Bonded for Growth

CONNECT NC BOND WOULD FUND SCIENCE EDUCATION
One of my top priorities for the first quarter of 2016 will be educating the university community and the Charlotte region about the Connect NC bond proposal. The proposed bond measure includes $2 billion for UNC system campuses, community colleges, public safety, water and sewer grants, state parks, and agriculture. UNC Charlotte’s interest in the bond measure is a proposed $90 million science facility that is crucial to ensuring our continuing ability to respond to ever-increasing demand for enrollment among well-qualified freshmen and transfer students.

We welcomed Gov. Pat McCrory and several other statewide leaders to campus in October for a ceremonial signing of the Connect NC bond bill that now goes to the public for a statewide vote on March 15. The governor had previously visited campus last April as he was launching the public conversation about the need for a major statewide bond measure.

A large crowd packed the atrium of the PORTAL building and included members of the North Carolina General Assembly, local elected officials, members of the Boards of Trustees of sister UNC campuses, representatives from the UNC Board of Governors, faculty, staff and students. Students from the Charlotte Engineering Early College (the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools’ magnet high school located on our campus) attended the ceremony to help reinforce the message that the future of science education must continue to be supported in our region.

In November, I began traveling across the Charlotte region touting the benefits of the bond package, joining Rowan-Cabarrus Community College President Carol Spalding before the RCCC Boards of Trustees and Foundation, local elected officials, and community supporters. Next stops include Gastonia, Mooresville, Monroe, and Charlotte. Investments in the Charlotte region include $40 million for seven community colleges and funding for improvements at three popular state parks: Crowder’s Mountain, Morrow Mountain, and Lake Norman State Park.

For UNC Charlotte, there is definitely a sense of urgency concerning this bond initiative. Enrollment at UNC Charlotte has grown by 142 percent since the current science building (Burson) was built in 1985. UNC Charlotte accounts for more than 61 percent of the enrollment growth in the entire UNC system from the fall of 2009 to the fall of 2015. More than 50 percent of our students with declared majors are in STEM-related fields, and 15,000 students take laboratory courses each year. The new science facility is crucial to ensuring continued growth and to meet strong demand for talent by Charlotte region employers.

The business case for the bond package is straightforward and strong: NO tax increase is needed to pay for the bonds, the debt service level is below the recommended amount to maintain the state’s triple-A bond rating, interest rates are at historic lows, and the costs of construction will surely be less today than tomorrow.

**WHAT CAN YOU DO?**

First, learn more about the Connect NC Bond. Two websites have been created by outside entities to provide resources and detailed information about the bond. Visit www.connect.nc.gov to learn more about the bond legislation and funding allocations proposed for specific projects. You can also check out www.ConnectNCForHigherEd.com for advocacy information and www.democracyexperience.uncc.edu/connect-nc-bond for information from UNC Charlotte.

Next, be sure to register to vote or to update your voter registration.

Third, take note of key election dates for the March presidential primary and bond vote:

- Absentee voting began – January 25
- Last day to register to vote – February 19
- Early Voting – March 3-12
- Election Day – March 15

Finally, make sure you vote!

Philip L. Dubois
Chancellor
features

8 Dramatic Move
An exciting new partnership between the Department of Theatre and Children’s Theatre of Charlotte demonstrates the fertile symbiosis between the University and Charlotte’s cultural community.

12 Bonded for Growth
The Connect NC bond aims to link North Carolina to the 21st century through statewide investments. The bond would provide funding for a new science building on campus that is essential for enrollment growth and meeting the demand for STEM education.

16 A Tradition of Engineering Excellence
The end of 2015 marked the 50th anniversary of service and dedication to the field of engineering by UNC Charlotte’s William States Lee College of Engineering.

22 Research Rocks On
UNC Charlotte earth scientist Missy Eppes has turned to research and data collected from our neighboring planet Mars to provide a better understanding of Earth.

30 Greek Giving
For several endowed Greek scholarships, the benefits extend to both the benefactors as well as the recipients.

profiles

10 Mossin’ Annie
A widely known expert in mosses, alumna Annie Martin has a passion for moss gardening that regularly sees her rescuing, cultivating and creating artistic landscapes with Mother Nature’s jade green carpets.

14 Helping Babies Breathe
UNC Charlotte alumna Gina Allen Wilson’s clinical residency experience in East Africa changed her life and played an important role in shaping a program she led to reduce newborn deaths in Tanzania.

20 Growing Up Racing
Matt Tifft, a 19-year-old business management major, talks about making his NASCAR XFINITY Series debut last September and his future plans in racing.

28 Air Force Cadet of the Year
From a field of more than 16,000 Air Force ROTC and U.S. Air Force Academy cadets, recent graduate 2nd Lt. Kailey Filter was chosen as the “best of the best.”

On the Cover:
The Connect NC bond proposal includes $2 billion for UNC system campuses, community colleges, public safety, water and sewer grants, state parks and agriculture. At UNC Charlotte, the bond would provide funds to construct a new science facility, enabling the University to keep pace with the demand for STEM education in one of the nation’s fastest growing regions.
Our People are Everywhere

This edition is our first in 2016, and so all of us at UNC Charlotte magazine wish you the best for this year.

The content we’ve selected for this issue includes several articles about exceptional action by individuals. While it is normal for us to publish stories about alumni, students and faculty members who are Staking their Claim to excellence, I’m struck by the range and scope of what our people are doing in these stories. For example: students and faculty pumping lifeblood into the local theatre; an outdoorsy alumna devoted to mosses – those misunderstood but quite beautiful features of nature; a recent graduate working in rustic locales of Africa to help babies survive; an undergraduate making a name for himself as a NASCAR driver; a researcher studying Martian rocks; a young alumnus cultivating a bright future in the armed forces; a prominent businessman and alumnus committing big money to enhancing leadership development; student-athletes earning accolades; a stellar professor writing thoughtfully on the essential issue of race in America. Whew!

UNC Charlotte people are making a difference everywhere. It’s a treat to lasso these stories and bring them to your attention.

Regards

John D. Bland, Editor
Senior Director for Public Relations & News Services
FIRST WARD PARK DEBUTS IN CENTER CITY

Charlotte has a new public gem in its crown with the formal dedication of the county’s First Ward Park. Located between East Seventh and Ninth streets in uptown Charlotte, the four-acre park links UNC Charlotte Center City with ImaginOn, a collaborative venture of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Library and Children’s Theatre of Charlotte, as part of an educational and cultural district.

First Ward Park is a joint partnership between Levine Properties, UNC Charlotte, Mecklenburg County and the city of Charlotte. County Manager Dena Diorio praised the collaborative efforts to create the park, and developer Daniel Levine remarked that “UNC Charlotte was a terrific partner with us.”

UNC Charlotte Center City is located at the intersection of Brevard and Ninth streets with convenient access to the current CATS Blue Line. When light rail extends to the University’s main campus in summer 2017, students, faculty and staff will have easy access to First Ward Park and the other cultural and educational offerings in close proximity, such as ImaginOn and the Levine Museum of the New South.

Amenities in First Ward Park include an open lawn for recreational play and festivals, an interactive fountain and plaza, an outdoor dining area, garden walk, overlook terrace, flower beds and restrooms.

With the park presenting opportunities for programming, campus leaders envision occasions where University offerings will spill out into the park and vice versa.
TOWER REMOVED, SPACE RENAMED BELK PLAZA

Design efforts are beginning for the new Belk Plaza, the historic core quadrangle in which the Belk Tower was located. The tower was dismantled and removed after UNC Charlotte personnel and outside consulting engineers determined it had significant structural issues.

A campus symbol since the 1970s, the Belk Tower was funded through a gift from Irwin Belk and his three brothers, John, Thomas and Henderson. Surviving members of the Belk family were consulted about the tower and support the University’s plans, said Chancellor Philip L. Dubois. To recognize the Belk family’s generosity to the University, the Board of Trustees has agreed to designate the area around the tower Belk Plaza.

University leaders envision Belk Plaza to be a functional and aesthetically pleasing area that will be open and inviting. A 14-member committee will help with the design and assist with synthesizing information from public forums.

Appointed by the chancellor, the Belk Plaza Design Committee will assist the Charlotte architectural firm of LandDesign to transform the space into a plaza.

LandDesign will conduct open forums to solicit input from the campus community and alumni regarding elements and principles to be considered in the design of Belk Plaza. The firm will develop a final plan for approval by the chancellor and UNC Charlotte Board of Trustees by mid-2016.

SEALED AIR CORP. PARTNERS WITH PORTAL

UNC Charlotte has reached an agreement with Sealed Air Corp. to lease temporary office and research and development space at the University’s PORTAL building.

The partnership calls for the University to house the company’s research and development personnel for 18 months or longer. The arrangement provides work space for the company’s researchers while a permanent facility is being built in Charlotte.

“One of the reasons Sealed Air is moving to Charlotte is its strong reputation for technology and innovation. In addition to allowing us to house newly hired and specially selected R&D staff, PORTAL provides an ideal collaborative workspace conducive to continuing our research and development work while construction on our new facility is completed,” said Robert Tatterson, vice president of research and development for Sealed Air.

University officials said the agreement advances UNC Charlotte’s standing as North Carolina’s urban research university. It also is a tangible illustration of the University’s commitment to foster partnerships with private industry.

Sealed Air is currently building a state-of-the-art, environmentally sustainable campus in Charlotte that will become the headquarters for its divisions, research and development facilities and corporate offices. This new campus, located at Lake Pointe Corporate Center near the airport, is scheduled to open at the end of 2016.

The partnership with UNC Charlotte will enable Sealed Air to accelerate its move to Charlotte while continuing to drive its innovation initiatives forward.

CHILDRESS KLEIN GIVES $2.5 MILLION TO UNIVERSITY

Real estate firm Childress Klein donated $2.5 million to UNC Charlotte’s Center for Real Estate, which was renamed the Childress Klein Center for Real Estate. The gift will fund a new endowed professorship.

SCULPTURE DEDICATED NEAR HECHENBLEIKNER LAKE

UNC Charlotte’s latest piece of public artwork, “Aperture,” was formally dedicated at a ceremony near Hechenbleikner Lake.

The creation of artist John Medwedeff, the artwork is a steel sculpture mounted on a bearing, which can be rotated to present different views of the lake and surrounding campus buildings.

Longtime University benefactor Irwin Belk commissioned the work. A University supporter for more than 40 years, Belk has commissioned other public artworks that have contributed to campus aesthetics, including bronze statues that represent UNC Charlotte’s intercollegiate sports — a national distinction as the largest athletic statuary collection on a college campus.

Belk also is responsible for “Ascend,” located outside the Student Union; “Orbis,” between Grigg and Duke Centennial halls; “Water Harp,” near Robinson Hall for the Performing Arts; and “Wings of Pride,” in the quadrangle behind Woodward Hall and honoring chancellor emeritus Jim Woodward’s service at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

Belk is a member of the family that established the Belk department store chain. In 1965, as a North Carolina state senator, he introduced legislation that would make UNC Charlotte the fourth university in the consolidated North Carolina system.
professional training programs for master’s students and faculty fellowships related to research on real estate and urban economics.

With an expected match from the state of North Carolina for the professorship, the total impact of the gift will be $3.2 million.

Real estate industry supporters previously have raised more than $5.5 million for the center, which provides regional and national research on real estate and urban economics, a Master of Science in Real Estate program and outreach activities in partnership with the Charlotte business community. The gift by Childress Klein is the largest single gift in the center’s 10-year history.

Childress Klein is a longtime supporter of UNC Charlotte, beginning in 1990 with the Childress Klein Scholarship for Merit, then again in 1999 with the Childress Klein Faculty Research Funds and later the Childress Klein Fellowship Fund, as well as gifts to the Chancellor’s Fund.

Don Childress and Fred Klein, the senior managing partners of Childress Klein, said the gift is important for the University’s development and Charlotte’s continued growth.

“We believe that UNC Charlotte has been instrumental to the growth and development of the Charlotte region,” Klein said. “The Childress Klein Center for Real Estate is an example of how an industry can support the education and research (that) provides talent, ideas and expertise directly back to the industry,” Childress added.

UNIVERSITY DEDICATES MARCHING BAND BUILDING

The Vickie and Gene Johnson Marching Band Center was dedicated formally in late 2015, and for Chancellor Philip L. Dubois, the new building represents one more important step in the formation of a reputable football program at UNC Charlotte.

The marching band center houses the Pride of Niner Nation marching band, which made its debut at the first home football game this past fall. The band currently has 150 members, but officials expect it will grow to include as many as 350 members.

The 6,700-square-foot Johnson Band Center features a conference room, workroom and four offices for the band staff. It also includes restrooms, a drum storage room and ample space to store musical instruments, uniforms and color guard equipment for the entire marching band.

Vickie and Gene Johnson, members of the classes of 1971 and 1973, respectively, have been generous supporters of the University and actively involved in the growth and progress of UNC Charlotte.

In May 2014, Gene became the first alumnus to be awarded an honorary degree from UNC Charlotte. He served as president of the Alumni Board of Directors and on the Board of Trustees (eight years) and was the first alum to chair the trustees. Vickie has two degrees from UNC Charlotte and also served on the Alumni Board of Directors.

HAUSER ALUMNI PAVILION DEDICATED

Leaders, alumni and friends of the University gathered beneath the newly constructed Hauser Alumni Pavilion for a formal ceremony to dedicate the facility prior to the 49ers football game against Florida Atlantic in September.

The pavilion resulted from a significant gift commitment from longtime UNC Charlotte supporters Nancy and David Hauser.

Located along 49er Way, a pedestrian path between the main campus and the stadium, the Hauser Alumni Pavilion is an 8,000-square-foot, brick-and-steel structure with enough space to accommodate 700 people. It also features a catering station, restrooms and utilities to support outside entertainment.

UNC CHARLOTTE AMONG ‘BEST FOR VETS’

UNC Charlotte is one of 125 four-year institutions to make the “Best for Vets: Colleges 2016” rankings by the Military Times.

An annual survey in its sixth year, the Military Times rankings provide the most comprehensive school-by-school assessment of veteran and military student services and rates of academic achievement.

“We award the Best for Vets designation to the very best — the colleges that really are setting the example,” said Amanda Miller, editor of Military Times’ Best for Vets rankings and special editions.

David Vacchi, a retired lieutenant colonel who served in the U.S. Army, joined the University in mid-2015 as associate director for veteran student services. He said being
FESTIVAL GOES GLOBAL, INTERNATIONAL ENROLLMENT SETS RECORD

In mid-October, UNC Charlotte hosted a large crowd on campus for the 40th installment of its International Festival. Thousands more experienced the wonder of the event via a live webcast.

This annual occasion featured traditional offerings of art, costumes, games, music, dance and food representing cultures from around the world. New for 2015, in recognition of the festival's four decades, the Office of International Programs introduced a lively procession of nations and celebratory fireworks presentation.

Attendance for the 40th celebration rivaled past events, including more than 2,000 students, according to the Office of International Programs.

The Office of University Communications provided a live stream for this year's festival that reached a global audience. Viewers of the webcast totaled more than 2,400 unique households in 40 countries with India, Germany and the Netherlands representing the top three countries for streamers.

UNC Charlotte welcomed nearly 550 new international students this fall, the largest global contingent to enroll at the start of any semester. In total, the University is hosting about 1,900 international students, placing UNC Charlotte among the top 125 institutions in the United States in international student enrollment.

ranked by Military Times is “an important first-time achievement for UNC Charlotte as we are finally being recognized for the great work the University is doing for veterans every day. There are areas in which we can improve as a campus, and the Veterans Services Office will be working diligently to make the campus even more welcoming for veterans.”

GRADUATE SCHOOL OFFERS STUDENT ASSISTANTSHIPS TO VETERANS

For the second year, the Graduate School is seeking military veterans to apply for graduate assistantships designated exclusively for veteran students. Three two-year assistantships are being offered for veteran students starting graduate studies in fall 2016. Each assistantship is valued at $36,000 to $45,000 and includes full tuition, health insurance and an assistantship stipend.

The Graduate School launched the program in early 2015 and named its inaugural recipients for fall 2015.

Veterans from any branch of the military with an honorable discharge who are admitted to any master’s or doctoral program at UNC Charlotte are eligible to apply for these competitive assistantships.

BELK GYM GETS MAKEOVER, REOPENS

The newly renovated Belk Gym has reopened, and students and visitors to the facility have noticed many improvements. Originally built in 1970, the remodeled facility now includes air conditioning for the gymnasiums and workout facilities and a new fitness center and cycling studio. Renovations on the pool will continue through spring 2016.

Belk Gym is the administrative headquarters for the departments of Kinesiology and Recreational Services. Newly renovated classrooms and laboratories will provide modern learning spaces for students pursuing degrees in kinesiology, athletic training, exercise science, respiratory therapy and outdoor adventure leadership.

The Recreational Services Department manages the overall facility, which includes the fitness center and weight room, cycling and group fitness studios, basketball, volleyball and racquetball courts and academic spaces. The department also runs the group fitness classes, sport clubs and intramural sports activities.

CITY STARTUP LABS ESTABLISHES CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

City Startup Labs (CSL) is establishing a Center of Excellence for Entrepreneurial Competency, Innovation and Leadership (CoE) at UNC Charlotte, in association with Ventureprise, a nonprofit campus-based venture development organization for the University and the Charlotte region. The center will operate from Ventureprise offices in PORTAL.

The center will continue with the focus initiated by CSL during its two-year pilot — empowering young black men as entrepreneurs. However, in addition to teaching entrepreneurship, the CoE will provide an intrapreneurial track designed to deliver innovation, problem solving and leadership to corporate Charlotte and beyond. Intrapreneurs are individuals within a large corporation who take direct responsibility for turning an idea into a profitable finished product.

In partnership with the University’s Urban Education Collaborative, the CoE will research the effect that this education can have on young black men to address wealth disparities in Charlotte.

PART-TIME MBA PROGRAM NATIONALLY RANKED

UNC Charlotte’s part-time MBA ranked 20th among 74 programs in Bloomberg Businessweek’s biennial rankings.

The rankings were determined by a survey of recent graduates combined with an academic quality measure that considers
average Graduate Management Admission Test scores, class size, completion rates and an assessment of post-MBA outcomes.

Graduates lauded UNC Charlotte’s high degree of flexibility and 13 concentrations that allow students to customize their education experience and accomplish career goals.

Based at UNC Charlotte Center City, the program enrolls more than 300 students. Individuals can complete the degree full-time in less than 17 months or part-time in as little as two years. With concentrations in energy, commercial banking, real estate finance and business analytics, students can design an individualized program.

DANCE DEPARTMENT ACHIEVES FULL NASD ACCREDITATION

The National Association of Schools of Dance (NASD), the national accrediting agency for dance and dance-related activities, has granted full membership to UNC Charlotte, making the University one of its 79 accredited institutions. Gained through an intensive peer review process, membership is granted only to institutions that meet all NASD standards.

Achieving full accreditation of all five units in the College of Arts + Architecture is a key goal in the college’s strategic plan. Accredited since 1979, the School of Architecture will undergo review for accreditation renewal by the National Architectural Accrediting Board in 2016. In 2014, the National Association of Schools of Music granted associate membership to the Department of Music. ADVANCEMENT DEBUTS ‘CROWDFUND UNC CHARLOTTE’

Social media has altered fundraising, and the Division of University Advancement is assisting members of Niner Nation in using this technology to solicit small gifts for campus ventures.

“Crowdfund UNC Charlotte” provides an online platform to students, faculty and staff to generate funding for ideas significant to them. It is an opportunity to reach out through a platform hosted by the University to seek support for the initiatives.

Projects through the crowdfunding site so far include the Witherspoon Greek Alumni Scholarship, Sheida Hosseinzadeh’s Memorial Scholarship, Niner Student Pantry, Pride of Niner Nation Marching Band and Veterans Student Services.

The Division of University Advancement plans to launch 30-day projects every spring and fall semester to encourage campus involvement in philanthropic endeavors.

49ER FINISH PROGRAM CALLED ‘MODEL OF EXCELLENCE’

The University Business magazine named the 49er Finish Program a 2015 Model of Excellence in its winter edition.

The magazine noted that the program has generated $400,000 in additional revenue for the University by encouraging individuals who stopped short of their degree to return.

The Office of Adult Students and Evening Services (OASES) has developed customized marketing materials to encourage former students with 90-plus credit hours and at least a 2.0 GPA to consider returning to finish their degree. According to OASES, the office has recruited 850 of the 3,000 students contacted during the past 10 years.

Jillian Stubbs, coordinator for the 49er Finish Program, said having one direct point of contact is key for the program’s concierge-style advising model, which allows each student to work with one person during the re-admission process.

BIOLOGY PROFESSOR WINS PRESTIGIOUS TEACHING HONOR

Professor of Biological Sciences Stanley Schneider was the 2015 recipient of the Bank of America Award for Teaching Excellence, one of UNC Charlotte’s most prestigious honors.

He received the award during a special ceremony at Bank of America’s Founders Hall. Schneider and the other four award finalists were lauded for their sustained commitment to teaching excellence.

As a teacher, Schneider’s goal is to change the way students think about and live on Earth. “I want them to experience awe and a sense of privilege and responsibility for living on this planet.”

Teaching is a social interaction, he noted. It is the contagious enthusiasm of the teacher that captures the imagination of students and helps them dream. Excellent teachers are rigorous, fair and demonstrate respect for students by holding them to high standards of performance by providing clear, organized and relevant lectures, he added.

JUNIOR HONORED FOR COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP, SERVICE

North Carolina Campus Compact, a statewide network of colleges and universities with a commitment to community engagement, recognized junior Angelica Rose Brown for outstanding leadership and service. She received the network’s Community Impact Award, which honored one student leader at each member school.

Brown, who is majoring in psychology and business with a minor in civics, is from Kings Mountain, N.C. She joins more than 200 college students recognized by the network since the award was first presented in 2006.

In her first semester at UNC Charlotte, Brown founded a student organization called My Sister’s Keeper. The group works to influence the community through philanthropy and the self-expression of dance and step, combining Brown’s artistic and humanitarian passions. Under her leadership, My Sister’s Keeper has raised hundreds of dollars for campus and community charities.

Brown also has served as a program coordinator and teaching assistant for the University’s Psychology Learning Community. In this role, she has led community service projects, including Stop Hunger Now and the new Niner Student Food Pantry, where she directs 35 student volunteers.

Angelica Rose Brown
An exciting new partnership between the Department of Theatre and Children’s Theatre of Charlotte (CTC) demonstrates the fertile symbiosis between the University and Charlotte’s cultural community.

Last fall, eight theatre students — three actors and five design and production students — joined the professional CTC cast and crew for “Coraline,” which ran Oct. 16-31 in the Wells Fargo Playhouse at ImaginOn. The co-production presented the first in an initiative intended to bring the Theatre Department and CTC together on a continual basis.

Senior theatre major Aubrey Young played multiple roles in “Coraline,” a musical based on a novella by Neil Gaiman. The performance demanded a wide range of skills, from acting and singing to manipulating large puppets. Rehearsals, which took place from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., began just weeks before the opening night.

‘ON OUR GAME’

“It was a much shorter rehearsal period than at UNC Charlotte, because they are a professional company,” Young said of CTC. “We had to really be on our game. They had very high expectations, and we were held to the standards of the professionals, which was awesome.”

CTC Artistic Director Adam Burke knows the value of learning outside the classroom. “When I was coming up as a young artist, it was very difficult to gain entrance to the professional world of theatre. I am incredibly happy that Children’s Theatre can help to bridge the gap that exists between the education and the profession and hope we continue to provide this access with future projects.”

Seeds of a sustained partnership between CTC and UNC Charlotte were planted more than two years ago with workshops of two adaptations of children’s picture books, “The
Paperbag Princess” by Robert Munsch and Michael Martchenko and “Jeremy Draws a Monster” by Peter McCarty.

Adapted for the stage by CTC in-house playwrights Michelle Long and Mark Sutton, with the help of theatre faculty Jeanmarie Higgins and Beth Murray, the new plays received staged readings by students at UNC Charlotte in fall 2013. “Coraline” represents an effort toward full co-productions that could take place as often as every other season, perhaps bringing children’s shows to Robinson Hall for the Performing Arts, too.

“We are definitely going to continue this relationship,” said Dean Adams, associate dean for performing arts services in the College of Arts + Architecture. “In particular, we will do additional readings and development of new work. For me, that’s one of the most exciting prospects — not just that students are getting opportunities with Charlotte’s largest and best-funded theatre, but that it’s about the development of new work, seeing professional work in various stages of development.”

Two UNC Charlotte faculty members were also part of the “Coraline” creative team. Benjamin Stickels, lecturer in audio engineering, designed the sound; Tom Burch, assistant professor of scenic design, designed the set. Burch has an established relationship with CTC, serving as scenic designer for “Jackie and Me” last season and “Journey to Oz” and the “Commedia Princess and the Pea,” which was directed by Assistant Professor of Theatre Carlos Alexis Cruz this season.

UNIVERSITY OFFERS TALENT POOL

“We have a great relationship with many of the faculty and staff at UNC Charlotte,” said Burke. “They provide us with a talented local artistic pool from which to draw. It is also great because they have a vested interest in the community because they live here, and that is very valuable to us.”

Names of UNC Charlotte theatre and performing arts services faculty can frequently be found in local playbills, Adams noted. “We have a core of professionals that are in demand all over town. I see opportunity there, too, for our students.”

The Theatre Department is developing partnerships with other institutions, such as the Blumenthal Performing Arts Center, to create multiple internships for students. “As the major public university in the area, we want our students to be first in line for those internships,” Adams said.

The University and the community both have something to gain from a symbiotic relationship, noted Burke. “CTC will see a long-term benefit by aiding in the education and training of potential future theatre artists and managers. We see it as an investment in the future not only for us but for the theatre field.”

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Meg Freeman Whalen is director of communications for the College of Arts + Architecture.
Mossin’ Annie

Alum’s passion for moss gardening generates livelihood, book

By Lisa Thornton

A
nnie Martin gets a tip from a concerned citizen, hangs up her phone and grabs her usual tools for the job — a children’s sled, a fitted bed sheet and a pair of Italian leather high-heel boots. It may seem like an unusual assortment for any task, but then again, rescuing moss from the perils of destruction is no regular work.

A widely known expert in mosses, Martin, also known as Mossin’ Annie, rescues, cultivates and creates artistic landscapes with Mother Nature’s jade green carpets. Her thriving business, Mountain Moss Enterprises (mountainmoss.com), is home to more than 5,000 square feet of mosses, growing safely and serenely at her “Mossery,” nestled near a pine grove in Pisgah Forest, N.C., not far from Brevard.

Most people probably don’t think of moss as needing a savior, but the deep lush plants are often chewed up like salad greens during the first stage of new commercial and residential construction.

Mossin’ Annie rescues, cultivates and creates artistic landscapes with Mother Nature’s jade green carpets.
Jump into Action

When Martin gets word, sometimes in the 11th hour, that a patch of thick, spongy moss is about to be replaced by a new shopping plaza or subdivision, she jumps into action, using a fitted bed sheet to shimmy the newly emancipated moss down from rooftops, or other slopes and the sled to offer gentle transportation back to her truck.

As for the high-heeled boots, Martin swears they’re better than any hiking boots she’s ever worn in her life. “I can climb around the hillside like a billy goat in these things,” she said.

Martin’s fascination with mosses began as a child growing up in the Blue Ridge Mountains. “When I was 10 years old, I made a terrarium, like so many other people did in the ’60s,” she said. “The mosses caught my attention right away. There’s a myriad of textures, and the nuances of the shades of green. They’re fascinating, and they’re magical.”

Others share her opinion, too. Sales of her mosses make up a good portion of Martin’s business. She regularly ships orders, from Connecticut to California, for homeowners to install in their own gardens. A team of researchers from New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, also order from Martin for their study of DNA properties in certain species of moss.

For the beginning moss gardener, she even sells terrarium kits, hoping they’ll spark the same excitement she remembers as a kid. “Mosses just steal my spirit, and that’s the true reward of the mosses — when they make you smile.”

’76 Sociology Grad

Ironically, Martin’s early plans for a career never involved botany. She graduated from UNC Charlotte in 1976 with a degree in sociology, and although that degree has little to do with her work now, she credits courses in the field that taught the scientific process of methodologies used in qualitative and quantitative research as beneficial to her own moss research.

Much of that knowledge appears in her new book “The Magical World of Moss Gardening,” published by Timber Press in August. The book encapsulates her years of research on the flowerless plants known to prefer shady damp settings.

Although she never took one botany or biology course at UNC Charlotte, signs of a budding botanist existed in Martin while attending the University. “I organized the first Earth Day on campus,” she said of the 1972 event. “It was out at the Belk Tower.”

Martin still visits the campus on occasion to teach workshops on mosses at the McMillan Greenhouse. Her next class is scheduled for March 19. Each time, she hopes new people will join the ranks as moss gardeners, and more importantly, moss guardians.

“Moss is 50 million years old,” she said. “They are the forerunners for all plants on earth. They watched the dinosaurs come and go.”

Lisa Thornton, owner of Follow My Lede, is a writer based in the Charlotte area.
Momentum is building toward a statewide referendum, one feature of which can fuel growth at UNC Charlotte.

Chancellor Philip L. Dubois has taken on the task of coordinating the regional educational effort for the Connect NC bond proposal that will appear on the March 15 primary ballot. The purpose of the $2 billion Connect NC bond is to link North Carolina to the 21st century through statewide investments across 76 counties in everything from education to parks, safety, recreation and water and sewer infrastructure.

The bond would provide $90 million for science education at UNC Charlotte, as the University seeks to construct a new science building that is essential for continued enrollment growth and to satisfy demand by employers for graduates with science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) degrees.

CATCHING UP WITH GROWTH
It was the dawn of a new millennium the last time a statewide bond proposal was authorized to upgrade the state’s infrastructure. The 2000 statewide bond was focused exclusively on higher education and resulted in an investment of more than $3.2 billion in the University of North Carolina and the community colleges, including $197 million for UNC Charlotte. In the 15 years since, North Carolina has experienced unprecedented growth with a population increase of more than two million people. Based on bipartisan support from Gov. Pat McCrory and General Assembly leaders, momentum is building for more investment in the Tar Heel state, particularly to support the rapid growth of public colleges and universities.

“The bond will not only invest money in UNC Charlotte, but will invest money in the state as well,” Dubois said.

Approximately $980 million of the $2 billion bond will be divided between
12 UNC system campuses, while $350 million will be used to support the state’s 58 community colleges. The Piedmont region will receive about $135 million to address the needs created by significant growth in higher education, in addition to parks and recreation projects.

During the past decade, UNC Charlotte’s student population has grown from 20,000 to 28,000. In fact, since 2009, UNC Charlotte alone has been responsible for more than 63 percent of the growth in the UNC system. This rapid growth has stretched many campus buildings to the breaking point. For example, UNC Charlotte enrollment has grown by 142 percent since Burson, the University’s current science building, was constructed 30 years ago.

DEMAND FOR SCIENCE EDUCATION

Demand for science instruction at UNC Charlotte is directly related to the University’s increased enrollment. Each year, a larger number of students pursue majors in STEM fields. Dubois sees a new science building as vital to ensuring continued expansion and believes much of the University’s forward movement will be stopped without it.

“We’ve reached a critical moment in the direction and trajectory of our institution to be able to secure this very, very important science building,” said Dubois. In an effort to meet the strong demand for talent by Charlotte region employers such as Duke Energy, Siemens and area health care institutions, UNC Charlotte would use $90 million from the bond for a new, state-of-the-art science building.

“Something that limits us (in Burson) is the size of the labs,” said Bernadette Donovan-Merkert, chair of the Chemistry Department. “In the current laboratories, students are crammed together. We’re at a point now that, because of the population growth of UNC Charlotte, it’s going to be pretty soon that we cannot meet the demand for these students.”

Gov. Pat McCrory toured the Burson building last April. “It wasn’t pretty. It wasn’t functional. It wasn’t fair to the students,” he said. “We are teaching 21st century science in a 20th century building.”

UNC Charlotte students also note the limitations of current facilities, but cast a hopeful eye toward what could be. “We love what we do now, but I can only imagine how that love and passion will increase when we have the resources other people are working with,” said Lizeth Hernandez, a chemistry student who has been active in research. “Ultimately, we want the best and we want our research to be top notch, and we want our facilities to match our level of passion and our level of ambition.”

While the lion’s share of the money slated for the region will go to UNC Charlotte, community colleges in the area will receive approximately $40 million. Community colleges have helped to train and educate about 40 percent of the state’s workforce during the last decade. They are also an integral part of the supply chain of workers that fill many of the skilled labor jobs throughout the region and the state and play an important role in higher education by funneling many graduates to four-year institutions, including UNC Charlotte.

UNC Charlotte is the UNC system’s leading institution for the admission and education of transfer students from the community colleges.

PRACTICAL BUSINESS CASE

“No tax increase is needed to pay for the bonds, the debt service level is below the recommended amount to maintain the state’s triple ‘A’ bond rating, and interest rates are at historic lows,” Dubois stated.

Rep. Dean Arp, a UNC Charlotte alumnus, was the primary sponsor of the Connect NC Bond Act. “The Connect NC bond will pay for 50-year assets with 20-year financing while keeping the state’s tax-supported debt lower in five years than it is today, as older debt issues are being retired,” he said.

McCrory has said, “We have ample debt capacity, within our existing revenue profile, to support these important investments. Bonds will allow North Carolina to pay, over 20-25 years, for assets that will last 50 years or more. We’re either going to prepare for the future or react to the future.”

When voters across North Carolina go to the polls to cast primary ballots for candidates in their respective parties on March 15, they also will have an opportunity to vote on the Connect NC bond proposal.

“Because we have such a heavily populated area, what happens in this region could very well determine what happens with the bond measure statewide,” Dubois said.

Melba Newsome is a self-employed writer based in Charlotte.
Helping Babies Breathe

Nursing grad leads program in Tanzania to reduce newborn deaths

By Leanna Pough

A mother in Moshi, Tanzania, is hemorrhaging while doctors deliver her ashen-faced infant. After failed attempts to stimulate the baby's breathing, a midwife instructs UNC Charlotte alum Gina Allen Wilson to wrap the newborn in a blanket and set it aside.

“The baby wasn’t crying; it wasn’t breathing. I and the other nurse and the midwife were running around the room trying to intervene to figure out ways we could help, and there were just very limited resources to intervene,” recalled Wilson, a family nurse practitioner.

For her final clinical rotation to become a family nurse practitioner, she helped deliver babies at a family clinic in Moshi at the base of Mount Kilimanjaro. “I was on cloud nine delivering babies. Then (that) delivery went really, really wrong. It was really bad,” Wilson said.

The nursing staff could only provide an IV to hydrate the mother. The team was able to stop the bleeding well enough for her to walk back to her village.

“That experience haunted me … I just kept thinking how in America it’s so different. If that happens, we have blood on hand … There’s a team of experts there to help, and that baby would’ve gone to NICU,” said Wilson, referring to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. She didn’t let go of those thoughts.

Wilson earned her bachelor’s degree in nursing in 2010 while on a softball scholarship at the University. She then began working in women’s health at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center in Winston-Salem, N.C.

“I loved nursing. When I finished at UNC Charlotte, I really felt like I would never go back to school … I was, and still am, so proud to be a nurse,” said Wilson, who grew up in Harrisburg, N.C.

But in working with patients, Wilson found pursuing advanced studies would be beneficial to her career. With the goal of becoming a family nurse practitioner, she enrolled in the Master of Nursing Program at Duke University in 2013.

“That’s what led me to this,” Wilson explained about her work in the East African country of Tanzania. “I was finishing my rotations, and I’d really enjoyed pediatrics. I thought maybe I’d be a pediatric nurse practitioner. Then I had an opportunity to go to Moshi, Tanzania, to do one of my final clinical residencies. This is where I had the experience that changed my life.”

HIGH INFANT MORTALITY

Wilson learned that a high percentage of babies born in Tanzania die from breathing difficulties at birth, similar to what she experienced at the Moshi clinic.
One in every 38 deliveries is classified as a stillbirth in nearby Zanzibar, Tanzania. “The traumatic birth I witnessed led me to start reviewing mortality rates, causes of newborn deaths and efforts being done to reduce those,” Wilson said.

She discovered that babies born in sub-Saharan Africa have a much higher neonatal mortality rate compared to those in the United States. In Tanzania, it’s four times higher. “I found a lot of these deaths are attributed to preventable causes,” she explained. “For example, in America we have bulb-suction devices to remove secretions from a baby’s nose and mouth after delivery. These simple devices are scarce resources in Tanzania.”

She met with a faculty member at Duke about her interest in reducing infant mortality in Tanzania and decided to enter the nursing doctorate program. Her dissertation is about the work.

She became familiar with Helping Babies Breathe (HBB), a newborn resuscitation program developed by the American Academy of Pediatrics. She took the training with the goal of taking the program to nurse midwives in Tanzania and teaching them so they could teach others. Previously, HBB had only been done with a dozen or fewer health professionals who were not necessarily on the front lines of deliveries as nurse midwives are.

Wilson had to obtain government approval for the program and raise $1,800 for supplies before she began her effort. “Some people laughed at me — they said there was no way I would get permission from the government,” she recalled, noting that it took persistence and flexibility to accomplish.

To raise money, she organized events, sent out letters and received substantial support from the church she grew up in, Providence Baptist, which continues to provide money for supplies. Wilson also partnered with ChaRA, a charitable organization in Zanzibar. Together, they work to minimize neonatal mortality and stillborn rates by educating midwives to be master trainers who can instruct other district and village midwives in HBB techniques.

“I had an opportunity to go to Moshi, Tanzania, to do one of my final clinical residencies. This is where I had the experience that changed my life.”

‘POWER NOT REALLY RELIABLE’

Funds purchase Penguin Suction Devices (bulb suctions); bag-mask resuscitators that can be disassembled, cleaned and reused; NeoNatalies, which are babies filled with water used in training simulations; Swahili workbooks; and solar lights. “Power is not really reliable anywhere in the country,” said Wilson, who has made three trips to Tanzania.

After the first one, as part of her master’s program, she returned to teach a Zanzibar class of six master trainers, who have since educated 27 additional midwives on HBB procedures. On her third trip, last September, she followed up with the HBB trainees and did more instruction. She plans to finish her doctorate in May and return again in September 2016.

Wilson hopes the Tanzanian islands of Zanzibar, Unguja and Pemba will eventually get the program.

She still thinks about the important role UNC Charlotte has played in her career and the rest of her life. Not only was Wilson a pitcher on the softball team, she met her husband, Ryan Wilson, at UNC Charlotte, where he was a golfer and now works with the nonprofit First Tee. They married in 2011 and live in Jacksonville Beach, Fla., where Gina is a family nurse practitioner at a pediatric clinic.

Furthermore, her dad, Bill Allen, works at the University in the Information Technology Services Department, and her mother, Mary Allen, retired from UNC Charlotte’s Materials Management Department. Her siblings, two sisters, also have Niner connections. Shauna Allen Drye worked at UNC Charlotte at one time, and Kelly Allen Clark currently is a doctoral student in special education.

“I think UNC Charlotte is the foundation for my work in Africa,” Wilson noted. “UNC Charlotte taught me how to be a nurse, and the importance of doing this work. I knew I wanted to help people when I came to Charlotte, and nursing was the perfect fit — to be the hands and feet that love and care for people.”

To learn more about her work, see Helping Babies Breathe or Hope Project: Helping Babies Breathe in Africa, both on Facebook.

Leanna Pough, (’15), is communications coordinator in the Office of Public Relations.
Lee College of Engineering celebrates 50th anniversary

By Jared Moon

The end of 2015 marked 50 years of service and dedication to the field of engineering by UNC Charlotte’s William States Lee College of Engineering.

While the college can trace its roots to the University’s early beginnings, 1965 is recognized as the official start of the college; it is the first year bachelor’s degrees were awarded. During its first 50 years, Lee College has expanded undergraduate and graduate academic programs, built new laboratories and developed a number of cutting-edge research programs, and a focus on student success has been a constant.

“The Lee College of Engineering has evolved from a small division graduating a handful of engineers each year into a key supplier of engineering talent in North Carolina. Our applied research programs have also become an economic engine for the region,” said Bob Johnson, dean of the Lee College of Engineering. “In spite of that dramatic growth and transformation, every engineering dean has held to the principle that ‘the student comes first,’ striving to ensure that every student grows as an individual while learning to design something, build something and be a part of something new and dynamic.”

There are a number of important dates and milestones in the history of engineering at UNC Charlotte. In 1946, the original Charlotte Center opened and began teaching introductory engineering and technology...
In 1965 there were two bachelor’s degree graduates. For the 2014-15 academic year there were 468 bachelor’s, 172 master’s and 17 Ph.D. degree recipients from the William States Lee College of Engineering.

courses. In 1973, the University changed the designation of engineering from a division to a college. However, 1965 was the year graduates began to take their place in the professional world of engineering. The students always have served as the heart and soul of the college, and it is the date when the very first engineering graduates could say to their peers, ‘I’m a UNC Charlotte engineer.’

In 1965, there were two bachelor’s degree graduates; for the 2014-15 academic year, there were 468 bachelor’s, 172 master’s and 17 Ph.D. degree recipients. As the college has grown from freshmen introduction to engineering courses to senior design projects sponsored by industry, Lee College of Engineering students have taken the knowledge learned from books and lectures and applied it to real-world projects. They have learned by doing, and the employers who have hired them have benefited, said Johnson.

To celebrate the 50th anniversary of its first graduates, the Lee College commissioned Jamie Franki, UNC Charlotte professor of art and award-winning coin designer, to create a commemorative medal. In creating the medal, Franki selected a collage of images representing the college’s mission for one side and a depiction of late Duke Energy president and the college’s namesake Bill Lee for the obverse.

“The image of Bill Lee is based on a photo taken at a celebration banquet toward the end of his career,” Franki said. “I selected this image, because to me, it showed Mr. Lee as a master of ceremonies at an event very similar to the 50th anniversary celebration of the college. It represents a mature stage of his career, much like the stage the college has now reached in its history.”

The reverse side of the medallion utilizes a five-sided border and five words from the college’s mission statement to communicate key elements from the college’s first 50 years. The words are: create, design, build, apply and visualize.

“The words are action verbs emanating from the mission statement that tell what the college does,” Franki said. “The plumb-bob is an engineering symbol that in this case points towards the word ‘visualize,’ which is the centering theme for the college’s purpose.”

The other key visual element is a Palladian window, such as those in Duke Centennial Hall, the home of the Lee College of Engineering. A symbol of traditional architecture, the window embodies the college’s sense of history.

Medals were sold, and proceeds will be invested to support engineering student scholarships, which help students as they aspire to become engineers and make their own contributions to the profession.

Jared Moon is communications coordinator in the Office of Public Relations.
‘SPECTACULAR’ BELK GYM RE-OPENS

A BIGGER, BETTER BELK GYM was on display Jan. 11 as campus leaders, students, faculty and staff celebrated the re-opening of a facility built in 1970.

Belk Gym serves recreational and academic functions, and the renovations required collaboration between the divisions of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs. At the Jan. 11 celebration, Chancellor Philip L. Dubois said the results were “spectacular.” He added the renovation provided 8,400 square feet for use by campus recreation and the Kinesiology Department.
The Recreational Services Department manages the overall facility, which includes the fitness center and weight room; cycling and group fitness studios; basketball, volleyball and racquetball courts.

Among the state-of-the-art academic facilities completed as part of the renovation are five high-tech classrooms; enhanced and expanded teaching laboratory facilities for exercise science, athletic training and the master’s program in kinesiology; expanded and upgraded space for the Biodynamics Research Laboratory; and the addition of a Health Risk Assessment Laboratory, which will use the latest technology to test people for a broad range of health risk factors.

Named in honor of Katherine and Tom Belk in recognition of their generosity and service to the University, Belk Gym was in near-constant use for decades prior to its closure in June 2014 for renovations.
Imagine being strapped inside a turbocharged racecar, unable to move due to the g-forces being exerted on your body from the intense banking of the turn you’re coming out of. You're entering hour three of the 300-mile race. Sweat is dripping from your brow as the temperature inside the car soars to nearly 150 degrees. All the while, you have several other cars traveling at just under 200 miles per hour jockeying for position inches away from you.

This was the reality for UNC Charlotte student Matt Tifft as he made his NASCAR XFINITY Series debut last September at Kentucky Speedway in the VisitMyrtleBeach.com 300. Driving the No. 20 Joe Gibbs Racing Toyota Camry, Tifft raced to a top 10 finish.

“I think tonight went really well for my very first XFINITY race. We made it up to as high as second at one point and thought we had a car capable of staying up there,” said Tifft. “Unfortunately, I just got shuffled on those last two restarts, but it was really cool to be up there running with those guys. I’m really proud of the guys and all of the hard work they put in to come out with a top-10 finish. Thanks to everyone at JGR (Joe Gibbs Racing) and UNC Charlotte for this opportunity.”

The 19-year-old business management major from Hinckley, Ohio, currently runs a part-time schedule in the NASCAR Camping World Truck Series for Kyle Busch Motorsports. He also competes in a limited amount of ARCA Series events throughout the year.

For the Kentucky race, the No. 20 car was decked out in UNC Charlotte colors and logos, and Tifft and his crew wore UNC Charlotte-branded suits, too.

“Having a national television audience watch a UNC Charlotte-sponsored car — driven by a UNC Charlotte student — racing for 300 miles is fantastic exposure for the University,” said Stephen Ward, executive director for University communications at UNC Charlotte.

The UNC Charlotte branding package was accomplished with no University funds being spent; both were arranged between the racer’s management group and the Office of University Communications. Branding materials were provided by the University’s Marketing Department, which promoted Tifft and the car through social media — making it the most popular post of the month.

“I've had a very positive experience at UNC Charlotte, so it’s made it much more worthwhile to represent the school,” expressed Tifft.
GROWING UP RACING

Tifft caught the racing bug as a kid going to the racetrack with his father. A fixture at the track, he developed a strong affinity for the sights and smells of the race track.

“As a kid, I can still remember the smell of gasoline and burnt rubber and the roar of the motors,” said Tifft. “I’d come home covered in dirt and dust from a day at the dirt track and think it was the greatest thing in the world.

“And now as a driver, I find myself still taking notice of those things which constantly remind me of why I first got into racing and how much I love it.”

While his career is still in its early stages, Tifft already has had the opportunity to learn from some of the biggest names in the sport, namely Kyle Busch and Joe Gibbs.

“I think the biggest thing you understand is their expertise and attention to detail,” Tifft noted. “There’s such a high level of professionalism in those teams, and it’s a huge learning curve when you go to those types of places, but those experiences with individuals of that caliber are priceless and will pay dividends throughout my journey.”

THE CAPITAL OF RACING

With 90 percent of the NASCAR Sprint Cup teams located within 50 miles, Charlotte serves as the proverbial capital of racing. A claim that was further cemented with NASCAR Hall of Fame now calling the city home. As a result, Tifft’s decision to move to Charlotte was fairly simple.

“The decision to come to Charlotte was similar to someone pursuing a dream of being an actor or model,” said Tifft. “If you want to be an actor or model, you go to Los Angeles or New York City, race car drivers go to Charlotte.”

A business management major, Tifft understands at an early age the importance of being business savvy, especially in a sport where sponsorship deals can hinge on a driver’s ability to be a quality and effective spokesperson.

“I chose to major in business to help me better understand the sponsorship aspect of racing rather than the engineering side that a lot of people do,” explained Tifft. “There’s no hiding that we’re essentially moving billboards out on the track, so if you can represent your sponsors in the right way, it leads to better relationships.”

Ultimately, Tifft hopes to continue his rise up the ranks to compete in the Sprint Car Series. But his current challenge is striking a balance between his duties as a full-time driver and as a full-time college student. In fact, Tifft admits that striking the balance of racing and school is a constant internal struggle.

“I can’t do the things many of my friends do, so it’s definitely a different college experience,” said Tifft. “But at the end of the day, achieving my goal of racing full-time at the top level far outweighs everything else.”

He finds success by maintaining a rigid schedule that artfully allots him time to keep up with everything.

“My typical week is front-loaded with classes, Thursdays are classwork and travel days, Fridays are practice day and Saturdays are race day,” said Tifft.

The life of a 19-year-old student driver is far from typical. And while he recognizes the importance of education, he fully acknowledges the small window of opportunity an individual has to find success on racings grandest stage.

“Succeeding in school and getting a degree has always been really important to me. But looking from a professional standpoint, there’s a very limited window of when you can make in NASCAR. For me, this next year is going to be a very critical year in racing, and hopefully, I can make the most of that opportunity.”

Jared Moon is communications coordinator in the Office of Public Relations.
The drive to learn how the sun weathers rock has taken UNC Charlotte earth scientist Martha-Cary “Missy” Eppes to great lengths – to the arid deserts of the Southwest, the periglacial boulder fields of Pennsylvania and Virginia and even to the surface of Mars.

Mechanical weathering, the physical means by which rock is broken into smaller fragments, is one of the primary processes that defines Earth
as we know it. Without it, there would be no erosion, no soil, no sediment from which resources like water and oil can be readily drawn, and no ready access to rock nutrients that are required by flora and in turn, fauna.

Studying the basic mechanisms that drive weathering can therefore lead to a more profound understanding of our planet.

“Endeavors like this hold the potential to open doors of understanding that we would not even know existed if we hadn’t gone down the road,” Eppes said. “This potential for discovery is the foundation of knowledge-building that universities like UNC Charlotte are uniquely poised to support.”

As a soil scientist and geomorphologist, Eppes wanted to understand the impact the sun has on this fundamental Earth surface process. She had noticed that cracks in rocks on Earth seemed to be tied to the sun’s movement from east to west. Her theory challenged the long-standing conventional view that thermal stresses caused by the sun are too low to cause weathering.

“If you go out and start measuring the orientations on cracks and rocks on Earth and you exclude variables related to tectonics, it turns out that most cracks are oriented in the Northeast-Southwest direction,” Eppes says.

'HOLY COW!' MOMENT

The findings that Eppes and her colleagues have made on Earth are detailed in the Geological Society of America Bulletin, Geomorphology and Earth Surface Processes and Landforms. Meanwhile, Eppes was inspired to look further.

“The Mars Rover landed on Mars, and I saw that one of the first pictures taken was of a rock with a crack in it,” she says. “I thought, ‘Holy cow. I bet the same thing works on Mars as it does on Earth.’ I was extremely motivated to find out if cracks in rocks on Mars point North” (as the rocks on Earth do.)

While photographs and other data from the Spirit and Opportunity Rovers became available quickly, analyzing the data proved more difficult. No virtual tools existed. Eppes turned to Andrew Willis, a professor in electrical and computer engineering, who with students’ help designed the software needed. Eppes and her students have used the software over the past few years to analyze data from the Mars missions.

The image analysis software enables users to browse the PANCAM image files recorded by the Rovers Spirit and Opportunity. Users can make 3D measurements from the recorded images. The data from the images is gathered in massive spreadsheets and analyzed.

“You basically can go and stroll around the surface of Mars and collect field data just like you were a field scientist walking along the surface of Mars,” Eppes says. “You can measure how big things are, or you can measure their orientation of planes, and you can measure distances across the ground surface.”

TAKING A CLOSE LOOK

A decade after Eppes saw those first Mars images, she and Willis in 2015 published findings in the influential academic journal Nature Communications. Co-authors are Jamie Molaro of the Lunar and Planetary Laboratory at University of Arizona, UNC Charlotte undergraduate student Stephen Abernathy and doctoral student Beibei Zhou.

They considered 1,857 cracks visible in 1,573 rocks along the path Spirit took, considering rock size, total number of visible cracks, and spatial data, including the length and orientation of cracks.

“There was variance from image to image, but when you collect the average of so many thousands of cracks, then you start to see a clear picture,” says Abernathy, who recorded and analyzed the data.

“It’s not something that every time you look at one of these rocks, it’s crystal clear and perfect and obvious,” he says. “It varies significantly from rock to rock, so that’s why we have to take so many data points. It’s the very large number of data points that allows us to actually pinpoint meaningful trends.”

They found that the Mars rock cracks are oriented in directions similar to those found in Earth rock cracks in mid-latitude deserts. A numerical model they developed also supported the hypothesis.

“We are able to say, ‘Here is the actual crack that we can measure on the surface of Mars,’ ” Eppes says. “Also, we can use physics and theory and predict those
High-Fives All Around

Celebrating 20 Years of Excitement in Halton Arena

By Tom Whitestone

2015-16 is the 20th season the Charlotte 49ers have called Halton Arena home. Home is where the hoop is, someone once said, and for Niner Nation, home has been on the court nestled within the brick columns of the Barnhardt Student Activity Center for 20 years. From raucous Midnight Madness celebrations to floor-storming victories and endless “Forty” — “Niner” chants, Halton Arena has witnessed some of the program’s most memorable moments.

The only other on-campus home was Belk Gym’s Mine Shaft, which staged the 49ers’ Final Four era in the mid-1970s and showcased the talents of Cedric Maxwell, Chad Kinch and Lew Massey. But the facility became too small for a burgeoning program.

So it moved elsewhere. The 49ers played home games at the Charlotte Coliseum — both the original still standing on Independence Boulevard (now Bojangles’ Coliseum) and the latter, since destroyed, which housed the first incarnation of the Charlotte Hornets near the airport. Both fine facilities — but neither belonged to the 49ers.

BRINGING BACK THE STUDENTS

In 1996, when full-time University enrollment was about 13,000 and the Internet was a budding idea, the 49ers returned home — bringing the student body back with them.

“This was about them,” wrote Ron Green Sr. in The Charlotte Observer the day after the 49ers’ first game in Halton Arena. “They finally had a home for their itinerant basketball team.”

Once again, students had easy access to games. No more 30-minute treks off campus for a home contest. The Barnhardt Student Activity Center was billed as the living room for the growing campus — a place for students to eat, relax, play and entertain.

And the 49ers have certainly entertained. Twenty seasons of celebrations began that Monday, Dec. 2, 1996, when Sean Colson poured in 21 points and added six assists. DeMarco Johnson added one of his many double-doubles with 14 points and 11 rebounds and the 49ers rolled past Appalachian State, 75-61.

Niner Nation is close enough to reach out and touch the action: Charlie Coley’s dunks, Dickie V in the house, a Conference USA tournament title celebration for the women’s program, showdowns that almost became throwdowns with Cincinnati, Leemire Goldwire winning the most competitive of games of H-O-R-S-E, Diego’s kisses, Plavich-range three-pointers, Basden’s game-changing thefts.

SHOWCASING TALENT

Halton Arena showcased the incredible talent of ESPN’s 2001 Freshman of the Year Rodney White and served as the backdrop for the inspirational story of the late Charles Hayward. The women’s team enjoyed a string of 12 straight post-season bids thanks, in part, to Halton’s home-court advantage and the standout play of stars like Sakellie Daniels, Pam Brown, Shannon McCallum and Conference Player of the Year Jen Hailey.

Melvin Watkins, who starred in the Mine Shaft on the Final Four team, coached the first game at Halton Arena. It was the site that Bobby Lutz picked up the majority of his 218 wins (a school record) and where Mark Price picked up his first collegiate coaching victory.

DeMarco Johnson is the 49ers’ lone 2,000-point scorer who played at least half of his career in Halton Arena. Curtis Withers (1,750 points) and Jobey Thomas (1,737 points) are the highest-scoring 49ers to play their entire careers in Halton. All-time assists and steals leader Pierria Henry called Halton home throughout his career and teamed with Terrence Williams to put together an arena-record 11-game win streak.

Names and achievements abound.

It’s been 20 years since the memories started rolling in incredible rallies, outstanding performances and signature wins. All were on campus for the student body to enjoy.

“This is one thing we’ve often yearned for,” Watkins said after the first-ever game in Halton Arena. “Having the students out in force.”

For the last 20 years, Halton Arena has given

BASEBALL ADDS SYNTHETIC INFIELD

Tom and Lib Phillips Field received an upgrade this winter in the form of a new turf infield. It affords the 49ers a better opportunity to beat the elements while offering more time for instruction and competition.

“We are very excited about our new synthetic infield,” remarked Head Baseball Coach Loren Hibbs. “The infield portion of Phillips Field was in need of significant upgrades. This investment is a step in the right direction to enhance player development and student-athlete welfare.”

Charlotte baseball has been forced
Niner Nation a place to call home, complete with a living room and a front-row seat to great basketball action.

**MEN’S SOCCER EARN FIFTH STRAIGHT NCAA BID**

The 49ers’ nationally ranked men’s soccer program made its fifth straight NCAA tournament appearance this fall after putting together an 11-6-3 season that included a 6-1-1 record in Conference USA.

Charlotte was ranked 26th in the final season poll by the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) and 29th in the NCAA Men’s Soccer RPI (Rating Percentage Index). Striker Kyle Parker won a host of awards (see story on far right).

The 49ers’ successful run has taken them to the NCAA tournament in six of the last seven years. This was their 11th trip overall, which ties men’s basketball for the most NCAA trips in department history.

**FORMER BASKETBALL STANDOUT JOINS RADIO CREW**

Jobey Thomas, who starred on the men’s basketball team from 1998 through 2002 and recently completed his pro career, has been added as the color analyst for men’s basketball radio broadcasts, which can be heard on the Charlotte IMG Radio Network.

Thomas reached postseason play in each of his four years at Charlotte, including three NCAA tournament berths. He played an integral role in helping the 49ers capture the 1999 and 2001 Conference USA tournament titles.

Thomas joins the 49ers broadcast crew after a successful 13-year professional basketball career in Europe. He played his first 10 seasons in Italy and spent the last three seasons in Portugal.

On broadcasts, he joins longtime play-by-play man Matt Swierad, who is in his 15th year as the voice of the 49ers.

**‘LET ME PLAY’ EXCEEDS GOAL, 49ER CLUB HOSTS EVENTS**

The Athletic Foundation’s 12th Annual Let Me Play Luncheon surpassed its goal by $17,000, raising $167,000 for the 49ers women’s athletic programs at the October event.

Chaired by Theresa Drew, Carolinas’ managing partner for Deloitte, the event drew 430 attendees to the Charlotte Convention Center and raised the second-highest total since the luncheon’s inception. Former 49ers softball player Andrea Wilkerson Howard spoke on the impact college athletics can have on female athletes.

“Teammates share a bond deeper than most friendships because of what we accomplish together on and off the field,” Howard said. “I learned the value of lasting relationships and how to be part of a successful team. The impact that being a college athlete has on a young woman is enormous.”

This spring, the 49er Club will host two major events — its annual Golf Outing on April 18 at Pine Island Country Club and the Great Gold Rush Auction June 4 in Halton Arena. For information, call 704-687-4950.

**SOCcer PlayeRs LEAD FaLL aWArdS**

Kyle Parker, Brandt Bronico and Matej Dekovic were named to the NSCAA Southeast Region men’s soccer team after leading Charlotte to the NCAA tournament for the fifth straight year. Parker was joined on the Conference USA first team by Bronico, and midfielder Max Rodriguez earned second-team honors.

Parker also repeated as Conference USA Offensive Player of the Year, won the Golden Boot Award after leading the league in scoring and made NSCAA’s second team all-America.

Women’s soccer standout Martha Thomas earned first-team Conference USA honors and was an NSCAA second-team Central Region selection.

Defensive lineman Larry Ogunjobi and running back Kalif Phillips were both selected second-team Conference USA to become the first 49ers to earn such honors in football.

In volleyball, Abreia Epps made second-team all-conference, while Michael Tamayo, Daniel Beamer and Carolina Casin-Silva captured all-conference honors in cross country.

**to postpone and cancels dozens of games over the years due to snow and rain, and there’s also been lost practice time. A combination of eight games last season and 14 over the past two seasons were canceled due to weather. The newly designed Phillips Field, part of Robert and Mariam Hayes Stadium, has a natural red-clay look to the infield and baselines as well as the path from the pitcher’s mound to home plate. The mound itself remains natural clay with a red-clay turf circle around it. The turf stretches into foul territory and covers the backstop area. A 49ers logo is stitched into the turf behind home plate. Charlotte opens its 2016 baseball season at home with a three-game series beginning Feb. 19. Charlotte has 10 home games scheduled in February.**
From Family Grocery to **LOWE’S**

Alumnus Robert Niblock donates $2.5 million to Belk College

Edited by Paul Nowell
Like many fellow alums and current UNC Charlotte students, Lowe’s Companies CEO Robert Niblock was the first member of his family to attend college.

During a recent visit to campus, when he donated $2.5 million to the Belk College of Business, Niblock, (’84), spoke about his modest upbringing in Cool Springs, N.C. As a young man working in the small family grocery store, Niblock wanted nothing more than to leave rural Iredell County for the big city. Knowing he wanted more to do than manage the family store, Niblock decided to pursue a college degree.

“In addition to an outstanding education, I always felt comfortable, yet challenged during my time at UNC Charlotte,” he said. “This was important to me because, as the first member of my family to attend college, I didn’t quite know what to expect. “The quality of the faculty allowed me to quickly acclimate and pursue my educational aspirations,” he said.

ACCOUNTING DEGREE

Niblock, chairman and CEO of Lowe’s since 2005, has served as its president since 2011. He joined Lowe’s in 1993 and holds a bachelor’s degree in accounting from the Belk College of Business.

Niblock also met his wife, Melanie, at UNC Charlotte. They met one day when she accompanied a student Niblock had been tutoring in accounting. “Both UNC Charlotte and the Belk College of Business have a special place in my heart, not only because of my education, but also because I met my wife there, and we’re in our 31st year of marriage,” he said.

Niblock’s $2.5 million gift will support Belk College’s Student Center for Professional Development, which will be named the Robert A. Niblock Student Center for Professional Development.

Chancellor Philip L. Dubois and Dean Steven L. Ott announced the gift and naming of the center on Oct. 20 at UNC Charlotte’s Student Union, during the inaugural CEO Speaker Series, presented by Niblock and organized by Belk College.

HELPING PREPARE STUDENTS

“Robert Niblock’s support will make a tremendous difference for our students. Many are first-generation college students, and many are working while studying in order to afford their education,” Dubois said. “Robert is giving back and providing students with personal and career guidance and resources that can prepare them for lifelong success.”

Niblock said he is still satisfied with his decision to enroll at UNC Charlotte. “First and foremost, I was interested in accounting as a major, and UNC Charlotte had a great reputation,” he said. “But the opportunity to go to school relatively close to home was also a key factor in my decision.”

What advice would he offer current Belk College students?

“As you consider your career choices, pursue what you love and what you’re passionate about,” Niblock said. “If you do, your career will be more rewarding, and you will be more successful in fulfilling your dreams.”

Paul Nowell is media relations manager in the Office of Public Relations.

“Both UNC Charlotte and the Belk College of Business have a special place in my heart, not only because of my education, but also because I met my wife there, and we’re in our 31st year of marriage.”
When she was a child, 2nd Lt. Kailey Filter heard a story about a pair of stretchers rushed into a hospital, one after another. The first held a man, the second: his missing foot.

The mother of Filter’s close childhood friend was a nurse. She often came home and told the girls about her day at work, accounts that painted an all-too-clear picture of what nurses see and do.

The stories stuck. Not because they frightened Filter, but because she recognized the small wonders that happen at hospitals every day. Whether it was helping a patient walk again by healing an injured leg or bringing a sick person back to health, Filter said she “thought it was incredible how science and medicine had evolved to better people’s lives.”
Today, memories of those first glimpses into the medical profession remain. Their significance is underscored by the fact that Filter, a May 2015 graduate of the School of Nursing, is poised to make an impact of her own.

**A TOP NURSING STUDENT**

Graduating near the top of her class from nursing school, Filter left campus as one of the most decorated Air Force ROTC cadets in the country. In October, she added to the honors when she was named U.S. Air Force Cadet of the Year, said Lt. Col. Richard Sanders, commander of the Air Force ROTC detachment at UNC Charlotte.

“...This is absolutely the highest award given to an Air Force cadet. Out of over 16,000 Air Force ROTC and U.S. Air Force Academy cadets, 2nd Lt. Filter was chosen as the best of the best by the Air Force chief of staff,” Sanders said.

Filter learned of the award as she is beginning her career. Last summer, she started a job as a medical-surgical unit nurse at Travis Air Force Base in California.

**CHOOSING CHARLOTTE OVER AIR FORCE ACADEMY**

Turning down a spot at the U.S. Air Force Academy, Filter came to UNC Charlotte from her hometown of Matthews, N.C., in 2011, the beneficiary of two respected scholarships. She received the Levine Scholarship, the most prestigious merit award on campus, and won an Air Force ROTC scholarship.

Like most everything in her life, Filter’s college decision was influenced by a concern for others. She said at first she wasn’t completely sure the military was right for her, and she worried about taking an Air Force Academy spot from another worthy candidate. Air Force ROTC thus provided an ideal opportunity for Filter to learn about the armed forces. It quickly became clear that she was on the right track.

“I stand for everything the Air Force does and want to serve,” she said. “The Air Force turned into the perfect combination of medicine and service.”

Filter quickly rose to the top student position in the University’s Air Force ROTC program. As cadet wing commander, she was responsible for leading 80 cadets through military training.

“My biggest kept secret is that all the cadets that I trained taught me more than I could ever teach them,” she said. “Every individual has so much to offer, and I was given the opportunity to shape cadets and nudge them to become the people and leaders that I, and everyone else, would want to follow.”

Filter also organized two Dance Marathon charity events, which raised $85,000 for the Children’s Miracle Network. She volunteered 320 hours at the American Red Cross and was a member of Red Cross response teams at several house fires, helping those affected find a safe place to go.

**SCHOLARSHIP BROADENS OPPORTUNITIES**

Filter credits the Levine Scholarship for broadening the range of opportunities she had in college. The program paid for her and 13 fellow scholars to go abroad each summer; she personally traveled to Alaska, Israel and Cuba.

Chloe Rodengen and other Levine Scholars were on the trip to Israel. The journey centered on an archaeological dig at Mount Zion, but it was on the side trips beyond the mountain that Filter’s natural leadership became apparent.

Rodengen remembers encountering an ancient aqueduct called Hezekiah’s Tunnel one afternoon. The narrow underground passageway is believed to have carried water to Jerusalem in biblical times. The students had planned to explore the tunnel, but even Levine Scholars are unprepared on occasion. No one in the group had thought to bring a flashlight to navigate the unlit passage. Undeterred, Filter poked ahead through the black air and knee-deep water, leading the group to the other side.

Rodengen said this is typical of her friend. And it’s a good sign for Filter’s career; great nurses have an innate understanding of what it means to lead people through dark places back into the light.

She said she decided early on to make the most of her time at UNC Charlotte, and her answer to what she’ll remember most speaks to who she is. “Twenty years from now, I will look back on the pictures that I have, and I probably will not be able to tell you what is going on in the picture, but I will forever be able to tell you who is in the picture with me.”

Wills Citty is director of communications for the College of Health & Human Services.
When R. Bernard Reeves passed away from cancer in October 2015, his fraternity brothers of Kappa Alpha Psi wanted to ensure future generations would know his name and reputation for good works and a kind heart.

They began planning and next fall hope to announce the first recipient of the Bernard Reeves Scholarship, a merit-based award given to a member of the Zeta Delta Chapter Reeves founded on the UNC Charlotte campus in 1970.

It will no doubt be a valuable gift for the student who receives it, but it will also be an important one for those who initiated the endowed scholarship.

Reeves served as chapter advisor from 1977 to 2015 and was considered by most members the patriarch of the fraternity.
We’ve initiated more than 350 brothers throughout the history of the chapter on campus, and Bernard has probably had an effect on every one that has come through,” said alumnus Jimmy Gardner ('98), who joined the fraternity in 1996. “He was everything to all of us.”

UNC Charlotte is home to 36 fraternity and sorority organizations. Students pledge for a variety of reasons, but most of the time, it boils down to finding a place to meet like-minded people who share interests and beliefs. The rewards are tight bonds that endure, often for a lifetime.

Christie Dean ('90) learned about those bonds from her brother Scott Webb ('83), a member of Chi Phi at UNC Charlotte. “When I think about my brother, I think about his relationships with his friends,” said Dean. “He had a lot of very good friends that he met at UNC Charlotte, especially in the Chi Phi fraternity. Lifelong friends. Forever friends that were by his side for the very end.”

Webb passed away in November 2007, and in 2009, his family initiated the Scott Edward Webb Endowed Scholarship. “Chi Phi meant so much to my brother,” said Dean. “Having something in his name to pass along to others in his fraternity was our main purpose for starting it.”

The scholarship is offered to a junior or senior belonging to either Chi Phi fraternity or Chi Omega sorority. In addition to good grades, he or she must demonstrate a strong role in Greek life.

The 2015 recipient of the scholarship, Samantha Whitley, is a chapter vice president and nursing major set to graduate in May. Whitley said the funds have helped to further her education in pursuit of becoming a nurse practitioner.

“Chi Phi meant so much to my brother. Having something in his name to pass along to others in his fraternity was our main purpose for starting it.”

Dean can second that. After listening to her brother’s stories about the benefits of Greek life, she joined Chi Omega while a student at UNC Charlotte. “He had such a good experience, I thought, why not?” said Dean. “I loved Chi Omega and what it stood for.”

For many, belonging to a fraternity or sorority during early adulthood helps set a solid path for later on, when careers and families come into play. Most members can remember at least one mentor who helped shape their futures, and for the brothers of Kappa Sigma fraternity, Kappa Omega chapter, Henry Nichols was that man.

Nichols had a long history within the fraternal organization. He served as district president for all of North Carolina in the 1970s and 1980s, but to his brothers at UNC Charlotte, he is remembered more as their longtime chapter advisor who gave them guidance in their youth.

In 1985, the Kappa Omega Chapter Housing Corp. established the J. Henry Nichols Scholarship, allowing Nichols’ influence to continue for future Kappa Omega members. “He helped us keep our ideals intact, and he especially taught us how to be men,” said Mark Isaacs ('80). “We loved him. He was our brother, but he was also our mentor.”

Lisa Thornton, owner of Follow My Lede, is a writer based in the Charlotte area.
1970s

James Mabry IV (’79) was named executive vice president of investor relations and mergers/acquisitions for South State Corp. He began his career in 1983 with Keefe, Bruyette and Woods in New York and has more than 30 years of investment banking experience. He earned a bachelor’s degree in business administration from UNC Charlotte.

Tom West (’79) was selected as the Apogee Awards Broward County CIO of the Year. West serves as vice president of information technology and chief information officer at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., where he is charged with advancing the university’s strategic goals related to academic technologies. Previously, he was chief information officer at Health Choice Network in Miami and Kaplan Higher Education. West earned a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from UNC Charlotte.

1980s

Altheria Smith Patton (’82) recently received the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, which is among the most prestigious awards presented by the governor of North Carolina. Individuals with a proven record of extraordinary service to the state, who have contributed to their communities and given extra effort in their careers, are eligible. During a long tenure in education, she has been a teacher, counselor, administrator, principal, associate superintendent, college professor and school board member. Additionally, the mayors of Anson County proclaimed Jan. 16 “Dr. Altheria Smith Patton Day.” Patton received a supervision and administrative six-year degree from UNC Charlotte.

Toni Kelner (’83), writing under the name Leigh Perry, released the novel “The Skeleton Haunts a House,” her 14th work and the third in the “Family Skeleton” series published by Berkley Prime Crime. The novel is a mystery in which “Sid the Skeleton” uses clues to solve a haunted-house homicide. Kelner earned a bachelor’s degree in English from UNC Charlotte.

Bob King (’84) was recognized as a “Future Star” in the 2016 edition of Benchmark Litigation, which focuses exclusively on litigation firms and attorneys. King has more than 25 years of experience in a variety of litigation matters and environmental law. He represents clients in toxic torts, shareholder disputes and wrongful-death cases. King earned a bachelor’s degree in history from UNC Charlotte.

David Poston (’88) released his first full-length poetry collection “Slow of Study,” published by Main Street Rag Publishing in Charlotte. He has authored two poetry chapbooks, including “Postmodern Bourgeois Poetaster Blues,” which won the N.C. Writers’ Network’s 2007 Randall Jerrell/Harperprints Poetry Chapbook Competition. Poston earned a master’s degree in English from UNC Charlotte.

1990s

Sean Trauschke (’90) was named board chairman for OGE Energy Corp., in addition to being named president and CEO in 2015. Trauschke joined OGE Energy in 2009 as vice president and chief financial officer. Prior to joining OGE, he served in leadership positions at Duke Energy. He earned a bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from UNC Charlotte.

Hilary Davidson (’91) was honored with the 2015 Charlotte ATHENA Leadership Award-Corporate. Davidson serves as sustainability director for Duke Energy and is responsible for directing the company’s sustainability outreach strategies. She has been a key contributor to Duke Energy’s environmental and sustainability strategies for most of her career. She received a master’s degree in civil engineering from UNC Charlotte and recently joined the Honors College advisory board.
Todd Aldridge ('92) was promoted to senior vice president/creative director for Luquire George Andrews (LGA), a Charlotte-based integrated communications company. During more than two decades at LGA, he has provided art direction and design expertise on projects from major branding campaigns to new product launches. In his new role, Aldridge will continue to be a creative lead but will take on expanded responsibility. He earned a bachelor’s degree in creative arts from UNC Charlotte.

Benjamin Kuhn ('92) was named to the 2016 edition of Best Lawyers in America in real estate law. With more than 18 years of experience, Kuhn focuses on real estate, business, land use, zoning, administrative law and litigation. He regularly represents developers, property owners and businesses engaged in or affected by the acquisition, development, construction, operation and leasing of commercial and residential properties in North Carolina. Kuhn earned a bachelor’s degree in political science from UNC Charlotte.

Joseph Ramey ('94) is the new chief of police of the Gaston County Police Department. He has served the department for 21 years holding a variety of positions ranging from patrol officer to assistant chief, the position he's held since 2011. Ramey earned a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice from UNC Charlotte and completed a master’s degree in business administration from Gardner Webb University.

Karen Kirks Alexander ('97) was elected mayor of Salisbury on Dec. 1 by the Salisbury City Council, to which she was elected in November’s general election. Alexander, who serves on the UNC Charlotte Foundation Board of Directors, is founder and president of KKa Architecture in Salisbury. She earned a master’s degree in architecture from UNC Charlotte.

Jennifer Amato ('99) was appointed commander of Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps Detachment 536 and professor of aerospace studies at Clarkson University in Potsdam, N.Y. A lieutenant colonel, she was an Air Force ROTC instructor at Detachment 875 at Virginia Tech University. Amato received a bachelor’s degree in organizational communication from UNC Charlotte.

2000s

Dianne Gallagher ('05) joined CNN Newsource as a national correspondent based in Washington, D.C. Prior to CNN Newsource, she worked at WCNC in Charlotte as a lead reporter and weekend morning anchor. She started as an anchor and reporter at CN2 in Rock Hill, S.C., and was voted the best reporter in the market three years in a row. Gallagher received a bachelor’s degree in English from UNC Charlotte.

Phillip Green ('05) earned a doctorate in leadership studies from North Carolina A&T University last May. His dissertation was “Military Millennials as Next Generation Leaders: Do Leadership Traits Matter?” He received a master’s degree in business administration from UNC Charlotte.

Danielle Trotta ('05), who works for Fox Sports, made her NFL debut as a sideline reporter during a regular season game between...
“The Mars Rover landed on Mars, and I saw that one of the first pictures taken was of a rock with a crack in it. I thought, ‘Holy cow. I bet the same thing works on Mars as it does on Earth.’”

same cracks essentially. I think that is the important contribution, to show that it’s a viable and possibly key process of cracking rocks on other planets. It’s just the influence of the sun rising and setting on Mars just like it rises and sets on Earth.”

VENTURING FURTHER

For Abernathy, who graduated in 2013 with a geology degree and who now works as a field geologist, the process helped him hone skills he has taken into his career.

“When you do a research project or independent study or anything like that, it really gives you a chance to put together all the things you’ve been learning that apply to a real world situation,” he says. “With geology at least, you take classes and you learn about things in the textbook, but a lot of times, it’s not until you actually go out in the field and start seeing things in the real world when it actually clicks into place.”

Eppes is now measuring cracking in real-time to gain more detailed observations, using acoustic emission sensors on boulders in pastures and in the desert. She also has made hypothetical cracks “grow” mathematically by using equations derived from mechanical engineering principles. She has learned that while cracks grow extremely slowly, the growth occurs at stresses much lower than a material’s laboratory-measured strength would imply.

She is teaming up with Russell Keanini of the Mechanical Engineering and Engineering Science Department at UNC Charlotte to model the fracture mechanics of rock cracking.

“The vast majority of weathering studies are concerned with the different factors in the environment that would induce a stress on a rock,” she says. “These are things like heating and cooling or freezing or frost shattering or unloading. But none of those are actually, in fact, the actual process that opens a crack. It’s fracture mechanics that dictates that. And so there’s this whole world, this whole undiscovered world of processes that weathering scientists haven’t really delved into.”

That is the world that will continue to pull Eppes in.

Lynn Roberson is communications director for the College of Liberal Arts & Sciences. Stewart Shelton (15) graduated with a master’s in English after working as a communications coordinator in the college.
University of North Carolina at Charlotte invites you to become a member of the Bonnie E. Cone Society. Fifty years ago, Bonnie Cone led an ambitious battle moving the two-year Charlotte College to the University of North Carolina at Charlotte with characteristic grace and determination. She worked tirelessly for the University to inspire students, win friends and attract donors.

Join Miss Bonnie and hundreds of others by making a planned gift and becoming a member of the Bonnie E. Cone Society.

Please contact John Cullum at 704-687-8003 or john.cullum@uncc.edu

www.plannedgiving.uncc.edu

For more information on the shovel used at the first groundbreaking and finding it 55 years later, watch:

http://youtu.be/dAToMx4xZD0
Electric-powered cars may seem to have reached a pinnacle recently with Elon Musk’s Tesla Motors, but let’s not forget the earlier visionaries at UNC Charlotte who laid the groundwork for electric perambulation. This 1970s rally car from the Williams States Lee College of Engineering competed in the Southeastern Clean Air Vehicle Road Rally. The second annual such event occurred on the UNC Charlotte campus in April 1972, with more than 25 entries from all points of the United States. The rally was coordinated by Prof. Donald Davis.
The Worlds We See
From Henry Dumas to today, race can play a role
By Jeffrey Leak, professor of English and president of the Faculty Council

When I decided to write the biography of Henry Dumas, a rather mysterious, ghost-like literary figure from the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s, I confronted a number of formidable challenges. Most of Dumas’ work had been published after his death. He was killed, at age 33, by a white New York City transit cop under tense circumstances, and no records of the shooting had survived. Furthermore, Dumas’ death in May 1968 came on the heels of the assassination of Martin Luther King. News of his death was a footnote, not a headline.

Perhaps the most significant point for me was less fact and more feeling. I knew I would have to talk about the tangled story of Dumas’ death, and in turn, the tangled story of his life — but I didn’t want to dwell on the violent nature or racial conditions surrounding the violent end to his life. “Visible Man: The Life of Henry Dumas” would do just as the title suggests, reveal a life, not simply the last moments of yet another black man taken down by a white man in uniform.

But when the book came out in April 2014, we already had quite a roll call of African-American men and women shot down or harmed by white officers who seemed disinclined to give the benefit of the doubt. In many of these cases — like Laquan McDonald in Chicago in 2014 or Walter Scott in Charleston, S.C., in 2015 — white officers seemed to act with impunity when it came to alleged black assailants. Henry Dumas’ case had some other wrinkles. I’ll let you read the book to find out more about them.

Certainly there are many white officers who go beyond the call of duty in serving everyone in our communities. But hardly ever do we hear of white men being pummeled with rounds of ammunition or being shot in the back when they don’t even have weapons. It gives African-Americans pause.

We’re often faced with moving between vastly different worlds even if we work at the same place or in the same part of Charlotte as white colleagues and friends.

My encounters with campus police have been positive, and elsewhere that’s been the case. Last year, as I was taking my children to school, I was stopped by a state trooper on Sugar Creek Road. My tag had expired, and the trooper was polite and fair, the consummate professional. But here’s the deal: when that trooper stopped me, I knew my kids were nervous, and I wanted to exude confidence for them, but I had my phone set to dial 911. If something happened, I wanted to have as much of the encounter recorded as possible.

Whether on campus or elsewhere, I’m concerned when I see a group of young black men congregating. I know that’s what students do, but I also know that innocent engagement, if misconstrued by one person, could turn African-American college students into “thugs.” That’s probably one of the main differences between being white, black or “other” in this world. In too many dangerous situations, your race determines the outcome. In that equation, being black is not a plus.

Let me be clear. In many ways, I live a privileged life, but in no way, when it comes to thinking about how those of us in black and brown bodies negotiate social spaces, does privilege guarantee security. This thought leads me back to Henry Dumas.

We lost an artist who died too young, a man well aware of the weight of being black in America in the 1960s. His response was to dive deep within himself, to use the written and spoken word, the latter of which he had heard in his Arkansas boyhood, as a kind of creative therapy for personal and collective transformation. Perhaps we should find a couch and read one of his books.
MEMBERS OF CHARLOTTE’S HMONG COMMUNITY HAVE BEEN LONGSTANDING PARTICIPANTS IN UNC CHARLOTTE’S INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL, WHICH MARKED 40 YEARS ON CAMPUS LAST OCTOBER.