

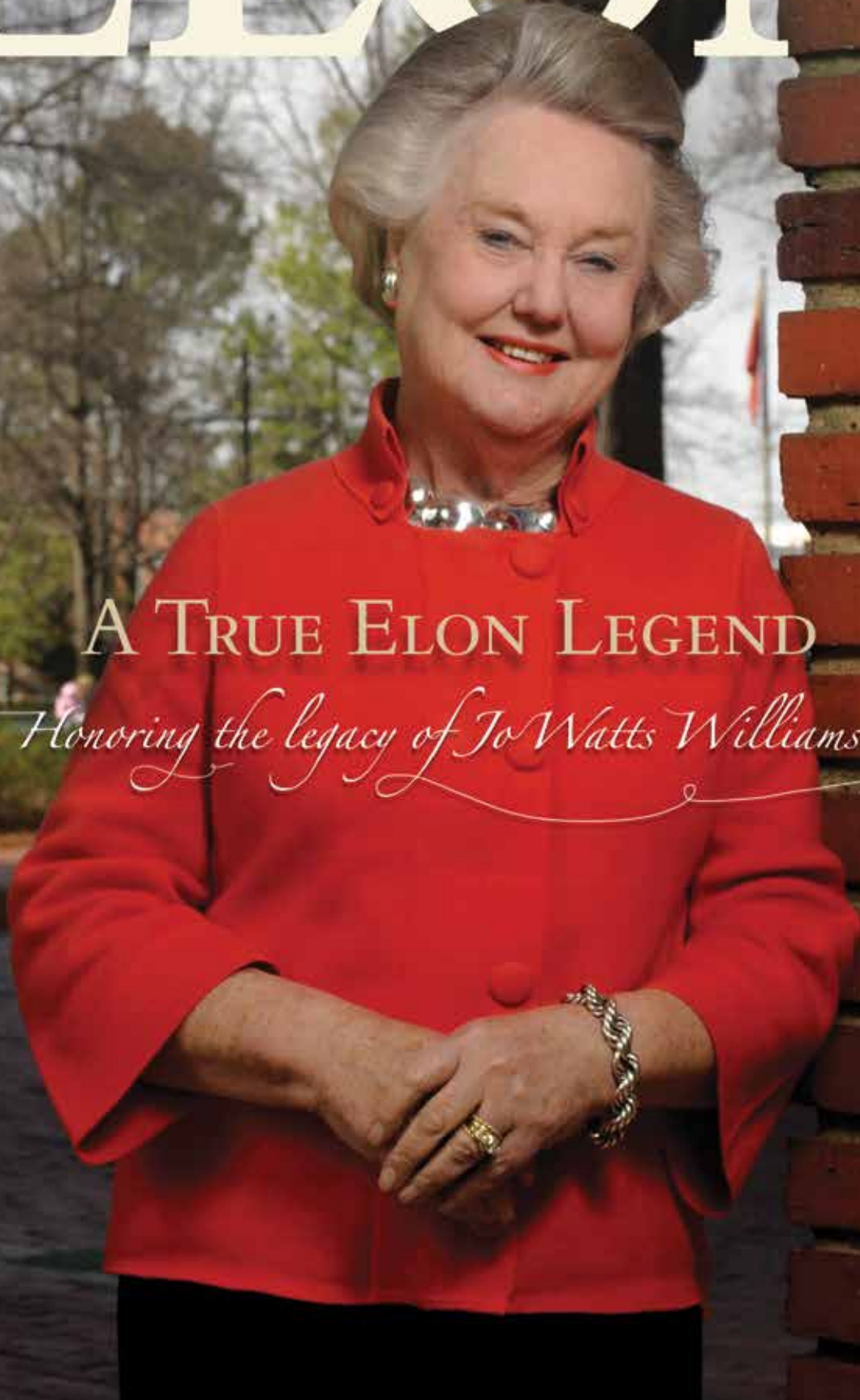
THE MAGAZINE OF

ELON

FALL 2021

A TRUE ELON LEGEND

Honoring the legacy of Jo Watts Williams '55



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REMEMBERING 9/11

BY TRAJAN WARREN

The Elon community gathered for several events this fall commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

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A senior analog designer at Nebula Microsystems, Jake Smith '18 used his free time to design a portable solar battery that's changing life in Haiti.

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A LIFETIME OF SERVICE

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The Elon community remembers the life and legacy of Jo Watts Williams '55, who dedicated 75 years to the university she loved.

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Toshio Sato of Utsunomiya, Japan, graduated at the top of her class in 1920.

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A photograph of an outdoor fitness court on a sunny day. In the foreground, two young women are performing squats on concrete blocks. One is wearing a black tank top and leggings, the other a pink tank top and black leggings. In the background, another student is visible near some equipment. The court is paved with large concrete tiles and surrounded by trees and a clear blue sky with the sun high in the frame, casting long shadows.

AL FRESCO WORKOUT

Students exercise at a new outdoor fitness court, which opened in September. Located on East Haggard Avenue on a portion of the former Elon Elementary School site, the fitness court has seven stations — core, squat, push, lunge, pull, agility and bend — for a seven-minute workout that can be done for multiple circuits and over 30 pieces of bodyweight equipment. It also features a QR code that directs people to an app with various workouts accompanied by a prerecorded virtual trainer who walks through the different exercises. The court was designed by the National Fitness Campaign, which has a growing network of similar courts around the country.

SHE BELIEVED IN US

The qualities of Jo Watts Williams '55



facebook.com/ElonConnieBook

twitter.com/ElonConnieBook

No individual can personify the culture and values of a complex institution like a university. But Vice President Emerita Jo Watts Williams '55 came as close as anyone could.

Our community mourns her death on Sept. 16 and celebrates the gifts she gave us as a student, alumna, faculty member and administrator. I hope you will read about her remarkable life in this issue of *The Magazine of Elon* (see page 20).

It is hard to fully appreciate the impact of this gifted leader who devoted 75 years to building and caring for our community, working alongside generations of people who came together under the banner of Elon.

Jo arrived as a student at Elon in 1945 with a passion for learning. She was inspired by her childhood experience flipping through her older siblings' *Elon* yearbooks and eagerly awaited her turn to enroll. "I do believe education is transformative," Jo said in an interview just before her death. "I have seen it happen in so many families, including my own. All of my siblings, eight of us, attended college and neither of my parents were college educated, so I know from experience how transformative education can be."

Jo was a contemporary of many whose family lines reached back to *Elon's* founders. She carried forward memories of those leaders — a living time capsule preserving the vision they had for educating future generations and building a great university. Ever the teacher, Jo made it her life's work to promote the distinctive and timeless characteristics we strive to instill in every *Elon* graduate. I hope every student works to develop these qualities:

Curious

Jo began conversations with a warm greeting and a question. I first met her on the sidewalk outside of Mooney Building when she stopped me by asking, "Hello, aren't you a new faculty member here?" Jo wanted to know my life story — her style



of leadership included asking questions that set the stage for learning.

Several years later, she asked, "Connie, are you becoming a department chair?" And then, "I was a chair in the '70s and I made a commitment to never give bad news over the phone. Go talk to people, Connie."

Her curiosity was insatiable, and she epitomized the concept of lifelong learning. "How does that work?", "Who's involved?", "What are the roadblocks?", and always, "How can we get this done and how can I help?" We want this kind of hunger for knowledge to be a hallmark of all *Elon* students.

Intensely personal

Up front, Jo always wanted to know, "How is your family?" She deeply understood the power of human relationships and had an incredible capacity for remembering social networks and connections within the *Elon* community. Her compassion was genuine and deep because she knew that growth happens best when we feel safe and valued.

Jo had a way of making each person feel like they had a special relationship with her. She was on your side and believed in you. And when Jo believed in you — when she loved you in such a powerful way —

she made you better and gave you the spirit to become more than you imagined.

We want to support this kind of mentoring relationship for every member of the Elon community.

Humble and hardworking

Many people don't realize it took Jo 10 years to graduate from Elon. She had to take a job working for President Leon Smith to finance her part-time studies. After graduation, she began work as a teacher while raising her family and continuing her studies to earn a master's degree and a doctorate in education.

When President J. Earl Daniele recruited her to return to Elon as a faculty member, her leadership advanced academic programs and later the college's fundraising, alumni relations and public relations programs. Her work ethic was unmatched, and she never stopped looking for ways to advance Elon. Those who worked with Jo learned that hard and humble work leads to success. That belief is ingrained in our community culture.

Committed to excellence

Jo was always dressed perfectly, and you never saw her with a hair out of place. Her style was that of a classic Southern lady. It was an outward expression of her commitment to the highest standards of professionalism. For Jo, there was no cutting corners or "good enough." She had too much respect for everyone around her and for the institution to compromise on quality.

Those high standards were contagious. You can see the evidence everywhere at Elon, from the excellence of academic programs and the commitment to student care and success to the well-maintained beauty of our campus.

Ready to embrace change

Jo put it simply as she reflected on her life: "I was never intimidated by change. In fact, I looked forward to change and newness." She knew what Elon could become and saw every innovation as a step toward reaching that goal.

"I always knew Elon would be a great institution because it was founded in 1889 as a co-ed institution, and at that time that was most unusual. Somehow I just knew that Elon would receive national recognition. I am just so thankful that I have lived long enough to see that happen."

I am honored to have had Jo Watts Williams in my life. It is no exaggeration to say that everyone who has spent time at Elon has felt her influence, whether or not they ever had the pleasure of meeting her. She loved in a way that made us all better and we love her for that confidence. It is up to us to live to be the people she knew we can be — the people of Elon. ♣

Connie Ledoux Book
PRESIDENT

A TRAILBLAZER IN WOMEN'S ATHLETICS



{ Debbie Yow-Bowden '74, center, with President Connie Ledoux Book & Elon University Board of Trustees Chair Ed Moriarty P'15 P'18. }

Elon trustee Debbie Yow-Bowden '74, one of the nation's most respected figures in collegiate athletics who has served for 42 years as a Division I women's basketball coach, administrator and director of athletics, was honored with the Elon Medallion during the Night of the Phoenix event on Oct. 22.

A native of Gibsonville, North Carolina, Yow-Bowden served as co-captain of Elon's women's basketball team under the leadership of her older sister, the late Kay Yow, who coached the team for four seasons before serving as women's basketball coach at North Carolina State University for 34 years. Shortly after graduating with an English degree in 1974, Yow-Bowden started coaching basketball at Williams High School in Burlington and Eastern Guilford High School in her hometown. She later served as head women's basketball coach at the University of Kentucky, Oral Roberts University and the University of Florida, where she eventually transitioned into athletics administration.

Yow-Bowden served as athletics director at Saint Louis University before being named athletics director at the University of Maryland in 1994. She became the first woman to serve in this role in the Atlantic Coast Conference and led the Terrapin program to 20 national championships while establishing Maryland's highest federal graduation rate. She returned to her home state in 2010 to serve for nine years as athletics director at N.C. State. Under her leadership, the school soared in the national Directors' Cup rankings of the best overall collegiate athletics programs, climbing from No. 89 in 2010 to No. 15. At Elon, she has served for 15 years as a member of the Elon University Board of Trustees, including as a key leader on the board's athletics policy and campus life committees, where she regularly offers counsel on important issues such as Title IX and gender equity. She is also a loyal Phoenix Club supporter.

The recipient of numerous awards, including the Order of the Long Leaf Pine from the Governor of North Carolina, Yow-Bowden is married to Dr. William Bowden. Her younger sister, Susan Yow '76, also played basketball at Elon and later became Elon's first women's basketball All-American. All three Yow sisters have been inducted into the North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame. ♣

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REMEMBERING TWO LOYAL ELON SUPPORTERS

This fall, the Elon community mourned the passing of two of the university's most loyal and generous supporters — Trustee Jeanne Swanner Robertson P'89, who died Aug. 21, and Life Trustee Wallace L. Chandler '49, who died Aug. 25.

Since the mid-1980s, Robertson, a nationally renowned public speaker and humorist, was a profound and leading advocate for Elon athletics along with her late husband, Jerry, who passed away June 7. She was elected to the board of trustees in 2003 and was a member of the board's campus life and athletics policy committees.

In 2014 the university named the Jerry and Jeanne Robertson Track and Field Complex in their honor following their gift to fund improvements to the facility. Three years later, the Robertsons were honored by then-President Leo M. Lambert with the Elon Medallion in recognition of their distinguished service to the university over many years. The Robertsons also contributed to the construction of Schar Center, and the main basketball court there is named Robertson Court in recognition of their gifts to help fund that facility, along with their



{ Jeanne Swanner Robertson P'89 & Wallace L. Chandler '49 }

previous contributions to renovate Alumni Gym. Chandler, who spent more than 40 years as one of Elon's most active and visionary trustees, served three years as chair of the board of trustees and was a trusted adviser to Elon presidents J. Earl Danieley, J. Fred Young and Lambert. He was elected to the board of trustees in 1967 and was elected as a life trustee in 2008. He also served on the presidential search committees for presidents Young and Lambert. Chandler was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Service Award in 1978, an Elon honorary doctorate in 1983 and the Elon Medallion in 2007. He was generous to the university and many facilities and scholarships bear his name, including Chandler Fountain and Plaza at the Ernest A. Koury Sr. Business Center, Wallace L. Chandler Residence Hall, the Chandler Lounge at Rhodes Stadium and the Wallace L. Chandler Scholarship Fund. He was a leading advocate for Elon's effort to achieve university status in 2001 and to establish a school of law in 2006. ☛



LATHAM PARK RENOVATIONS UNDERWAY

committed to advancing our leadership position on and off the field in the highly competitive arena of NCAA Division I athletics, and providing outstanding facilities is a key component of that goal."

Phase one of the project features a new indoor performance facility to be constructed along the right-field line at Latham Park. The facility, with four batting cages and garage bay doors, will allow student-athletes to train and practice year-round, rain or shine. "We are proud that developing premier academic and athletics facilities to ensure student success is one of the key objectives of the Elon LEADS Campaign and Boldly Elon, our strategic plan for 2030," said President Connie Ledoux Book.

Elon Baseball has won 29 conference titles, made seven NCAA Tournament appearances and produced more than 70 Major League Baseball draft picks. Elon is set to host the CAA Baseball Championship in spring 2022. ☛

Construction began this fall on renovations to Walter C. Latham Park, the university's baseball facility, thanks to an anonymous gift. This leadership commitment, made as part of the Elon LEADS Campaign, brings fundraising for phase one of the project to more than \$1.5 million.

"This generous investment represents an exciting step forward for our baseball program and will allow Elon student-athletes to continue competing at the highest level," said Elon Director of Athletics Dave Blank. "We remain

TOP MARKS

A roundup of Elon University's latest rankings and accolades



• **U.S. News & World Report ranks Elon University No. 1 for excellence in undergraduate teaching and No. 9 for innovation** in its 2022 “Best Colleges” guide. The university ranks No. 83 among national universities and is also the only school in the nation to rank in the top 20 in all eight programs proven to enhance student success: learning communities (No. 1), study abroad (No. 1), first-year experiences (No. 2), service learning (No. 2), senior capstone (No. 3), internships/co-ops (No. 6), undergraduate research/creative projects (No. 13) and writing in the disciplines (No. 16).



• In a special 30th anniversary edition of “The Best 387 Colleges” guide, **The Princeton Review recognizes Elon for the consistent excellence** of its academic and student life programs. Due to the pandemic, this year the publication highlighted “Great Lists” based on historical data. Elon was recognized for career



services, college dorms, college theater program, great-run college and most beautiful campus.

• **Elon ranks No. 14 in the nation and No. 1 in North Carolina** among private universities for student engagement in the **2022 Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education College Rankings**. Overall, Elon ranks No. 107 among 455 private universities in the nation, and is listed with Duke University, Wake Forest University and Davidson College as the only North Carolina schools ranked among the top 400 private institutions.

• For a seventh consecutive year, **Campus Pride named Elon among the “Best of the Best” American colleges** and universities for policies, programs and practices friendly to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students. Elon received five out of five stars and was named one of the 30 “Best of the Best” by the national advocacy group.

CORNER

FACSTAFF



Three Elon faculty members were awarded endowed professorships this fall. **Jennifer Hamel, associate professor of biology**, was named the Japheth E. Rawls Professor for Undergraduate Research in Science, a rotating two-year professorship that supports faculty engagement with students in the scholarship of scientific discovery. **Andrew Monteith, assistant professor of religious studies**, was named the Distinguished Emerging Scholar in Religious Studies, a professorship that supports a junior faculty member in the Department of Religious Studies who shows potential for a distinguished academic career. **Kenn Gaither, professor of strategic communications**, was named the A.J. Fletcher Professor in Communications in recognition of his excellence as a teacher, mentor, scholar and peer educator.



Associate Professor Vickie Moore is the co-principal investigator on a National Science Foundation grant of nearly \$500,000. The five-year grant supports training faculty in assessment of undergraduate learning in biochemistry and molecular biology, with a focus on diversity, equity and inclusion, and creating a community of practice. It will also fund a series of national and international workshops with co-principal investigators Dan Dries of Juniata College and Kim Cortes of Kennesaw State University.



Assistant Professor of Exercise Science Simon Higgins has been awarded a three-year, \$388,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health. As principal investigator, Higgins and collaborators will study behavior changes that are associated with long-term health risks and how best to support first-year students as they transition from high school to college.

A National Science Foundation grant will support an Elon-based initiative to create more STEM careers.

A partnership with the Early College Program at Alamance Community College and supported by a \$142,238 grant, the project is led by Associate Professor of Engineering Sirena Hargrove-Leak, Associate Professor of Biology Jen Hamel and Assistant Professor of Biology Jessica Merricks. Debra McCusker, cybersecurity lead instructor at ACC, is also a co-collaborator.



Assistant Professor of Music Cora Palfy has published a book. Released by Routledge Publishing, “Musical Agency and the Social Listener” contends that music has the potential to engage us in social processes and that those processes can be experienced as social interaction with a musical agent or persona.



“Antiracism on a very basic level is that I recognize you are a person, and because I recognize you as a person, you deserve to be here simply because you already are. Simple.”

— Author Jason Reynolds during Elon’s Common Reading Lecture on Sept. 21, which focused on “Stamped: Racism, Antiracism, and You.”



Photo: James J. Reddington



“Be open to people, respect everyone’s opinions, learn, listen. I have met people that have helped me ... that have hurt me ... that have challenged me. I have taken all of that as part of my journey and I have been able to learn from so many people.”

— Soccer legend Carli Lloyd during Elon University’s Fall Convocation on Sept. 24.



Dedicating a ‘gateway to the Elon experience’

Earlier this fall, Elon University celebrated the long-delayed dedication for The Inn at Elon, the on-campus, four-star 80-room hotel and restaurant made possible by the generous support of nearly 60 families.

“Thanks to the people in this room, to our trustees and, led by the Mahaffey family, this inn is now a reality and has truly become a gateway to the Elon experience,” President Connie Ledoux Book said during the Oct. 23 event. “The university will benefit from this long after our time here.”

The boutique hotel and restaurant are owned by the university and operated by Charlestowne Hotels, with profits used to fund student scholarships. Guests are reminded that their visits to The Inn at Elon are “A Stay with Purpose.”

Providing the lead gift for the inn were Trustee Mark Mahaffey and his wife, Marianne, whose son Tom graduated from Elon in 1997 and whose daughter Kiley graduated in 2001. The inn’s restaurant, The Mark at Elon, is named after Mahaffey, who noted how impressed he was by the server during a recent visit, a sophomore at Elon who plans to apply to the university’s Physician Assistant Studies program after graduation. “What a great future we have ahead for this university and we are certainly proud and honored to be a part of it,” Mahaffey said.

The Inn at Elon opened in January 2020, shortly before the global COVID-19 pandemic upended life and clamped down on the hospitality industry. Located next to the Ernest A. Koury Sr. Business Center at 605 N. O’Kelly Ave., the inn features 10 suites along with 70 rooms featuring king-sized and queen-sized beds. Along with The Mark, it offers an outdoor courtyard with fire pits, a fitness center, dedicated on-site parking, valet and bell service and complimentary bicycle rentals for guests to explore the botanical garden campus.



{ The long-awaited ribbon cutting for The Inn at Elon took place Oct. 23. }

Conference facilities make The Inn at Elon a valuable resource not just for the university, but for the entire community and region. The 5,200-square-foot multipurpose ballroom accommodates up to 340 people, with the outdoor lawn providing space for 440. All facilities are open to the public and available for business meetings and retreats as well as family celebrations such as weddings, reunions and holiday parties. ♣

LIFELONG CONNECTIONS

Marilyn Slade's role as program assistant in the Center for Race, Ethnicity and Diversity Education is more than merely a job to her. Throughout the years, she has nurtured the potential of countless students who passed through the CREDE as a steadfast supporter and role model. In recognition of her outstanding mentorship, she received the 2021 Blanche Garrison Memorial Award at Elon's Staff Appreciation Day.

Marilyn Slade

BY JASMINE TURNER '15

When I think of the phrase "always in your corner," Marilyn Slade immediately comes to mind. Mentorship and friendships can be the foundation of a successful college experience. A support system can help you through every high and low. Ms. Marilyn, or "Mama Marilyn," as she is known to many, has been a constant in my life for the past decade.

As a first-year student, I would quietly sit at the front of the Center for Race, Ethnicity and Diversity Education, formerly known as the Multicultural Center, waiting for weekly meetings. One day we started talking, and the rest is history. We have shared moments of vulnerability but also had plenty of laughs. It was often the highlight of my day to walk upstairs in the Moseley Center, turn the corner and see Ms. Marilyn sitting at the front desk of the CREDE. It brought a sense of relief. She is a safe space and the embodiment of the pillars of the university's honor code: honesty, integrity, responsibility and respect.

Always a listener and a supporter, you could count on Mama Marilyn to be there if you invited her to support a concert for Gospel Choir, a fundraiser or your wedding day, years after graduation. Even her local church family embraced students, her "Elon babies," as we would attend services throughout our time in school. To this day, it means so much more than she will ever know to get messages on holidays and birthdays or to see a post on social media congratulating us on life accomplishments. It is proof of a bond and support system formed at Elon that has lasted well beyond my time as a student there.

As Elon Day 2021 was approaching, I was reflecting on my time in school, scrolling through old photos in an effort to put into words what my four years meant. I came across a moment captured on camera of Ms. Marilyn and me hugging after I received my diploma and couldn't help but smile. I immediately sent it to her and felt such a sense of gratitude. No matter the years that have passed, no matter the distance, I can rest assured Marilyn Slade will always be in my corner, and I will always be in hers as well. ♡



Jasmine Turner '15 is a three-time Emmy Award-winning anchor and reporter for NBC 12 News in her hometown of Richmond, Virginia. In addition to life in local news, she is a wellness educator, certified in teaching yoga and meditation.

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT



{ Miranda Ferrante '23 }

Miranda Ferrante '23 received a \$3,000 summer grant through the Scripps Howard Foundation. The journalism and communication design double major spent the summer in her home county of Westchester, New York, serving as editorial intern with Westchester Home, creating social media content, writing blog posts and connecting with local designers and architects.



{ Kyra O'Connor '23 }

Journalism major Kyra O'Connor '23 participated in the inaugural Society of Professional Journalists Student Leadership Institute in Indianapolis this summer. The institute was designed to help collegiate journalists build their confidence and make the student members of SPJ credible, ethical and values-based leaders. O'Connor serves as the executive editor for Elon News Network.



Sarah Jane McDonald '21 and Holly Cardoza '23 received U.S. Department of State Critical Language Scholarships. The program supports the study of 15 languages deemed critical to U.S. diplomacy and outreach. McDonald, a religious studies and international and global studies double major, studied Swahili remotely through the MS Training Centre for Development Cooperation in Tanzania, while Cardoza, a political science and international and global studies major, studied Arabic remotely at the Noor Majan Training Institute in Oman.



{ Faith Leslie '21 }

Faith Leslie '21, a political science and international and global studies double major, received a \$30,000 Rotary Global Grant Scholarship as she pursues a master's degree in international affairs in Italy. Leslie spent the summer interning with the Center for European Policy Analysis and plans to work in diplomacy, focusing on conflict prevention and European policy.



{ Jordan Young '22 }

Jordan Young '22, a cinema and television arts major, participated in the Television Academy's "Star Trek" Command Training Program, a prestigious internship with an acceptance rate of less than 2 percent. As part of the program, Young worked on different aspects of production related to the "Star Trek" franchise and received weekly online professional development, including panels and customized seminars.

SYLLABUZZ

ECO: 3231 Markets and Environmental Justice

BY ALAYNA MCNALLY '23

After carefully crafting the curriculum from scratch and facilitating a successful Winter Term trial-run class, Assistant Professor of Economics Brooks Depro is excited to continue teaching ECO: 3231 Markets and Environmental Justice every other fall. The course uses a variety of perspectives to delve into complex environmental problems, such as unequal pollution exposure for marginalized communities.

Depro has two decades of experience in economic consulting and spent many years conducting research on the economics of environmental justice. The premise of environmental economics, he says, is to use an economist's way of looking at behavior to try to understand and solve environmental problems. Through real-world applications, interdisciplinary readings and research projects, the class exposes students to the ever-growing array of topics that economists study.

Depro's favorite aspect of Markets and Environmental Justice is the interdisciplinary approach applied throughout the course. "It allows me to think about the discipline I am trained in but also look at the blind spots economists have," he says.

During the course, students develop a plan to explore other Elon courses that examine environmental topics from a non-economics perspective to compare and contrast how different disciplines analyze complex issues. "Students understand where the differences lie in terms of assumptions and viewpoints," Depro says.

Depro sees an opportunity for students to recognize environmental economics as a relevant topic that allows for critiquing assumptions economists often make. "It's both self-critiquing the

discipline but also applying it to an area many people do not think economists consider or study," he says. His main goal is to provide a lens for economics students to think about environmental issues they might not be exposed to in a traditional bachelor-level setting.

Although Markets and Environmental Justice is a 300-level course, the only prerequisite is the intro-level economics course offered in Elon's Martha and Spencer Love School of Business. This unique aspect allows students in any major who are interested in current environmental problems to learn about and dissect approaches to combating these issues.

Because the class is heavily application-based, Depro hopes students will take the practicum beyond the classroom and into the workplace and use it to guide future conversations and decisions surrounding environmental economics. "I want to make sure students understand economists' arguments beyond a superficial level so they can more successfully state their concerns and challenge those arguments," he says. ☘

ABOUT THE PROFESSOR

Brooks Depro joined Elon's full-time faculty in 2017. His research focuses on environmental regulation, housing choices, environmental health risks and teaching economics. He currently serves as faculty adviser of Elon's B.S.B.A. in Economic Consulting.

RECOMMENDED MATERIALS

- "Toxic Communities: Environmental Racism, Industrial Pollution, and Residential Mobility," by Dorceta E. Taylor



A TRANSFORMATIVE PRESENCE

Surrounded by friends, family, former colleagues and scores of students she mentored during her time at Elon University, Janice Ratliff attended the formal dedication in September of the building that now bears her name.

The naming of the Janice Ratliff Building, which houses the Office of Residence Life, the Office of Student Care and Outreach and the Office of Student Conduct, was a tribute to Ratliff's impact during her 35 years meeting the university's needs and responding to student concerns with care and a listening ear.

"Janice, you were known as the heart and soul of the Student Health and Wellness Office, and your colleagues knew they could count on you to care for each and every student you encountered, helping to ease their minds and those of their families far away from Elon's campus," President Connie Ledoux Book said at the event.

A native of Elon, Ratliff joined the university in 1981 as an administrative assistant in the Office of Cooperative Education. Through the years, she

worked in the Office of the Vice President and Dean of Students, the Office of Student Development, the Office of Auxiliary Services and, finally, the Office of Student Health and Wellness. She played a vital role in the development and mentoring of students, and as one of the first Black staff members to serve in the various roles she had on campus, she was a transformative presence for the university's Black community. She retired in 2016 and was honored the following year with the Elon Medallion, the university's highest honor.

"This journey has been one of continual learning and adventure," Ratliff said, adding she was honored to serve as an adviser for a range of student organizations and as a go-to resource for Black students on campus as adviser to the Black Cultural Society, which is now the Black Student Union. "Students are the reason my name is on this building today," she added.

Ratliff is the first Black Elon staff member to have a campus building named in her honor. 🌟



{ Janice Ratliff (second from right) cuts the ribbon in front of the building that now bears her name during a formal dedication in September. }

SOCIAL

snapshots

A compilation of #ElonUniversity social media mentions.



@MR_RROGERSMATH

Took Mooney to see what she is named after! Fun day back at @elonuniversity



UNITED WAY OF ALAMANCE COUNTY

Thank you [Elon University](#) for kicking-off your campaign today! We appreciate your support and helping us lift families out of poverty in Alamance County!



FREEBIRD MCKINNEY

Another reason among countless as to why we [Elon University](#) so much! Went to watch an Elon volleyball game today and the players and coach remembered her from summer camp with joyful elation and hugs. Way to make a young player a fan for LIFE! Thank you 🙏



@NCTINA_LIFE



About yesterday #Sunday; The official Graduation ceremony for my [#elonuniversity](#) [#2020Graduate](#) & his classmates finally happened 16 months after the fact of finishing due to our world health crisis.

So [#Thankful](#) to be alive to enjoy this beautiful day!!
[#AccountingMajor](#) 🙌 [#BachelorOfScience](#) 🙌
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CULTURAL CALENDAR PREVIEW

For a complete list of events, visit elon.edu/culturalcalendar.

The 2021-22 Elon University Speaker Series, presented by WUNC North Carolina Public Radio, welcomes distinguished thought leaders and change-makers to campus. This year's series explores the "Power of Relationships."

TUESDAY, JAN. 11

BD Wong, "Change, Hope and Equality for Asian Americans"



McCrary Theatre, Center for the Arts, 6 p.m. Martin Luther King Jr. Commemorative Address

One of today's most versatile performers, award-winning actor BD Wong has been on screens big and small for more than 20 years.

TUESDAY, FEB. 8



Eric Liu

Time and location TBA

Eric Liu is co-founder and CEO of Citizen University, a nonprofit national platform that fosters citizenship through activation, communication and education.

THURSDAY, MARCH 31

Leland Melvin, "Chasing Space: An Astronaut's Story of Grit, Grace and Second Chances"



Alumni Gym, Koury Athletic Center, 7 p.m. Baird Lecture Series

An engineer, educator and former NASA astronaut, Leland Melvin served on board the Space Shuttle Atlantis, helping to construct the International Space Station.

TUESDAY, APRIL 5



Belle Liang

Whitley Auditorium, 7:30 p.m.

As the principal investigator of the Purpose Lab, Belle Liang's research explores positive youth development, including mentoring and relational health in adolescence and young adulthood.

For more details, visit elon.edu/speakerseries.

UPCOMING PERFORMANCE

FRIDAY-SUNDAY, FEB. 11-13

The Department of Performing Arts presents

"INTO THE WOODS"

McCrary Theatre, Center for the Arts, Feb. 11, 12 at 7:30 p.m.; Feb. 12, 13 at 2 p.m.

James Lapine and Stephen Sondheim take everyone's favorite storybook characters and bring them together for a timeless, yet relevant, piece. Featuring characters adept at comedy and drama with classic and contemporary vocal styles — a rare modern classic.

EXPANDING GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES

Elon University has entered a new partnership with GITAM University in India that will support student and faculty exchange programs between the two institutions and facilitate research collaborations among faculty.

During a virtual signing ceremony in August, Elon President Connie Ledoux Book and Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Aswani Voley were joined by GITAM President M. Sri Bharat, Vice Chancellor K. Siva Rama Krishna and Registrar D. Gunasekaran.

"Global perspective is a critical competency in the 21st century, and Elon University leads the advance of global understanding," Book said. "The partnership we have forged with GITAM University will create new opportunities for students and faculty at each of our institutions to learn, to grow and to thrive."

GITAM is a multidisciplinary university established in 1980 with campuses in

Visakhapatnam, Hyderabad and Bengaluru. Initially established as an engineering and management college, GITAM became a university in 2007 and has continued to expand its academic offerings, campuses and student body.

The partnership comes as Elon continues to grow its engineering program, which added a four-year engineering degree in 2019. GITAM is developing a physical therapy program, so the partnership offers an opportunity to expand the global learning opportunities that are part of Elon's physical therapy and physician assistant studies programs.

"We wanted a memorandum of understanding that both parties believe in, not just one that just exists on paper," said Bharat. "We want it to be mutually beneficial. We want to contribute to the growth of Elon and likewise, look for Elon to contribute to the growth of GITAM." ♣

Picture-Perfect #TravelGram

BY CAROLINE DIFRANGO '23

LIKE MOST MEMBERS OF GENERATION Z, Andreas Thorsén '22 grew up around technology. During his childhood, the Elon men's soccer team midfielder would take photos and videos on whatever devices he could get his hands on.

As he got older, photography fell to the wayside as videography consumed his life. Having bought himself a GoPro video camera with his Christmas money one December, he became enamored with documenting his life. Eventually, this love for capturing his

family travels led him to join social media, where he shared those experiences with a broader audience.

Tailoring his Instagram account to his public image made its way to the forefront of Thorsén's mind during his two-year soccer career in Scotland, prior to attending Elon. Seeing so many other soccer players using their social media to build a brand, he began to explore that option for himself. While soccer is a major facet of his personality, he began exploring who he was beyond the field and how to best represent that.

During his first year at Elon, Thorsén's family planned numerous summer vacations — Hong Kong, Bali, Denmark — igniting his interest in shifting his social media accounts into the travel photography realm. With so many exciting destinations in his near future, he invested in his first digital camera and began practicing. Alongside peers and professors, he prepared for the summer that would propel his Instagram account into the brand it is today.

After years of playing around, he has developed a consistent color palette and theme for his Instagram account. He often finds himself in exotic, awe-inspiring locations, but says he tries to keep his shots relatively simple, preferring minimalist compositions with only one focal point. His style definitely resonates with others. His account (@thorsenx) now has nearly 16,000 followers.

While he loves shooting self-portraits and beautiful landscapes, his favorite aspect of photography is the editing process. Being able to fine-tune an image to a specific aesthetic is no small feat and took Thorsén years to perfect. But he now has it down to a science and has even developed his own presets to ease the process. This attention to detail has gotten his work featured on the GoPro Peru Instagram account as well as reposted by one of his inspirations, French filmmaker Benjamin Ortega.

While he does not intend to pursue photography professionally after graduation, Thorsén hopes to bring that creativity and photographer's mindset into his professional life. An international business and marketing double major, he hopes to find a career path that lends itself to continuing his passion for travel photography. ✨



{ Andreas Thorsén '22 during a visit to Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen, Denmark, in December 2020. }



FIVE THINGS TO KNOW ABOUT SAM DOMINGUEZ '22

BY CAROLINE DIFRANGO '23

A MIDFIELDER AND DEFENDER for Elon's women's soccer team, Sam Dominguez '22 has left her mark on the program. The Keller, Texas, native was instrumental in helping the team to its first CAA Championship title in program history during her junior season. Off the field, Sam is pursuing a degree in engineering with a biomedical concentration. The Honors Fellow is currently concluding a research project about medicine and sports medicine. She took some time from her busy schedule to share some insights with The Magazine of Elon.



▶ **Her game day routine includes her father.** Sam's father, Phillip, sends her a new hype song before each game. "My dad has been doing that ever since I got to college," she says. "It's just been something that keeps us connected since my family is so far away."



▶ **She enjoys exercising body and mind.** In her spare time, Sam enjoys completing crossword puzzles and reading, both of which stimulate and relax her mind. "I love diving into a story and learning all sorts of new things," Sam says.



▶ **She was destined to be an engineer.** Growing up, Sam loved building things and running experiments, so a career in engineering was a no-brainer for her. "Engineers are professional problem solvers," she says, "and I've never met a problem I didn't want to find the answer to."



▶ **She grew up playing the piano.** "I was actually kind of good at it," Sam says, adding she lost interest and eventually stopped playing at age 10. She now wishes she had stuck with it.

▶ **She wants to teach overseas.** After graduation, Sam hopes to teach English in the Czech Republic and has applied for a Fulbright scholarship to do so. She plans to attend medical school after that. "There are just so many things I could do in people's lives to help make a difference," she says.



THE ELON COMMUNITY
GATHERED FOR SEVERAL EVENTS
THIS FALL COMMEMORATING THE
20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
SEPT. 11, 2001, TERRORIST ATTACKS.

REMEMBERING

BY TRAJAN WARREN

Twenty years have come and gone since two hijacked planes flew into the north and south towers of the World Trade Center, one into the Pentagon and another in a field in Pennsylvania on Sept. 11, 2001. Many facets of life have changed in that time, and some details from that harrowing day have faded from the public consciousness.

But the memory of one of the most significant events in American history has stayed with those who lived through it, as made apparent by the memories shared by members of the Elon community who participated in some of the commemorative events held on campus this fall to mark the 20th anniversary of the attacks.

“I was actually here at Elon as a faculty member 20 years ago this week, and we all know our world changed dramatically before most of our student body was even born,” said President Connie Ledoux Book on Sept. 7 at a special College Coffee. She recalled how members of the campus stood by each other during that time and how important that kind of support is when facing great challenges. “I think it’s in those moments that we realize ... the power of a community — that it’s here for celebrations and it’s also here to provide comfort when we’re afraid because we don’t know what’s next.”

Twenty years ago at a special College Coffee meant to celebrate the grand opening of Rhodes Stadium, a significant portion of the Elon community was alerted about the terrible events unfolding in New York City and Washington, D.C.

9/11



{ Much of the Elon community learned about the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, while attending a College Coffee meant to celebrate the grand opening of Rhodes Stadium. }

“WE HOPE THAT PEOPLE REMEMBER THAT AMERICANS COME FROM ALL DIFFERENT RELIGIOUS, SPIRITUAL AND SECULAR BACKGROUNDS AND HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THIS NATION FROM THE BEGINNING.” — ALLISON PELYHES



{ Then-President Leo M. Lambert addressed students, faculty and staff in the aftermath of 9/11. }

Then-President Leo M. Lambert stood in front of hundreds of Elon students, faculty and staff who were prepared to celebrate a historic moment for the university, but who instead mourned the lives lost during an unprecedented event for America.

“The rest of it, I almost remember in slow motion,” Lambert said during a fall panel discussion in which community members who were at Elon on Sept. 11, 2001, recounted their experiences. “My thought was, ‘We have to change this program very quickly.’ We will not have the football coach speak; we asked the marching band to play the national anthem and we announced that there were horrible events happening in New York City.”

The “Elon and 9/11: A Retrospective” panel consisted of Lambert, Professor of Philosophy Ann Cahill, Professor Emerita Anne Bolin, Chaplain Emeritus Richard McBride and Assistant Vice President for Annual Giving and Alumni Engagement Brian Feeley ’03.

Lambert asked McBride to give a prayer at that College Coffee in 2001, and McBride recalled focusing on an ROTC member in the crowd. To this day, he’s not sure of what his exact prayer was but remembers that “the spirit of it was, ‘Let us not be consumed by vengeance, for if we are consumed by vengeance then we are in the same place as the terrorists.’” The day after the attacks, thousands of Elon students, faculty and staff gathered in Alumni Gym to share their grief, thoughts and, most importantly, support in a bewildering and despondent time.

Another fall panel featuring faculty in the international and global studies and political science and policy studies departments focused on how the Sept. 11 attacks have continued to shape America in more ways than one — chiefly, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the overarching war on terror. The panelists said the memory of Sept. 11 has been “hijacked every day since” to condone problematic policies and the use of torture by the United States military in a war built on falsehoods.

“All of us are still feeling the repercussions of that ‘war on terror,’” said Sandy Marshall, assistant professor of geography, who spoke on the panel along with Professor of Political Science Jason Kirk, Professor of Political Science Safia Swimelar, Associate Professor of Political Science Baris Kesgin and Sarah Wagner, an anthropology professor at George Washington University.

In addition to the 2,977 people killed on the day of the attacks, Marshall accounted for the losses of those afterward, including more than 7,000 service members killed, tens of thousands wounded, 30,000 veterans who committed suicide after returning home and thousands more who struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder. More than 8,000 U.S. contractors were killed in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as an estimated total of 300,000 civilians.

Marshall said the war in the Middle East contributed to the more than 40 million refugees worldwide, the highest number since World War II, and that the \$8 billion spent on defense could have gone toward health care, education and infrastructure.

“The question that haunts me most is, ‘What if?’ Before the dust had even settled from those buildings,



{ Above and below: The day after the attacks, thousands of students, faculty and staff gathered in Alumni Gym to support each other and process their grief. }

we were beating the drums for war,” Marshall said. “What if we’d taken the Taliban’s offer to negotiate and bring Osama bin Laden to justice?”

To conclude the campus events, the Truitt Center for Religious & Spiritual Life hosted a multifaith breakfast in the McBride Gathering Space in the Numen Lumen Pavilion on Sept. 11. Multifaith Coordinator Allison Pelyhes said the center was contacted by Mark Dalhouse, director for global educational initiatives, about creating a space for the official 20th anniversary of the event.



The Truitt Center often provides opportunities for reflection, collective mourning and greater awareness of religion in the community, Pelyhes said, and the remembrance breakfast was an example of all those traits on display.

The breakfast shed light on the truth of American religious diversity and the increased harm created by religious bias following the terrorist attacks. Pelyhes said a prime objective of the event was to remind people that religious diversity has been essential in America, even from its genesis.

“We hope that people remember that Americans come from all different religious, spiritual and secular backgrounds and have contributed to this nation from the beginning,” Pelyhes said. “Especially in tragedies such as Sept. 11, religious communities play a key role in responding with peace. Our nation suffered a great loss, and we remember every life lost in the name of extremism.”

While many questions still remain about the turmoil that resulted from the attacks over the past 20 years, McBride said one thing is for certain: 9/11 marked a major historical moment in U.S. history, and we all should learn something from it. “This year’s anniversary has brought much greater understanding of what has happened and its long-term impacts,” he said, “and that’s for the good.” ✻




POWER

to the People

BY MICHAEL ABERNETHY



A senior analog designer at Nebula Microsystems, Jake Smith '18 used his free time to design a portable solar battery that's changing life in Haiti. He's just getting started.



In 2019, Jake Smith boarded a plane bound for Thoman, Haiti, to check the status of 25 portable solar batteries he and his collaborators had left there the year before.

About the size of a lunch box, the intuitive devices known as Relays could power lights, phones and small electronics, bringing electricity to homes and areas where it had never existed before. On that flight, Smith wondered what he would find. Were people using them? Would any still be working? Would others want them?

When Smith arrived in the eastern Haiti town, the answer came as a resounding “yes.” The batteries were powering lights and phones and being guarded preciously.

“They loved them,” Smith says. “Two or three had broken, and they had gone to ridiculous lengths to fix them. The Haitian people are so smart and so good at solving problems. They’d welded new circuit components. They figured out how the Relays worked, found a way to flip the wires so they could run two lights instead of one.”

The poorest country in the Western Hemisphere, Haiti ranks 174th out of 197 nations for access to elec-

tricity, according to the World Health Organization. Only about 40 percent of its 11 million residents have access to the nation’s unreliable electrical grid.

After completing studies at Elon, Smith earned his dual degree in electrical engineering and engineering-physics at Georgia Institute of Technology. At Georgia Tech, Smith earned his master’s degree in electrical engineering and began working with the Haiti Solar Initiative, which aims to expand electrical access and improve the quality of life in the Caribbean nation.

Smith and the project have since provided 75 Relays in Haiti and outfitted community centers and ministries with efficient solar panels to maintain vital health and educational services. They also designed a solar-run sewing machine, powering entrepreneurship among mothers who operate tailoring businesses to feed and educate their families.

“Seventy-five is good. I feel decent about that at night,” Smith says. “But I want to deliver 10,000.”

Smith grew up in nearby Greensboro, North Carolina. He valued service from childhood, participating in church mission trips and community outreach. His



work in Haiti is an extension of that philanthropic mindset, especially seeing the value his expertise in electrical engineering and circuits could hold for technology in the developing world.

“I love integrated circuits. No matter how far you get into this field, there’s space to constantly be learning,” Smith says. “Any time I learn the next thing about circuits, there’s a way to affect people’s lives with that. You can make it possible for people to inexpensively access power and water, so you can save lives with integrated circuits. It’s a powerful field to get into because there’s so much you can do with it.”

Circuits and electrical engineering dazzled him early in high school, but Smith wasn’t ready to commit to the field. He enrolled in Elon’s dual-degree engineering program — which allows undergraduates to earn two degrees in five years by completing three years of courses at Elon before finishing their engineering degree at a partner institution — for the opportunity to explore different aspects of engineering and science.

“Elon engineering is rigorous, but it gives you the chance to ask questions and learn about all types of engineering,” Smith says. “It provides that opportunity to find your way and to be a well-rounded engineer.”

He worked closely with Associate Professor of Engineering Scott Wolter ’85 in a Department of Homeland Security-funded project studying X-ray diffraction imaging for better security screening. “Jake has always taken the initiative to pursue interesting and challenging projects,” Wolter says. “When I learned of his involvement with the Haiti Solar Initiative, it did not surprise me at all. I’m certain he considered his skills and abilities and recognized that he could help those in need.”

At Georgia Tech, Smith was awarded the Outstanding Electrical Engineering Senior Award, the Alvin M. Ferst Leadership and Entrepreneur Scholarship and the

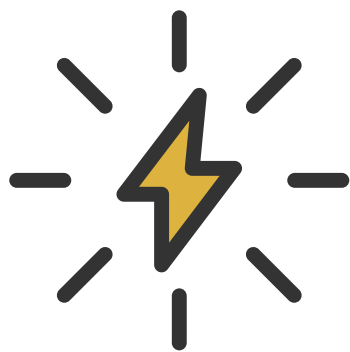


{ About the size of a lunch box, the Relay is a portable solar battery capable of powering lights, phones & small electronics in homes that didn’t previously have electricity. }

“Any time I learn the next thing about circuits, there’s a way to affect people’s lives with that. You can make it possible for people to inexpensively access power and water, so you can save lives with integrated circuits. It’s a powerful field to get into because there’s so much you can do with it.”



{ Jake Smith '18 works with the Haiti Solar Initiative, which aims to expand access to electricity in a country where only about 40 percent of residents have access to an unreliable electrical grid. }



electrical and computer engineering Undergraduate Research Award.

Early on, Smith overheard a group of Georgia Tech students talking about the Haiti Solar Initiative and wanted to get involved. He soon became a team leader, designing the concept for the Relay in about a day. He and the team spent the next year “making it work for Haiti.”

“The original design we had was too complicated. We had to simplify, simplify, simplify,” Smith says. “To really fine-tune a design requires knowing your customer. Americans sometimes come into places and think they know the solutions, but you don’t know what people there need. They know what they need. So, we spent a whole year just learning so we could understand what they needed.”

That understanding led to a pared-back device that performed the essential function of providing electric-

ity without superfluous components. Designed for a population without much experience with technology, the Relay is intuitive. “Three things have made the Relay successful: it’s small, it’s really simple and it’s inexpensive,” Smith says. “There’s no massive solar panel installation. They throw it on their roof, prop it up and they can take it down at night. Other systems with extra circuitry might work better, but better is expensive. We wanted to make something safe and reliable and efficient enough to work for them.”

The Relays are sold to local businesses below cost, then sold to customers at a small profit. All profits are returned to the project to continue manufacturing and distributing new devices.

So how will Smith get to 10,000 batteries on the ground? This year, he and a team of Georgia Tech undergraduates are prototyping the Relay III, a lithium-ion battery that’s more ecologically sound and small enough to carry in a pocket.



“To really fine-tune a design requires knowing your customer. Americans sometimes come into places and think they know the solutions, but you don’t know what people there need. They know what they need. So, we spent a whole year just learning so we could understand what they needed.”

The work doesn’t come without risks. Natural disasters including hurricanes and earthquakes have ravaged Haiti over the past decade. Those disasters have exacerbated political upheaval and violence, exemplified by the July assassination of President Jovenel Moïse. The turmoil makes daily life precarious for Haitians and potentially dangerous for foreigners and aid workers.

“It’s the evil of a select few causing the detriment of the whole,” Smith says. “Haitians are phenomenal people. They are the kindest, most generous and most appreciative people I’ve ever met. The unrest is not indicative of the Haitian people as a whole.”

Their plight only makes Smith more determined to act. “A lot of people see what’s happening there and they turn away,” he says. “I’m in a fortunate position that I can do this work, and if something did happen to me, I’m not leaving a wife and kids behind. I feel called to lend my help

there because many don’t have the opportunity or can’t risk the danger of it.”

At home, Smith works as a senior analog designer for Nebula Microsystems in the Dallas area. Until recently, he was an analog integrated circuits design engineer at Texas Instruments, where he designed circuits that make all kinds of gadgets go, from phones to smart doorbells. Texas Instruments supported the project through donations and publicity. Smith says working in circuits is his “dream job.” Every day presents a new puzzle, a new challenge to push through and new opportunities for the next breakthrough that could change the world.

“Engineering is the field of taking science and technology and putting them to use for the betterment of the world,” Smith says. “It’s a noble cause and I try to continuously find ways to do that.”

Learn more about the Haiti Solar Initiative at gthaitisolar.com. ✨

{ The Haiti Solar Initiative has provided 75 solar-powered Relay batteries in Haiti & outfitted community centers & ministries with solar panels to maintain vital health & educational services. The devices designed by Jake Smith '18 are compact, inexpensive & intuitive to use. }



A Lifetime of Service

Be nice to everyone, even when they're not nice to you.
 Don't complain unless you have a solution to the problem.
 Keep your mouth shut, and karma will take care of it later.

T

The Elon community remembers the life and legacy of Jo Watts Williams '55, who dedicated 75 years to the university she loved.

BY ALEXA BOSCHINI '10

HIS, ACCORDING TO LONGTIME FRIEND BARRY BRADBERRY '75, was "The Gospel According to Jo Watts Williams." It captures the qualities that the people who knew her best throughout her extraordinary life remember most fondly. Her genuine kindness. Her generosity of spirit. Her warm sense of humor. Her unique ability to forge deep connections with people, to make everyone in her orbit feel truly special.

"She embraced people with sincerity," says Bradberry, Elon's associate dean of admissions and special assistant to the vice president for enrollment. "Everyone wants to have an inspired leader, and she was truly a leader."

A legendary educator and administrator, Williams died Sept. 16 at age 92 at her home in Burlington, North Carolina. She was a part of Elon University, her alma mater, for more than 75 years and contributed greatly to the quality of life in Alamance County through her extensive work in the community. After working as a public school teacher, Williams returned to Elon and made her mark in the classroom and the administration, ultimately rising through the ranks to vice president for development. She remained a devoted advocate for the university as vice president emerita, working to shape Elon's future right up to her passing.

"Dr. Williams' service to our university spanned five presidents — Jo has been the common thread through Elon's growth," President Connie Ledoux Book says. "At every moment in the life of the institution, Jo was there building community, warmly embracing each of us and sharing her endless love." She adds, "Jo has also been a personal friend and mentor for me. I was proud and humbled to have her at my side the day I began my service as Elon's ninth president. She has been a role model for intelligence, integrity, strength of character and always a spirit of warmth, grace and dignity. We are better people because we have known Jo Watts Williams. She embodies all that is good about the Elon community and we will forever celebrate her remarkable life."



{ Jo Watts Williams '55 helps plant a white oak on campus to mark the beginning of Connie Ledoux Book's presidency at Elon in March 2018. }



Williams' legacy will continue to impact Elon for generations to come thanks to the generosity of her family, sons William "Lee" Williams III and his wife, Beth, through the Beth and Lee Williams Foundation, and Dr. Randall Williams and his wife, Elizabeth. Their \$10 million gift to Elon — the largest endowment gift in the university's history — will provide permanent funding for numerous scholarships and support for faculty, administration and the university's community partnerships. And in July of this year, Elon's board of trustees approved the naming of the Dr. Jo Watts Williams School of Education in recognition of her lifetime of distinguished service.

"I've been doing this work for over 30 years, and I've never been associated with a gift that more accurately aligns with a human being's life than this one," says Jim Piatt, vice president for university advancement. "It supports students; she was a student here. It supports faculty;

she was a faculty member. It supports administration; she was an administrator here. It supports the community; she was one of the driving forces in Alamance County. There are these components that line up with the phases of her life. I think that's a beautiful thing."

A Natural Educator

Jo Watts was born on May 26, 1929, in the White Store community of Anson County, North Carolina, the youngest of eight children of James C. Watts and Blanche Rogers Watts. Neither of her parents had attended college, but they were committed to the importance of education. They raised money to hire a teacher for the town's school and ensured that all of their children attended college.

Following her graduation from Deep Creek (N.C.) High School, Williams followed the path of all of her

{ Left: In 2013 Elon named a building in The Oaks neighborhood in honor of Williams. Right: Williams with Barry Bradberry '75 during her 90th birthday celebration. Below: Williams & J. King White '80, who she hired to be Elon's director of alumni & parent relations right after he graduated. }

siblings, enrolling in then-Elon College in 1945. It was there she met fellow Elon student William Leaford Williams Jr., and the two were married on June 13, 1948. She combined her studies with work, serving as secretary to President Leon Edgar Smith for four years. She completed her bachelor's degree in elementary education and graduated from Elon in 1955.

Following college, Williams spent 14 years as a public school teacher in North Carolina, working in Alamance County Schools, Concord City Schools and Burlington City Schools. She was a Teaching Fellow and earned her master's degree in education in 1971 and a doctorate in 1973 from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

"The most exciting thing was when you could tell when a student understood what you were trying to teach. There was this glow about them," Williams said in an interview after the announcement of her family's gift to Elon. "I do believe education is transformative. I have seen it happen in so many families, including my own."

In 1969, then-President J. Earl Danieley '46 recruited Williams to accept a position on the Elon College faculty in the Department of Psychology and Education. She soon advanced from instructor to the rank of professor, and in 1977 was named associate dean of academic affairs and director of the Learning Resources Center. Two years later, President J. Fred Young appointed Williams director of development and soon promoted her to be Elon's first vice president for development.

J. King White '80 took several courses with Williams



right before she transitioned from faculty member to administrator. "Those of us who took Jo's classes realized right away she was fun, positive, warm and charming," says White, who along with Bradberry and others became known as a "third son" to Williams over the years. "She knew what she was doing. She had a really easy way about her and her manner with students was really top-notch. I don't know anybody who ever took a class from Jo Williams who didn't rave about it."

Though Bradberry never had Williams as a professor, he met her through a friend after transferring to Elon from Chowan University in 1973 and she quickly took him under her wing. She recommended him for a job in the Office of Admissions right after he graduated and later supervised his graduate school practicum. Bradberry credits Williams with imparting important life lessons in addition to serving as a mentor in his work. Her son Lee helped him get his first loan to buy a car and taught him financial literacy. And always known for her impeccable style, Williams urged Bradberry to dress professionally.

"To this day, I don't walk into Powell Building or Inman Admissions Welcome Center without a coat and tie on," Bradberry says. "I was the first person hired out of Elon to go directly into admissions. She said, 'You look too young. When you go into a high school, they're going to ask for your hall pass.' That's why I dress the way I do."

Blazing a Trail

Williams assumed the role of vice president for development at a time when it was rare for women to hold senior-level positions in higher education. She made strides toward changing that not only through her own work but also by hiring and supporting other women in administrative leadership roles at Elon. "I had a tremendous support system in the administration here. They took a big chance and were blazing a trail," Williams said in a 2019 interview

“She was the best at sewing relationships, sewing different people’s personalities together to make Elon successful. If it wasn’t for Jo, I don’t think Elon would be where it is now.” — Teena Koury

with *The Magazine of Elon*. “I used my energy trying to bring in capable women to serve in roles. I started hiring women and just kept bringing them in. I quietly and patiently kept plugging away.”

One of those women was Annette Orbert ’90, who Williams hired in 1983 to work as a data entry clerk in advancement. The position was being vacated by a Black woman, and Williams wanted another Black woman to fill the position and went out of her way to recruit Orbert, who was working at a bank at the time. “She took a big

step,” Orbert says. “She was trying to maintain diversity in the office. She was really ahead of her time. She paved the way for women at Elon.”

Creating opportunities for others, especially other women, was important to Williams, and Orbert benefited greatly because of her mentorship and steady encouragement. Not long after she started as the data entry clerk,

Williams told Orbert that she wanted her to take classes at lunchtime and at night at what was then Elon College. Orbert wanted to complete her undergraduate degree, but she was newly married. She wasn’t sure she could juggle work, marriage and classes. “I told her, ‘I don’t see how I can do it all,’” Orbert recalls. “She insisted that I could take a class at lunch and one at night. She really pushed me.”

Seven years later, Orbert earned her degree with Williams cheering her on and pushing her toward new opportunities in the financial aid office as a receptionist. “She wanted me to move up,” Orbert says, and she did. She was soon a financial aid counselor and eventually the director of minority recruiting in admissions, where she worked until 2005. Orbert earned a master’s degree from Wake Forest University in 2007 and is now the executive director of Alamance County Community Services Agency.

As she advanced through her career, Orbert stayed in contact with Williams, who always made her feel special.

“Whenever she talked with you, it felt like you were the only person she was focused on,” Orbert says. When she was still working for Williams, Orbert’s 8-year-old sister and her mother visited her at work one day. Williams insisted on meeting Orbert’s little sister. Instead of chatting with her from behind her big desk, Williams pulled out a chair and started asking the nervous youngster questions, quickly putting her at ease. “I was so impressed with that. She wanted everyone to feel comfortable,” Orbert says. “I think about that now. When I talk with people, I do it at a round table in my office. I don’t like the desk between us.”

Innovating University Advancement

In her 16 years as vice president for development, Williams provided administrative leadership, strong trustee and donor stewardship and crucial fundraising success that fueled the institution’s growth. She led four major Elon fundraising campaigns and secured the first \$1 million gift for the college. She also initiated the college’s planned giving program and oversaw major gifts, annual giving, alumni and parent relations, church relations, foundation and corporate relations, and the publications and public information office. The Elon endowment grew from about \$3 million in the 1970s to more than \$23 million in 1995.

“The reason she was so successful in advancement is because she wasn’t one and done, write the check, I’ll see you later,” Bradberry says. “She really cared about people. She had true, deep friendships with people.”

That relationship-driven approach to university advancement is one of the reasons Williams hired White to be Elon’s director of alumni and parent relations right out of college. He recalls wearing shorts and a T-shirt after spending the day cheering on his fraternity brothers at a club lacrosse game when he went to her office in Powell at her request. He was student body vice president, and he thought she wanted to talk to him in that capacity. But after exchanging pleasantries, it became clear she wanted to talk to him about a job. “This was not the formal job interview I expected to be doing,” White says. “I was so embarrassed, and she was loving it because she put me on the spot.”

Williams wanted to innovate and re-energize the development office, including a renewed focus on forging



{ Williams led Elon’s advancement efforts for 16 years. }



strong connections with young alumni. She thought White, with his background in student government and his assured yet friendly demeanor with both staff and students, was the perfect person to

cultivate those relationships. “That launched my working career, and it was because Jo Williams saw something in me that I didn’t see in myself,” White says.

White describes his work with Williams as “the best first job ever.” She was highly respected among her staff, and her charm masked an innate drive to succeed. She pushed her team to represent Elon in the best possible way, encouraging them with “the sheer power of her personality,” White says. When he wanted to pursue another job after five years at Elon, Williams was his biggest cheerleader and served as a reference. He carried the lessons she taught him with him throughout his career, and they remained close for life. “Jo’s warmth was apparent to each and every person she dealt with,” White says. “By her actions, she represented the epitome of Elon’s culture for

hospitality.”

When Piatt began working at Elon in 2008, Williams was one of the first people he met. He regularly frequented her office during his first few months on the job, armed with a notepad as she shared her knowledge about university advancement and Elon in general. “I fully recognize that Jo created this job,” Piatt says. “I’m a steward of her legacy, so personally it’s an honor for me to be in a role like this, that I know was born during a time when it was more challenging, but it was born with great integrity, great vision and great wisdom.”

Piatt credits Williams with modernizing university advancement at Elon, implementing strategies that weren’t even on most other schools’ radars at the time. She oversaw the creation of Elon’s first call center, hired the first major gifts staff and established the Parents Council, among countless other initiatives. “I think some people struggle with how much this place changes, but Jo loved it all, much like President Danieley when he was alive,” Piatt says. “They saw the growth and change as evolutionary.”

A Force for Good

Williams was named special assistant to President Young in 1995, representing Elon in the Alamance-Burlington community and continuing her personal relationships with many donors and friends. In 2010 President Leo M. Lambert named Williams vice president emerita and she continued to be active in the life of the university and nurtured philanthropic relationships between generous families and Elon.

“Jo Watts Williams was among the most prominent architects of today’s Elon University. As a respected faculty member and a talented administrator, she strengthened every aspect of the university and touched the lives of thousands of students,” Lambert says. “As a leader in our wider community, she was a major contributor to the quality of life in Alamance County, helping to make possible the medical facilities and senior living communities that are enjoyed every day by thousands of people. She exemplified the value of civic engagement and the impact that one person can make in the lives of others. But most of all, she was a dear and true friend to me and countless others.”

{ Above: Williams with Annette Orbert '90, one of the many women Williams mentored during her time at Elon. Below: Williams with President Emeritus J. Fred Young, President Connie Ledoux Book & President Emeritus Leo M. Lambert during her 90th birthday celebration. }





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“There will always be an Elon, and now there will always be a School of Education at Elon because of this generous gift from my family. In addition to my family, Elon has been the greatest blessing of my life.”

— JO WATTS WILLIAMS '55

eena Koury, co-owner of Carolina Hosiery Mills and Alamance Industrial Park, can attest to that. As an Alamance County native, she first met Williams about 40 years ago through social gatherings and her family's connection to Elon, and they remained friends. “I looked at Jo as a seamstress for Elon University,” says Koury, a fitting analogy that ties to her own textile heritage in the area. “She was the best at sewing relationships, sewing different people's personalities together to make Elon successful. If it wasn't for Jo, I don't think Elon would be where it is now.”

Williams said her life had three priorities: her family, her university and her community. She leaves a legacy of leadership in Alamance County, serving as one of the driving forces in the complex merger of Memorial Hospital and Alamance County Hospital and the construction of Alamance Regional Medical Center (ARMC), which opened in 1996. She served on the Memorial Hospital Board and continued on the ARMC board. She was also instrumental in the construction of the former Memorial Hospital property of Alamance Extended Care, which includes the Village at Brookwood retirement community and Edgewood Place.

In addition, Williams served as a board member on multiple community organizations, including the Alamance County Chamber of Commerce, Alamance County Habitat for Humanity, Salvation Army and Burlington Boys and Girls Club. She was also a trustee and ruling elder in First Presbyterian Church and was named Woman of the Year by the Burlington Civitan Club in 1982.

While these accomplishments are impressive enough, for Koury, Williams' true legacy lives on through the countless people she touched. “She's taught so many how to sew relationships,” she says. “Everyone else has learned her pattern for sewing, so it will carry on.”

At Williams' memorial service, Vice President for Access and Success and Professor of Education Jean Rattigan-Rohr described an encounter with Williams at a gas station in downtown Burlington that encapsulated Williams' impact on the community. “I quickly jumped out of the car to talk to Jo, to embrace and to catch up,” Rattigan-Rohr said. “But what was telling to me was that car after car as they pulled into that gas station, just about everybody stopped to say hello to Jo. I teased her and said, ‘You know, you should really have run for mayor.’”

Williams was named Elon's Distinguished Alumna of the Year in 1995, was awarded the Elon Medallion for outstanding service to Elon in 1998 and received the Frank S. Holt Business Leadership Award in 2008. In 2013 the



{ From left: Dr. Randall Williams, Ann Bullock, dean of the Dr. Jo Watts Williams School of Education, & William "Lee" Williams III in front of the school. }

university named a residence hall in The Oaks neighborhood on campus in her honor, and her portrait hangs in a conference room that bears her name in the president's office suite in Powell Building. In 2014 she was recognized by North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory with the state's Order of the Long Leaf Pine award.

Williams was a generous and consistent donor to Elon through more than five decades, supporting scholarships, academic programs, athletics and building projects. She was a member of the Elon Society, Phoenix Club and the Order of the Oak planned giving society, and she and her husband created the William L. and Jo Watts Williams Scholarship.

An Enduring Legacy

This summer, Williams' sons ensured her legacy would live on thanks to a \$10 million gift in her honor that will touch every facet of education at Elon. In recognition of this commitment, Elon's board of trustees voted to name the Dr. Jo Watts Williams School of Education — a fitting tribute to a pioneer in education at Elon and beyond. "Her life's work always focused on the power of education to transform lives," says Ann Bullock, dean of the Watts Williams School of Education. "We are proud that her name will forever be associated with our school and the success of our students."

Thanks to the school naming, Book says, generations of future students will learn about Williams' positive spirit and legacy. "They will have an inspiring role model who demonstrated the impact a single, passionate individual can make in building a better world," she adds.

The gift, which was made as part of the Elon LEADS Campaign, will create an endowment to support students, faculty, administration and the university's community partnerships. The funds will be used in the following ways:

- Support for 10 annual recipients of the Dr. Jo Watts Williams Teaching Fellows, Elon's most competitive and highest award for students desiring to pursue a career in teaching.

- Support for at least 10 annual recipients of the Dr. Jo Watts Williams Scholars award, who will participate in the partnership between the Alamance-Burlington School System (ABSS), Alamance Community College and Elon University. These students will be Alamance County residents who demonstrate financial need and, upon completion of the program, will go on to begin their careers in the ABSS schools.
- Support for the dean of the Watts Williams School of Education and the Dr. Jo Watts Williams Endowed Emerging Scholar, which will be granted on a rotating basis to education faculty members who are beginning their Elon teaching careers.
- Establish the Watts Williams Community Excellence Fund to provide support to Elon's partnerships such as the Elon Academy, the "It Takes a Village" Project and Service Year programs.
- Support for 20 scholarships in Elon's groundbreaking Odyssey Program, supporting full financial aid for students with exceptional potential and limited resources. Many students selected for the Odyssey Program are first-generation college students. Recipients will be known as the Dr. Jo Watts Williams Odyssey Scholars.

"My mother exemplifies all that is wonderful about the Elon community," Williams' son Lee says. "This gift will provide resources that will transform the lives of students who are fortunate enough to follow in her footsteps."

In an interview following the announcement of the gift, Williams said it was "a lifelong privilege" to be affiliated with Elon. She dedicated most of her life and career to nurturing the university she called home, contributing significantly to its rise from a regional college to a nationally recognized university. Thanks to her family's philanthropy, her impact will continue to resonate at Elon long after she is gone.

"Teaching was my love from the very beginning, and the fact that this gift will educate teachers at Elon makes it even more special," Williams said after learning of the gift. "There will always be an Elon, and now there will always be a School of Education at Elon because of this generous gift from my family. In addition to my family, Elon has been the greatest blessing of my life." ♣

Roselee Papandrea Taylor '21 and Keren Rivas '04 G'21 contributed to this story.

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POSTCARDS FROM

TOKYO



ELON FACULTY, STAFF, STUDENTS AND ALUMNI REFLECT ON THEIR TIME AT THE LONG-DELAYED 2020 OLYMPIC GAMES.



{ Left: Assistant Women's Cross Country & Track & Field Coach Laura Igaune at the Tokyo games. Below: Assistant Professor of Physical Therapy Education Shefali Christopher (second from left) with members of the U.S. Paralympic Triathlon team. }



BY TRAJAN WARREN

It was the largest media event in history — with more than 150 million Americans tuning in, an average of 15.6 million during the prime-time slot and 5.5 billion minutes consumed through streaming — but the privilege of actually participating in it was only granted to a select few.

It was feared that the Tokyo Olympics, the biggest sporting event in the world, would be canceled entirely due to the COVID-19 pandemic. But after a year's delay, more than 11,000 athletes and 80,000 officials, journalists and support staff made their way to Tokyo for the games, and thousands more made the event possible remotely.

Several Elon University faculty, staff, students and alumni were among those who spent their summer competing, supporting athletes or producing content for the billions of people watching worldwide.

THE COMPETITOR



Laura Igaune competed in the women's hammer throw event at her first Olympics this summer as one of the 33 competitors representing Latvia in Tokyo. As the assistant women's cross country and track and field coach at Elon, she hopes to show the student-athletes she trains what it will take to get to the next level once they are finished with college athletics. "Since this is my first Olympics, I will remember every single moment that I experienced and the magnitude of being at that event," Igaune says. "It kind of motivates me to go further; I will go and try to qualify for the next Olympics in 2024. It's just a huge motivator for me to continue going because I feel like I'm on the right path."

THE THERAPIST



Shefali Christopher, assistant professor of physical therapy education, assisted the U.S. Paralympic Triathlon team as a contract physical therapist, a role she has served in since 2018. With so many moments from her time in Tokyo to pull from, she said being around such incredible athletes was her biggest takeaway. "It was inspiring to be around such top-class athletes," Christopher says. "It was fun to watch them flip a switch, acting like this was just another day leading up to race day and on race day, but then truly remembering where they were and celebrating this achievement after."

"Being able to support the paratriathlon team in bringing home three gold medals and two silver medals was also something I will never ever forget. I still get chills when I think about the women's wheelchair finish where Kendall Gretsch won gold, coming back from a four-minute staggered start in the swim to overtaking her opponent on the blue carpet! It's a must-watch if you get a chance."





THE SPECTATOR-TURNED-INTERN

Shaun Goodman '22, a senior cinema and television arts major, spent his summer editing videos and collaborating with media industry professionals as a runner assigned to NBC's digital team. With his father working for NBC, he had the opportunity to attend the 2008 and 2012 games as a spectator. But working the Olympics as an intern gave Goodman another perspective. "The Olympics are always a special occasion because the whole world is coming together on one stage," he says. "Although there weren't any fans in attendance this time, I was lucky enough to work behind the scenes with a variety of media companies and people from around the world.

"I think my leadership qualities grew because I looked around and I saw that leadership doesn't solely rest on one person, but the collective effort of the whole and people picking each other up when they're down, just like in the athletic events."

THE PRO PRODUCER

Max Negin, assistant professor of cinema and television arts, worked on his seventh Olympic Games in Tokyo, producing "Tokyo LIVE" for NBC's Peacock streaming platform. Negin said the restrictive nature of this past Olympiad made things "odd," but the same indispensable knowledge from such an experience remains. "For me, the greatest part of it, as someone who teaches media and TV production, is to be involved in, arguably, the largest and most extensive remote production in the world and to be able to walk around and ask questions and observe," he says. "It's just invaluable for my teaching and for my professional development to be able to see what's going on, and then I can bring that back and talk to students and explain different techniques, different practices that people are doing and to make connections."

{ Above: For Assistant Professor of Cinema & Television Arts Max Negin, Tokyo marked the seventh Olympic Games of his career as a producer. Right: Shaun Goodman '22, who was a spectator during the 2008 Beijing Olympics, served as an intern at the Tokyo games. }





THE REMOTE CONTENT CREATOR

Ellie Whittington '18, a social media assistant for the Durham Bulls minor league baseball club, was granted the opportunity to be a part of the worldwide competition. Working remotely as a social media digital production assistant, she worked from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m. Eastern Time to cover the results of the games live and worked with the Bulls in the afternoon. Fortunately, earning her undergraduate degree in journalism from Elon had prepared her for such challenges. “Elon taught me how to be a multimedia journalist,” Whittington says. “I’m just so grateful for Elon making me a well-rounded journalist to be able to handle multiple things at one time versus just being pigeonholed into a specialty.”

{ Ellie Whittington '18, above, & Emmanuel Tobe '21, right, provided coverage of the games remotely. }

THE REMOTE PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Working on the Olympics remotely from Stamford, Connecticut, was not how **Emmanuel Tobe '21** originally planned to spend the games. He had planned to intern in Tokyo before the pandemic forced the world’s biggest event to be postponed. He took an internship with Hearst Magazine, where he currently works. But when the opportunity arose to freelance with the ad insertion team as the digital production assistant, he didn’t hesitate to accept. “It was a great experience. I loved it,” Tobe says. “It was a big confidence booster for me as well. If I can work 12 hours a day, as a part of this crew working on something that’s going to be produced 14 hours away with 7,000 people involved from all over the country and the world, then I feel like I can do anything.”





THE MAGAZINE EDITOR

Lindsay Kimble Carney '13 graduated from Elon with a degree in journalism and is now the senior news editor and sports editor with People Magazine. Tokyo was the first Olympic Games that she was able to cover. As a lifelong viewer, she was taken aback by the scale and meticulousness of it all.

“It’s such a mammoth production that a country undertakes to put these games on, the thousands of athletes from all around the world, their teams ... and then you have thousands of journalists and all the volunteers,” Carney says. “It’s really impressive to watch and really neat to have a front-row seat.

“Sitting in the stands and quickly publishing a story while track athlete Allyson Felix wins the final gold medal of her Olympic career and then running down the stairs of the stadium to interview her fresh from the track with sweat beads still on her forehead ... was so surreal and had me pinching myself.” 🌸



Celebrating Elon's first Japanese student

Toshio Sato of Utsunomiya, Japan, graduated at the top of her class in 1920.

BY KATELYN LITVAN '24

Over the years, thousands of students have gathered Under the Oaks to celebrate their academic achievements at Elon and begin the next chapter of their lives. All graduates' accomplishments are unique, as each student has embarked on their own journey to receive their diploma. Last year marked the 100th anniversary of the culmination of an Elon graduate's academic journey that spanned over six years and 6,000 miles.

In fall 1914 Toshio Sato enrolled at Elon College as its first Japanese student. The Utsunomiya, Japan, native traveled 6,813 miles to start her classes at Elon at the invitation of Alice True, a member of the board of trustees who met Sato while traveling in Japan for missionary work.

Throughout her six years at Elon, Sato pursued a certificate in art and a diploma in art. She was heavily involved in college life throughout her time at Elon, serving as a representative of the Psiphelian Literary Society and a member of the student volunteer band. She also served on the cabinet of the Young Women's Christian Association and was elected president of the organization in 1920. Additionally, Sato was involved in student government as secretary of the senior class and president of the Student Council. At the time, the Student Council was the self-governing body of women students at Elon College. Years after Sato graduated in 1920, the Student Council merged with the men's Student Senate to form the Student Government Association, which still has a prominent presence on campus today.

Sato, along with classmate Ollie McCollum, received the "Biggest Flirt" senior superlative title in the 1920 publication of the Phi Psi Cli yearbook. The yearbook recorded that "To know her is to love her... our beloved classmate came from a faraway clime and broke all records of scholarship, loyalty, and devotion to duty."

Sato was the valedictorian of her class.



JAPANESE GRAD SENDS LETTER

The Missionary Education Movement sends word of a letter received from an Elon alumnus in Japan. Mrs. Toshio Sato, class of 1920. The letter, forwarded by Pfc. Barney H. Strickland, USN, stationed in Japan, was addressed to Lucy M. Eldredge, secretary of the movement, and is as follows:

Wakuya, Aug. 1, 1947.

Dear Lucy:

Miss Angie Crew wrote and gave me your address. I bet you can't imagine how glad and happy I was to hear from her again, and to know that you still thought of me well enough to ask her about me.

Well, thankful that the war is over, and I'm writing you again. It seems like a long, horrible dream to me, but every one of my family is alive and recovering from the shocks of bombings.

Just before the first Christmas after the war I met a soldier going back to the States. He promised to take messages for me, and I gave him our address, also several notes. And some time after I sent you a card to let you know that we were alive and working just as hard as a donkey. During the war I had to run away from Kobe to Tokyo to the country way up in Southern Japan where I was born. The name of the place is Wakuya, and as you see I'm still living at the place. My husband remained in Tokyo, and after the last bombing he got a very serious heart trouble, and once no doctor thought he could pull through. Of course, I had to work hard to take care of my two younger boys, who ran away from Tokyo with me and helped him too while he was sick. He is now almost well, but still under the doctor's care.

The food situation in Japan is very serious one, and I've to work very hard to get even rice. Ice cream, candies, coffee, or cakes are the dreams of the long ago past. To feed and clothe the boys is the hardest work of my life now.

Soon after the war was over, the U.S. soldiers came up to the northern part of Japan. At first, Japanese people were very much afraid of them, and tried their best to stay away from them. I know better, so I volunteered to help them. One of the things they badly needed was a place to do their laundry. I know of quite a large dry cleaning and laundry shop in Osaka city (biggest city of Japan), where Christian Church used to be and helped the work there. To go to this city takes me three hours, but I thought the time was here for me to do my best to show my appreciation of what you Americans did for me while at Elon College. I was very happy to have the chance.

Last September I moved to the dry cleaning and laundry room Hq. I.K. Corps Building. From 5 a. m. to 8 p. m. every day except Sunday I am away from home, and the two boys help with the housework whenever they are at home. You see, they too are to their school.

Now I must close this time and write you again.

With lots of love,

Yours,

Toshio.

In her speech, which was titled "Is It Nothing to You," she encouraged her fellow graduates to act on their faith and support refugees of World War I. The speech was published in the June 1920 edition of *The Christian Sun* newspaper, after which Sato was awarded two prestigious awards: the Wellons Scholarship Medal and the Moffit Essayist's Medal.

After graduation, Sato returned to Japan, where she worked as a teacher for many years. Sato was praised by the principal of the school for her "perfectly wonderful work," according to a 1921 *Christian Sun* article. Sato married Kameichi Kato, a graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. The couple met when Sato was studying at Elon and married shortly after returning to Japan. They had four children: three sons and a daughter. The daughter passed away at age 10, and all three sons graduated from college in Japan.

Throughout the 1920s, Sato kept in touch with her Elon friends through letters. However, she found it increasingly difficult to correspond with them as the 1930s began, with tensions rising leading up to World War II. Sato was finally able to send a letter to her friend Lucy Eldredge in 1947 after the war ended.

In the letter, Sato explained the difficulties that her family faced throughout the war, including the loss of their Tokyo home in a bombing. After the fighting ceased, Sato volunteered her time helping U.S. soldiers who were stranded in Japan. She wrote in her letter, "I thought this time was here for me to do my best to show my appreciation for what you Americans did for me while at Elon College."

Sato died suddenly of a heart attack at age 71. Her son wrote to Elon to inform the community of her death. An article was promptly sent out in the alumni newsletter, titled "Toshio — A Beloved Member of the Elon Family." *

A New Era of Leadership

BY JALEH HAGIGH

CAMPAIGN AT A GLANCE

Goal \$250M

\$229M+ Raised to date
(as of Oct. 15)

30,000 Donors to date

Priorities Graduates the World Needs, Engaged Learning, Mentors Who Matter, Iconic Learning Environment

Concludes Dec. 31, 2022

PRESIDENT CONNIE LEDOUX BOOK announced alumni Priscilla Awkard '95, Christian Wiggins '03, Maity Interiano '07 and Jack McMackin '08 as the new co-chairs of the Elon LEADS Campaign, sending a powerful message about the importance of alumni leading Elon's future.

The co-chairs, who are among Elon's most engaged and generous alumni, were announced Oct. 22 at the fall meeting of the Elon University Board of Trustees. They will lead the final year of the Elon LEADS Campaign, which will conclude on Dec. 31, 2022. They succeed Elon trustee and parent Dave Porter P'11 P'19 of Boston and Elon alumnus, trustee and parent Chris Martin '78 P'13 of Tinton Falls, New Jersey, who chaired the first and second year, respectively, of the campaign's public phase, which began in spring 2019.

"The Elon LEADS Campaign has had strong, steady leadership from the beginning, and that tradition continues with Priscilla Awkard, Christian Wiggins, Maity Interiano and Jack McMackin, who represent the next generation of alumni leaders," Book said. "The Elon community is grateful to Dave Porter and Chris Martin for their loyalty and outstanding service."

Book also thanked Joan Doherty P'07; Ed Doherty P'07, former chair of Elon's board of trustees; and Trustee Allen Gant Jr. for their leadership of the campaign during its planning phase.

Awkard of Raleigh, North Carolina, has served in many leadership roles as an alumna, including as a member of Elon's Phi Kappa Phi honor society, the President's Black Life Advisory Council, the Elon Black Alumni Network, Phoenix Club Advisory Board and the Raleigh Regional Campaign Committee. A standout volleyball player, Awkard is also a member of the university's Sports Hall of Fame and received the Eugene Perry '69 Distinguished Alumni Award in 2011 and Distinguished Service to Elon Award in 2020.

"I am honored and humbled to be asked to be one of the co-chairs of the Elon LEADS Campaign," Awkard said. "It shows me that Elon trusts me to be a part of a monumental time in the history of Elon, and they know I only want what's best for Elon."

Awkard received a volleyball scholarship to attend Elon and credits her alma mater with preparing her to succeed, which inspires her to support Elon LEADS each year. She has also placed Elon in her estate plan with a generous gift to support the volleyball program and Black Alumni Scholarship, which she helped endow.

"I feel an obligation to give back to the place that helped develop me into the leader I am today," said Awkard, who serves as vice president of the Teller Center at Coastal Credit Union in Raleigh. "I'm so proud of what Elon LEADS has been able to do. The dedication and commitment of all those who have given is evident, as this is the most money raised in Elon's history."

As of mid-October, donors had contributed more than \$229 million toward the campaign's historic \$250 million goal.

Wiggins, CEO of FarmHouse International Fraternity in Kansas City, Missouri, has given more than a decade of service to Elon, serving on the Elon Alumni Board and Charlotte Alumni



{ Christian Wiggins '03, Priscilla Awkard '95, Maity Interiano '07 & Jack McMackin '08 are the new co-chairs of the Elon LEADS Campaign. }

Chapter and as a founding member of the Young Alumni Council. He has generously contributed to Elon's Greatest Needs, Phoenix Club and Gender and LGBTQIA Center, along with The Inn at Elon.

As a first-generation college student, Wiggins knows firsthand the challenges many students face affording higher education and the power of scholarships to transform lives. In May, he made a second estate gift to support the Louise Amburn Memorial Scholarship at Elon, which he endowed to honor his great aunt and will assist low-income students from his hometown in western North Carolina. Increasing scholarship funding through endowment and annual gifts is the top priority of Elon LEADS.

"Elon punches above its weight class in terms of what we're able to deliver with top national rankings and student success with the endowment resources we have," Wiggins said. "Elon LEADS seeks to change that and to try and level the playing field with our peer and aspirant schools."

Interiano, an Emmy Award-winning journalist and on-air talent at Univision Network in Miami, attributes her success to

Elon's national leadership in engaged learning and to mentors in the School of Communications who helped guide her development as a journalist.

"I support Elon LEADS because I understand that the professional I've become started off with the education I received at Elon, and everything I've accomplished so far goes hand in hand with my Elon experience," she said.

Interiano is a loyal donor to Elon's Greatest Needs, the Latinx/Hispanic Alumni Network, Phoenix Club and School of Communications. She received Elon's Top 10 Under 10 Award in 2012, delivered Elon's Commencement address in 2017 and is a member of the President's Young Leaders Council.

"Our generation has a chance to give back to a school that has given so much to each one of us," Interiano said. "It's our time to step up and make a difference for Elon's future."

McMackin is a member of the President's Young Leaders Council and co-chaired the New York Regional Campaign Committee in 2019.

"This is an extraordinary time to be involved with Elon as it grows," said McMackin, founder and managing director of Mission Innovation Network, a venture capital firm in South Bend, Indiana. "I've seen the progress Elon has made since I graduated while also staying true to its core identity, and that inspired me to be involved in the Elon LEADS Campaign."

McMackin's study abroad and internship experiences were pivotal to his growth as a student, which is why in 2006 he endowed with his parents Jack and Kathleen McMackin P'08 the McMackin Family Scholarship for International Study. He continues to make annual gifts to support the scholarship to this day.

McMackin encouraged all alumni to support Elon LEADS, adding, "As alumni, we now have the opportunity to act on our shared love of Elon and lift the university to even greater heights, supporting the next generation of leaders the world needs."

"I've seen the progress Elon has made since I graduated while also staying true to its core identity, and that inspired me to be involved in the Elon LEADS Campaign." — Jack McMackin '08



CAMPAIGN PRIORITY:

Graduates the World Needs

Donors continue to generously support the top priority of the Elon LEADS Campaign — growing scholarship funding through endowment, estate and annual gifts to attract outstanding students who will lead the future. More than half of the campaign's \$250 million goal will be designated for financial aid alone. To date, campaign gifts and commitments from alumni, parents and friends have created 241 new scholarships to transform lives, including those of first-generation students.

240+

TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOLARSHIPS
ESTABLISHED SO FAR
DURING THE CAMPAIGN

110 Odyssey

31 Fellows

58 Elon Engagement

42 Elon Experiences

* As of Oct. 15



{ Britt Mobley II '24 }

ODYSSEY SCHOLARSHIPS

BY JALEH HAGIGH

Elon's nationally recognized Odyssey Program serves students with significant financial need, including many who are the first in their families to attend college. Students move through the program as a cohort and are consistently among Elon's top-performing students and active campus leaders. The scholarships in the program have been endowed by some of the university's most generous donors and include financial aid that meets a student's full need.

This past spring, Elon reached the 200 Odyssey Scholarship milestone thanks to gifts and commitments from campaign donors whose generosity has doubled the number of endowed scholarships in the program. The university is now halfway to its long-term goal in the Boldly Elon strategic plan of having 400 Odyssey Scholarships, or 100 scholarship recipients per class.

“I have worked hard to persevere, and this scholarship gave me the opportunity to be successful. ... Being able to guide first-year Odyssey students now is one of the best feelings ever.”

— Britt Mobley II '24

Britt Mobley II '24 was sitting in church with his mother, Debra, in fall 2019 when he received a phone call that would change his life. Marcus Elliott, director of Elon's Odyssey Program, was calling to offer Mobley the Inman Family Scholarship and the chance to attend the school of his dreams.

“I could not believe it. All I could say was ‘thank you’ because without the Inman Scholarship, I wouldn't have been able to come to Elon,” Mobley says. “I went back into church and told my mom the good news. She started crying and singing even louder! Our prayers had been answered. At that moment, I saw all the pieces coming together, and I knew Elon was where I'm supposed to be.”

The Inman Family Scholarship was established following a generous endowment gift to the Elon LEADS Campaign from Pat Inman P'00 and Elon Trustee Bill Inman P'00, who are among the university's most devoted donors. Their endowment supports 10 students in the Odyssey Program each year.

“I have nothing but gratitude and love for the Inmans for making their gift and making my Elon experience possible,” says Mobley, who is majoring in strategic communications and media analytics. “I have worked hard to persevere, and this scholarship gave me the opportunity to be successful.”

Mobley has made the most of his Elon education since arriving on campus last fall from his home in Raleigh, North Carolina. He joined the Student Government Association and currently serves as president of the Class of 2024. He was also selected as a Communications Fellow and has taken advantage of many of the School of Communications' engaged learning opportunities, including working as a broadcast engineer to ensure student-produced television shows run smoothly. Colin Donohue '05, director of student engagement and special projects and instructor in journalism, was so impressed with Mobley's passion and leadership skills that he asked him to join the school's Student Advisory Board this year.

Perhaps Mobley's most cherished role has been mentoring first-year Odyssey students. “Meeting people like me who understood the struggles of life was comforting and it gave me a larger family to call my own before I even got to school,” Mobley says. “Being able to guide first-year Odyssey students now is one of the best feelings ever.”

“He's one of those special talents who not only recognizes the gifts he brings but is a good steward of the gifts and talents he has to better everyone around him,” Elliott says. “The sky's the limit with Britt, and Elon will be better for it.”



{ From left: Megan, Katie '20, Martha P'20 & Rob P'20 Park }

FELLOWS SCHOLARSHIPS

BY MADISON TAYLOR

Scholarship support for Elon's six Fellows Programs helps attract top students who set the bar for academic excellence at the university and strengthen Elon's national reputation for quality and innovation. These rigorous, four-year programs include Fellows-only courses, faculty mentoring and paid assistantships or internships. Fellows typically have the highest academic profiles of each entering class.

When **Katie Park '20** decided to pursue a teaching career, she was all in. Her dedication and devotion to reaching that goal through her studies in Elon's Dr. Jo Watts Williams School of Education had a ripple effect. It inspired her family, including parents Martha and Rob Park P'20 of Fort Worth, Texas, and Rob's parents, Judy and Major Park GP'20 of Mission Woods, Kansas, to endow the Park Family Teaching Fellows Scholarship.

“Teaching is a very important job that deserves more attention,” Martha Park says. “Katie has been excited about teaching for a very long time. Her excitement and passion for teaching led us to become involved.”

Elon's Teaching Fellows program serves as a national model for the preparation of leading teachers and scholars. Fellows scholarships are essential to Elon's efforts to recruit top future educators.

"It provides an opportunity for a student to receive an excellent education that is built upon the liberal arts and provides opportunities above and beyond what we already offer in our outstanding education program," says Ann Bullock, dean of the Watts Williams School of Education. "Every child deserves a great teacher, and Elon produces wonderful teachers."

Katie Park exemplifies those ideals. She graduated with a degree in elementary education at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and is now teaching kindergarten in the Birdville Independent School District near Fort Worth.

"Elon prepared me to teach by providing me with an education on different kinds of students. I feel prepared to serve students on varying levels, both academically and emotionally," she says. "The professors helped me grow my love and passion for serving the future leaders of my community."

ELON ENGAGEMENT SCHOLARSHIPS

BY MADISON TAYLOR

Elon Engagement Scholarships are integral to the university's enrollment strategy because they help close the financial gap for families, allowing promising admitted students to choose Elon. Engagement scholars embody the spirit and values of the uni-

versity and are eager to participate in Elon's nationally recognized engaged learning programs.

Miracle Smythe '23 arrived at Elon with a goal to experience everything she could while working toward a career in television as a broadcaster, writer, producer and, ultimately, an executive. After all, she says, "I would hate to limit myself in a world full of opportunities."

Smythe, a first-generation college student from Reynoldsburg, Ohio, exemplifies the spirit and values of Elon. She doesn't want a passive learning environment. She is the kind of bright, curious, resilient and dedicated student Elon had in mind when it created the Engagement Scholarship. Smythe, who is majoring in cinema and television arts and minoring in professional writing and business administration, has emerged as a campus leader. She serves as the HBO Max campus brand manager and co-director of the new Film en Color program.

The Lori and Eric Sklut Elon Engagement Scholarship made it possible for Smythe to enroll at Elon and to remain a student through the economic hardships created by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"There have been many times when I had to sit down with my mom and have a serious conversation about transfer options," Smythe says. "The simple thought of leaving the home I created at Elon was heartbreaking. With the help of the Lori and Eric Sklut Elon Engagement Scholarship, students like me could continue their education."

Elon Engagement Scholarships not only provide critical financial aid, but also a one-time grant for one of the five Elon Experiences: study abroad/Study USA, internships, undergraduate research, service or leadership. Smythe has been accepted into the Elon in LA program for next spring. It was her dream Study USA opportunity, and she hopes to amplify the experience by securing an internship in the entertainment industry while there.

Elon parents Lori and Eric Sklut P'14 of Charlotte, North Carolina, endowed the Sklut Elon Engagement Scholarship as part of ELON LEADS. "I've had the opportunity to meet students interested in going to Elon who were gifted," said Eric Sklut, an Elon trustee, when the couple made their gift. "Knowing they could only attend a school like Elon through a scholarship made that even more important to us."

Smythe fits that description. "My mother was not able to obtain a degree at a four-year college," Smythe says. "She worked hard to provide me with a life of comfort and happiness. It didn't always work out that way, but she taught me that hard work pays off. When I graduate, I will be doing it for her."

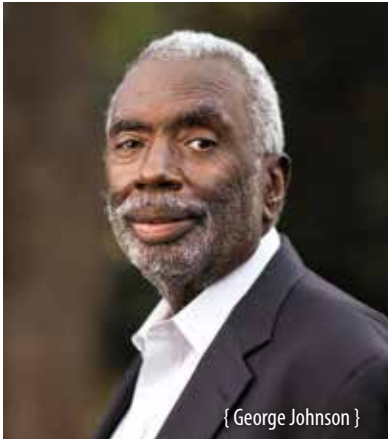


{ Miracle Smythe '23 is the recipient of the Lori & Eric Sklut Elon Engagement Scholarship. }

ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS

BY JAMIE FRAMPTON

New scholarship honors Dean Emeritus George Johnson



{ George Johnson }

As a tribute to the late Dean Emeritus and Professor of Law George Johnson, Elon Law Advisory Board members Mark Jetton '06 L'09 and Ronny Lancaster, along with Elon Law alumni Eric Meredith L'09 and Raleigh Lancaster '08 L'13, created the Dean Emeritus George R. Johnson, Jr. Memorial Law Scholarship in May 2021.

Johnson, who passed away in November 2020, was a founding member of Elon University School of Law. He earned an exceptional reputation as a teacher, mentor, scholar and leader in the legal community.

"As a member of the profession and parent of an Elon [University] and Elon Law graduate, making a gift to a scholarship in Dean Johnson's memory is a most fitting way to honor his legacy," Ronny Lancaster says. "The scholarship will reward Elon Law students who exhibit intellect, integrity, leadership and compassion — the very ideals he exemplified."

The scholarship is intended to honor Johnson's many contributions to the school and to the legal profession. As a member of the founding faculty, Johnson began teaching at Elon Law in 2006. He went on to serve as Elon Law's first associate dean of academic affairs before being named dean in 2009. In 2014, Johnson returned to the faculty and continued to teach and inspire the next generation of lawyers.

"More than a professor, and more than the dean he would be by the time I graduated, he was a mentor and a friend to so many of us," Jetton says. "Now that we're into our second decade of practicing law having successfully established our firm, I felt the time was right to give back to create opportunities for future Elon Law students, while honoring Dean Johnson who dedicated his career to building a better profession."

The scholarship will be awarded to students who have a commitment to promoting the ideals of diversity, equity and inclusion at Elon Law and/or within the legal profession.

"It's impossible to think back on my time in law school and not think of Dean Johnson," Meredith says. "Making a gift to help establish a scholarship in his name will help so many future Elon Law students learn the values and knowledge he instilled in us all, while preserving his legacy as the type of lawyer we all should aspire to be."

Honoring the memory of Jeffrey D. Bennett '98

Jeff Bennett '98 has been described by those who knew him best as having an infectious smile, a hardy handshake, an uplifting outlook and a loving and caring heart for others. He was also a caring son, father, brother, uncle and friend.

After his sudden passing in December 2020, multiple donors, including his family, close friends and classmates, came together to endow the Jeffrey D. Bennett '98 Memorial Scholarship Fund. "We wanted to honor Jeff's love and dedication to Elon and keep his memory alive in as many ways as possible," says Bennett's father, Gary. "We know Jeffrey would approve — he was always helping others."

A native of Fair Haven, New Jersey, Bennett was the first of four members of his family to attend Elon. When he arrived at Elon College in 1993, he immediately fell in love with the school. He quickly became involved with the Student Government Association, Kappa Sigma Fraternity, Elon Rugby and on-campus jobs in residence life, admissions and leadership. After graduating in 1998, Bennett went on to work at Elon in admissions and advancement. Even after he relocated to Charlotte, North Carolina, Elon remained near and

dear to his heart, and he often returned to campus with his sons for alumni and athletic events. Bennett continued his work in higher education in admissions at Queens University, St. Andrews University and Webber International University. He later served as a consultant for schools as vice president of corporate sales at Brand RPM and as an executive with Under-score, a higher ed enrollment marketing firm.

The fact that the scholarship will provide access for students to enjoy the same opportunities



{ Jeffrey D. Bennett '98 & sons }

Bennett cherished at Elon is a fitting tribute for someone who impacted so many people. Once fully endowed, it will provide financial assistance for an incoming Elon student who is a graduate of Rumson-Fair Haven Regional High School in Rumson (Bennett's alma mater), or an incoming Elon student from New Jersey. "Through the generosity of the incredible Bennett family and his closest friends, this memorial scholarship will plant the seed of Jeff's indomitable spirit inside the life of an Elon student forevermore," says friend and scholarship donor Tait Arend '96 G'00. "His impact will never end."

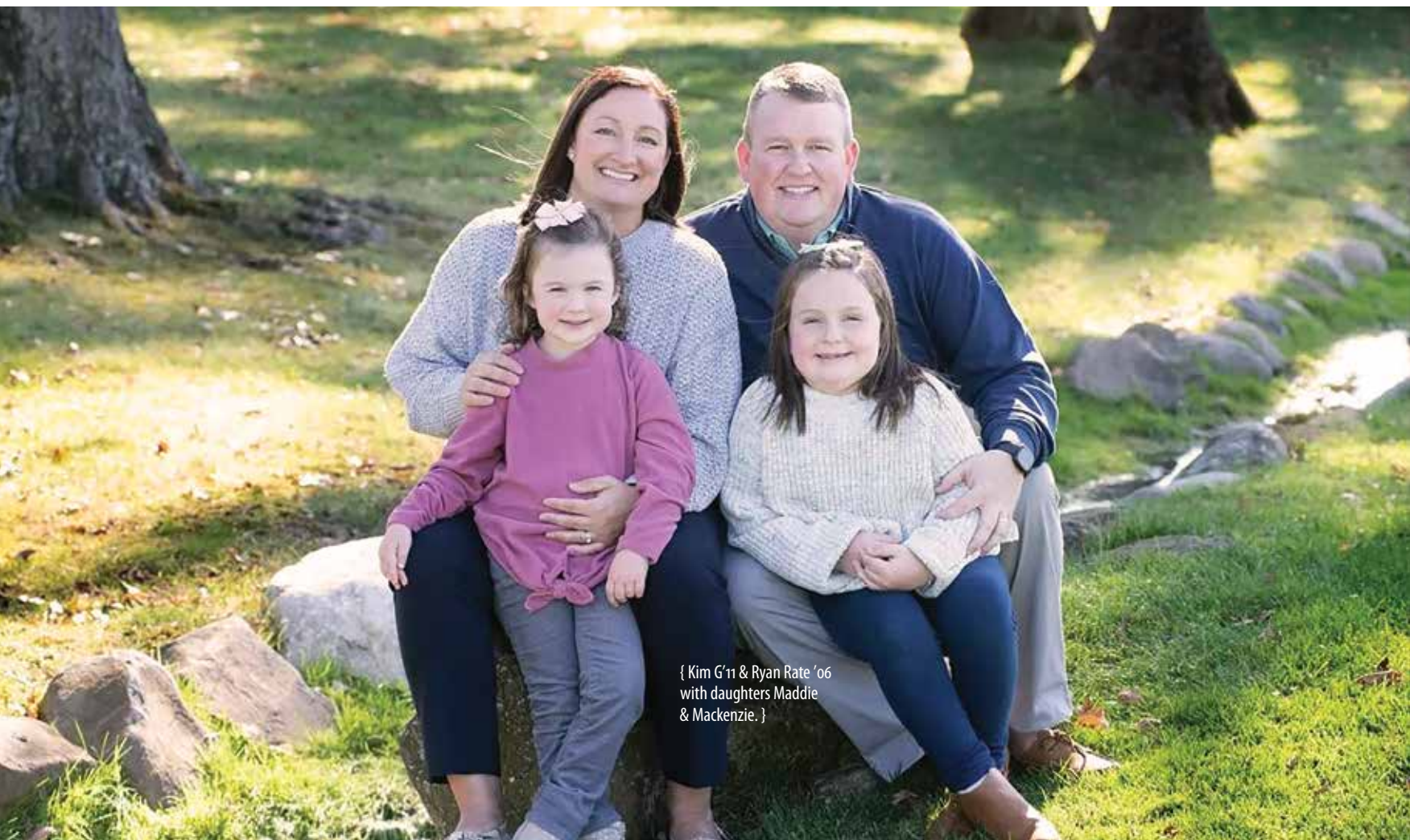


CAMPAIGN PRIORITY:

Engaged Learning

ELON EXPERIENCES SCHOLARSHIPS

Bolstering access to the Elon Experiences, the university's signature engaged learning programs, is another crucial priority of the Elon LEADS Campaign. Gifts to engaged learning opportunities are propelling Elon forward, fulfilling its promise to provide transformative engagement experiences for learning through global study, internships, undergraduate research, service and leadership development.



{ Kim G'11 & Ryan Rate '06
with daughters Maddie
& Mackenzie. }

ALUMNI COUPLE ENDOWS GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT SCHOLARSHIP

BY JAMIE FRAMPTON

Kim and Ryan Rate have been loyal supporters of Elon since graduating in 2006, designating their gifts to the areas on campus that were the most impactful to them. Recently, the couple decided to support another program that helped shape their Elon experience by endowing a global engagement scholarship. Once funded, the endowment will support Elon students with verified financial need who are pursuing global engagement opportunities, either internationally or within the United States.

“As an alumni couple, we are excited to have the opportunity to endow a global experiences scholarship fund,” Kim Rate says. “Elon’s immersive and experiential approach to learning continues to pay dividends for its students far after graduation, and we wanted to give students, who otherwise may not be able to, the chance to explore the world more broadly and share in our passion for global travel and experiences.”

Kim earned both her undergraduate and graduate degrees in special education from Elon and taught in the Alamance-Burlington School System for 10 years before taking a break to raise the couple’s two young daughters, Maddie and Mackenzie.

Ryan, a business and accounting major, has worked for PwC in various roles since joining the company in 2006 and is now a partner. Leveraging his matching gift program with PwC meant that the couple could increase their giving to maximize their philanthropic impact.

Corporate matching programs can often put creating endowments within reach for younger alumni. Because of Kim’s and Ryan’s generosity, deserving Elon students will have a chance to participate in Elon’s nationally renowned global engagement program for years to come.

ELON FAMILY’S INTERNSHIP GIFT STRENGTHENS CATHOLIC CAMPUS MINISTRY PROGRAM

BY MADISON TAYLOR

To help first-year Catholic students at Elon find the services offered by the university’s Catholic Campus Ministry, Paul and Renee Armstrong P’22 have made a generous gift to endow the Armstrong Family Catholic Campus Ministry Engagement Internship, a peer-to-peer mentoring program that just completed its first year at CCM.

Patterned after a similar initiative at Elon Hillel, engagement interns are second-year students who serve as ambassadors for Catholic Campus Ministry. They develop strong connections with first-year students through one-on-one outreach, ongoing interactions and mentoring. The program includes leadership training, group programs and mentoring sessions for interns, where they gain the experience necessary to reach out to first-year students and help them overcome any challenges that may occur when moving into a new place with few, if any, familiar faces.



{ The Armstrong family, from left, Paige, Paul P’22, Renee P’22 & Sara ’22. }

“Our goal is to keep students alive in their faith while at Elon, and we hope this helps bridge that gap,” Renee Armstrong says.

“We know the beginning of a student’s college time is very challenging. The first thing they think about isn’t always their faith, even if they have strong faith,” Paul Armstrong says. “Having someone personally contact new students when they arrive on campus makes getting involved easier, rather than showing up to an event and not knowing anyone or what to expect.”

Engagement interns contact incoming first-year students prior to their arrival on campus and offer invitations to coffee, Sunday meals or other CCM social gatherings and Catholic services. They help first-year students acclimate to a new environment, raise their confidence to tackle challenges and make friends. It is an opportunity to build meaningful relationships, tap into leadership opportunities and strengthen or renew their faith.

Paul and Renee Armstrong are both retired from General Electric. Paul last served as a sourcing manager and Renee served as a marketing manager. Along with Catholic Campus Ministry, the couple have made gifts to Elon’s Martha and Spencer Love School of Business, the Center for Organizational Analytics, Reed Finance Center, Kernodle Center for Civic Life and student scholarships.

“Words fall short in my gratitude for the ways in which the Armstrong family supports our ministry,” says Father Peter Tremblay, CCM director and associate chaplain for Catholic life at Elon. “It’s not only a tremendous act of generosity but a tremendous leap of faith to trust us with such a lasting gift.”



CAMPAIGN PRIORITY:

Mentors Who Matter

ENDOWED SUPPORT FOR FACULTY AND STAFF

Elon fosters powerful intellectual relationships among its faculty, staff and students. Gifts to this priority will enhance Elon's innovative course design and strengthen programs, advance teaching methods and elevate research opportunities for faculty and staff mentors, which benefit student learning.

GENEROUS GIFT FROM STEVEN AND PAT HOUSE ENDOWS AWARD TO HONOR STUDENT MENTORING

BY JALEH HAGIGH

Elon Executive Vice President and former Provost Steven House and his wife, Patricia House, made a generous gift to endow an award that will celebrate excellence in student mentoring — one of the markers of quality that has fueled Elon's reputation as the national leader in engaged, experiential learning. The couple's estate gift will create an endowment that in the future will fund the Steven and Patricia House Excellence in Mentoring Award. The couple are making annual gifts to fund the award immediately.

"Pat and I believe that the true disruptive innovation in higher education is a commitment to relationships in which each student has a faculty or staff member who demonstrates how much they care about the student, encourages the student and gets the student excited about learning, and that's what Elon does so well," Steven House says.

Pat House adds that her career in education and consulting has affirmed her belief in Elon. "I knew Elon was something special as a former employee here, but seeing Elon in the light of other institutions I've worked with has only strengthened this belief," she says. "And how rewarding it is for me to see graduates invite Steven to their medical school commencements or contact me as successful professionals seeking guidance in their journeys and watch them reach heights they may never have imagined possible."

KATE UPTON RECEIVES STEVEN AND PATRICIA HOUSE EXCELLENCE IN MENTORING AWARD

BY OWEN COVINGTON

Associate Professor of Finance Kate Upton has inspired countless students, alumni and fellow faculty through her dedication to the growth, success and well-being of students at Elon, earning her the second Steven and Patricia House Excellence in Mentoring Award in May.

"Kate's commitment to her students is found in every aspect of her work at Elon, both in and out of the classroom," wrote colleagues in support of her nomination for the award. "An exceptional teacher, her courses reflect the Elon ideal of engaged learning."

Upton has created and redesigned finance courses with students



{ Patricia & Steven House }



{ Kate Upton }

in mind. Each course focuses on preparing students for their specific careers but also helps them develop broader skills while teaching resilience and critical thinking.

“Dr. Upton not only made class and the subject enjoyable, but would spend countless hours after class with a line of students out her door and sitting on the floor just to review a few more problems and prepare for an exam,” wrote one former student. “I believe her students wanted to succeed because of the environment she fostered in class.”

Upton has also served as a mentor for student research, advising Honors theses, a Love Award for Excellence in Business Leadership winner and independent research projects focused on gender bias, diversity and inclusion in business. She has spent two years as director of the Reed Finance Center, and she created and still advises Elon’s Women in Finance student club.

“Words cannot fully explain the impact she made on not only my years at Elon University but my entire life,” one former student wrote. “The mentoring relationship that I developed with Dr. Upton while at Elon has shaped me into the individual I am today.”



CAMPAIGN PRIORITY:

Iconic Learning Environment

INNOVATION QUAD TAKES SHAPE

BY MADISON TAYLOR

Elon’s Innovation Quad will be the new hub for STEM education and fuel development of a distinctive engineering program grounded in engaged learning, entrepreneurship and the arts and sciences. As of Oct. 22, 17 generous families had contributed \$9.4 million toward the \$20 million fundraising goal, including a lead gift from alumnus Furman Moseley ’56 and Susan Moseley to name the IQ1 building Founders Hall.

The first phase of the IQ features 60,000 square feet of classroom, lab, prefabrication and collaboration space in two connected buildings, Founders Hall and IQ2. The facilities will serve as the new home for Elon’s engineering and physics programs and STEM studies such as astrophysics and virtual reality. The first two buildings are the beginning of a visionary



plan to advance connections between engineering and science along with entrepreneurship, sales, design thinking and analytics. The IQ is scheduled to be completed in time for the 2022-23 academic year.

Elon announced plans for the IQ in January 2020, yet the vision to grow the university’s engineering and other STEM programs started in 2013. For Sirena Hargrove-Leak, associate professor of engineering and director of Elon’s four-year engineering program, it’s inspiring to see the dynamic first phase of the IQ taking shape in the former parking lot between the Dalton L. McMichael Sr. Science Center and Richard W. Sankey Hall.

“It is very exciting to see our ideas come to fruition. This excitement extends across campus into the surrounding community and into the dreams of future engineering students,” Hargrove-Leak says. “This is evident in new interdisciplinary collaborations, community partnerships and growth in enrollment.”

Members of the campus community have seen the IQ rise from the ground daily as they walk to nearby Moseley Center, Belk Library, Koenigsberger Learning Center and the Ernest A. Koury Sr. Business Center. Prospective students and families can also see the IQ as they begin their campus visits from the adjacent Inman Admissions Welcome Center.

“Students are so excited that it is difficult to walk by the construction site without stopping to stare,” Hargrove-Leak says.

LEARN MORE

Fundraising continues for the IQ project. For more information, including aerial photos, a fly-through video and naming opportunities, go to elon.edu/iq.

THE IQ AT A GLANCE

- ▶ 60,000 square feet of connected space in Founders Hall and IQ2
- ▶ New home of engineering and other STEM programs
- ▶ Lab space for prefabrication, design and advanced prototyping work
- ▶ Astrophysics lab; mechatronics and virtual reality labs

Annual Giving: Every Gift Counts

2020-21 GIVING

\$23.4M Fiscal year total received

12,899 Total donors

\$6.3M in Planned Giving estate commitments

1,101 Elon Society members

\$3.4M+ from 5,609 Elon Day donors



Annual gifts provide a critical source of revenue for the university to operate, going to work immediately to support the best of Elon. Thanks to the collective efforts of our loyal alumni, parents, grandparents, students, faculty, staff and friends, this vital source of revenue supports every area of campus, including Elon's Greatest Needs, scholarships, academic programs, athletics, student organizations, religious life and more.

THROUGHOUT THE 2020-21 FISCAL YEAR, DONORS MADE A COLLECTIVE IMPACT ON ELON STUDENTS BY MAKING GIFTS OF EVERY SIZE:

- ▶ Thousands of donors renewed their annual support last year as members of the 1889 Society, which honors Elon's most loyal donors who make gifts to the university two or more years in a row.
- ▶ Gifts from various initiatives throughout the year including Giving Tuesday, Elon Luminaries and more contributed to the overall support for students.
- ▶ Elon Day set a new record, raising more than \$3.4 million and contributing to 235 student and campus funds on Elon's annual day of giving.

WHY I GIVE

"As an Elon Engagement scholarship recipient, I am forever grateful for the opportunities to not only study abroad each of my four years but to give back to the community through service and grow in leadership." — Becca Surprenant '18



FACULTY/STAFF GIVING

Elon’s staff and faculty once again supported the university through their financial gifts, with 67 percent of employees making contributions that totaled more

than \$400,000 to support Elon students. The 2020-21 campaign co-chairs were Jason Husser, associate professor of political science and policy studies and director of the Elon University Poll, and Patti Gibbons, associate director of cultural and special programs.

“I recognize that participating in faculty and staff giving could be the difference in whether or not a student is able to continue their academic journey at Elon,” said Harry Titus, donor and assistant director of student care and outreach.



{ Halle Brennan '21 }

SENIOR CLASS GIVING

Students continued to make an impact in 2020-21 with nearly 50 percent of the senior class making a gift to Elon through Senior Class Giving.

“I wanted to make a difference for the incoming first-year students and students to come,” said Halle Brennan ’21, a Communications Fellow and double major in the School of Communications who served as Senior Class Giving co-chair

with Ryan Vu ’21. “The university and its programs have given me so much, and I strongly believe that every student should experience the valuable opportunities I did.”



PHOENIX CLUB

In 2020-21, the Phoenix Club successfully debuted its first virtual Phoenix Club 5K, which raised more than \$31,000 for student-athlete scholarships from more than 950 Elon alumni, families and friends across 34 states. In total, more than 2,200 donors gave \$3.6 million to support student-athletes at Elon.



BLACK ALUMNI SCHOLARSHIP

Elon is launching an ambitious yet important goal to triple the endowment of the Black Alumni Scholarship, reaching \$1 million by 2025. This scholarship helps Black students who demonstrate high scholastic achievement and financial need realize the full Elon educational experience.

Intended to help make an Elon education available to deserving Black students, the Elon Black Alumni Network Scholarship fund was established in 2007. Thanks to pledges and gifts from EBAN members and friends of the university, the scholarship was endowed in just three years. Over the years, gifts from more than 1,000 alumni donors have pushed the value of the Black Alumni Scholarship to more than \$350,000, helping to change the lives of its student recipients. To date, it has provided financial assistance to 10 Elon students.

The special fundraising initiative to triple the scholarship’s endowment 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.

WHY I GIVE

“I’m forever grateful for my experience and want to make sure future Black Elon students can afford to do the same.”

— Jasmine Spencer ’11

Annual Giving: Paying it Forward



LEADING THROUGH GIVING

BY HEATHER MUNRO '18

The Elon Society is the university's leadership annual giving community that includes all donors who make a gift of \$1,500 or more each year, for any purpose. Undergraduate alumni of the last 10 years and of the last five years become Elon Society donors by giving \$1,000 or \$500 a year, respectively.

To Wes Brewer '16, there really is no other place like Elon. The Burlington, North Carolina, native credits his time on the men's basketball team and his hands-on experience in the classroom for the success he has achieved since graduating five years ago.

"My professional success after Elon is all thanks to the fellow alumni that came before me and gave back financially," he says. "They helped mold the experiences that I had at Elon, as well as the experiences of all my fellow classmates."

Brewer made his first gift to support Elon students during his senior year, and he has continued his tradition of philanthropy every year since. Today, Brewer gives to a combination of areas at Elon so that current and future students can have the same experiences he was grateful to receive. As a member of the Elon Society, he generously gives to the men's basketball team, the Love School of Business and Sankey Hall.

"Elon had such a long-lasting impact on me and forever will," Brewer says. "When I graduated, I knew I wanted to start giving back right away and have a sustained impact at Elon for the rest of my life."



"Elon had such a long-lasting impact on me and forever will. When I graduated, I knew I wanted to start giving back right away and have a sustained impact at Elon for the rest of my life." — Wes Brewer '16

PHILANTHROPY COMES FULL CIRCLE

BY KATIE PEOPLES '06

From changing majors to traveling the world to using her talents to give back, Nikki Inocencio '21 has had quite the Elon adventure.

Arriving on campus as an aspiring singer-songwriter, Inocencio originally planned to major in music production and recording arts. She joined the student-run record label, Limelight Records, her first year and wrote songs, performed solo gigs and took music theory classes.

"After that year, I decided it was time for a change in direction," Inocencio says. "So, I traded my microphone in for a camera, and switched my major to cinema and television arts."

A natural talent, she easily adjusted from musical to visual arts, and a few of her pieces went on to win awards.

As her Elon odyssey continued, Inocencio studied abroad in Singapore in fall 2019 through scholarships and grants. It is there she formed some of her closest friendships, which would become an important support system as the world moved into a difficult period.

"Being at Elon during such a politically divisive time taught me a great deal about perseverance," she says. "I learned the importance of finding a strong community, surrounding yourself with supportive people and creating safe spaces for those who need it most."

She also saw firsthand the impact of philanthropy at Elon, both as the recipient of a scholarship in the Odyssey Program and as a student caller in the Student Outreach Program. This group of students reaches out to alumni, parents and friends to secure annual gifts that support Elon students. When the program was put on hold amid the COVID-19 pandemic in fall 2020, Inocencio joined the Office of University Advancement's communications team as a video producer, creating content for Elon Day and other initiatives that raise funds for students.

"I talked to parents and alumni about how they, too, could create opportunities for a happier, healthier student body," she says. "I was still communicating those same messages as a video producer, but through a craft that I had honed during my time at Elon. It all came full circle."

After graduation, Inocencio moved to Austin, Texas, where she works as an editor for Atmosphere, a streaming company.



The Power of Philanthropy

*Your gifts to Elon make it possible for students to achieve dreams they never thought possible. **Thank you** for making a difference in the lives of our students through your philanthropic support.*



Caitlin Strickland '22

**Teaching Fellow, History with Secondary Education
Teaching Licensure**

Hometown: Evanston, Illinois

Future Plans: “After college, I plan on teaching in high school and eventually I would like to go into administration.”

Throughout her Elon career, Caitlin has received scholarships through the James W. and Jo Anne A. Maynard Endowment for Teaching Fellows, established by lifelong Alamance County resident and businessman Jim Maynard and his wife, Joie, and the Luther Alexander Lineberger, Jr. Scholarship, established by Virginia Lineberger '32 in memory of her brother, Luther '38. Caitlin was studying in Dunedin, New Zealand, with her Teaching Fellows cohort when the pandemic sent most of Elon's students abroad back to their homes. The Mark T. and Marianne Mahaffey Scholarship for International Study and Service, established by an Elon parent and trustee, helped Caitlin with her travel to and from New Zealand.

“Thank you so much for these scholarships, and for making my college career possible. Without generous people like you, I would not be able to attend such a great university. It is in times like these, with the global pandemic, that I feel even more grateful that I am still blessed enough to receive a quality college education.”

– Caitlin Strickland '22

Aubrey Cavey '24**Finance, Professional Sales & Entrepreneurship****Hometown:** Chesterfield, Virginia**Future Plans:** “I have a passion for golf and hope to use my knowledge of the golf industry and my teachings from Elon to mesh the two.”

Elon is an important part of Aubrey’s family. His parents, Bill ’91 and Stacey ’92, as well as his older sister, Mary Grace ’21, all graduated from Elon. Since coming to campus, Aubrey has been busy with classes in finance in addition to participating in the new Elon e-sports club and Rip_Chord, an all-male a cappella group. Aubrey is a recipient of the Elon Alumni Board (EAB) Engagement Scholarship, which supports promising first-year students with family members who also attended Elon.

“I am extremely grateful for the EAB Engagement Scholarship, which has opened opportunities for me to try new things and meet new people. I am so grateful for this support in my journey through Elon as well as my journey through life.”

– Aubrey Cavey ’24

**Gabriela Varisco de Oliveira '22****Finance & Accounting, Economics****Hometown:** Porto Alegre, Brazil

Gabriela’s life changed completely when she learned she was a recipient of the Cameron Little Memorial Scholarship and would be joining Elon’s track and field and cross-country teams. After moving to the United States to attend Elon and compete as a student-athlete, Gabriela developed a special affection for Elon — an affection shared by Cameron Little, an Elon football player and track athlete. After graduating from Elon with a degree in math, Little attended East Carolina University to earn his master’s degree. He eventually went on to coach football at Western Carolina University and teach and coach multiple sports at Jacksonville Senior High School. When Little passed away in 1977, his friends and family established a scholarship in his memory.

“With this scholarship I could move to a new country, be introduced to a new culture, make lifelong friendships and be provided with an exceptional level of education that will brighten my future. I had the opportunity to pursue the sport I love alongside great teammates and coaches through both track and cross-country seasons. Once again, thank you for making my goals and dreams become a reality!”

– Gabriela Varisco de Oliveira ’22

TWENTY YEARS OF WAR

BY ALEX LUCHSINGER

WHEN I SAW THE IMAGES OF AFGHANS CHASING PLANES, desperately clinging to wings and wedging themselves in landing gears — many plunging to their deaths — it conjured thoughts of my reporting trip to Afghanistan in 2011. The fevered desperation of the Afghan people was as palpable in 2011 as it appears now and serves as a tragic, full-circle flashback to the innocent Americans jumping from the World Trade Center two decades ago, the event that precipitated it all.

When our plane descended into the Kabul airport in 2011, the dazzling beauty of the striated mountains surrounding the tarmac gave way to the reality of entering a war zone. Old memories and mounting anxiety washed over me as we made our way through the barren airport. I was five years out of the Marine Corps, where I served in Iraq in 2005. My colleague and I were alone now, hailing a taxi outside the airport, just a pair of Westerners in a sea of Afghans, eager to shed light on a forgotten war.

We arrived at the International Security Assistance Forces headquarters to abandoned machine gun positions still smoldering from an intense firefight. After being spirited into relative safety behind barriers, we linked up with personnel who assigned

us to embed with troops in Garmsir, a small district situated in the south in Helmand Province.

En route, I ran into four Marines with whom I previously served. One, a gunnery sergeant on his fifth tour, told me of his recent divorce and how the strain of the relentless deployment tempo became too much for his wife and family, another casualty of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

We arrived at our remote forward operating base in Garmsir at dusk on an Osprey, an aircraft notorious for mechanical failures but capable of making tactical vertical landings and takeoffs like a helicopter. Our brief by the commanding officer was quick and austere: The day before, a Marine left the compound to retrieve a bottle and was killed by an improvised explosive device as his peers looked on from a rifle tower.

Tiny outposts dotted one of the only roads in and

out of Garmsir; many bases had no running water or sanitation. Malnourished and exhausted, Marines told me of bartering goods at local markets in exchange for fresh fruits and vegetables. Taliban intimidation abounded as we patrolled surrounding areas, but the Marines' morale was still high—and they were so young, many born shortly before the start of the war.

I nearly wept when we arrived at a school that recently opened after being shuttered for six years by the Taliban. The Afghan military manned a rifle tower while children filed into the compound, its classrooms nothing more than a concrete space with secondhand desks. I met teenagers there, just 18, who told me they were sixth graders because they had not been to school since they were 12 years old. I asked if they knew about 9/11 or Osama bin Laden; their vacant looks confirmed what I suspected. I knew then the American mission in Afghanistan had run past its expiration date.

The hasty withdrawal from Afghanistan is reminiscent of the rush to invade in 2001. Little was known about the country, particularly the centuries-old tribal strife and years of corrupt leadership, let alone a dearth of command of the languages spoken there.

Afghanistan, under Taliban rule, underscores historic attempts to change entrenched ways, and until Afghans, should they desire, come together to shape their future, the Taliban will reinstitute its draconian grip on the country. It is a blow to progress on women's rights, education and human rights.

It is time to leave Afghanistan and to many, including me, we must now live with its aftermath and the unnecessary deaths of Afghans and American service members who stepped up so the majority did not have to. ♣

Alex Luchsinger is an assistant professor of journalism at Elon University and continues to work as a journalist and documentary filmmaker. He served as a U.S. Marine from 2002-06 and received the Purple Heart.



{ Alex Luchsinger with Afghan children in a school classroom in Garmsir, Afghanistan, in September 2011. }

Shaping **Elon's Future**



Dear fellow alumni,

As we enter the final year of the ELON LEADS Campaign and embark on a new beginning through the Boldly Elon strategic plan, I find myself reflecting on the notion that our actions now shape our future. What we do today lays the foundation for where we will be tomorrow and where we will find ourselves 10 years from now. As I begin my tenure as president for the Elon

Alumni Board, I am excited for what we can accomplish together this next year, an important first step on the road to becoming Boldly Elon.

This fall, the alumni office sent a survey to ask for your feedback on ways Elon can better engage and serve our alumni populations. The Elon Alumni Board also provided recommendations and ideas to staff during our recent meeting on campus. With feedback incor-

porated, Elon plans to build on its commitment to alumni, fostering lifelong partnerships through more workshops, webinars and professional development opportunities like continuing education and certification courses.

At the end of this next decade, we also aim to establish learning centers in Los Angeles, New York City and Washington, D.C., that will provide resources and connections for Elon community members in those areas.

The generous philanthropic effort contributed so far to the ELON LEADS Campaign will fuel the progress we make with Boldly Elon. Hand in hand, philanthropy and action create change.

I invite you to take an active role in the development of our university and our community. Whether it is through participating in regional events, serving as a mentor, or giving back annually or even through a planned gift, I invite you to lead from where you are. Take action today to help shape Elon's tomorrow.

Katie Zach Fitts '04
President, Elon Alumni Board

Phoenix Virtual 5K



Join the Phoenix Club Virtual 5K from Nov. 20–28! Participation supports Elon student-athlete scholarships. Learn more about how you can do good for yourself and for others at elonphoenix.com/5K.



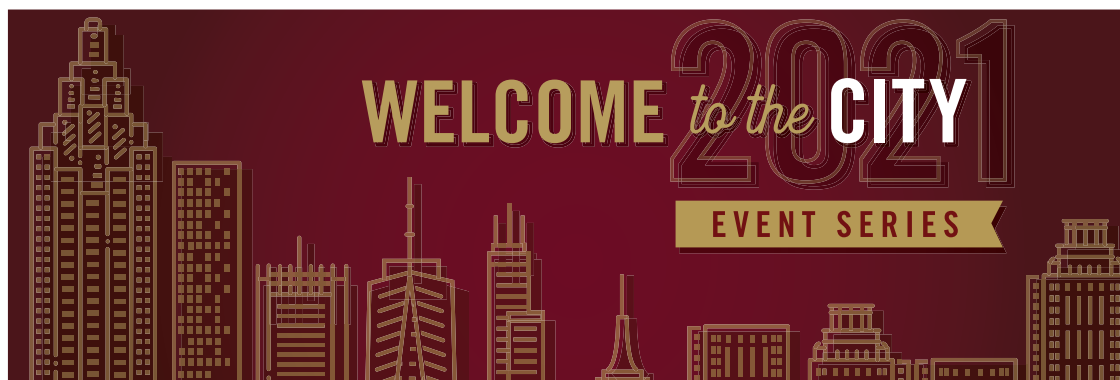
Class of 2020 Commencement

More than 700 members of the Class of 2020 came back to Elon this fall for a Commencement celebration they've been looking forward to since it was put on hold last year due to COVID-19.

The Commencement weekend boasted plenty of opportunities to celebrate, including receptions with academic deans and departments, the Donning of the Kente ceremony, Lavender Graduation, a special Class of 2020 tailgate before the football game against Wofford, a Saturday evening celebration and a Commencement brunch.

A formal Commencement ceremony was held Under the Oaks, where graduates received oak saplings in keeping with Elon tradition and Leonard Dick P'20, an Emmy Award-winning writer and producer, gave the Commencement address. Attendees also heard remarks from President Connie Ledoux Book and the Class of 2020's senior class president, Noor Irshaidat '20, who conferred upon her classmates her own version of an Elon degree — "a master's in humanity, with a concentration in pandemic experience." See more photos from this special weekend on this issue's inside back cover.

alumni on the town



Beginning in September, Elon's regional alumni chapters gathered to welcome the Classes of 2020 and 2021 and relocated alumni to their city. Elon graduates had the opportunity to reconnect with each other and welcome new alumni to the area, strengthening bonds after a year of solely connecting virtually. For many cities, this was their first in-person event since March 2020. While alumni took the necessary health and safety precautions to gather in person, the energy of connecting face-to-face brought the community together. Each region-based event was held at a local-favorite venue centrally located for many alumni. Thank you to everyone who participated in your local Welcome to the City. Stay tuned for more upcoming events from your regional alumni chapter this year.

ELON in the BALLPARK

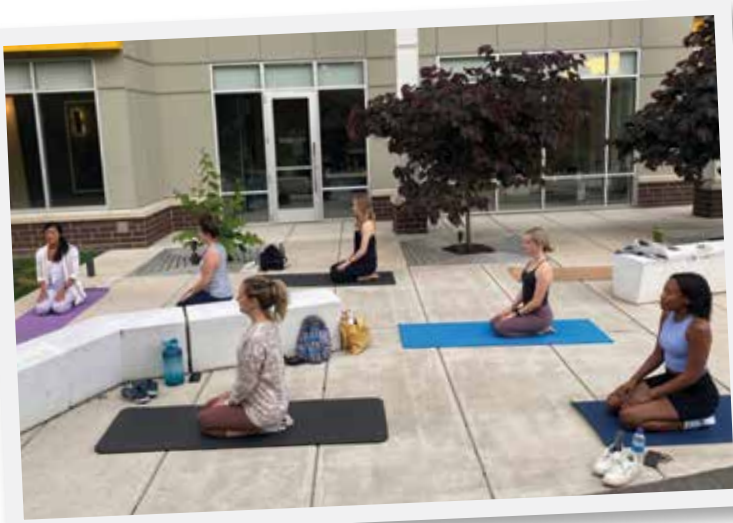
This summer, alumni chapters gathered at ballparks across the country to support their local teams and reconnect with each other as part of the Elon in the Ballpark event series. This year's series included games in Alamance County, Atlanta, Boston, New York City, the Triad and the Triangle. Thank you to all who came out and supported your local teams.





As part of ELONNEXT, LifelongElon continues to serve as a hub for professional network connections, mentorship opportunities and continuing education through monthly professional development webinars. Connect with alumni from all over just from the touch of your keyboard and continue to build a meaningful, robust professional network by logging in to [LifelongElon.com](https://lifelongelton.com) today.

CHAPTER HAPPENINGS



- ▶ **The Pittsburgh Alumni Chapter** kickstarted the summer with a beautifully led yoga flow. Katie Le '14 led a group of five alumni in a mindful practice outside. Following the class, alumni were invited to socialize outdoors safely with drinks, food, pets and children.



- ▶ **The Washington, D.C., Alumni Chapter** ended their summer with a family-friendly picnic in Stanton Park in late August. Alumni, family and friends were invited to the picnic to enjoy light refreshments, play games for chances to win Elon swag and reconnect with many of their friends in person.



- ▶ **Chapter Leader Retreat** On July 24, 35 chapter presidents gathered from across the country with staff from the Office of Alumni Engagement to celebrate the success of the past year and to begin discussing strategies for planning regional events for the coming year with the hope that many will be in person. During the retreat, chapter presidents expressed their excitement for being back in some of their favorite venues. Alumni engagement staff would like to thank all the regional chapter leaders for their dedication to providing Elon alumni with the opportunity to stay connected in their local regions.

HERE'S LOOKING AT YOU, ELON ALUMNI

Throughout the pandemic, the Office of Alumni Engagement has shared stories of alumni who are doing important and uplifting work in their careers and communities as part of the “Alumni in Action” series. Here are some of the stories we shared in 2021.

Supporting COVID research

As a clinical research coordinator at Weill Cornell Medicine in New York City, **Noah Carton Rossen '18** works in the clinical and translational research unit (CTRU). During the pandemic, Noah and his co-workers shifted gears to serve as a resource for doctoral researchers and doctors from the hospital network to help with all of the new COVID research projects. As part of his duties, Noah and his teammates extract data to create a risk model using the charts of all the people who came to the hospital with COVID-19, which at the peak in spring 2020 was hundreds a day. “Overall, it’s been a really hard year, but I am thankful I was in a position that allowed me to try to help,” Noah says. “It gave me purpose in an otherwise bleak year.”



Serving the most vulnerable

Rachel Vad-Miller '15 has always had a heart for service and volunteering. At Elon, the human service studies major was an Elon Volunteers! coordinator who worked closely with several community agencies advancing housing, youth and family programs in the area. Now living in Denmark, Rachel works full time as a municipal social worker connecting vulnerable children and families to needed services. Her off-time is spent volunteering

in the community filling gaps not covered by the country’s public services. She also chairs her local branch of Save the Children Youth, a Danish organization that connects adults under 30 in volunteer service for youth and educational services. “What really keeps me going is my work as a social worker,” she says, “seeing all the needs in the community and building connections.”

Know an Elon alum doing great work related to the COVID-19 pandemic or another important cause? Send their name to alumni@elon.edu.

EBAN SUMMIT 2021

More than 50 members of the Elon Black Alumni Network (EBAN) returned to campus for its annual fall summit Saturday, Sept. 11. They heard from Elon leaders on topics ranging from university updates and strategic planning efforts that seek to expand access and resources available to Black students and alumni to ongoing diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. Members also heard about on-campus programming for Black students and received an update on the effort to triple the Black Alumni Scholarship endowment. They ended the day with a family cookout celebrating the dedication of the Janice Ratliff Building (see page 9).



CLASS NOTES

ALUMNI ALBUM



Virgil "Bobby" May III '74 & friends

'74 Virgil "Bobby" May III was joined by classmates **Drew Coble**, **Turner Revels** and **Buddy Thomas** to witness one of their own make baseball history. They attended the White Sox and St. Louis Cardinals game on 5/25/21, which marked the 5,376th game for legendary umpire and former Elon football teammate **Joe West**, who broke the umpiring record that day. The White Sox organization acknowledged Joe's achievement during the first and fifth innings on the stadium's scoreboard, and Bobby is happy to report the group of alumni was able to snap a photo together. Bobby lives in Midlothian, Va.

'82 In August, **Bertha Johnson** was named the deputy city manager of Durham, N.C. Prior to this appointment, Bertha spent 13 years as budget and management services director before serving as interim deputy city manager for five months. She oversees the city's operations departments, which primarily provide core services to residents.

'87 North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper awarded **Joel Leonard** the Order of the Long Leaf Pine Award in April. The award is the highest the governor can give to a North Carolina resident in recognition of their service to their community and the state. Joel was

Alumni members of the Iota Tau Kappa fraternity (active on campus from 1923 to 1980) held a reunion at The Inn at Elon in August. It was the first time many of them had seen each other or Elon's campus since the 1970s. A total of 53 people attended the event, including 37 alumni members. Activities included a welcome reception at the Walker Room in Alumni Field House, a golf outing at Alamance Country Club, a tour of Loy Farm, a wine tasting at Grove Winery and a campus tour led by **Barry Bradberry '75**. The main event was a banquet dinner at the inn, where they shared a brief history of the fraternity and enjoyed old photos that University Archives uncovered.



Dr. **Charles Kernodle Jr. '38** was posthumously inducted into The North Carolina Sports Hall of Fame in July. Charles, a surgeon based in Burlington, N.C., served as the Williams High School football team doctor for 70 years and also helped with the Elon football and basketball teams. He was one of 11 members in the Hall of Fame's 2021 induction class and the second doctor to be inducted in the hall's 57-class history. Longtime friend **Sam Story '69** (front row, second from left) attended the induction ceremony on Charles' behalf.



selected because of his long-standing service developing strategies and approaches to address the skilled labor shortage. After the COVID-19 outbreak, he invested more than \$100,000 to set up MakesBOROUSA, a mobile workshop dedicated to building a stronger technician-to-career pipeline by educating underserved communities throughout the state. Joel lives in Asheboro.

Bryant '83, Kevin Hand '84, Johnny High Jr. '85, Chuck Hodgins Jr. '87, Cabby Raymer '88, Herb Evans '89, Anne Withers Game '89, Robb Lacey Jr. '90, Kristina Williams-Neukrug, Ginni Wray Totaro, Keri Cox Raggio '92 and Joe Fox '94. Kevin reports the group had a great time together.

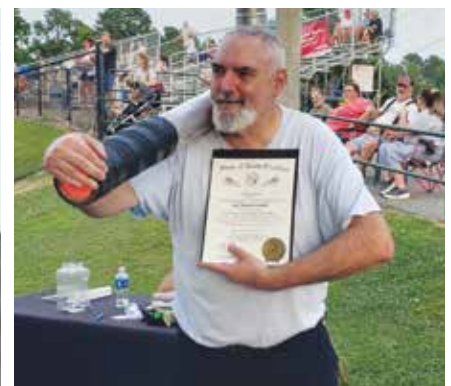
'91 **Kevin Carter** shared that a group of alumni gathered on 8/16/21 at a Dead and Company concert in Raleigh, N.C. The group included **Todd "T Dog"**

'92 **Kim Clark** is happy to share that she assumed the role of senior key account manager with Zogenix in September. Her husband, Tripp Clark, serves as senior executive director of sales with Nihon Kohden. They live in ►

ALUMNI ALBUM



Bertha Johnson '82



Joel Leonard '87

Q&A WITH COACH DAVID GENTRY '70

BY CAROLINE DIFRANGO '23

Considered a legend in the North Carolina high school football coaching community, **David Gentry '70** never set out to stand out. For almost 40 years, the former Elon football player coached the Murphy High School Bulldogs, always focused on taking it one game at a time. Along the way, he led his team to nine state championship wins and became the all-time winningest high school coach in the state before retiring in June. While those accomplishments have meant a lot, he is most proud of the memories his players will have for the rest of their lives.

What made you want to transition from being an athlete to coaching? Coach Red Wilson gave me the opportunity to be an undergraduate assistant and coach the freshman football team at Elon, which included handling all the scouting duties. This helped solidify my choice to become a head coach.

Did your experience as an Elon football player impact your coaching style? Yes. While playing under Coach George Tucker and winning the Carolina Conference my freshman year, he seemed to always get the most out of his players. I knew I felt the same passion for winning.

What did it feel like to be inducted into the National High School Athletic Coaches Association's Hall of Fame? When I began coaching, I never focused on breaking records or receiving any honors; I was just wanting to win the next game in front of me. So receiving this national recognition after all of those hard-fought years was definitely one of the biggest highlights in my career.

You are also the winningest high school football coach in North Carolina history with 413 wins. How did you lead your teams to this momentous achievement? Both of these achievements were possible by



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surrounding myself with great assistant coaches and very dedicated players. Breaking the record was extra special for not only myself but also my staff, players, school and community because it was against our bigger rival, Swain County, on their home turf.

What inspired you to continue coaching for so long? Before retiring this year, my biggest inspiration was being able to work with my players on a daily basis in hopes of impacting their lives in a positive way on and off the playing field.

How has coaching shaped you as a person? Coaching has taught me to be a leader and a team player. Football is a team sport and coaching has taught me to look at the big picture, which is to always look for what is in the best interest of all included, not just the individual. ♣



ALUMNI ALBUM



Kevin Carter '91 & friends



Kim Clark '92



Erik Townsend '92

Glen Allen, Va. • After 21 years in the information technology field, **Erik Townsend** was promoted to assistant director of facility services at Durham Technical Community College on 8/1/21. Erik and his wife, Nuria, live in Chapel Hill, N.C., with their daughter.

'93 In May, **Tracey Helton Lewis** was selected as the director of marketing and communications for the Rowan-Salisbury School System in North Carolina. In this position, Tracey supports student success by directing and managing all district marketing, communications and public relations while ensuring that strategies are aligned with the district's vision, mission and goals. She also serves as the media liaison for district-wide events and issues, and serves as the spokesperson for the district. She lives in King.

'95 **Erick Gill**, communications division director at the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners in Florida, was

named the 2021 Communicator of the Year by the Treasure Coast Chapter of the Florida Public Relations Association for his service to the community. In this position, Erik manages a team of six employees who oversee all internal and external communications for the county. His team also won four 2021 Hermes Creative Awards for their excellence in digital communications. Erik and his wife, Colleen, live in Fort Pierce. • **Bryan James** recently joined Maples Group as senior vice president of U.S. entity services. He and wife Mary live in New London, Pa.

'00 **Martha McDuff** married Lee Kester on 6/11/21. The couple resides in Beaufort, S.C., where Martha is a board-certified health and wellness coach and Lee is the owner of Carolina Chutes & Equipment.

'01 In 2020, **Steven Alexander Wilson** partnered his practice with High Point, N.C.-based Bethany Medical Center, where he now serves as chief ▶

Charitable Gift Annuities Can Provide Income for Life

A CHARITABLE GIFT ANNUITY of \$10,000 or more to Elon will guarantee a fixed income for the rest of your life. With market interest rates near historic lows, a gift annuity is an attractive way to increase your income and make a gift to Elon at the same time. You will receive immediate tax benefits and can defer capital gains. The payment rate of a charitable gift annuity depends on your age at the time of the gift — the older you are, the higher the rate.

CURRENT RATES

ONE BENEFICIARY		TWO BENEFICIARIES	
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.

To explore a gift annuity for you, your spouse or a family member, visit ELONLEGACY.ORG.

Talk with us today about how you may benefit from a life income gift to Elon and other gift planning opportunities.



PLEASE CONTACT:

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



{ A snapshot from Elon's Parents Weekend circa 1984. }

ALUMNI ALBUM



Tracey Helton Lewis '93



Erick Gill '95



Bryan James '95



Martha McDuff Kester '00 & Lee Kester

ALUMNI ALBUM



This fall, Shantia Coley '07 was recognized with the inaugural Next Gen Emerging Millennial Leader Award by Corporate Counsel Women of Color. The award recognizes young attorneys of color who possess outstanding legal talent and innovative skills, as well as a strong commitment and dedication to serving their communities. Earlier in the year, Shantia joined Edward Jones as associate general counsel in the Banking and Trust Legal Division. Shantia was recruited to provide support, strategy and legal support to the firm with respect to existing banking and lending products and services. She and husband Joshua live in St. Louis.

TURN YOURSELF IN!



elon.edu/classnotes



Steven Alexander Wilson '01



Lindsey Goodman Baker '04 & family



Danielle Nashold '04 & family



Courtney Jackson '05 & family



Adam Leonard '08 & Lesley-Anne Lamb Leonard



Clifton Johnson '07 & friends

counselor, supervising all counselors affiliated with the center. He also received the Order of the Long Leaf Pine Award in September of that year, the highest honor given to a North Carolina resident by the governor. Steven works with people of all ages to help improve their mental health as well as with people who are having difficulties with substance/addiction-related issues.

'03 **Kristjan Thompson** and Joshua Lewis welcomed their first child, Larsyn Emilia Lewis, on 4/16/21. Kristjan is an associate professor of anatomy at Mercer University School of Medicine. The family lives in Savannah, Ga.

'04 **Lindsey Goodman Baker** and Matt Baker welcomed their second child, Grayson Wallace, on 6/9/21. He joins big brother Brooks. Lindsey is an associate director at the National Association of Corporate Directors. The family lives in Falls Church, Va. • **Danielle Nashold** and Blaine Nashold Jr. welcomed son Wellesley "Wells" Wilson on 2/10/20. He joins big brother Trey. The family lives in Charlotte, N.C., where Danielle is a senior vice president for Bank of America.

'05 **Courtney Jackson** and Adam Jackson welcomed daughter Tessa Blair Jackson on 3/16/21. She joins big brothers Braylon, Bennett, Brycen

and Britton. Courtney is a well-being consultant for Gallagher Benefit Services. The family lives in Chester Springs, Pa.

'07 **Clifton Johnson** and Kevin Kuhta were married 7/3/21. **Jonathan Chapman** officiated the ceremony, **John Pickett '03** served as best man and **Michael Bumbry** was a groomsman. Other alumni in attendance included **Tyler Beddoe** and **Sarah Freeman Nelson**. Clifton is a consultant with The Clearing, Inc. He and Kevin live in Washington, D.C. • **Lindsay Wright** and Jason Stallman were married on 5/29/21 atop Haleakala National Park in Maui, Hawaii. The couple lives in Bridgeport, W.Va., where Lindsay is a business analyst at UKG.

FROM THE FIELD TO THE SIDELINES

Two Elon football alumni have turned their love for the game into successful sports business careers.

BY ALAYNA MCNALLY '23

During their time at Elon, **Jordan Thompson '14 L'17** and **Karl Bostick '15** were football teammates, fraternity brothers and close friends. Now, they utilize their passion for football and synergize their legal and marketing prowess to help up-and-coming athletes elevate their careers. Both alumni work for Element Sports Group, an NFL agency that provides athletes with everything from legal counsel for contracts to marketing experts for public relations, outreach and branding. The agency represents more than 100 clients across multiple divisions — from media talent and TV personalities to coaches and professional and collegiate football players, including Pro Bowlers, Heisman Trophy winners and top draft selections. Because Element is a full-service agency, Thompson, an agent and legal counsel, and Bostick, director of branding and partnerships, collaborate daily to provide the best service to their clients.

After graduating from Elon, Thompson, a political science major, was accepted into Elon's School of Law but deferred his enrollment to pursue his dream career working with an NFL staff. One month later, the Detroit Lions offered him a position. "Ironically, for someone who had just deferred law school, the president and the general manager at the time were both attorneys," Thompson says.

Thompson interned at Element Sports Group after his first year of law school. After his second year, he worked in the salary cap department of the Washington Football Team, and then at Wall Street's oldest BigLaw law firm representing all 32 NFL teams, where he gained invaluable negotiation and legal experience. Upon graduating, Thompson continued in the law firm's sports law and global litigation groups, before landing back at Element years later.

Bostick, a business marketing major, broke his leg right before his senior season started. "At that point I really had to do some soul searching in understanding who I was as a person now that football was being taken away from me," he says. Bostick gravitated toward sports marketing because it allowed him to still be part of the team. "Being able to go to the facilities and connect with my teammates and talk about ideas to promote the team gave me a sense of pride," Bostick says. He developed a love for storytelling from the athlete's perspective, which landed him a job at NASCAR working on brand



{ Jordan Thompson '14 L'17 & Karl Bostick '15 }

partnerships. He expanded his repertoire working for Bleacher Report, where he developed integrated marketing campaigns for multiple Fortune 500 brands. He continued to build his perspective on athlete marketing through experiences at Roc Nation Sports before joining Element Sports Group.

After a few years apart building their respective careers, Thompson and Bostick reconnected to talk about their futures and career goals. "We felt like it was the right time in our respective journeys to see if there was a way we could work together, leveraging his experience on the representation side and what I do from a brand-building perspective," Bostick says. When a brand partnerships position opened up at Element, Thompson immediately thought of his former teammate. "I knew Karl was super talented and I was calling him every day to get him here," Thompson says. "He's one of my closest friends, fraternity brother and former teammate, so I already knew we would work well together."

Matt Zobel, director of client marketing at Element, helps Bostick manage marketing and branding endeavors and praises the attention his colleagues have garnered in the competitive, niche industry of athlete representation. "Both these guys hit the ground running when they got out of school," Zobel says. "They are definitely two of the most respected people in our business. It is an honor to work with both of them in the same office." ✦

The Performance of a Lifetime

Brooke Greenberg, whose stage name is Brooke Alexx, was among the lineup of 170 bands at this year's Lollapalooza.

BY LEILA JACKSON '22

This past summer, Elon music alumna **Brooke Alexx '17** felt like everything she had been working toward was coming together. She was in Chicago at her first music festival, Lollapalooza, but she wasn't just there to watch. She was performing. Alexx had her own backstage trailer, her name was on the back of the festival's T-shirts and fans were asking her for photos. "Every part of it was everything I've ever dreamed of," Alexx says.

She received the opportunity through Empowered by Bumble, a music program created by the dating app Bumble with a mission to close the gender disparity gap and grow the pool of women musicians in popular music, starting with male-dominated festival lineups. Upon selection, Alexx was invited to perform at Lollapalooza, one of the largest and most iconic music festivals in the world. When Alexx found out she was part of the lineup, she created a series of TikTok videos detailing her journey. She practiced with her guitarist, decided on outfits and worked on her stamina. A couple days before her performance, she posted one of herself getting ready — getting her hair cut, her eyebrows waxed and her nails done. It went viral with 8.9 million views, gaining her thousands of new fans. "The essence of the video was to showcase how a 'regular girl' gets ready for such an extraordinary opportunity," Alexx says. "I think the video resonated because people could easily relate to my no-frills approach."

The singer-songwriter found an interest in music at an early age. "When I was 7 years old, I apparently went up to my mom and said I

wanted to be a singer," she says. Her family lived outside of New York City, so Alexx began auditioning for musicals as a way to sing. At 13 years old she discovered Taylor Swift, who is still one of her biggest inspirations today. "It just clicked. I was like, oh, I can do pop music, I can write my own songs," she says. "So I started guitar lessons and songwriting and that led me to major in music at Elon."

While at Elon, Alexx honed her craft as part of Sweet Signatures, Elon's oldest all-female a cappella group, and the Techtronica and Elon Electric Ensemble music groups. "Those were the first times I got to hear my songs with full instrumentation, not just me and my guitar in my bedroom, and that really inspired me to continue because it just felt right," Alexx says. "It felt like where I was meant to be and what I was meant to do when I was hearing my music fully fleshed out in that way." She credits Senior Lecturer in Music Clay Stevenson and Associate Professor of Music Todd Coleman for helping guide her down this path.

After graduating, Alexx moved to Nashville and was hired as a content creator with Big Machine Label Group, Swift's previous record company. Alexx initially thought she might be satisfied with a life working on the industry side of music. However, she still felt a strong pull toward singing and songwriting. "I couldn't drop my love for it, so I decided to go all in. With some time and hard work, I've been able to sharpen my songwriting, grow my online presence, and rise up in the Nashville pop scene," she said. Currently, Alexx is releasing singles off her forthcoming third EP, which is slated for spring 2022 and will feature six songs focused on her family and her roots. ♡



ALUMNI ALBUM



Dahlia Guterman '11 & Neri Jorge



Manisha Patel G'11



Alex Trice Herring '12 & Shane Alexander



Caroline York Ingram '12 G'15 & Jordan Ingram

'08 **Adam Leonard** married Lesley-Anne Lamb on 5/1/21. Adam works as a video studio manager at Wake Forest University School of Business. Adam and Lesley-Anne live in Winston-Salem, N.C.

'09 **Chad Zimmerman** and wife Katherine welcomed twins Aria Amelia and Graham Roberts into the world on 5/20/21. The family lives in Mount Joy, Pa., where Chad is assistant chief counsel of the Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board.

'11 In winter 2021, **Dahlia Gutterman** and **Hal Corin** {Interactive Media '14} welcomed their first child, Neri Jorge Corin. The family lives in

Denver. • **Laura Wylie Jara** and Nathan Jara welcomed daughter Claire Wylie Jara on 6/26/20. The family resides in Pittsburgh. • **Manisha Patel** {Law} was sworn into the Board of Directors for the National Conference of Women's Bar Associations in August. A family law attorney based in Greensboro, N.C., Manisha is the immediate past-president of the North Carolina Association of Women Attorneys after serving two terms as president in 2019 and in 2020. She also serves on the Board of Directors for Legal Aid of North Carolina, the North Carolina Advocates for Justice and the Greensboro Bar Association.

'12 **Alex Trice Herring** and Jason Herring welcomed son Shane

Alexander on 7/7/20. The family lives in Greensboro, N.C., where Alex is senior editor of Gifts & Decorative Accessories magazine. • **Caroline York** {PA '15} and Jordan Ingram were married on 5/22/21 at the Cadillac Service Garage in downtown Greensboro, N.C. Alumni in attendance included **Addie Carr Harrison**, **Sophie Kluthe**, **Corrie Baglia** {PA '15} and **Jaclyn Stevens** {PA '15}. Caroline and Jordan live in Winston Salem, N.C., where Caroline works as a physician's assistant at Wake Forest Baptist Health.

'13 **Christian Binder** and Emily Binder welcomed son Leo on 6/17/21. The family lives in Raleigh, N.C., where Christian works for Red Hat, Inc. • **Kinsey Augustine** and Ethan Mann

were married on 5/29/21. Alumni in attendance included **Patrick Cunningham '12**, **Bert Brokaw IV**, **Lucie Miller Cunningham**, **Alexis Deprey**, **Emily Dietrich**, **Sarah Davenport Quinn**, **Paige St. Germain**, **Gabrielle Tan**, **SarahBeth White Farley '14** and **Victoria Selover '15**. Kinsey and Ethan live in Atlanta. • **Tricia Teter** {MBA '17} and Alex Hale were married in Roaring Gap, N.C., on 6/5/21. Elon alumni in attendance included **Burney Jennings '87**, **Dina Jennings '87**, **Chase Stroud O'Geary '12**, **Kathryn Hjalmarson**, **Jill Hollis** {MBA '17}, **Mollie Hughes Levy**, **Allyson Lord**, **Liza McIntosh**, **Bill Powers**, **Lauren Alencewicz Powers**, **Dylan Frank Story**, **Tracy McBride Story**, **Emily Turner**, **Courtney Whiting**, ▶

ALUMNI ALBUM



Christian Binder '13 & family



Tricia Teter Hale '13 G'17, Alex Hale & friends



Kinsey Augustine Mann '13, Ethan Mann & friends



Ranen Jones Burke '14, Sean Burke '14 & friends

Mary Ann Collins '16 and **Gordon Teter '18**. Tricia and Alex live in Greensboro. • Social media phenom and vegan influencer Tabitha Brown collaborated with her fellow Rockingham County, N.C., native **Jeffrey Williamson {Interactive Media '14}** in a one-on-one session to kick off her tour for her first book, "Feeding The Soul (Because It's My Business)" in Greensboro. Brown recently shared the images from the session across her social media platforms and Williamson created an Instagram reel documenting the process, which now has more than 45,000 views.

14 **Ranen Jones** and **Sean Burke** were married in Charlotte, N.C., on 4/10/21 surrounded by many fellow Elon alumni. Though the couple

was officially wed in 2020, they postponed the ceremony due to COVID to celebrate with friends and family. Ranen works in human resources at Barings and Sean works in finance at PGIM. They live in Charlotte.

'15 **Erin Parker** and **Hans Bredahl** were married 7/10/21 surrounded by many of their Elon friends. They live in Denver. • **Will Frauenfelder** and **Kaitlin Dunn '16** were married in Darlington, Md., on 8/8/20. The couple met while at Elon but didn't start dating until after they both graduated. **Simone Jasper '16** served as a bridesmaid. Other alumni in attendance included **Mary Kate Brogan '14**, **Allie Kornacki '16**, **Allison Pichowicz '16** and **Megan Sweeney '16**. Kaitlin is a copywriter

for MCI USA and Will is a teacher for Prince William County Public Schools. They live in Falls Church, Va. • **Chelsea Lindsay** received her Master of Fine Arts in Animation degree at UCLA in 2020. Since then, she has been hired by Bento Box Entertainment as a production assistant for the Fox show "Duncanville." Having spent the past five years trying to break into the entertainment industry in Los Angeles, Chelsea is overjoyed by this opportunity.

'16 **Michael Faircloth** and **Elizabeth Long '17** were married on 5/22/21. The couple lives in Wilmington, N.C. • **Kimberly Tendlak** and **Tyler Stone** were married on 5/14/21. The couple lives in McLean, Va. ✨

ALUMNI ALBUM



Chelsea Lindsay '15

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ALUMNI ALBUM



Erin Parker Bredahl '15, Hans Bredahl '15 & friends



Will Frauenfelder '15, Kaitlin Dunn Frauenfelder '16 & friends



Michael Faircloth '16, Elizabeth Long Faircloth '17 & friends



Kimberly Tendlak Stone '16, Tyler Stone '16 & friends

IN MEMORIAM

Doris Weldon Renn '42,
Asheville, N.C., 5/2/21.

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

Dolores Evans "Dody" Matze '51,
Roanoke, Va., 5/6/21.

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

Otis Stultz '56,
Eden, N.C., 5/20/21.

Cecil Wayne Rudisill '59,
Opa Locka, Fla., 1/13/21.

James "Jim" Allen Buie '63,
Florence, S.C., 12/1/20.

Ralph B. Gilbert '66,
Eden, N.C., 3/7/21.

Marvin Edward "Eddie" Yount '67,
Henderson, N.C., 3/13/21.

Terry Wayne Lee '74,
Yorktown, Va., 5/9/21.

David N. Slye '76,
Luray, Va., 3/22/21.

Brian "Irish" Camper '84,
Botetourt County, Va., 5/19/21.

Virginia Beth Elder Ellington G'91,
Blowing Rock, N.C., 3/10/21.

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

Paula Marie Booth G'17,
Lewisville, N.C., 3/17/21.

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

.....
Sandra "Kay" Carroll,
Summerfield, N.C., 6/26/21. Carroll retired in May 2018 after a 30-year career at Elon. She held several positions in the information technology department including secretary for academic computing, PC software support specialist, help desk associate and service desk analyst.

A LONG-AWAITED CELEBRATION

MORE THAN A YEAR AFTER THEIR DEGREES WERE CONFERRED DURING A VIRTUAL EVENT amid the COVID-19 pandemic, members of the Class of 2020 returned to campus Sept. 3-5 for their in-person Commencement ceremony. The much-anticipated festivities marking the conclusion of their Elon undergraduate education included Donning of the Kente and Lavender Graduation celebrations, a special tailgate and football game, a Saturday night party and formal Commencement exercises Under the Oaks. Here are some highlights from that memorable weekend.





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{ More than 2,000 families returned to Elon's campus Sept. 24-26 for Family Weekend 2021. Among the weekend's 40 events were Fall Convocation with soccer legend Carli Lloyd, Phoenix 4th Friday in downtown Burlington, music and dance performances, fireside chats, and soccer, volleyball and football games. }