labor.”

—Civil rights activist and award-winning filmmaker Valarie Kaur during the 2021 Baccalaureate address on May 19

”



“Just because you have wings now doesn’t mean you have to fly right now. Because this world isn’t going anywhere. Sometimes the gift isn’t the new growth. Sometimes the gift is having the time to remember and reflect how much you’ve grown. So before you rush and flutter off into this world anew, take the time to recognize the wings that you grew.”

—Tony Award nominee Daniel J. Watts ’04 delivering Elon’s 131st undergraduate Commencement address on May 21

TOP MARKS

A roundup of Elon University's latest rankings and accolades



• **Elon University has been named a top producer of Fulbright students for a sixth time**, as 10 recent graduates were offered the prestigious international fellowship to study, research or teach English overseas for 2020-21. Elon is recognized among national doctoral institutions, and

the school's 10 Fulbright offers tied with Boston University, Miami University, Stony Brook University, the University of Nebraska and the University of South Carolina. Along with Elon, other North Carolina institutions recognized as top producers are Duke University, Wake Forest University, Davidson College, the University of North Carolina and Appalachian State University.



• **Elon University School of Law's reputation for the strength of its legal writing and trial advocacy programs** earned the school its highest marks to date in specialty rankings in U.S. News & World Report's 2022 Best Graduate Schools guide. Elon Law's No. 34 ranking for legal writing places it in the top 20 percent of law schools, and its No. 79 ranking for trial advocacy places Elon Law in the Top 100 of law schools for the first time ever.

CELEBRATING THE CLASS of 2020

Members of the Class of 2020 and their guests are invited to return to campus Sept. 3-5 for a variety of events culminating in a formal Commencement ceremony. Celebrations of the class during spring 2020 were disrupted by the pandemic.

The fall festivities will kick off Friday afternoon with department open houses and school receptions to allow the graduates to reconnect with friends and mentors. Saturday's events will include ceremonies that celebrate their identities, as well as a family tailgate by Lake Mary Nell before the Phoenix take on Wofford at Rhodes Stadium. An evening of live music, dancing, food trucks and a beer garden will follow.

Sunday's Commencement ceremony at Schar Center is being planned for 1 p.m. and will provide graduates and their families a way to officially celebrate their achievements. This formal ceremony in caps and gowns will include a message from the class president, the Commencement address from Elon parent Leonard Dick P'20, President Connie Ledoux Book's charge to the graduates and the distribution of saplings.

Based on current health guidelines and expectations for attendance, each graduate is allowed to bring at least four guests to the in-person ceremony. More details, including how to register for these events, will be posted on the Commencement website, elon.edu/commencement. 🌱



Janet L. Williams named VP FOR FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Following a national search, Janet L. Williams, vice president for finance at Wake Forest University, has been named vice president for finance and administration at Elon University. Williams joined Elon April 15, serving on the university's senior staff and succeeding interim vice president Susan Kirkland, who returns to her position as associate vice president for business and finance.

"Janet Williams is a strategic leader who has extensive experience as a chief financial officer and manager of complex operations," said President Connie Ledoux Book. "She will draw upon her rich background in higher education, business and industry, enabling Elon to continue its long history of outstanding fiscal management and operational efficiency."

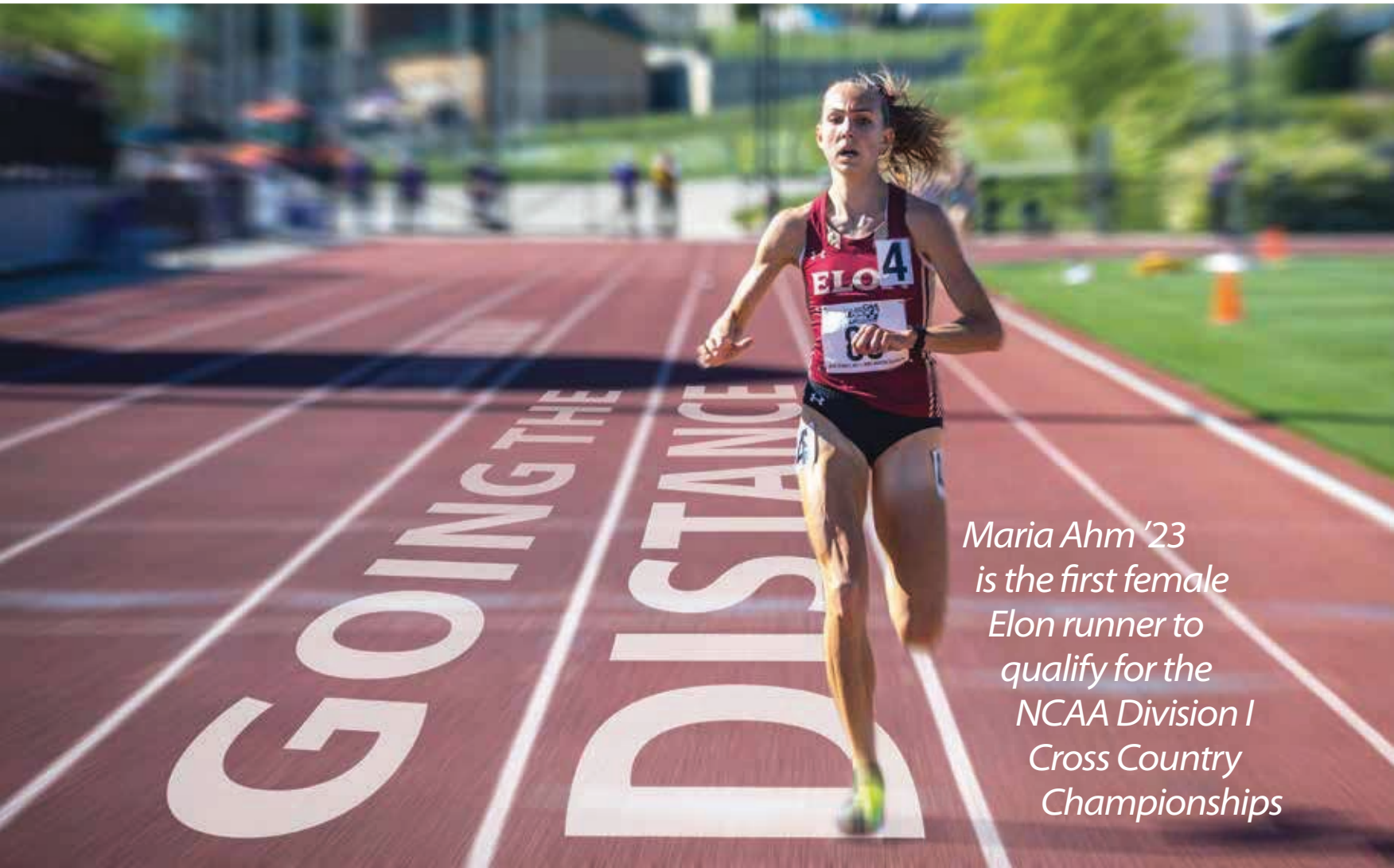
Williams leads Elon's Division of Finance and Administration, overseeing the departments of business and finance, human resources, facilities management, information technology, campus safety and police, auxiliary services, administrative services, internal audit and planning, design and construction.

Williams brings to Elon nine years of experience in higher education and 29 years of experience in business and industry. Before leading Wake Forest's business and finance units, Williams served two years at Ithaca College, where she was interim vice president for finance and administration and also served as the college's controller. She began her work in higher education by serving four years at Cornell University, where she was administrative director for the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences.

"I love working in higher education and I am inspired by Elon's mission and student-centered values," Williams said. "The Boldly Elon strategic plan provides a framework for the next decade of growth and I am excited to be a part of the talented and committed team that will further Elon's position as a national university." 🌱



{ Janet L. Williams }



*Maria Ahm '23
is the first female
Elon runner to
qualify for the
NCAA Division I
Cross Country
Championships*

BY ALEXA BOSCHINI '10

TWO EQUAL BUT OPPOSITE FORCES drive Maria Ahm's running. It brings her inner peace and a sense of fulfillment, fueling the energy and focus she needs to tackle a demanding academic and athletic schedule. But it also pushes her to her limits, motivating her to test how much harder, farther and faster she can go than she previously thought possible.

Both facets of running spark joy for her, and both anchor her in the resolute pursuit of her goals — most recently, the NCAA Cross Country Championships in March at Oklahoma State University. “I have never been in such a competitive and big field before,” says Ahm, an Elon rising junior and member of both the Phoenix cross country and track teams. “It was fun to compete against so many intense and good runners because it helps you to push yourself.”

Ahm is the first female Elon runner to qualify for the

NCAA Division I Championships and only the second Phoenix cross country runner to qualify for the national meet overall, after Luis Vargas in 2014. Before her NCAA debut, Ahm won the Colonial Athletic Association individual title at the league's championship meet March 5, setting a CAA championship record in the 6K with her time of 19:37.30. Her performance helped the Phoenix claim the CAA title for the second straight season. She closed out her cross country season finishing 82nd out of 253 runners in the women's 6K at the NCAA championship, clocking a time of 21:23.5. “She started the race with confidence and poise toward the rear of the field and gradually moved up as the hills slowed down most of her competition,” says Kevin Jermyn, head cross country coach and assistant women's track and field coach. “She finished ahead of a lot of really great runners.”

A native of Holbæk, Denmark, Ahm didn't follow the same path to collegiate running as many of her American counterparts. She started playing soccer at age 9 and was

{ The Phoenix after clinching the CAA Outdoor Track & Field Championship (right) & the CAA Women's Cross Country Championship (below). Opposite page: Maria Ahm '23 was named the 2021 CAA Women's Runner of the Year. }

always the member of the team who ran the most. In Denmark, Ahm says schools don't have sports teams, so young athletes only play for club teams. She started to run for fun with her dad, a marathoner and triathlete, and by high school, she left her soccer club to devote her energy to running on her own. Her dad trained her for her first half marathon when she was 16, followed by a marathon in Berlin the next year. "The two things that engaged me in running were soccer and my dad,"

Ahm says. "When I look back at it now, a lot of it has to do with this time with my dad. We enjoyed being able to do this together."

Ahm had an innate talent for the sport. She ventured into cross country in 2019 and qualified for a European championship after her first race. That caught the attention of Jermyn, who contacted Ahm after her championship race. She had never thought about living in another country but knew she needed to broaden her horizons to reach her full running potential. A visit to Elon's campus sealed the deal. "My dad and I flew here and met Coach Jermyn, saw all of Elon's facilities, and at that point I was not in doubt anymore," Ahm says. "I knew it was the right decision for me."

Ahm competes in the 5K and 6K in cross country and the 5,000 meters and 10,000 meters in track. After starting her running journey individually, she was drawn to the camaraderie of a team. That made the restrictions amid the COVID-19 pandemic that much harder. Everyone on the team had to wear masks and split into small groups of three to four people for workouts. At times during the fall,



"My dad and I flew here and met Coach Jermyn, saw all of Elon's facilities, and at that point I was not in doubt anymore," Ahm says. "I knew it was the right decision for me."

Ahm trained alone or with just one partner. The team's routine was slowly making its way back to normal by the spring, with athletes divided into three larger training groups.

But a challenging year culminated in some major victories. After winning the CAA Cross Country Championship, the league honored Ahm and Jermyn as Women's Runner and Women's Coach of the Year, respectively. The Phoenix also clinched the CAA Outdoor Track

& Field Championship in May, the first title sweep for both track and cross country at the Division I level in the same season. Ahm came in first in the 5,000 meters with a time of 16:52.48. She was also named Team MVP for both women's cross country and women's track and field at Elon's annual athletics banquet. "While Maria is certainly making a name for herself in the Elon record books, she has played an even more important role in elevating both our cross country and track and field teams," Jermyn says. "She helps make everyone around her better and she cares for everyone."

Ahm's long-term goal is to qualify for the Olympics in the 10K and the marathon. But in the meantime, she'll continue to work hard with her team and hopes they can all experience the NCAA championships together next year. "Our success this year is a reflection of how committed and passionate we are as a team," Ahm says. "In running, it's so easy to focus on the individual person. To see what we can do together when we help each other is huge." ❦



THE POWER OF *philanthropy*

*Donors change lives by creating
200 Odyssey Program scholarships*

BY JALEH HAGIGH

ABOUT YOUR GIFT

All gifts to the university for any purpose count as part of the Elon LEADS Campaign. To learn how you can make an impact through your gifts, visit elonleads.com.

ELON'S GENEROUS COMMUNITY OF DONORS has doubled the number of Odyssey Program scholarships as part of the Elon LEADS Campaign, fueling the growth of a program that assists talented students with high financial need, including first-generation college students.

Elon reached the 200 Odyssey scholarship milestone thanks to gifts and commitments from alumni, parents and friends who believe in investing in outstanding students and the Odyssey Program, a national model for college access initiatives. Increasing financial support for Odyssey and other scholarships is the top priority of the \$250 million Elon LEADS Campaign. As of June 1, donors had contributed \$212 million toward the campaign. The university is half-way to its long-term goal in the Boldly Elon strategic plan of having 400 Odyssey scholarships, or 100 scholars per class.

"The scholarships in the Odyssey Program have transformed the lives of hundreds of Elon students and alumni," President Connie Ledoux Book said. "The Elon community is indebted to all the donors who are creating generations of college graduates the world needs."

THE ODYSSEY PROGRAM: A NATIONAL MODEL FOR SUCCESS

Established in 2007, the Odyssey Program includes some of Elon's largest scholarships endowed by more than 25 generous families. Housed in Elon's Center for Access and Success, Odyssey is a highly selective, four-year program that has become a national model for serving students with significant financial need who are often underrepresented on college and university campuses. Many of these students are the first in their families to attend college.

Students move through the program as a cohort and receive valuable mentoring by faculty and staff, along with academic support and professional development to inspire personal growth and set them up to succeed. Odyssey has a nearly 100 percent retention rate and 90 percent graduation rate among scholars who become leaders in medicine, health care, law, business, education and engineering, among other fields. "Odyssey scholars are consistently among the top-performing students on Elon's campus," said Jean Rattigan-Rohr, vice president for access and success. "This shows that when given the proper resources and support, students from low-income households do, in fact, succeed and go on to impact the world in positive ways."

Each scholarship in the Odyssey Program includes financial assistance that meets a student's full need. In addition to annual tuition assistance, each scholarship includes a stipend for books and supplies, and a one-time \$4,000 global study grant to be used for an approved study abroad or Study USA program.





“I accomplished everything I set out to do socially, academically and professionally thanks to Elon.” — **JOE PATURZO '20**

Joe Paturzo '20 received the John L. Georgeo Scholarship, one of several scholarships in the Odyssey Program endowed by Elon alumnus Furman Moseley '56. Moseley, one of Elon's most generous donors, also honored his wife by endowing The Susan Scholarship, which has assisted more than 50 alumni and students since it was established in 2007. After earning a biochemistry degree in May 2020, Paturzo returned to Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore to continue his work as a research fellow examining hospital billing practices, as well as quality assurance measurements within health care and the epidemiology of COVID-19 in older populations. He plans to pursue medical school and work to unite public policy with individualized patient care by making primary care and preventative medicine more accessible in vulnerable communities.

“I have nothing but gratitude for my Elon experience and for Furman and Susan Moseley who made it possible,” said Paturzo, who recently completed a two-year term as a youth trustee on Elon's board of trustees. “I accomplished everything I set out to do socially, academically and professionally thanks to Elon. These are the people who have helped shape me to be the person I am today and set me up for the next chapter of my life and made it so enjoyable along the way.”

Briston Whitt '22, a rising senior from Winston-Salem, North Carolina, is a proud recipient of The Honorable Thad Eure North Carolina Achievement Scholarship, which made enrolling at Elon a reality. The scholarship honors the North Carolina's former secretary of state, who served as an Elon trustee for nearly 50 years and whose family has deep ties to Elon. Whitt, who's majoring in acting with minors in communications and human service studies, is grateful for her rigorous classes and faculty mentors who have challenged her to develop a valuable global perspective.

“They've helped me to see life through a totally different lens. It's knowledge I will carry with me forever,” Whitt said. “I can't imagine being at any other place that has challenged me personally and academically like Elon has. And to be able to maintain such high academic standards since being here is something I am very proud of. Being here has also shown my siblings that there is no limit to what they can accomplish.”



“I can't imagine being at any other place that has challenged me personally and academically like Elon has. And to be able to maintain such high academic standards since being here is something I am very proud of.” — **BRISTON WHITT '22**

For more information on Odyssey Program scholarships and other campaign priorities, visit elonleads.com.

Leading Through You

Elon is grateful to the following families who have recently endowed Odyssey Program scholarships, helping to make an Elon education possible for students with significant financial need.

Donor support creates a lasting impact at Elon. Read more about these and other gifts at elonleads.com.

BY MADISON TAYLOR



{ Robert & Rosemary Baffi P'17 }

▲ Rosemary and Robert Baffi P'17

Rosemary and Robert Baffi P'17 are first-generation college graduates who credit strong mentors for guiding them to successful careers. Their experiences fueled a desire to support Elon students by endowing a scholarship in the Odyssey Program. "We were always thinking about what to give to since our early days with Elon," Rosemary Baffi said. "As I gained knowledge about the Odyssey Program, the more we knew it was the right thing. The program is so impressive."

Their endowment gift will assist two Baffi Family Odyssey Program scholars each year. "I was so impressed that it's not just a financial arrangement. They make sure scholars graduate with the skill sets they need to succeed," Rosemary Baffi said.

The Baffis, who live in the San Francisco area, both earned undergraduate and graduate degrees en route to successful careers. Rob Baffi retired as president of Global Manufacturing and Technical Operations for BioMarin Pharmaceutical and now serves as a special adviser to the chairman and CEO. Rosemary Baffi retired from institutional equity sales at Montgomery Securities. They began contributing to Elon when their daughter Jane '17 enrolled. A second-floor student engagement lounge in Richard W. Sankey Hall is named for the family.

▼ Shelby and Andy Silvernail P'21

The desire to move Elon closer to its long-term goal of creating 400 Odyssey Program scholarships and build a more diverse campus learning environment was a driving factor in the Silvernail family's decision to endow the Silvernail Family Odyssey Scholarship.

As Shelby and Andy Silvernail P'21 of Lake Forest, Illinois, planned how to best support the university, they discussed Elon's top priorities with campus leaders. Then they presented those priorities to their sons Koster '21 and Spencer and daughter Alyssa. "The second they read off the description of the program and I read more about it, it struck me as the right choice," said Koster, who graduated in May with a degree in marketing. He now works as a project analyst for Strategix in Chicago.

Shelby, who was a first-generation college student, said diversity and inclusion in the Odyssey Program and how it strengthens the cultural and academic environment at Elon resonated with the family, and especially with Koster. "When I saw how the students are selected, learned about what's offered in the program and talked to Odyssey scholars and heard their stories, I saw how driven they are to succeed," Koster said. "I was impressed. They are the kinds of Elon students that when I came here, I wanted to be."

Andy is chairman and CEO of Madison Industries, which is dedicated to fostering businesses related to health and well-being. The Silvernails have previously supported scholarships, including the Students First initiative, which was launched last summer to help students impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic return to campus to finish their education.



{ From left: (back) Koster '21, Alyssa & Spencer Silvernail; (front) Andy & Shelby Silvernail P'21 }

A lasting LEGACY

Hendricksons' gift supports A Will to Lead

BY JALEH HAGIGH

Elon Trustee Jay Hendrickson '71 and his wife, Amy Hendrickson '69, of Raleigh, North Carolina, have made a \$1 million estate gift to support A Will to Lead, a special initiative of the Elon LEADS Campaign to encourage alumni, parents and friends to establish a lasting legacy by placing the university in their estate plans. The initiative was announced in March and is a vital part of reaching the \$250 million Elon LEADS Campaign goal. As of June 1, donors had contributed \$212 million toward the goal, including \$35 million in estate gifts alone.

"The Elon community is grateful to Jay and Amy Hendrickson for their lifelong commitment to transforming the lives of students," said President Connie Ledoux Book. "Their steadfast support is moving the university forward in significant ways."

As members of Order of the Oak, Elon's planned giving society, the Hendricksons are among Elon's most generous benefactors and the most recent members of the university community to support A Will to Lead by placing Elon in their estate plans. Their gift will support engineering and athletics. "Our joint Elon experience was very special," Amy Hendrickson said. "The professor-student interaction was very meaningful for our ongoing successes in life. Hopefully our gift will allow others to enjoy the same type of experience and thrive throughout their lives."

The couple has provided transformative support to Elon for the past several decades. In 2000, they endowed the James A. '71 and Amy T. '69 Hendrickson Engineering Scholarship. In 2007, their \$1 million gift named the Hendrickson Football Center in Alumni Field House in honor of Jay's father, Horace J. Hendrickson, who served as Elon's football coach in the 1930s and 1940s and is considered one of Elon's all-time great coaches. The couple is proud to have 14 immediate family members with ties to Elon, including alumni and former faculty and staff members. "Our roots run



{ Jay Hendrickson '71 & Amy Hendrickson '69 }

very deep at Elon and that was one of the motivating factors when we made the gift to name the Hendrickson Football Center," Amy said.

Jay Hendrickson has been a member of Elon's board of trustees since 2008. Amy co-chaired the Elon LEADS Campaign regional committee in Raleigh as a member of the Campaign Steering Committee. She has also served as chair of the Phoenix Club Advisory Board. Together, the couple served on the Elon Alumni Board and are charter members of the Phoenix Club IMPACT Circle. "It's been amazing the ascension that Elon has gone through," Amy said. "It makes us very proud to support the university."

Estate gifts allow donors to provide life-changing opportunities for students by supporting scholarships and other campaign priorities without parting with any assets now. For more information about how to include Elon in your estate planning, contact Elizabeth Read, assistant director of planned giving, at (336) 278-7474 or eread@elon.edu.



“The Elon LEADS Campaign allows alumni, parents and grandparents to continue providing future generations all the tools and resources to become excellent professionals, inspiring leaders and graduates the world needs.”

— Maity Interiano '07, campaign co-chair



{ President Connie Ledoux Book }

KEEPING ELON CLOSE

Alumni, parents and friends throughout the country participated in a series of virtual events this spring to hear university updates and learn about the progress of the Elon LEADS Campaign. Attendees learned more about important university initiatives on the horizon, including scholarships in the Odyssey Program, the new Innovation Quad that will house

expanded STEM initiatives, Elon’s new nursing program that will offer students a focus on health equity, and spring admissions data. Remarks for the program were delivered by President Connie Ledoux Book, Elon LEADS Chair and Trustee Chris Martin ’78 P’13 and Campaign Co-Chair Maity Interiano ’07, as well as other faculty, staff and alumni leaders.

A great day for growing opportunities

The Elon community around the world celebrated the eighth annual Elon Day on Tuesday, March 2, by making gifts to grow opportunities for students. In total, donors gave more than 5,600 gifts and raised nearly \$3.5 million to ensure every student has access to the full Elon experience, regardless of financial resources. Learn more about the impact of this annual day of giving at elon.edu/elonday.

ELON DAY

NUMBER OF GIFTS 5,609

CAMPUS FUNDS IMPACTED 176

TOTAL AMOUNT RAISED \$3,496,140



A heart of **MAROON** *& GOLD*

BY MEGAN MCCLURE

ALTHOUGH FRANK DALTON '81 has traveled to nearly every corner of the globe, he still holds a special place in his heart for Elon.

Among the oaks and bricks of Elon, Dalton learned to build relationships and connect with people across different personalities and lived experiences. Soon after he graduated, Dalton found himself putting those skills to good use as a junior officer in the Navy.

"I had a great experience at Elon that helped mold me into a more confident and productive person in society," says Dalton, who now lives in the Washington, D.C., area and serves as regional deputy director for the Navy International Programs Office. "I'm proud of what Elon was when I was there, and I'm equally proud of what Elon has grown into."

Dalton shows his Elon pride by making gifts to support students every year. As a member of the Elon Society, he splits his giving between two areas on campus: Elon's Greatest Needs and the Black Alumni Scholarship.

"I think giving to Elon's Greatest Needs is probably the easiest way to do the greatest good for the most people," says Dalton. "I also want to support opportunities for African Americans at Elon because I know the positive impact that an Elon education can have."

"I'll do anything I can to perpetuate the Elon story."

LEARN MORE



The Elon Society honors leadership annual giving donors who make a gift of \$1,500 or more each year for any purpose. Visit elon.edu/ElonSociety to learn more.



A civic mindset

BY PATRICK WRIGHT

A name change, a new strategic plan and a new director are positioning the Kernodle Center for Civic Life for even greater community partnerships in the future.



LEAD

Systemic change
for a more equitable

TOMORROW

INCREASE
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT

INSPIRE,
EDUCATE
and prepare students

{ Mary Morrison led service efforts at
Elon for almost 15 years as director
of the Kernodle Center for Civic Life.
She retired in May.}



{ Throughout the years, countless students have participated in service trips as part of the Kernodle Center for Civic Life's programming. }

Mary Morrison had a hundred thoughts running through her mind, as one typically does during a job interview. At the top of that list was whether a well-established organization like Elon University's Kernodle Center would be open to change.

"I remember saying in the interview, 'I'm an architect and a builder, so if you need somebody to maintain, then I'm probably not the person for the job,' and I think they really liked that," she says with a laugh.

That was almost 15 years ago when Morrison interviewed for the center's director position. Since that day in 2006, Morrison has built an organization that mirrors her passion for service-learning and community engagement. She retired in May as director of the center and assistant dean of campus life, having overseen much change and growth in the center and further cemented Elon's place as a national leader in service-learning. In 2020, the university earned a No. 2 ranking among national universities for service-learning experiences from U.S. News & World Report.

At no time was her commitment to service-learning more important than during the 2020-21 academic year. Morrison and the Kernodle Center faced the global COVID-19 pandemic head-on while continuing to advance the organization's mission to inspire, educate and prepare students to partner with diverse communities and address local and global challenges.

At the forefront of those efforts were Elon students, tasked with helping to lead the organization through a year of uncertainty. That student-centered focus has always been a key piece of Morrison's service-learning phi-

losophy, beginning with more than two decades of work with 4-H and the APPLES Service Learning program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. As a result of that philosophy, the Kernodle Center has seen a sharp increase in student participation in Morrison's tenure, with between 80 and 125 student leaders planning, implementing and evaluating the center's operations each year.

"My goal is to give young people an opportunity to learn the skills of leadership in service and community engagement," she says. "I don't know how to do this work without student leadership. This work has to be by students, for students and with students."

A nimble approach

With the support of Morrison and other Kernodle Center leaders, Elon students navigated a host of obstacles to carry out the center's important work during the pandemic. As student leaders began to think of new ways to engage their peers in service, they quickly found that their first step would be to raise awareness of the Kernodle Center itself.

"We realized some first-years didn't know anything about the Kernodle Center — some thought we were the Koenigsberger Learning Center," says Gillian Kick '22, lead service ambassador for the Kernodle Center. "We wanted to get our name out there and start talking about issues because people genuinely didn't know about them."

Kick heads up a team of other ambassadors who connect student organizations across campus with service opportunities throughout the community. Kick also serves as an executive member of Elon Volunteers!, the student-led service and community engagement organization housed within the center. As part of her work with Elon Volun-



Gillian Kick '22

My goal is to give young people an opportunity to learn the skills of leadership in service and community engagement. I don't know how to do this work without student leadership. This work has to be by students, for students and with students.

Mary Morrison

{ Right: Elon Votes! has been recognized nationwide for its voter registration efforts ahead of the 2020 presidential election. Below: Elon Volunteers! promotes service & community engagement by partnering with community organizations. }



teers! last year, Kick oversaw a staff of student coordinators who organized projects with community partners like the Center for New North Carolinians, the local Boys & Girls Club and Burlington's Positive Attitude Youth Center. Each of those partnerships took on new forms in 2020. "We had to make a total reset because everyone needed something different as a result of the pandemic," she says. "We had to really adapt our programming to best support our community partners."

The needs of community partners came in many forms — both big and small. When Burlington Animal Services realized the pets in their shelter were lonely, they reached out to Elon Volunteers! for help. Kick and six Elon students spent a day working in the Moseley Center kitchen to produce handmade toys and treats for the shelter's animals. This seemingly small gesture was exactly what the shelter needed. "We think a lot about big picture stuff, and I love that we do that, but right now our community partners just need little things," she says. "What our community needed this year were little things, and we could provide that."

As Kick was focused on reshaping the service mindsets of her fellow students, Associate Professor of Communication Design Phillip Motley targeted faculty. Motley recently completed his first year as faculty fellow for service-learning and community engagement, a role that involves helping Elon faculty develop academic service-learning courses and incorporate service-learning into their existing courses.

Motley organizes regular workshops and lunch-and-learn sessions that engage faculty in discussions about service-learning, usually hosting between 20 and 25 people. During the pandemic, however, Motley transitioned the sessions to a virtual format and saw those numbers double. "Now that the workshops are on Zoom, we've had 50, 60 attendees come and hear from us, and we've been able to open up the invite to the broader Elon community and even some of our community partners," Motley says. "So there are people showing up who just wouldn't have been there before."

That is Motley's top priority as faculty fellow: to engage new audiences and introduce them to the power of service-learning. It's work that he's passionate about because of the impact he's seen it have on his students. "Service-learning brings out the best in students," Motley says. "I like it when they stop worrying so much about grades and the academic mechanics of class and instead focus on doing a good job for their community partners. They realize that teamwork in this capacity is different from the types of group work they often are asked to do in a typical class, and in this context they really need their teammates."

Motley, however, points to a "groundswell" of support for seeing the idea of service-learning expand. He be-

COLLABORATE

PREPARE

INFORM

ADDRESS
societal challenges

believes there's room to rethink how the work is framed and discussed, preferring it to be called "community-based learning," with more of a focus on mutually beneficial experiences for community partners and students, a feeling Morrison shares.

"We see our community partners as co-educators with us," Morrison says. "So we have faculty in the classroom and we have co-educators in the community, and all that combines to make a really robust and rich experience for students."

A strategic vision

In 2019, the Kernodle Center took a major step in broadening its focus, introducing a seven-year strategic plan to carry the organization into the future. Kernodle Center leaders spent two years developing the plan that they hope will serve as a national model for civic engagement and prepare Elon students and the campus to engage in local and global communities.

The plan targets four priorities — Expand, Prepare, Deepen and Engage, and Impact — and focuses on things like expanding community partnerships in Alamance and Guilford counties, developing student leaders through mentorship, and much more. "Really it's a very ambitious plan," Morrison says. "We say right up front we want to be a model for the nation, and I think it's really going to take us quite far and stretch us."

An immediate change to come out of the strategic-planning process was a new name for the Kernodle Center, signifying its renewed mission. Originally formed as the "Center for Service-Learning" in 1995, the center became the home for a number of existing service programs. Two years later, an endowment gift from the John R. Kernodle Sr. family officially named the center in honor of John Robert Kernodle Jr. Programs and staffing have been added as the university has grown in size and the commitment to service and community engagement continues to deepen. Known as the Kernodle Center for Service Learning and Community Engagement since 2009, the organization is now known as the Kernodle Center for Civic Life. Morrison says the "Service Learning and Community Engagement" title had become too narrow and no longer accurately depicted the full picture of the center's work on and off campus.

With the emergence of the student-led civic responsibility organization *Elon Votes!*, which is housed in the center, leaders decided it was time to come up with a more inclusive name. It was a welcome change for Carrie Eaves, who serves as faculty fellow for civic engagement and sees service and civic engagement as one in the same.

"We want all eligible students to vote and then think about new ways to get involved in their communities," says Eaves, who also serves as an associate professor of political



science and policy studies and co-chairs *Elon's Council on Civic Engagement* with Morrison. "For some students it's activism or protests, and for others it's volunteering at an animal shelter or an after school program. All of those are ways that we're engaging and making our community a better place that we all want to be a part of."

Eaves has helped lead *Elon's* civic engagement efforts for more than two years, organizing panel discussions and other events to engage the campus community in important conversations relating to civic life. Eaves also works closely with *Elon Votes!* and the group's adviser, Bob Frigo. Over the past year, *Elon Votes!* has earned *Elon* high praise nationwide for the group's voter registration efforts ahead of the 2020 presidential election. *Elon* finished the campaign season ranked in *TurboVote's* top 10 colleges and universities in total registrations and percentage of registrations among undergraduates. *Elon* was also named a "Voter Friendly Campus" by Fair Elections Center's Campus Vote Project and the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators.

That success wasn't by chance. Student leaders spent all of summer 2020 planning their outreach strategies, turning to virtual events, table sessions and other engaging

{ As part of its civic engagement efforts, the Kernodle Center for Civic Life has co-sponsored presidential debate watch parties in recent years. }



{ Elon students volunteer with The Salvation Army Boys & Girls Club of Alamance County to mentor local students during the pandemic. }

programs to encourage more than 2,000 Elon students to register to vote. “To put the students out there and watch them grow and flourish was exciting,” Eaves says. “They didn’t take their foot off the gas this year. In fact, they tried to expand. It would have been really easy to say, ‘It’s too hard this year,’ but they kept pushing to do more.”

The success of Elon Votes! further validates Morrison’s philosophy of developing a service-learning model with, by and for students. And as COVID-19 restrictions lessen, Morrison is optimistic about what Elon’s students will do next. “We’re entering an era that I think is going to be transformative,” Morrison says. “I see tremendous possibilities for the future.”

A transformative legacy

During her time at Elon, Morrison has not only championed service-learning. She has also inspired countless students — including Kick, who was immediately drawn to working with the Kernodle Center after meeting Morrison during a Fellows Weekend her senior year of high school. From that moment, Kick says she always knew she wanted more out of her college experience, and Morrison was her inspiration.

“She’s so loving, and she’s the embodiment of service leadership,” says Kick, who will serve as one of three Elon Volunteers! executive directors as a senior. “And Mary being the embodiment of service leadership is what has made our work so successful. She practices service leadership in any interaction you have with her.”

The Kernodle Center for Civic Life is ready to take its next bold step to work collaboratively with faculty, staff, students and community partners to inspire, educate and prepare students to directly address societal challenges today while simultaneously working to lead systemic change for a more equitable tomorrow.

Bob Frigo





As she looks back at her role as director of the Kernodle Center, Morrison sees a number of areas that the center can target moving forward. Whether it takes on issues of diversity, equity and inclusion, economic development, or health care, she feels the center and the university are poised to make an even greater impact in local and global communities.

The center will continue its mission under Frigo's leadership, as the former associate director of the Kernodle Center was named director and assistant dean of campus life following Morrison's retirement. Serving as associate director since 2013, Frigo helped advance the center's mission in a number of ways. He co-founded *Elon Votes!* in 2014 with student leader Meredith Berk '15, helped lead community and civic engagement programs at Elon and assisted with the creation of strategic plans for the Kernodle Center and the Division of Student Life. He is "humbled and honored" to have the opportunity to continue the work Morrison started.

"Cultivating informed, engaged and active citizens to

shape a truly representative democracy for the 21st century is now more important than ever before," Frigo says. "The Kernodle Center for Civic Life is ready to take its next bold step to work collaboratively with faculty, staff, students and community partners to inspire, educate and prepare students to directly address societal challenges today while simultaneously working to lead systemic change for a more equitable tomorrow."

Following more than a decade of service to Elon, Morrison is proud of the hundreds of student leaders she's partnered with who remain active in their communities to this day. It's those students who made this work so meaningful to her. She hopes they'll teach their own families to be passionate about service and that that passion will carry on through generations. "I am so grateful that I have been able to have a career that has been so satisfying, so meaningful and having the privilege of working with hundreds if not thousands of students," Morrison says. "I think of them like a thousand flowers blooming in the field, and that makes me happy." ✨

{ Members of the campus community participated in a meal distribution event at the CityGate Dream Center in Burlington, N.C., during one of five Alternative Break experiences in the spring. }



Janelle Bennett '14



Alexandra Robinson '15

A MILLION-DOLLAR IDEA



Makayla Oby '23



Raleigh "Tres" Jones '20



Shakori Fletcher '16

Arianne Payne '20



Jordan Vaughn '20

Contia' Prince '18



Kiara Hunter '23



Chann Little '17



What began as a desire to help support Black students has evolved into a quest to grow Elon's Black Alumni Scholarship endowment to \$1 million.

BY KATIE PEOPLES '06

As she walked across Elon's campus wondering if this would be her home for the next four years, Kelli Palmer '98 remembers hearing the tour guide explain the many student organizations Elon had and how any student could start one.

"Everyone can lead at Elon," the tour guide said. "Anyone can make a difference."

Fast forward to 2007. Palmer was working in fundraising at the University of Virginia and had a front-row seat to the impact philanthropy had on students' lives. "I saw the power and potential of Black alumni engagement as donors with the Black alumni group," Palmer says.

Participating in creating life-changing opportunities for students, particularly Black students, along with the comment from the tour guide inspired Palmer to take action at Elon. Priscilla Awkard '95 was thinking along the same lines. "Priscilla was talking about an interest in a scholarship and I was talking about an interest in some sort of structured giving," Palmer says. "And so, the two of us got together and thought, 'What if we could get some other people to participate?'"

Palmer, Awkard and Darryl Smith '86 contributed \$5,000 each to the effort to create a solid foundation on which to build what became Elon's Black Alumni Scholarship. "We talked to everyone about it," Palmer says. "We passed a hat at events every Homecoming. We stood on the stage, Priscilla and I, and we said, 'We're raising money to send other Black kids to Elon. There's a hat. Put your money in it.'"

Today, gifts from more than 1,000 alumni donors have pushed the value of the endowed scholarship to more than \$350,000, helping to change the lives of its student recipients. To date, it has provided financial assistance to nine Elon students, with the 10th recipient, Makayla Oby '23, announced in April. Oby, a sophomore biochemistry major with a minor in public health studies, is working her way toward a career in family dentistry. "I was thrilled to learn of my selection for this honor and am deeply appreciative of the support," Oby says. "I will continue to work hard and eventually give back through dentistry, research and funding scholarships for future students like myself."



We talked to everyone about it. We passed a hat at events every Homecoming. We stood on the stage, Priscilla and I, and we said, 'We're raising money to send other Black kids to Elon. There's a hat. Put your money in it.'

— Kelli Palmer '98, co-founder of the Black Alumni Scholarship

Brian Feeley '03, assistant vice president of university advancement at Elon, has watched much of this growth since his return to campus as a staff member in 2014. "It has really grown exponentially since it was founded, but in the past five years or so, we've seen steady growth both in terms of participation and dollars to the scholarship," Feeley says. He credits the leadership of Elon's Black Alumni Network (EBAN) for building a strong foundation of philanthropy and staying engaged with the university.

"They have passed the baton to a new network of leadership," Feeley says. "We have seen within the EBAN community that peer-to-peer leadership takes shape. They impress on their peers the need to pay it forward and blaze a trail for future Black students at Elon."

It's not surprising that Elon announced this summer an ambitious goal to triple the endowment of the Black Alumni Scholarship to \$1 million by 2025. This special fundraising initiative is part of the Elon LEADS Campaign, for which building scholarship support is the top priority, and coincides with the 25th anniversary of EBAN's founding. As one of the original founders of the scholarship, Palmer looks forward to receiving messages asking her to contribute to the scholarship on Elon Day, Elon's annual day of giving. She also enjoys reading notes from the recipients to hear what they are doing and what they hope to become.

"I love that connection to current students. I love being reminded annually that the legacy continues and that it evolves," Palmer says.

A living legacy

That legacy lives on through students like Kiara Hunter '23, who received the scholarship in 2020. Hunter enrolled at Elon in fall 2019 after receiving the Honorable Thad Eure North Carolina Achievement Scholarship in the Odyssey Program. The Black Alumni Scholarship helped fill additional financial needs.

"When I received the Black Alumni Scholarship, it gave me a sense of security and peace," Hunter says. "Because of the scholarship, I have the potential to do great things. I can go to graduate school and study public health and do things to help the community. It gave me that boost and I'm grateful for it."

The ability to help communities solve multiple problems is what drew Hunter to public health. The field touches on many important issues, from mental and physical well-being to the environment, education and the criminal justice system. Hunter is now a double major in public health studies and statistics. "All of my courses are teaching me different things. There are multiple ways to make change. As long as you have the motivation and drive you can do it," says Hunter, who hopes to eventually attend graduate school at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill



Because of the scholarship, I have the potential to do great things."

— Kiara Hunter '23, public health studies and statistics double major

and ultimately work in public health for a government agency or in the nonprofit sector.

Hunter finished her first year as a Black Alumni Scholarship recipient as one of 15 Lumen Prize scholars, Elon's top undergraduate research award. She will receive \$20,000 for a two-year research project conducted with a faculty mentor.

Turning dreams into reality

Chann Little '17 received the scholarship in 2014, which gave him the resources needed to take his education to the next level. "Being a Black Alumni Scholarship recipient was life-changing. It enabled me to be able to do the Elon in LA program, which started my career in the entertainment industry," Little says. "Going to LA during the program gave me the confidence to move there after school, which led to me having a thriving career as a content strategist and social media manager."

The high-impact learning practices for which Elon is nationally known for provide the real-life experiences that set Elon graduates apart from their peers. "The Black Alumni Scholarship turns dreams into reality. I am a living testament to how this program transforms lives," Little says. "When you are a first-generation college student, opportunities like Elon in LA seem inaccessible because of the costs. This scholarship gave me the means and the courage to pursue my dreams unapologetically and confidently."

After graduating, Little followed his dreams back to the West Coast, where he learned the ropes of the communications industry at a digital marketing agency. He then went on to work with friend Sydel Curry-Lee '17 before joining Sheryl Sandberg, COO of Facebook, and her team at Option B as the leading social media manager. Today, Little runs his own company, The Visionary House, a full-scale digital marketing agency that provides creative services, tools and resources to socially conscious, BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and people of color) and women-led businesses.



The Black Alumni Scholarship turns dreams into reality. I am a living testament to how this program transforms lives."

— Chann Little '17, owner of The Visionary House



I liken my emotions about the Black Alumni Scholarship to how the very first farmer must have felt when they planted their first seed and saw the fruits of their labor grow."

— Priscilla Awkard '95, co-founder of the Black Alumni Scholarship

As its endowment grows, Elon's Black Alumni Scholarship will continue to impact the lives of students like Little, Hunter and Oby thanks to Awkard and many others who helped nourish those seeds of hope, planted so many years ago.

"I liken my emotions about the Black Alumni Scholarship to how the very first farmer must have felt when they planted their first seed and saw the fruits of their labor grow. I imagine they felt an array of emotions: excitement, encouragement, pride, a drive to do more and just pure joy, because these are all of my feelings," Awkard says. "We have hit so many milestones because of so many special people and we hope to grow this list by sharing the great stories and encouraging more to give to this amazing cause." ♣

To learn more about how you can support Elon's Black Alumni Scholarship, visit elon.edu/eban.

Madison Taylor contributed to this story.



WHAT WE LEARNED

Members of the Elon community share what they've learned this past academic year as the university and people across the globe have grappled with a changing world.

THE PANDEMIC CREATED MANY CHALLENGES for the Elon community during the 2020–21 academic year, but it also brought with it a host of lessons — opportunities to learn on personal, professional and academic levels.

As the university readies for a new academic year, Elon students, faculty and staff share the main lesson they learned as they adapted and endured during this global health crisis. They responded with stories about how the pandemic brought personal foundations into clearer focus, how they developed the ability to respond in ways they had not thought possible, and how breaking down barriers opened a world of possibilities.

LESSON 1

THE IMPORTANCE OF A STRONG FOUNDATION

Chandler Vaughan '21, Leadership Fellow and Elon National Pan-Hellenic Council president

The biggest lesson I learned throughout the pandemic is the importance of having a solid foundation to withstand difficult times and external pressures and challenges that present themselves. For me, that looks like God and my faith, and receiving discernment and guidance on how to operate in life and how to truly be a change agent and impact others' lives through love, through leadership, through intention.





LESSON 2

TAKE NOTHING FOR GRANTED

Isabella Seman '21, Elon volleyball player

I think a big lesson and maybe the best lesson I've learned throughout the COVID-19 pandemic was to not take opportunities for granted. You never know when it's going to be the last time you're stepping foot on the court and playing your last point. You never know when it's going to be the last time you step on stage and have a show. You never know when it's going to be the last time you can hug your grandparents, hug your best friend, a loved one. But I also think it's a big opportunity to realize how important taking care of yourself is, how important mental health is, and to take time to relax, to recharge. At the same time, take time to check in on your loved ones to make sure people are OK. Always make sure that you're checking in on yourself and on each other.

WHAT WE
LEARNED

LESSON 3

LISTENING AND UNDERSTANDING

Anthony Hatcher, professor of journalism

Deadlines are extremely important in what I teach, but what I learned during the pandemic was that sometimes you can give a student not just a second chance, but a third chance or even a fourth chance. And that student will come through, and that student will learn something, and that student will benefit. I've also learned to be a better listener. I try to talk less when a student needs me, and to really hear what they're trying to say to me. This entire experience has reinforced something I've known since I first started teaching years ago: Being in the classroom is the best part of my day. I have classroom withdrawal just as much as my students do, and I can't wait to get back to them face to face.



LESSON 4

THE POWER OF REAL-TIME PUBLIC HEALTH DATA

Stephanie Baker, assistant professor of public health studies

I've learned three big lessons during this past year related to public health and this COVID-19 pandemic. The first is we can collect data about racial inequities in real time at a national level. As health equity researchers, we knew that this pandemic was going to disproportionately impact communities of color because all diseases do. So to see politicians, activists and academics lobbying to make sure that data was being collected and reported based on race, ethnicity and gender was really an important contribution. It raised our collective societal understanding about racial disparities and health.

The second lesson was the impact of talking about structural and systemic racism as it related to the pandemic. There was this interesting intersection of the need to be safe and stay home and the need to advocate and fight for racial justice. And the third thing was what we can accomplish when we break down barriers to improving and increasing knowledge. Part of the reason why the COVID vaccine was able to be developed so quickly was because a lot of the barriers and the ways that we structure new knowledge formation in our pharmacology world were broken down. People weren't hoarding the information about the coronavirus; they were sharing it widely across the globe. That meant you had scientists all over the world doing their best to figure out a solution to this problem.

Imagine how much more leverage, how much more productive work we could do if we started to break down some of those barriers in more consistent ways outside of when we have a global pandemic. There's so much to learn about what's possible, and I hope we embed some of the lessons we've learned into our future.



LESSON 5

ADAPT AND PIVOT

Tim Dengler, director of building trades

The biggest thing that I learned this past year was how quickly people can adapt and pivot in order to overcome a challenge. Everybody had their normal day-to-day job and then everything changed. The pandemic hit and everybody had to reinvent the way they went about their lives. People picked up other responsibilities that may not have had anything to do with their previous job, and I was just amazed to see how quickly people were able to take charge of those new duties and responsibilities and execute them flawlessly. It was really cool to see people jumping in and getting into a team effort, knowing that we were all in this together, and that we were going to solve the problems as best we could with the information we had to get the university back to some semblance of normal.



WHAT WE LEARNED



To watch videos of these and other things we've learned, scan this QR code.

ADVOCATING FOR VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

Funded by the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission, Elon Law's Emergency Legal Services Program plays a key role in helping those who turn to family justice centers for protection from abuse in Guilford and Alamance counties.

BY ERIC TOWNSEND

PHYSICAL BLOWUPS WITH HER PARTNER had become routine around the home, but for Maricruz Hernandez-Valdez, the breaking point was when he got drunk one day in 2018 and assaulted their 11-year-old daughter. That was when Hernandez-Valdez realized she needed help.

The mother of four already was familiar with the Guilford County Family Justice Center in downtown Greensboro, North Carolina, and had previously visited for guidance on the relationship. Now that her partner had turned his ire on a child, guidance wasn't enough. She sought a restraining order.

"I was looking for protection," Hernandez-Valdez says. "I knew I wasn't going to be able to get the kind of support I needed from my family. More than anything, this was to let him know that I wasn't alone and someone was going to help me."

{ With the help of Elon Law's Emergency Legal Services Program, Maricruz Hernandez-Valdez was able to obtain a temporary restraining order against her now-former abusive partner. }



The Guilford County Family Justice Center and the almost identical Alamance County Family Justice Center on Martin Street in nearby Burlington offer comprehensive resources for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, child abuse and elder abuse. Both centers bring together under one roof law enforcement, medical, legal and social service professionals to coordinate access to services, safety planning and judicial intervention with a special focus on victims of domestic and sexual violence.

Among the agencies that contribute to the success of both centers is Elon Law's Emergency Legal Services Program, a one-of-a-kind program in American legal education. The program aids clients in emergency situations by providing in-house legal consultations, help with preparing and obtaining domestic violence protective orders, and coordination with other in-house professionals about criminal charges and other comprehensive services designed to get clients to safety.

Statistics shared by the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence indicate that domestic violence is "prevalent in every community and affects all people regardless of age, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, or nationality." More than 10 million adults experience domestic violence each year. An estimated 20 percent of all female victims and 11 percent of male victims are in need of legal services. Nationally, nearly a quarter of all women experience intimate-partner physical violence during their lifetimes. In North Carolina, that number is 44 percent, and the problem has only intensified over the past year with the COVID-19 pandemic and related government-issued lockdowns.

"Issues of domestic violence and intimate-partner violence breed in isolation," says Catherine Johnson, director of the Guilford County Family Justice Center. "While in the past year and a half we've had to take necessary steps to self-isolate for health, what we know is that instances of physical abuse and financial abuse have intensified."

Funded by the North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission with grants totaling more than \$2.5 million, the Elon Law program provides specialized legal services in the fields of family law, immigration and elder abuse to ensure a victim's immediate physical

MORE THAN 10 MILLION ADULTS EXPERIENCE DOMESTIC VIOLENCE EACH YEAR. AN ESTIMATED 20 PERCENT OF ALL FEMALE VICTIMS AND 11 PERCENT OF MALE VICTIMS ARE IN NEED OF LEGAL SERVICES.



{ Margaret Dudley, director of Elon Law's
Emergency Legal Services Program }

and psychological health and safety. It often refers its clients to Child Protective Services or other social service agencies. When appropriate, the attorneys — some part-time, some on contract — help clients with child custody agreements or modifications to existing arrangements.

“People that come to the Family Justice Center have been living in abusive situations for a while, and for whatever reason, they have gotten to a point where they have decided to reach out for help” says Margaret Dudley, director of Elon Law’s Emergency Legal Services Program. “You’d be surprised what people will tell you about their lives.”

Dudley has been with the Elon Law legal services program since it joined the Guilford and Alamance centers in 2017. A longtime Greensboro attorney — Dudley was the third Black woman to practice law in Guilford County — she manages a team of part-time and contract attorneys, Elon Law students on externships and in their residencies-in-practice, and an administrative assistant. It was a career opportunity that took time to consider. After years of managing her solo law practice, and inspired by experiences growing up in Eastern North Carolina and other parts of the Jim Crow South, Dudley saw how her no-nonsense approach and decades of courtroom litigation could be of value in helping people in crisis find a measure of peace.

“Attorney Dudley is a really strong woman,” Hernandez-Valdez says recounting consultations about how legal documents are

“
People that come to
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written and how arguments are presented in court. “At first I was a little bit intimidated! But I also saw myself in her. When she told me, ‘This is how it needs to be and this is how it goes,’ I just knew this was who I needed. Being strong isn’t a bad thing.”

Neither Dudley nor Johnson is aware of another law school that offers emergency legal services inside a family justice center in the same manner as Elon Law, though Johnson says some law schools operate domestic violence clinics that may assist nearby centers.

The impact of Elon Law’s innovative approach led last year to an invitation for Dudley to co-teach a national webinar for civil attorneys on how to try cases involving strangulation. The webinar was co-hosted by the Alliance for Hope International’s Strangulation Institute and the American Bar Association.

An integral part of Elon Law’s program is the student component. Dudley and her team welcome several students each year for academic credit as part of their residencies-in-practice or externships. Katherine Bordwine L’18, an attorney with Legal Aid of North Carolina, praised Dudley’s mentorship and the lessons she shared for achieving success in the profession.

“She taught me that empathy without boundaries really isn’t the way to go in providing legal services,” says Bordwine, who completed her Elon Law residency-in-practice inside the Guilford County Family Justice Center. “It’s better to have compassion for someone in crisis and help them build a plan for addressing what’s happening in their lives. When you understand where people are coming from, really amazing things can happen, whether it’s getting out of a situation or persevering through a difficult situation.”

Ultimately, that’s how Hernandez-Valdez found the help she needed. A temporary restraining order, followed by a modified custody agreement that gave her now-former partner time to rebuild trust with his children, has led to a healthier situation for everyone. “For me, it’s always about my children. It wasn’t about me and him. Punishment wasn’t the goal,” Hernandez-Valdez says. “I wanted to find stability in my children’s lives. I wanted them to be safe.” ♣

What's in a color?

A look at the meaning behind the colorful robes and special garments faculty and students wear during academic processions.

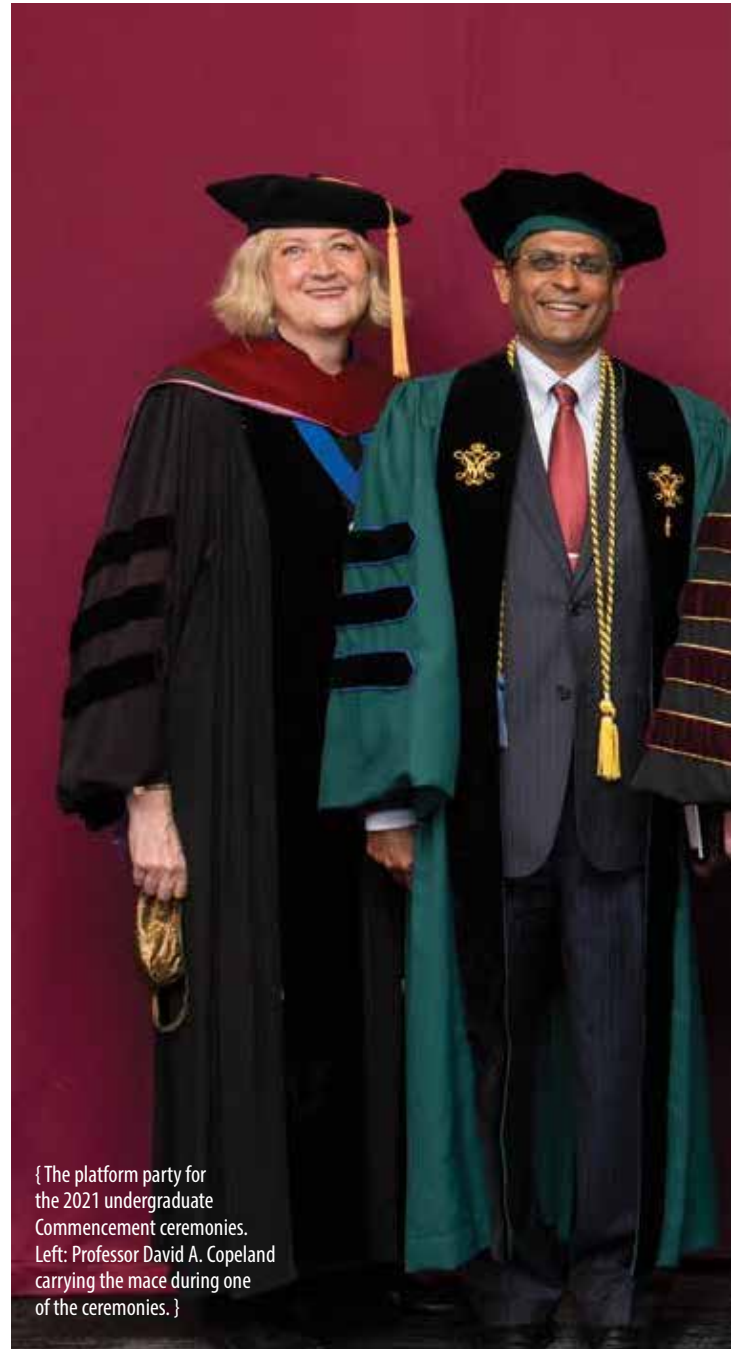
BY KEREN RIVAS '04

ATTEND ANY OFFICIAL CEREMONY at Elon that involves an academic procession and you will notice participants wearing an array of colorful garments.

Ever since the first Commencement took place Under the Oaks in 1891, Elon faculty and students have worn academic regalia during graduations. It's a tradition that goes back to medieval European universities and has not changed much since the 16th century. Academic regalia signifies the wearer's academic accomplishments and includes a robe, head covering and hood.

The baccalaureate robe at Elon is maroon, representing one of the school colors. It is a simple design, with full sleeves. The master's robe is black and has a closed or glove sleeve open at the wrist. The doctoral gown is very different, with velvet panels down the front and velvet chevrons on large bell-shaped sleeves. Additionally, the head covering for those who hold a doctorate is a velvet Tudor cap with a tassel. Both the baccalaureate and master's head coverings have tassels.

In addition to these various distinctions between different levels of academic accomplishments, the hood also adds meaning to the academic regalia. The hood falls from the shoulders down the back of the gown and displays different colors based on established disciplines. The hood is usually black with a colored edge that represents the discipline of the wearer's degree. The color in the silk lining represents the degree being awarded by the college or university. An Intercollegiate Code was adopted in 1895, matching colors with disciplines. Wondering what colors go with different disciplines? Check the list on the facing page.



{ The platform party for the 2021 undergraduate Commencement ceremonies. Left: Professor David A. Copeland carrying the mace during one of the ceremonies. }

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|---|---|--|---|
| } |  White: <i>Arts, letters and humanities</i> |  Crimson: <i>Journalism and communications</i> |  Dark blue: <i>Philosophy</i> |
| |  Drab: <i>Business</i> |  Purple: <i>Laws</i> |  Golden yellow: <i>Science</i> |
| |  Rust: <i>Economics</i> |  Lemon: <i>Library science</i> |  Citron: <i>Social sciences</i> |
| |  Light blue: <i>Education</i> |  Pink: <i>Music</i> |  Scarlet: <i>Theology</i> |
| |  Brown: <i>Fine arts</i> | | |



The changing landscape of **live entertainment**

BY MARK HORSBURGH '07

In March of 2020, my Delta flight glided up the Hudson River, past the Statue of Liberty, Freedom Tower and Lower Manhattan before banking right just in front of the United Nations building. It was another uneventful approach into New York's LaGuardia Airport, which for someone working in the event industry had become like turning into my driveway after yet another week on the road.

What I didn't know at the time was that it would be my last flight for longer than I could imagine. A new career reality would set in quickly as I watched numerous events we had planned, some years in the making, get canceled due to the early uncertainties of COVID-19. We would not be heading out to stage the next presidential debate, any part of the NCAA tournament or, as we would soon find out, any event anytime soon. It was a punch in the gut. While these cancellations were not anywhere near the greatest loss of this pandemic, the impact

on the event industry was swift and significant.

Canceled events led to the same painful decisions and consequential implications faced by so many industries, including furloughs, layoffs and, for some, closing businesses altogether.

For an industry that prides itself on thriving in the unknown and gracefully handling adversity, this was the ultimate test. Leagues scrambled to create bubbles to complete their seasons. Production companies and agencies pivoted to the new environment of virtual events. Freelancers and gig-workers rushed to find any job they could. This included the newly created task of running community COVID-19 testing and vaccination centers, where the skills needed to efficiently manage this most important challenge aligned well with those in the event industry out of work.

True to the American entrepreneurial spirit, quite a few success stories emerged amid all the early chaos. Sport leagues found ways to restart in empty stadiums, sponsors created new types of events to reach their stakeholders and totally new businesses were formed on the fly to service the fast-changing event environment. Even

with the benefit of the early solutions, the extended break from live events continued to create more challenges. Virtual events quickly became tiresome. Sporting events felt soulless without in-person, capacity crowds cheering for their favorite teams. And with no revenue, event venues teetered toward bankruptcy. For some people, circumstances became so bleak that the actual future of in-person events seemed tenuous. But for most, the return of live events has never felt more important, as so many of us look to a future where we can gather together once again to share a common experience. People have been longing to do things with other people, and therein lies quite a bit of hope.

As we enter summer, the industry is seeing strong signs of a return to live events. Attendance at many outdoor stadiums is back to normal, musicians are beginning to hold concerts and indoor events are even starting to remove or eliminate capacity restrictions. There are still many obstacles. Varying protocols in each city, county and state make a unified return to events nearly impossible. Everyone has their own personal comfort level with their experiences around others. And with increased politicization around health and safety guidelines and protocols, leagues, event producers and sponsors have proceeded tentatively with the re-introduction of activities, fearing public backlash.

Having said that, events have never come without challenges, and the industry remains resilient. This past March, almost a year to the day from when event cancellations first began to pile up, our WarnerMedia team was given final sign-off to produce a between-games music performance by Miley Cyrus at the NCAA Men's Final Four in Indianapolis. The adrenaline was flowing again. We'd have only two weeks to produce an event with a planning cycle that would usually span up to a year. Within hours, our team had been formed. We were back in business, doing what we were trained to do, as we jumped into action to present one of the largest nationally televised performances of the year.

As our flight lifted off the ground from LaGuardia and ascended over Central Park on the way to Indianapolis for an event with real-life fans (no more cardboard cutouts!), it was hard not to smile and think about how far we have already come, and how close we are to truly being back, better than ever. ✦

Mark Horsburgh is the director of live events at WarnerMedia. He is a 2007 business administration graduate and past recipient of Elon's Top 10 Under 10 Award.



“For an industry that prides itself on thriving in the unknown and gracefully handling adversity, this was the ultimate test.”

A NEW Beginning

Dear Alumni,



As I write this, spring is in full bloom outside my window and I'm beginning to reflect on the fact that my year-long service as the Elon Alumni Board president has come to an end. While serving during a global pandemic has been challenging at times, I am beyond grateful for the opportunity to work with so many dedicated alumni and such wonderful Elon staff. Their leadership is inspiring and they have such enthusiasm for what lies ahead for this university we love so much.

I'm thankful that **Katie Zach Fitts '04**, who lives in Richmond, Va., and serves as head of talent marketing and communications for Capital One, has agreed to lead the alumni board for the next year. **Anne Frank Casey '87 P'21**, a resident of Avondale, Pa., and principal at SolomonEdwards, will serve as vice president.

When I think about all the change that this time of year brings, there remains a constant in nature. As the outside world awakens from winter, it seems there is a parallel uncovering within society as vaccines become available and we slowly leave our

screens to greet each other face to face once again. A new beginning.

Just as we count on spring to greet us each year, so too can we count on the daunting yet exciting and hopeful time in a student's life: Commencement. To commence means to begin. And so, we begin again. As we begin this new fiscal year and new academic year, we acknowledge the new chance we have to inspire, instill change and make an impact on generations to come.

By the time you read this, we will have welcomed a new class of Elon alumni to our global family, and we will be preparing to greet a new cohort of students eager to commence their journeys. We hope to reconnect in person for Welcome to the City events this summer and at Homecoming & Reunion Weekend this fall, where there will be more to celebrate than milestones and coming together again — a new beginning.

Brian Scales '96
President, Elon Alumni Board

Get ready for #ElonHome!

Come home to Elon Nov. 5–7. After a year apart, reconnect with old friends and create new memories that will last a lifetime at Elon's Homecoming & Reunion Weekend 2021. The festivities will kick off with an awards ceremony Friday morning to honor the Distinguished Alumni Award recipients, followed by the annual Rock the Block Party for the entire Elon family, complete with live music, games, food trucks and fireworks. Other activities include:

- **Brick Run/Walk:** Start your Saturday with a run or walk with family and friends along Elon's brick pathways
- **Game Day Experience:** Get energized at our All Alumni Tailgate before cheering on the Phoenix as they take on Villanova
- **Reunion and affinity events**, including the Golden Alumni Induction Ceremony and more!

Registration opens in early September. For more information, visit elon.edu/homecoming.



alumni on the town

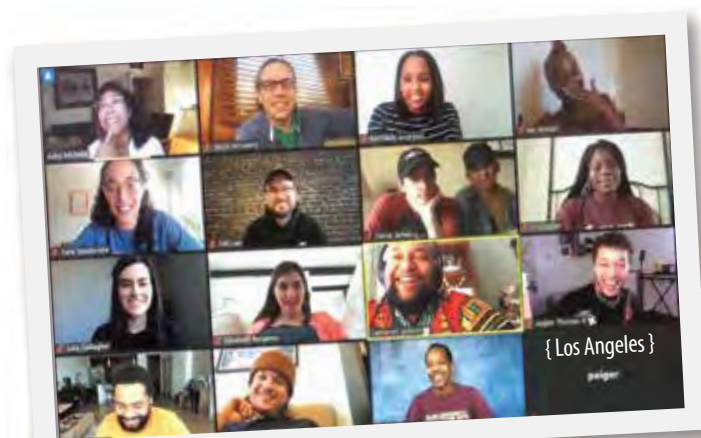
CHAPTER HAPPENINGS

- The **Los Angeles Alumni Chapter** hosted a virtual discussion Feb. 28 in celebration of Black History Month. **Cameron Jackson '11** curated a recommended content list, then led a panel discussion with Elon Black alumni about the depiction of the Black community in entertainment. Recommended selections included “Horror Noire: A History of Black Horror,” “Coming to America,” “Black Panther” and “The Fresh Prince of Bel Air.”
- This spring the **Young Alumni Council (YAC)** welcomed 10 new members and kick started its spring meeting with an orientation on April 16. The event gave an opportunity for both new members and YAC leadership to review what it meant to be a member of the council. Council members spent the following day hearing from university leaders, including President Connie Ledoux Book.
- The **Triangle Alumni Chapter** hosted a virtual professional development panel April 22 featuring four alumni who cover varying industries. **Jonathan Citty '10** (software), **Mital Patel L'09** (business), **Emily Frizzell '19** (education) and **Evan Sassaman '19** (finance) discussed how the pandemic affected each area of their work. The chapter also kicked off a Phoenix 5K as they closed out their year of virtual events encouraging alumni to get outside and enjoy the spring weather.

Have you recently moved?



Make sure to update your information at elon.edu/alumniupdate to learn about upcoming events in your area.



welcome

to the city 2021

EVENT SERIES

Each fall, Elon's alumni chapters host events August through October as part of the Welcome to the City Series. Whether you've just moved to a new city or haven't moved in years, Welcome to the City events give alumni a chance to reconnect with one another and the Elon community in their region. If you are new to one of the 38 areas where we have alumni chapters, this is the perfect opportunity to get to know others in your city, meet chapter leaders and learn more about Elon programming in your new home. More information about dates and locations for the entire event series, as well as other regional programs, can be found at elon.edu/alumni. We hope to see you at the events in your area!

TO FIND
A CHAPTER
NEAR YOU, GO TO

ELON.EDU/ALUMNI



Welcome to the alumni family!

Congratulations on your graduation, Class of 2021. As you begin the next phase of your life, whether it's starting a new job, continuing your education or following another path, remember that the Office of Alumni Engagement is your partner for continued success. Elon will continue serving you as an alum in many ways — through job opportunities from fellow alumni, chapter events in your area, Homecoming & Reunion Weekend and professional development opportunities. Help Elon keep you informed and involved by updating your information. Visit elon.edu/alumniupdate to ensure you receive information that is relevant to you.



IT'S TIME TO CHEER ON THE PHOENIX!

Whether you are planning to attend a game on campus or on the road, or just tune in from home, get ready to show your school spirit!



Saturday, Sept. 4 – Wofford
Class of 2020 Celebration

Saturday, Sept. 11 – Campbell*

Saturday, Sept. 18 – Appalachian State*

Saturday, Sept. 25 – William & Mary
Family Weekend

Saturday, Oct. 2 – Richmond*

Saturday, Oct. 9 – Maine*

Saturday, Oct. 23 – New Hampshire

Saturday, Oct. 30 – James Madison*

Saturday, Nov. 6 – Villanova
Homecoming & Reunion Weekend

Saturday, Nov. 13 – Towson*

Saturday, Nov. 20 – Rhode Island

For more details and ticket information,
visit elonphoenix.com.

** Denotes away games*

CLASS NOTES

51 **Carolyn Long Beane** was selected as the 2019 Woman of the Year by the American Business Women's Association Mid Day Professionals Chapter in Asheboro, N.C.

64|65|66|67

55th REUNION Committee members **Eileen Cobb, Mary Benson Daniels** and **Stan Switzer** encourage all members of the Classes of 1964, 1965 and 1967 to return to Elon and join the Class of 1966 in celebrating their 55th reunion during Homecoming & Reunion Weekend, Nov. 5-7. If you have any questions, please contact reunions@elon.edu.

70|71 **50th REUNION**

Committee co-chairs **Frank Lyon, Noble Marshall Jr.** and **Nina Martin McConnell** along with committee members **Buck Bayliff, Bob Bridwell, Lynne Marie Schwartz Davis, Bob Lane, Sally O'Neill Mauldin, Chuck Miller, John Paisley, Diane Clendennen Payne, Thomas Short** and **Wade Williamson** encourage all classmates from 1970 and 1971 to attend the 50th class reunion during Homecoming & Reunion Weekend, Nov. 5-7. Honorees will receive their Golden Alumni Medallions at a luncheon on Friday, Nov. 5. If you

have any questions, please contact reunions@elon.edu.

75|76 **45th REUNION**

The Classes of 1975 and 1976 will celebrate their 45th reunion at Elon's Homecoming & Reunion Weekend, Nov. 5-7. Reunion committee members **Deborah Cochran, Zene Fearing, Tom Hall, John "Archie" Ligon** and **Ted Winslow Jr.** look forward to seeing many classmates during Homecoming & Reunion Weekend, Nov. 5-7. Please contact reunions@elon.edu if you have any questions.

Entrepreneurship on her own terms

CAROLINE DIFRANGO '23

OWNING AN INTERIOR DESIGN STORE was not the destination **Ariene Dennis Bethea '00** had set for her career path.

Armed with a corporate communications degree from Elon University and a master's degree in management communication and organizational development from Emerson College, Bethea's original path led her into the corporate world.

Her shift from human resources to interior design came about, ironically, because of her former employer. "We always met in my boss's office and it was never enough space, and I always thought it could be configured differently," Ariene says. "When she decided to go on vacation, I told her I was going to redo her



office. ... When she came back she was like, 'Oh my God, you should do this for a living.'"

After this lightbulb moment, Bethea began pursuing design. She worked briefly at Bassett Furniture to receive formal training, but found she did not enjoy the hard-selling of being employed by a major furniture company.

That experience paired with watching her husband, Daren Bethea '00, open his own chiropractic practice gave her the confidence to

branch out independently. She had an eye for acquiring vintage decor, so she decided to start selling her finds on websites such as Etsy. That's when she realized there was a market for what she offered that extended beyond her local community. "Most of my pieces were going out to other states, so I started doing local pop-ups," Bethea says, adding she also briefly sold in a multi-merchant space.

Throughout the process, her communications degree has certainly come in handy. It has not only helped her with marketing her products, but also provided her the skillset to temporarily contribute to local interior design publications. After gaining a solid social media presence and following, Bethea had the confidence to finally open Dressing Rooms Interiors Studio in 2015 in Charlotte, North Carolina. She sells vintage decor and the occasional handmade item, as long as it matches her brand. "I buy things that I love," she says. "When I look at an item, I try to ask myself, 'Is this on brand?'"

As a Black female business owner in the South, opening the physical store was no cakewalk. "When I first opened the store, I would get some questions like 'Oh, is this your store?' or 'Are these things consigned?' or 'Who's the business owner?'" she says.

Luckily, the support system she had built through fellow Elon alumni, her husband and other designers on social media has helped her not only overcome this but thrive. And industry leaders have taken notice. In recent years, Dressing Rooms Interiors Studio has been recognized by House Beautiful, HGTV and Essence magazines, among others.



But Bethea does not let the numerous accolades go to her head. "I don't think about them, actually. I just keep doing the work because work still has to get done," she says. "I give it its moment, but all the other things still have to get done."

Case in point: Even when the brick-and-mortar store was closed due to COVID-19, Dressing Rooms Interiors Studio continued to flourish. Going forward, Bethea hopes to hire an assistant and continue growing her business while inspiring others, especially her clients. "I want people to be free to create whatever space they want in their homes," she says. "I have to constantly remind clients it's their home and they can do whatever they want." ❀

Keep up with Bethea at dressingroomsinteriorsstudio.com.

80|81 40th REUNION

Join the Classes of 1980 and 1981's 40th reunion committee members **Laurie Alcon Brown, Mike Brown, Steve Coor, Linda Kent Duckworth, Kim Spencer Matthews, Scott Matthews, Vickie Blackwell Morrow, Lynn Moore Stewart, Betty Burton Thayer** and **King White** back on campus Nov. 5-7 to help celebrate your 40th reunion during Homecoming & Reunion Weekend. Be sure to make plans now to attend. If you have any questions, please contact reunions@elon.edu.

82 **Aubrey "Mike" Wilkerson** recently joined Virginia-based F&M Bank as the chief strategy officer and Northern Shenandoah Valley market executive. In his new role, Mike will be responsible for strategic leadership and the expansion of the bank into

the Northern Shenandoah Valley. Mike has served in numerous leadership roles in the mid-Atlantic states for the past 39 years. He lives in Winchester with wife Denise B. Wilkerson.

85|86 35th REUNION

Join the Classes of 1985 and 1986's 35th reunion committee members **Fred Applin, Joe Coco** and **Steve Sabol** on Nov. 5-7 to participate in class reunion activities and reminisce about the great times that were spent at Elon. The committee is looking forward to catching up with classmates during Homecoming & Reunion Weekend. If you have any questions, please contact reunions@elon.edu.

89 Former first-year Elon roommates **Emilie Justad "Mo" Mobley** and **Lee**

74 Major League Baseball Umpire **Joe West '74** broke baseball's umpiring record May 25, working home plate as the St. Louis Cardinals visited the Chicago White Sox. It marked the 5,376th game for West, who began his career as an umpire during the 1976 season. A native of Asheville, N.C., West grew up in Greenville, N.C., and played baseball and football at Elon. He was inducted into the Elon University Sports Hall of Fame in 1986 and into the North Carolina Sports Hall of fame in 2018.



Norwood joined forces in 2020 as part of Annapolis College Consulting. Mo lives in Southern California and owns California College Consulting, and Lee, owner of Annapolis College Consulting, lives in Maryland. From coast to coast, the two collaborate to help

high school students find their perfect college fit.

90|91 30th REUNION

Time to celebrate the Classes of 1990 and 1991's 30th reunion with committee members **Jana Telford Beal, Lisa Toomer Biggs, Belinda Wall Day, Julie Perry Githens, Gayle Arkwright Moseley, Andy Shaffer** and **Jeanne Watson Tucker**. They hope their classmates make plans to head back to campus Nov. 5-7 to help celebrate this exciting milestone with them. If you have any questions, please contact reunions@elon.edu.

92 In April, **Christopher Landino** became the new director of career and workforce development at East Stroudsburg University. In that capacity, he manages the institution's career center, as well as the workforce development team and testing center. Christopher lives in Haddonfield, N.J.

95 **Parrish Lawler** now serves as director of trade and development for the Alabama State Port Authority. In that role, he directs container carrier sales and containerized/intermodal cargo business development for the Port Authority. Parrish joined the company in 2014 as manager of trade and development with more than 20 years of experience in transportation, logistics, sales and marketing.

95|96 25th REUNION

Exciting plans are underway for the Classes of 1995 and 1996's 25th reunion during Homecoming & Reunion Weekend, Nov. 5-7. Reunion committee chair **Beth Point Clingaman** and committee

ALUMNI ALBUM



Christopher Landino '92



Jennifer Stephenson '96



Heather Coffey '98



Jason Cain '04



Carter Davenport II '04



Danielle Nashold '04, Blaine Nashold & son Wellesley Wilson

members **Molly Smith Anderson, Liz Babb, Amy Mueller Davis, Anne Dunn Gordon, Corey Hatchell, Bryan James, Jason Knight, Brian Martindale, Amy Maxwell, Renee Fedak McGinnis, Bridget Gibson McGuire, Laura Lyerly Milliken, Alison Curley Rose, Jason Rose, Chrissie Hilliard Velaga, Shannon Prater Warden and Kristen Wither Yntema** hope to see all their classmates on campus to mark this special milestone. For more information, please contact reunions@elon.edu.

96 In October, **Jennifer Stephenson** renewed her certification as a National Board Certified Teacher. This marks her second certification renewal. Jennifer is a first-grade teacher at Waxhaw Elementary School in North Carolina.

00|01 **20th REUNION**

It's time for the Classes of 2000 and 2001's 20th reunion. Make plans now to mark this milestone with reunion committee members **Ariene Dennis Bethea, Maurice Gardner, T.J. Reynolds-Emwanta, Marianne Smith Stern and Dannielle Dixon Thomas** at Homecoming & Reunion Weekend, Nov. 5-7. For more information, contact reunions@elon.edu.

98 **Heather Coffey** was selected for the University of North Carolina Board of Governors 2021 Excellence in Teaching Award. A professor in the Department of Middle, Secondary and K-12 Education at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte's Cato College of Education, Heather was recognized for her contributions in the classroom ▶



03 **David Henkel '03**, senior financial advisor at Wells Fargo Advisors, has been named one of "America's Best-in-State" wealth advisors by Forbes. The list spotlights more than 5,000 advisors, nominated by their firms and then researched, interviewed and assigned a ranking by SHOOK Research. At Wells Fargo, David helps clients address their financial concerns and develop sound strategies by focusing on each individual's specific needs and risk tolerance. He lives in Charlotte, N.C.

ALUMNI ALBUM



Olivia Allen-Price '09 & son Sullivan Gray

TURN YOURSELF IN!

elon.edu/classnotes

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AGE	ANNUITY RATE	AGE	ANNUITY RATE
60	4.3%	60/65	4.0%
65	4.7%	67/67	4.4%
70	5.1%	71/73	4.7%

Annuity rates are subject to change. The annuity rate remains fixed once your gift is made.

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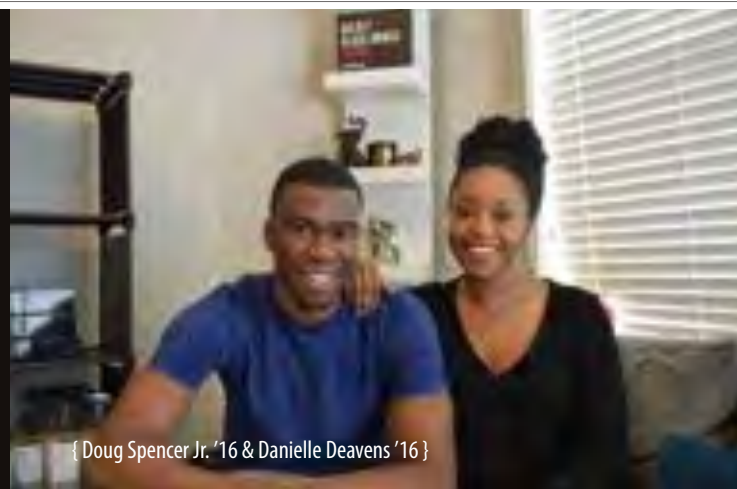
Elizabeth Read, Assistant Director of Planned Giving
336-278-7474 ■ eread@elon.edu ■ elonlegacy.org



{ A scene from Commencement day in the 1980s }

A BOLD career move

BY PATRICK WRIGHT



{ Doug Spencer Jr. '16 & Danielle Deavens '16 }

Doug Spencer Jr. '16 had already enrolled in his dream law school in 2019 when a summer job at a law firm changed his mind. "It didn't fit; it didn't feel right to me," Spencer says. "I called [the law school] and told them 'thank you, but I'm not coming.'"

After passing on law school, he published a post about the difficult decision on a friend's blog. His story garnered a great deal of attention and encouraged others to reach out to him for advice in making their own bold moves. After that experience, he decided to partner with his journalist girlfriend, **Danielle Deavens '16**, to start a blog of their own, "The Curatours," which focused on young Black people doing notable work.

Around that time, Deavens was checking off presents from her Christmas list when a friend told her about a Black-owned formal wear company that would be a great place to buy a pocket square for her father. Deavens enjoyed the shopping experience so much she decided to buy all of her family's presents that year from Black-owned businesses, but she was surprised by how difficult it was to find businesses to support.



That's when the idea for their latest venture started to take shape. By February 2020, Deavens and Spencer launched Bold Xchange, an online retail shop marketing products exclusively sourced

from Black-owned businesses. The project combines their passion for sharing stories of Black excellence with their goal of supporting Black business owners. "It was kind of born out of knowing these great Black-owned businesses existed, knowing it was a personal connection that led me to them, and wanting it to be a more accessible and simple experience," Deavens says. "It all kind of started there."

Bold Xchange offers a convenient way to find Black-owned businesses across the country and promises fast shipping, no hidden fees, vetted products and thoughtfully crafted rewards. Deavens and Spencer research and acquire products from brand partners, market them and handle fulfillment of every order themselves. It's no simple task, but the opportunity to help good businesses break

down barriers far outweighs the work required, they say. "You're reminded every day about how meaningful this is because you're working with people who are also nourishing their baby," Spencer says. "Their business is something they've put so much time into."

Bold Xchange's work with Black-owned businesses has already earned the company national attention. It has been featured by TODAY.com and partnered with Home Depot to curate a Black History Month box, containing Black-owned products, to be shipped to customers and influencers. Deavens and Spencer also received a \$50,000 equity-free Arch Grant to relocate Bold Xchange to St. Louis, Missouri, and use warehouse space there to grow their business further. The most meaningful aspect of their first year of business, however, has been the opportunity to help Black-owned businesses thrive, even amid a global pandemic. "It's so rewarding to talk to brand partners who say, 'I had a banner year, and I couldn't have done it without you guys,'" says Deavens. "That's the dream, that you help somebody have a really great year."

The summer of 2020 gave the couple's work new meaning. As cries for social justice rang out across the nation, Bold Xchange saw a spike in visitors looking for ways to support Black-owned businesses. With the increased interest, the shop frequently ran out of inventory, and Deavens and Spencer even struggled to keep a supply of shipping boxes in stock. But, the success of their business wasn't front of mind at that moment. Their focus was on making a statement. "We want to be a part of convincing people that this is something they should care about forever," Spencer says. "So for both of us, it's like, 'yes, we're supporting these entrepreneurs, but how do we engage with people who are now paying attention and help them understand that this isn't a fad, it isn't fleeting?'"

Deavens and Spencer are continuing on with that message in mind, as they form strong personal connections with the Black business owners who help make Bold Xchange a success. They've spent time learning about their stories, their concerns and their dreams, and the couple hopes to see brand partners reach their personal and business goals through Bold Xchange.

"If we've done this in one year, where will we be in five? Where will we be in 10?" Deavens says. "We have really lofty goals for Bold Xchange, so to be able to start to see even some of those come true is incredible." ✨

For more information, visit boldxchange.com.

ALUMNI ALBUM



Andrew Cordisco '11, Kelly Cordisco '11 & daughter Margaret "Margo" Coates



Travis Counsell '11



Allaire Guralnik Rutherford '11, Dan Rutherford '11 & friends



Kelly Giffear Antal '12, Chris Antal '12 & son Benjamin Loy

13 Since receiving her oak sapling at graduation, **Meredith Frazier** has taken great care of it, planting it in a flower pot before it found a permanent spot at her parents' home in Iron Station, N.C. Through the years, her sapling has endured ice storms, dry weather and some nesting bagworms, but she is happy to report it has kept climbing higher and higher. The little twig of a tree is now more than 20 feet tall and is expected to enjoy a big growth season in 2021. Meredith visits her tree often as she lives in Durham. A structural biologist and biochemist, Meredith is conducting coronavirus research at the National Institutes of Health.



and her work as a mentor to countless students. The award was established in 1993 by the UNC Board of Governors to highlight the importance of teaching.

00 In March, **Michiel Wackers** was sworn in as director of community development for the City of Cleveland by Mayor Frank Jackson. He manages the department of community development that invests more than \$30 million in local and federal resources throughout the City of Cleveland in areas of public service, blight remediation, rehabilitation and construction of new housing, storefront renovation and reuse of vacant land in the City's Land Bank. He and wife Jennifer March-Wackers live in Shaker Heights, Ohio.

04 **Jason Cain** has self-published a book, "Mosaic of Exercise and Massage: Dawning of a

New You." The book is a compilation of two prior works — "The Art of Exercise," published in 2020, and "The Art of Self-Massage," published in 2019. All titles can be found on Amazon.com. Jason lives in Columbia, Md., where he works as a physical therapist at Perform for Life Physical Therapy. • **Carter Davenport II** has been promoted to senior vice president of Diversified Trust's Greensboro office. In this role, Carter will continue to proactively assist clients with income tax reporting, investment performance reporting and financial planning. • **Danielle Nashold** and husband Blaine Nashold welcomed son Wellesley Wilson on 2/10/20. They live in Charlotte, N.C., where Danielle is a senior vice president for Bank of America.

05|06 15TH REUNION

Join **Nicholas W. Rust** and the Classes of 2005 and 2006 for their 15th reunion, Nov. 5–7 for Elon's Homecoming & Reunion Weekend. For more information, contact reunions@elon.edu.

08 **Christopher Swartz** recently rejoined the U.S. Office of Government Ethics as senior associate counsel. Chris comes from the Department of the Interior's ethics office, where he was responsible for overseeing the 12 ethics programs servicing the department's bureaus and offices, including the National Park Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the U.S. Geological Survey. Chris previously served with

06 as associate counsel and team lead for international assistance and outreach. He lives in North Bethesda, Md.

09 **Olivia Allen-Price** and husband Sam Price welcomed son Sullivan Gray on 1/28/21. The family lives in San Francisco, where Olivia works as a journalist at KQED Public Media.

10|11 10th REUNION

Join the Classes of 2010 and 2011's 10th reunion committee members **Julianne Berger, Tessa Conte, Ayaan Forstall, Molly Gorsuch, Tracy Llewellyn, Ben Lunka, Patrick Minnock, Nick Oschner** and **Jay Reno** on Nov. 5–7 to participate in class reunion activities during Elon's ►

A SIMPLER WAY OF LIFE

Megan Donahue '20 and her mother convert school buses into mobile homes in honor of her late brother.

BY GRACE TERRY '21

Megan Donahue '20 and her mother, Lisa, cover Tobius' metal sides with paint, looking for any spots that need touch-ups. Megan is trying to make the 30-foot bus look perfect before it hits Facebook Marketplace.

"They don't leave until they're perfect," Megan says, referring to her buses. "You can eat off of the floor. I say I want to advertise like that: a video of me eating off the floor because I would."

It's February and Tobius is the latest bus the mother-daughter duo is transforming into a home as part of their company, Live Simply. The business began as a way to honor Megan's brother, Michael, who died in 2015. Michael always loved being outdoors and a week before he died, he tweeted, "It is the simple things in life that make it worth living."

Megan wanted to find a way to take that mentality and turn it into a project that could involve her whole family. Originally they thought of flipping houses, but decided against it due to the large financial commitment required. They realized they could afford a school bus instead, and thought a home in a bus epitomized Michael's message.

"I think people now, especially with the pandemic, are realizing that all of this is not worth it," Lisa says, gesturing at her home. "It's quality time, and that's what we're trying to promote."

In the summer of 2017, Megan and Lisa went to a junkyard and found a small 11-seat Chevy bus, which they named Gus. Gus was the first of seven buses they have redone so far.



{ Megan Donahue '20 and her mother, Lisa, promote a simpler way of life through their business, Live Simply. Below: An interior & exterior shot of one of their buses. }

"I think people now, especially with the pandemic, are realizing that all of this is not worth it," Lisa says. "It's quality time, and that's what we're trying to promote."

Gus took more than a year to transform because Megan was still finishing her communication design studies at Elon and could only visit her family's house in Graham, North Carolina, on the weekends. In order to complete the job, they worked with carpenters, electricians and plumbers. Once the project was complete, Gus took only 12 hours to sell.

They attribute the fast sale to the effort they put into the appearance of the bus and their work to make it economical.

"We want to make sure [the price] is reasonable," Lisa says. "But at the end of the day, we just want it to go to somebody who is going to spread the word about Michael."

They do not want to use sorrow as a reason to make a sale, though. "Just keep my brother's name going, and that's all we can really ask for from whoever buys them, but not in a sad way; my brother goes everywhere those buses go," Megan says, adding that her dream is to get the buses on a property in Vermont and turn them into rental properties.

Beyond carrying on Michael's legacy, the business has deepened Megan's relationship with her mother, something she will forever cherish. "We were best friends before," Megan says, "but now it's just like a new level." ♣

You can follow Live Simply on Instagram (@living_simplyyy) and Facebook (livesimplybus).

A version of this story was first published by Elon News Network.

Homecoming & Reunion Weekend. For more information, contact reunions@elon.edu.

11 **Kelly Cordisco** and **Andrew Cordisco** welcomed daughter Margaret “Margo” Coates on 12/30/20. The family lives in Raleigh, N.C. • After receiving his MBA in Hawaii, **Travis Counsell** has taken on the role of executive director at the New England Mountain Bike Association. He and wife **Chelsie Counsell ’09** live in Fairfield, Conn. • **Allaire Guralnik** and **Dan Rutherford** were married on 12/31/19. **Dani Fabrizio ’10**, **Brooke Buchalter**, **Henry Clougherty**, **Mollie Lair**, **Kelsey Lamon**, **Raleigh Richards**, **Nick Siciliano** and **Zack Widdoss** served in the wedding party. Other alumni in attendance included **Patrick Irvine ’09**, **Mike Barg ’10**, **Laura Brainer ’10**, **Sheila Gilmore ’10**, **Jessica McConchie ’10**,

Chelsea Alban, **Vincent Ayube**, **Braeden Bumpers**, **AJ Colbert**, **Matthew Cushman**, **Steve Fales**, **Colin Gilmore**, **Brandi Green**, **Kara Griffin**, **Casey Hekker**, **Wes Horbatuck**, **Carolyn Irvine**, **Emily Kenyon**, **Zack Luz**, **Christine McDonough**, **Jordan McDonough**, **Dan Montalvo**, **Christy Nagle**, **Gregory Orfe**, **Concy Richards**, **Taylor Sicilano** and **John Woodson**. Allaire and Dan are grateful for their Elon experiences and lifelong connections they’ve made as a result. They live in Fair Haven, N.J.

12 **Chris Antal** and **Kelly Giffear Antal** welcomed their first child, Benjamin Loy, on 1/17/21. Benjamin’s middle name is a nod to Elon’s Loy Center, the Greek neighborhood where Chris and Kelly met during their first year of college. Chris is a brand manager for Ferrero’s Kinder Bueno and Kelly is a veterinarian with Pitman

Animal Hospital. They live in New Jersey. • **Elise Delmerico Lake** and **Alex Lake ’13** welcomed daughter Eloise Sperry on 2/1/21. She joins big sister Adelaide. Elise is a freelance strategic communicator and serves on Elon’s Young Alumni Council, and Alex is a consultant at Numerator. The family resides in Bentonville, Ark.

13 **Jess-Mara Jordan** and Antoine Jones were married 3/28/21. Alumni in attendance included **Brittany Jones ’11**, **Faith Clayton**, **Janae Frazier-Bowens**, **Brenna Humphries**, **Khyandra Murrain**, **Brittany Washington {Interactive Media ’15}** and **Jeffrey Williamson {Interactive Media ’14}**. They live in Charlotte, N.C. • Earlier this year, **Ryan Vet** was named president of the Newchip Accelerator, an online global accelerator servicing 1,000-plus startups a year. In this role, he

leads more than 50 remote team members and six active, concurrent accelerator cohorts. Ryan serves on Elon’s Doherty Center for Creativity, Innovation and Entrepreneurship advisory board. In addition to founding several startups, he held executive leadership positions at companies including Anutra Medical and Netsertive. He is also the co-founder of The Oak House, a craft beverage lounge that has two locations in North Carolina. He and wife **Jessica** live in Durham.

15 **Danielle Biggs** was included in the “Six Theatre Workers You Should Know” list, which ran as part of American Theatre magazine’s “Role Call: People to Watch” series. Danielle is the membership manager of New York City’s Public Theater and will continue that role as she pursues ▶

ALUMNI ALBUM



Elise Delmerico Lake '12, Alex Lake '13 & daughters Eloise Sperry & Adelaide



Jess-Mara Jordan Jones '13 & friends



Ryan Vet '13



Samantha Bellamy McRae '15



Zora Stephenson '15

2021 Sports Hall of Fame Class Announced

Three outstanding student-athletes will join the university's Sports Hall of Fame during Homecoming & Reunion Weekend.

Matt Garner '04 (baseball), **Danielle Mills '09** (women's golf) and **Tomeka Watson '13** (softball) will be inducted on Saturday, Nov. 6, alongside 2020 Hall of Fame Class of **Veronica Day '11** (women's track and field), **Aaron Mellette '13** (football) and **Chris Thomas '12** (men's soccer). The group had its scheduled induction ceremony postponed due to COVID-19 protocols from this past year.

One of the top pitchers in program history at the Division I level, Garner is the Phoenix's career record holder in complete games (seven), innings pitched (304.1) and opponent batting average (.230). He helped the Phoenix earn an NCAA Regional berth for the first time in school history at the Division I level in 2002, and was later named the Elon male Basnight winner in

2003 and selected to the Big South All-Tournament team.

Mills is only one of two Elon women's golfers to earn All-Southern Conference honors for three seasons. She retired as Elon's all-time highest conference finisher while winning three tournaments as an individual and helping the Phoenix win three tournament titles over her career. She also helped Elon to a SoCon runner-up finish in 2008 and was named the team's Most Inspirational Player in 2006.

The first All-American in program history and the first Elon athletics female to receive All-American laurels at the Division I level, Watson concluded her career as the Phoenix's all-time career leader in hits (258) and runs (161). She also ranked second in career batting average (.337), home runs (34), RBI (125) and stolen bases (100). She was named the SoCon Freshman of the

Year in 2010 and a 2013 National Fastpitch Coaches Association (NFCA) Mid-east All-Region first team selection, which led to her becoming a third team All-American by the NFCA.



IN MEMORIAM

Fred Irvin Dickerson Sr. '32, Mars Hills, N.C., 8/21/17.



Esther Cole Kernodle '36, Elon, N.C., 2/2/21. For more than eight decades Esther was involved in the life of the university. She and her family made a gift to endow the university's Kernodle Service Learning Center, now called the Kernodle Center for Civic Life. In addition, the university awards the endowed Esther Cole and John Robert Kernodle Leadership Scholarship, which is named in honor of her and her husband, the late Dr. John Robert Kernodle '35.

Edna Alene Barrier Harrington '42, Wilmington, N.C., 2/18/21.

Carrie Stanford Thompson '48, Graham, N.C., 2/25/21.

Clarence B. "Chubby" Brown '51, Burlington, N.C., 4/12/20.

James Eugene Rice '52, Apex, N.C., 4/6/21.

Lois Long Stockard '52, Burlington, N.C., 2/24/21.



Eddie Bridges '57, Greensboro, N.C., 5/18/21. Bridges was a nationally recognized conservationist who was elected to the North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame for his work to preserve wildlife and the outdoors. An ardent supporter of Elon, he was named Distinguished Alumnus of the Year in 2003.

Lacy Robert Fogleman '56, Greensboro, N.C., 7/9/19.

Richard Arlen Curry Sr. '58, Ridgeway, Va., 1/5/21.

Robert Craver Phelps '58, Lexington, N.C., 2/23/21.

Shirley Walker French '60, Elon, N.C., 1/6/21.

Judy Maness Allen '63, Columbia, S.C., 2/24/21.

Richard Taft Apperson '63, Burlington, N.C., 7/26/20.

James "Jim" Allen Buie '63, 12/1/20. A service is planned for July 2021. Contact alumni@elon.edu for more information.

Barry Doyle Hodge '63, Elon, N.C., 1/18/21.

Johnny Mack Clayton '64, Burlington, N.C., 1/14/21.

Joe Larry Jones '64, Gallatin, Tenn., 1/9/21.

David "Dave" Bruce Clarke '67, Newton, N.C., 1/9/21.

William Randall "Randy" Etheridge '72, Hattiesburg, Mass., 1/16/21.

Timothy "Tim" Parker '72, Burlington, N.C., 1/10/21.

Cecil Elwood "Woody" Allman Jr. '76, Portsmouth, Va., 2/1/21.

Mary "Bunky" Womble Manley '78, Virginia Beach, Va., 1/18/21.

Donald "Don" Wayne Lawrence '80, Mount Holly, N.C., 2/5/21.

Mary "Marti" Kain Evelsizer '86, Seven Fields, Pa., 2/26/21.

William Wilson "Bill" Pleasants '90, Harwich Port, Mass., 2/27/21.

Robert "Rob" Ayers, III '91, Tampa, Fla., 2/3/21.

Tonya R. Taylor '94, Chapel Hill, N.C., 1/13/21.

Charles F. Touron '94, Williamsburg, Va., 1/25/21.

Britten Knauer Hartnett Tyler '00, Chestnut Hill, Mass., 1/31/21.

Robert "Craig" Page '05, Charlotte, N.C., 4/19/21.

Elizabeth "Liz" Robb '07, Jacksonville, N.C., 2/5/21.

Noah K. Buntain '17, Syracuse, N.Y., 2/17/21.

James Markley '23, Burlington, N.C., 1/20/21.



Bob Anderson, associate professor of political science, 4/12/21. Anderson retired in August 2012 after a 28-year career at Elon. Besides teaching, he also served as coordinator of special programs, director of foundation and government relations, special assistant to the president and coordinator of Elon experience.

a master's degree in education policy and leadership at American University in Washington, D.C., this fall. • In February, **Samantha Bellamy McRae** graduated from Vanderbilt University's Master's in Nursing program and became a board certified nurse midwife. She lives in Nashville, Tenn. • On April 9, **Zora Stephenson** made history by becoming the first woman to serve as play-by-play announcer in the Milwaukee Bucks' 53-year franchise history. Zora, a sideline and digital reporter for the franchise, called the Bally Sports Wisconsin broadcast of the Bucks' game against the Charlotte Hornets. The former Elon women's basketball team captain joined color analyst and

former Bucks star Marques Johnson in the booth that night.

15|16 FIFTH REUNION

The Classes of 2015 and 2016's fifth reunion committee members **Nick Atz, Lauren Forbis, Mac McCann, Devin Mehra, Julie Rodriguez** and **Kasey Sullivan** encourage classmates to return for Elon's Homecoming & Reunion Weekend, Nov. 5-7. For more information, contact reunions@elon.edu.

18| Bennett Driscoll is the newest member of Best Buddies International's advisory board in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. Supporting the nonprofit has been a passion for the past dozen years, he says, as he has

learned about and made connections with members of the intellectual and developmental disabilities community. During his time as a board member, Bennett will focus on creating a Young Professionals Council, generating philanthropic support and furthering the Best Buddies mission. Bennett is global marketing events manager for Dell Technologies and lives in Boston, Mass. • **Gabby Vance** is happy to announce she has graduated from William & Mary Law School. Gabby is joining K&L Gates as an associate. She lives in Washington, D.C.

20| Eugenia Floyd {M.Ed.}, a fourth-grade teacher at Mary Scroggs Elementary School in Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, has been named the 2021

Burroughs Wellcome Fund North Carolina Teacher of the Year. Eugenia was selected from a field of nine finalists representing the state's eight education districts and charter schools. • **Emma Kopkowski** is happy to share that "Regulars," a documentary film she produced, was screened in May at the RiverRun International Film Festival in Winston-Salem, N.C.

21 REUNION ZERO

The Class of 2021 will celebrate Reunion Zero this year during Homecoming & Reunion Weekend. Return to campus Nov. 5-7 and join your classmates for this milestone reunion. For more information, contact reunions@elon.edu. ✨

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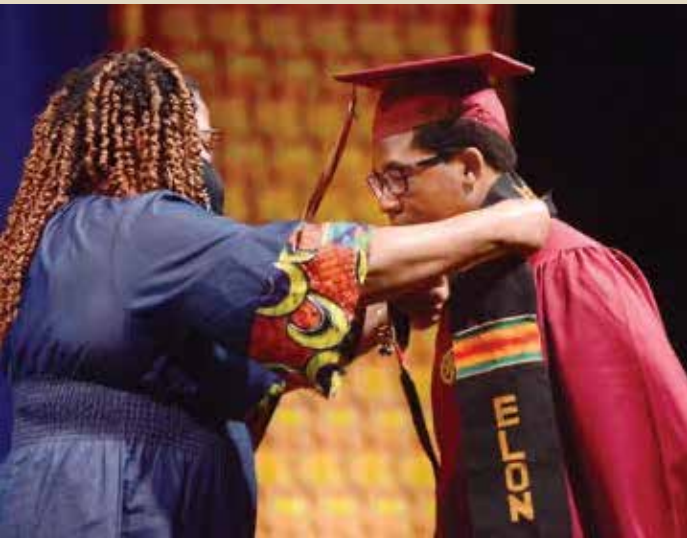
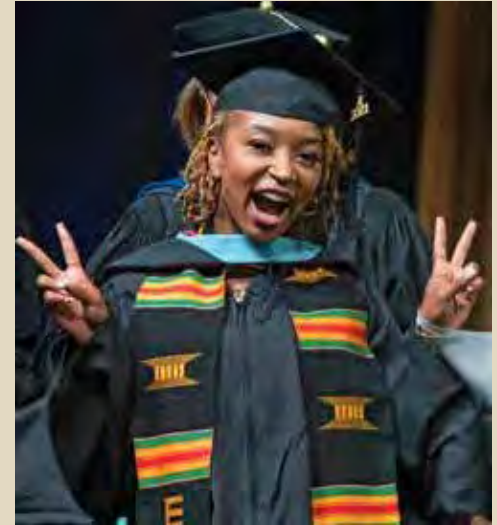
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(M.S.)

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HERE COMES THE CLASS OF 2021

At the end of an unprecedented year, members of the Class of 2021 celebrated their achievements in multiple in-person ceremonies during Commencement Week, May 17-21. More than 1,500 undergraduate and graduate students received their diplomas and joined the alumni ranks. Here are some images from that memorable week.





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{ Members of the Class of 2021 enjoyed food,
games & fireworks during a special Senior
Celebration at Rhodes Stadium on May 19. }

