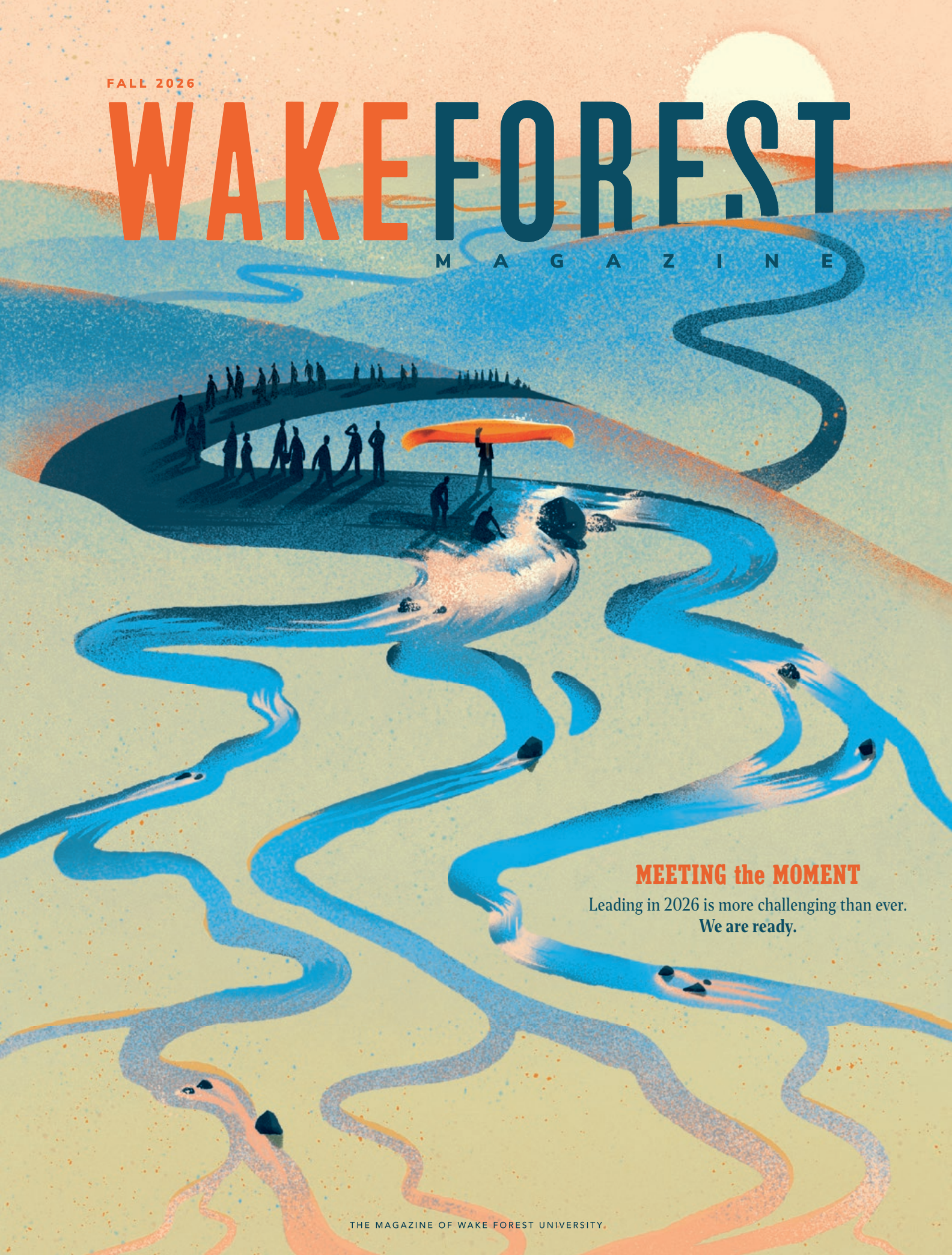


FALL 2026

WAKE FOREST

M A G A Z I N E



MEETING the MOMENT

Leading in 2026 is more challenging than ever.
We are ready.



SUMMER NIGHT LIGHTS

When the German Men's National Team made Graylyn Estate its home base for the 2026 World Cup, Kovi Konowiecki ('14) understood the appeal. The former Wake Forest soccer player-turned-photographer returned to campus in June to see some of the sport's biggest stars practice at Spry Stadium.



See Kovi's
photo essay
on our website.

Photo by Kovi Konowiecki ('14)



28

THE PRESIDENTS GO TO WASHINGTON

By Kelly Greene ('91)

Deacs who ran Student Government, including Danny Reeves ('19), have a powerful advantage when they come to the nation's capital.



Watch our presidential alumni in Washington here.



16

FIT? CHECK.

By Elaine Tooley

President Peter Rodriguez has landed at a university that is "congruent" with his background and his values. Plus, meet the new Board of Trustees chair and four Deacs leading in higher education.



48

LEADERSHIP IN CHARACTER

By Caroline Khalaf ('27)

The Program for Leadership and Character, rooted in *Pro Humanitate*, has become part of the Wake Forest experience.



58

CHARTING THE COURSE

By Elena Marsh ('22)

How alumni are leading through turbulent times in their industries.

DEPARTMENTS

- 4 Around the Quad
- 64 Philanthropy
- 66 Class Notes
- 80 Constant & True

ALSO INSIDE

- 8 American Flashpoint
- 14 Emily Giffin's Wake Forest Sequel
- 72 Shining a Light on Wake Women
- 79 Two Professors' Star Treatment

WAKEFOREST MAGAZINE

2019 ROBERT SIBLEY
MAGAZINE OF THE YEAR

FALL 2026 | VOLUME 74 | NUMBER 1

ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT AND EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
CREATIVE DIRECTOR

Chad Cheek (MBA '05)

SENIOR MANAGING EDITOR
Natalie Jennings

MANAGING EDITOR
Kelly Greene ('91)

EDITOR
Katherine Laws Waters ('20)

DIGITAL EDITOR
Matthew Johnson

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
Elaine Tooley

DESIGNER
Julie Helsabeck

PHOTOGRAPHERS
Lyndsie Schlink
Nick Fantasia

PRINTER
Cummings Printing

Wake Forest University Magazine (ISSN 0279-3946) is published three times a year in the spring, summer and fall by Wake Forest University, 1834 Wake Forest Road, P.O. Box 7227, Winston-Salem, NC 27109-7227. It is sent to alumni, students' parents, donors and friends of the University. The magazine is part of University Advancement, led by Senior Vice President Mark A. Petersen.

magazine@wfu.edu
magazine.wfu.edu
facebook.com/wakeforestmagazine
instagram.com/wakeforestmagazine
linkedin.com/company/wakeforestmagazine

Send address changes or cancellation requests to:
Wake Forest Magazine Alumni Records
1834 Wake Forest Road
P.O. Box 7227
Winston-Salem, NC 27109-7227
336.758.3761

© 2026

Class years: Alumni have years of graduation in parentheses. A "P" indicates a parent of a graduate.

Wake Forest Magazine welcomes notes, letters or comments at editor@wfu.edu or our mailing address listed above.

ON THE COVER

Illustration by Eleni Debo

THE EDITOR'S BRIEF

Leadership is rarely requested with an engraved invitation. Most often, the need for it arrives unannounced, in an unexpected crisis, amid conflict or transition. Individuals and institutions find themselves at a fork in the road, and clear-eyed direction is suddenly, urgently needed.

Leaders across many sectors are facing such moments, including in higher education. Artificial intelligence is disrupting industries and classrooms. The early-career job market is tougher than it has been in years. Higher education, especially research funding, is facing new hurdles.

Wake Forest and its alumni are not immune to these challenges. But are we ready for them? In this issue, we explore the ways Wake Foresters are leading now.

My own understanding of what it takes to lead was deepened through the work we did on this issue. That includes several conversations I had with Tom Dingleline (MBA '78) over the last few months. I have been struck



by his commitment to the idea that higher education should not merely credential managers. It should cultivate character. The Program for Leadership and Character, which he has supported, and which we feature, has increased Wake Forest's capacity to prepare students to

step into an unpredictable world with the resilience, empathy and integrity required to meet whatever challenges await.

Wake Forest itself is in transition, welcoming our 15th president, Peter Rodriguez, at a pivotal moment in higher education. His leadership will not be defined merely by the office he assumes, but by his enthusiasm to meet the complex challenges ahead — and find opportunity in them. After reading Elaine Tooley's profile of him, I think you'll draw the same conclusion I did: He's ready.

We looked to alumni — including some working in industries undergoing rapid change and nearly a dozen who work in the nation's capital — to understand how their Wake Forest education prepared them for this moment. They have seen their fair share of obstacles. But they were ready for them, and they are succeeding.

Leaders cannot always choose when defining moments find them, but they can prepare for them. As you read this issue, I hope you will feel the same reassurance I do that Wake Forest and Wake Foresters are more than ready to step forward. And, lead.

Stride Steady,

Chad Cheek (MBA '05)
Editor-In-Chief

WAKE FOREST IN THE NEWS

The University and the Office of the Provost started a university-wide **AI for Human Flourishing initiative** to guide the integration of artificial intelligence across teaching, learning, research and administrative work while remaining grounded in the University's mission and values. Hultquist Family Professor of Psychology **William Fleeson** was named associate provost for AI Initiatives.

An AI Task Force will help shape the University's long-term AI strategy while overseeing three pilot initiatives: AI Compass, led by Carlson Professor in University Studies **Ana Iltis (P '24)**, to explore the ethical, societal and health implications of AI while strengthening Wake Forest's capacity for interdisciplinary research and scholarship on questions surrounding artificial intelligence; AI Teaching Studio, led by Fleeson, to examine the opportunities and challenges AI presents for teaching and learning; and AI Impact Clinic, led by School of Business Professor of the Practice **Shannon McKeen** and Professors of Computer Science **Paul Pauca ('94, MS '96)** and **Errin Fulp**, to connect faculty and students with internal and external partners to develop practical AI solutions through applied learning and real-world projects.

Wake Forest's partnership with Senior Services Inc.'s Intergenerational Center for Arts and Wellness in Winston-Salem was recognized as the North Carolina Campus Engagement network's Community Partner of the Year. The partnership culminated in the 2025-26 academic year with an Academic Community Engagement first-year seminar called Creative Care: Empathy and the Benefits of Community Engagement. Sixteen students participated in the seminar. They studied the neuroscience behind the benefits of engaging in the arts for people living with dementia and were paired with people living with memory loss or frailty for creative pursuits including crafts, writing poetry and other activities.

Allison Walker, director of community partnerships and experiential learning in the Office of Civic and Community Engagement, designed the seminar to deepen the collaboration between the organizations. The connection with the



William Fleeson, top left, was named associate provost for AI Initiatives, and Norma Montague, top right, was named interim dean of the School of Business. Students in the Creative Care seminar, middle row, were paired with people living with dementia and frailty. The University's Freedom School, bottom, helped dozens of local schoolchildren maintain their reading skills.



Generations Center was built over the past decade by dance professor and ACE Fellow **Christina Soriano** and School of Medicine researcher **Christina Hugenschmidt (PhD '08)**. Funded by the National Institutes of Health, they study how improvisational dance can help improve walking

and balance in people with Parkinson's disease or cognitive decline. Some of their research has included the center's patrons, and they continue to conduct a weekly dance class there that's free and open to the public.

LEARNING ON THE JOB

Eleven distinguished graduates joined the University July 1 as **Wake Forest Fellows**. They are working full-time across campus for a year. In addition to fulfilling an assignment in a specific department, the fellows participate in leadership activities and interact with key administrators and faculty to learn how higher education works. The fellows program for exceptional graduates started in 2008.

The 2026 fellows are:

Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist: **Amaya Williams**, Morrisville, North Carolina

Board Secretary: **Sydney Calabrese**, Raleigh

Campus Life: **Josephina (Fina) Dooley**, St. Simons Island, Georgia

Dean of the College: **Mary Hauser**, Kennebunk, Maine

Information Systems: **Samantha (Sam) Stinson**, Shanghai, China

Leadership and Character: **Alfredo Diaz**, Miami

President's Office: **Catherine (Lulu) Clark**, Greenwich, Connecticut

Provost's Office: **Carter Dow**, Chicago

START Gallery: **Jane Alexander ('25)***, Winston-Salem

Wake Downtown: **Alaina Wheeler**, Waldorf, Maryland

ZSR Library: **Hannah Reynolds**, Hastings, Nebraska

**Second year*



Front row, from left: Sam Stinson, Mary Hauser, Alaina Wheeler, Lulu Clark, Sydney Calabrese and Amaya Williams. **Back row, from left:** Fina Dooley, Hannah Reynolds, Alfredo Diaz, Jane Alexander and Carter Dow

For six weeks every summer since 2017, dozens of Forsyth County, North Carolina, children have gathered on the Reynolda Campus for the University's **Freedom School**. The program is designed to motivate children who have finished kindergarten through eighth grade to keep reading

and feel good about learning. College students lead the school's classes as "servant leader interns," teaching a reading-rich curriculum.

A study of the program found after the first year that Freedom School students maintained their reading levels through the

summer. The program changes the college students too, leading many to enter teaching as a profession, says Dani Parker Moore, executive director of the program and an associate education professor who was once a student intern herself.

CAMPUS MOVES

Norma Montague, the Dale K. Cline Associate Professor of Accountancy, was named interim dean of the School of Business. She was senior associate dean of academic programs from 2021-25, providing strategic leadership for curriculum innovation, enrollment management and fundraising. She has overseen curriculum design in the undergraduate program and instructional innovation, including AI-enabled and experiential learning and cross-school academic initiatives. Previously she was senior associate dean for the MS in Management program.

Betina Wilkinson, an associate professor of politics and international affairs, was named associate dean for faculty development and belonging in the Office of the Dean of the College. She has won multiple awards for leadership in faculty and student mentorship and culture-building.

Diana Polley joined the Office of the Dean of the College as director of experiential learning after directing the Martinson Honors Program at the U.S. Air Force Academy. There, she managed a \$10 million gift for high-impact learning initiatives.

AWARDS, HONORS AND MILESTONES

The Fulbright Program awarded scholarships to four graduates: **Jack Bradley ('24)**, **Maria Fernández ('26)**, **Evan Harris ('26)** and **Isabella Romine ('26)** to teach English in Colombia, Spain, Indonesia and Uzbekistan, respectively.

Faculty awards in May included: **Reid-Doyle Prize for Excellence in Teaching** to **Alisa Russell**, assistant professor of English; **Teaching Professionals Award for Excellence in Teaching** to **Lynne Yengulalp**, associate teaching professor of mathematics and director of the Math

& Stats Center; **Excellence in Advising Award to John Tomlinson (PhD '05, P '24 '26, '28)**, teaching professor of chemistry and director of pre-health advising; **Awards for Excellence in Research to Qiaona Yu**, associate professor of East Asian languages and cultures, and **Stephen Winter**, associate professor of physics; **Kulynych Family Omicron Delta Kappa Award to Gary Miller**, professor and chair of health and exercise science; and the **Donald O. Schoonmaker Faculty Award for Community Service to Heidi Robinson (MA '11, P '18, '20)**, professor of the practice in education and associate vice president for career education and coaching.

Four faculty received URECA Faculty Awards for Excellence in Mentored Scholarship: **Justin Esarey**, professor of politics and international affairs; **John Gemmer**, associate professor of mathematics; **Luis González (P '13, '17)**, professor of Spanish; and **J'Nese Williams**, assistant professor of history.

Kenneth Kishida, professor of biology and Boswell Presidential Chair in Neuroscience and Society, received a \$683,782 award from the National Institutes of Health for computationally assisted multi-neurotransmitter detection for intracranial research.

Ebony Flowers, assistant professor of creative writing, was named a 2026 Howard Foundation Fellow. The program is designed to advance independent, creative and scholarly work of early- to mid-career individuals. Flowers teaches Making Comics and Advanced Fiction.

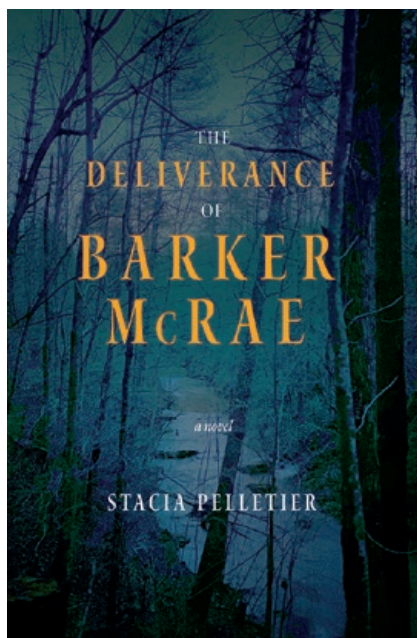
Tricia Clayton, associate professor of engineering, was accepted into the Executive Leadership in Academic Technology, Engineering and Science fellowship program at Drexel University, designed to help senior faculty in STEM become effective institutional leaders.

Delta Alpha Pi, an academic honor society for students with disabilities, named **Anna Parker**, assistant teaching professor in biology, as its 2026 Accessibility Champion. And the University recognized five staff members and departments for their commitment to raise awareness and support the disability community: **Carol**

Cramer, head of collection management, resource services at ZSR Library; **Anna Hawryluk**, director of campus planning; **Paul Whitener (P '18, '22, '23, '27)**, associate director of digital fabrication and maker education at the WakerSpace; **Lynne Yengulalp**, associate teaching professor in mathematics; the **School of Business**; and the **Center for Learning, Access, and Student Success staff**.

The Southeastern Association of Teachers of Japanese (SEATJ) named Professor of the Practice **Yasuko Rallings** its 2026 Teacher of the Year.

Stacia Pelletier, executive director of corporate and foundation relations in University Advancement, also writes historical fiction. Her latest book, "The Deliverance of Barker McRae," took bronze in the Foreword Indies awards for historical fiction.



Wake Forest Magazine won a 2026 CASE Gold Circle of Excellence award in design for its Summer 2025 Creativity Issue and Spring 2025 Mentoring Issue.

Amy Diaz, a reporter for WFDD, Wake Forest's public radio station, won a regional Edward R. Murrow Award for her coverage of the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools budget crisis.

New books by professors include "Honesty Crisis: Preserving Our Most Treasured

Virtue in an Increasingly Dishonest World," by A.C. Reid Professor of Philosophy **Christian Miller**; "Daylight / Savings," by Assistant Professor of English **Lucy Alford**; and "Science of the Supernatural" by **Melissa Maffeo**, an associate teaching professor of psychology.

Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer **Jackie Travisano** was a Triad Business Journal 2026 C-Suite Award winner.

The **University Police Department** earned accreditation from the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators.

THE QUAD AND BEYOND

The University officially opened its new Charlotte campus in May with a ribbon-cutting ceremony. Part of **The Pearl** innovation district, the new campus includes work areas, meeting rooms, classrooms and student gathering spaces. Within the next year, the long-standing Charlotte-based offerings from the School of Law and a new study-away semester will be based at the Pearl, alongside programming from the School of Business and School of Professional Studies.

Mit Shah ('91, P '25), CEO of Noble Investment Group in Atlanta and vice chair of the University Board of Trustees, gave a keynote in April on the hospitality industry as the first installment in the University's Friends of Economics Lecture Series.

Michael Kamtman, an associate teaching professor of performance, was featured in CNN's documentary miniseries "This Land" for his story as a descendant of President James Monroe.

DEMON DEACON SPORTS

Two student athletes were recognized for excellence on and off the field by the Department of Athletics: Track and field and cross country athlete **Rocky Hansen ('27)** received the Arnold Palmer Award, and **Mia Schoenbeck ('27)**, a field hockey player, received the Marge Crisp Award. Tennis player **Mees Rottgering ('29)** and soccer player **Kylie Maxwell ('29)** were

The University's
Charlotte campus
officially opened in May.



named newcomers of the year. Rottgering also made it to the round of 16 in August's Winston-Salem Open.

Janeen Lalik was named deputy athletics director and senior women's administrator. Joining from the Nashville Predators' Sabertooth Sports & Entertainment, Lalik will represent Wake Forest as senior woman administrator in the NCAA and Atlantic Coast Conference governance system and work closely with partners to support The Grounds development surrounding Wake Forest's athletic venues.

Five Demon Deacon baseball players were selected in the Major League Baseball draft: **Kade Lewis ('28)** in the fourth round by the Cleveland Guardians; **Duncan Marsten ('28)** in the sixth round by the Cincinnati Reds; **Javar Williams ('27)** in the 11th round by the Athletics; **Matthew Dallas ('28)** in the 12th round by the Washington Nationals; and **Dalton Wentz ('28)** in the 16th round by the San Francisco Giants. Separately, **Zach Johnston ('26)** and **Blake Schaaf ('29)** both signed with the New York Yankees.

Terry Rooney was named director of baseball recruiting. He has mentored 14

pitchers who reached Major League Baseball and coached 20 who were selected in the first 10 rounds of the MLB draft.

Vice President and Director of Athletics **John Currie ('93)** was selected as ACC Chair of Athletic Directors, making him part of the Atlantic Coast Conference's leadership team for 2026-27.

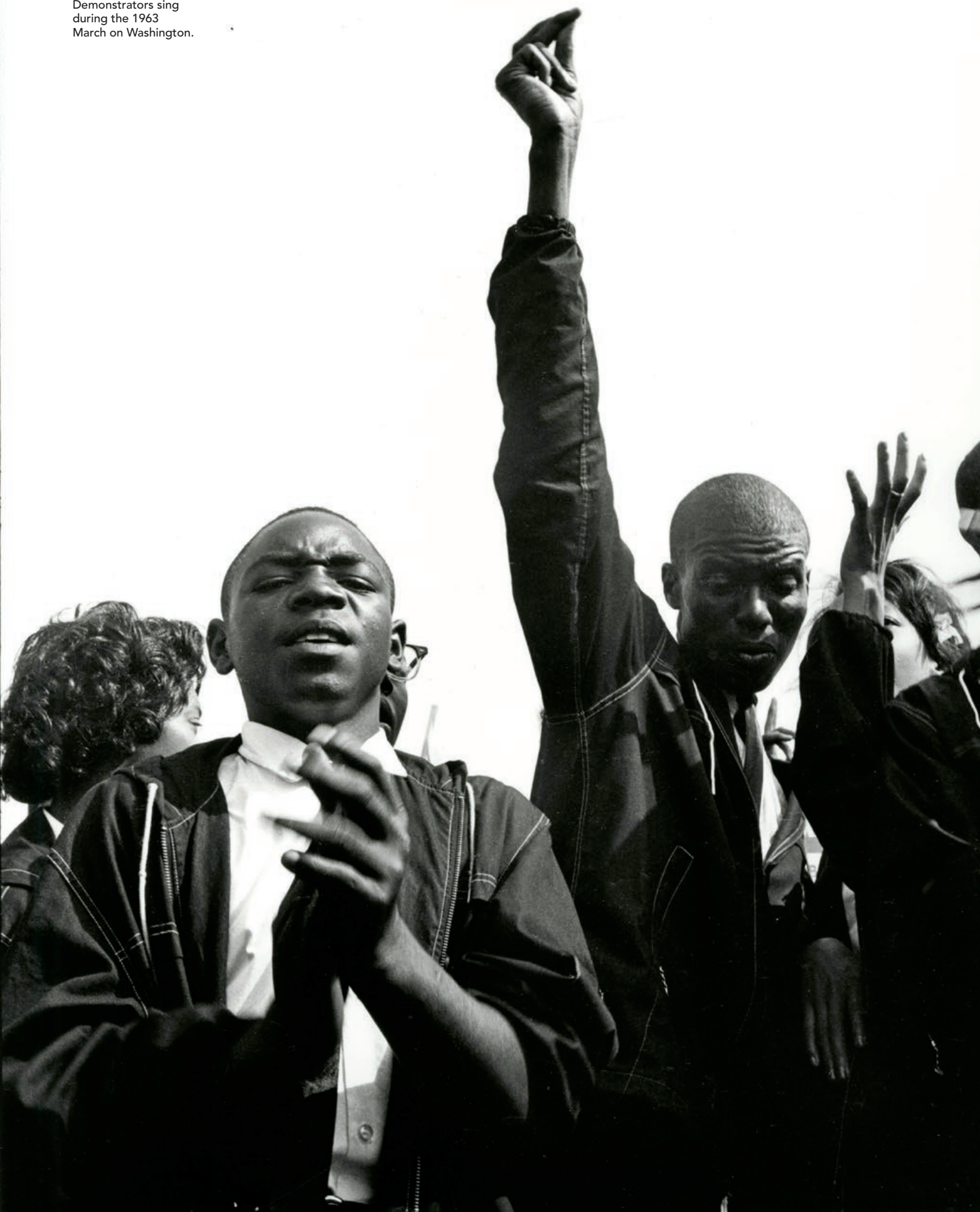


Read the
online version
with links to
more.

AN AMERICAN FLASH POINT

Danny Lyon photographed the everyday work of the leaders of the Civil Rights Movement. You can see his work at Reynolda House Museum of American Art. By Matthew Johnson

Demonstrators sing
during the 1963
March on Washington.



SNCC photographer Clifford Vaughs, center, is arrested by the National Guard at a demonstration in Cambridge, Maryland, in 1964.

Now, more than 50 of Lyon's most famous photos have been promised as gifts to Wake Forest by James Agah (P '26, '28) and Wendy Agah (P '26, '28). An exhibit featuring them, "Flash Point: The Civil Rights Photography of Danny Lyon," will run at Reynolda House Museum of American Art from Sept. 17 through Jan. 3, 2027.

"Of the many ways to reflect on the American quarter-millennium, a look back at its art is one of the most rewarding," says Phil Archer ('95, MBA '05), the Betsy Main Babcock Deputy Director at Reynolda House and co-curator of the exhibition. "Artists are aware; they notice things in their own time that their fellow Americans overlook."

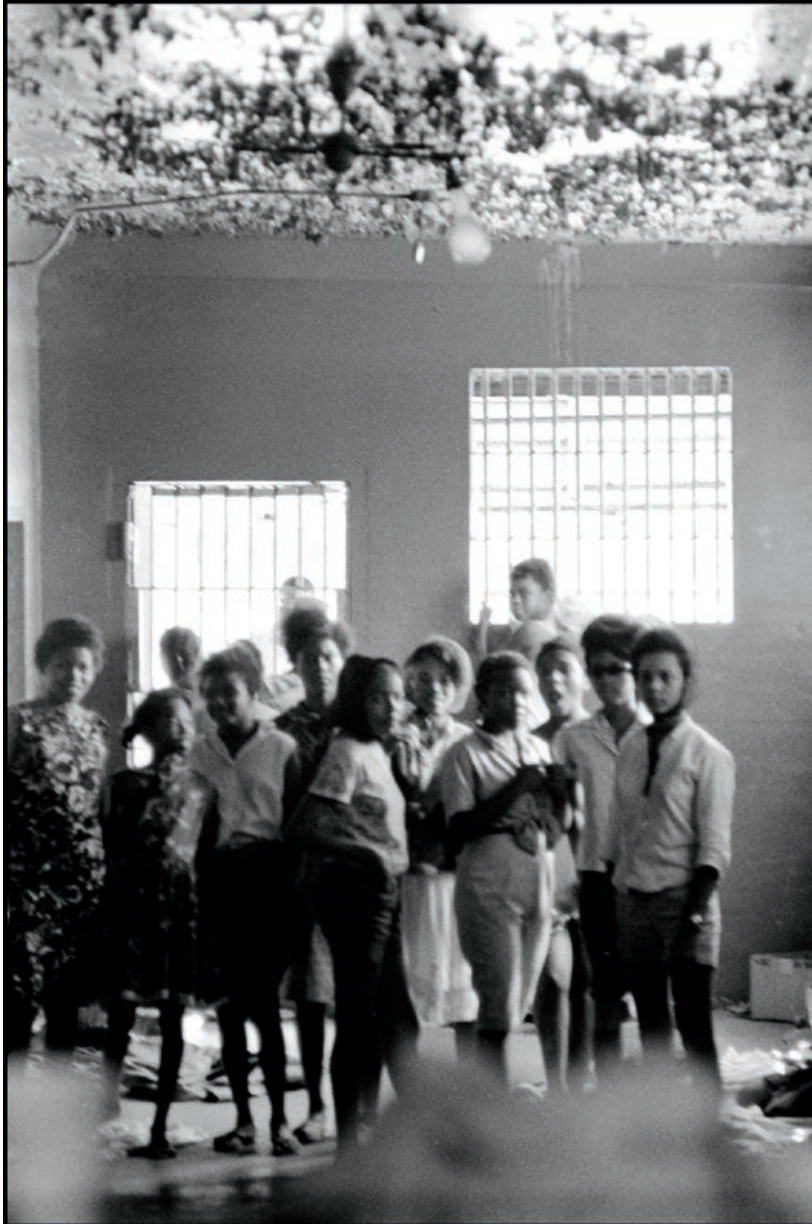
"Danny Lyon's photographs provided information about what was happening in the South visually: They were published in SNCC pamphlets, posters and calls to action, and, as a result, helped to sway public opinion," says co-curator Ashley Givens, an adjunct assistant professor of art history. "He photographed protestors in calm moments of song as well as revealing the violence inflicted upon protestors and activists."

IN THE SUMMER OF 1962,

UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO student Danny Lyon packed his camera and hitchhiked south. By August, he was in jail in Albany, Georgia, in a cell across from the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

Lyon linked up with the Student Non-violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), a group of mostly Black college students that became a driving force in the Civil Rights Movement. Lyon photographed SNCC members as they organized and protested. He captured lunch counter sit-ins and voter registration drives, dangerous activities that could lead to being jailed or beaten. Lyon set out to document the movement, but his photos became much more than historical records. They were tools of civic change.





Teenage girls being held in a stockade near Leesburg, Georgia, in 1963.

Lyon's photographs include images of musician and activist Bernice Johnson Reagon, singer Bob Dylan and civil rights activists Stokely Carmichael and John Lewis.

Some of Lyon's photos, which include King and James Baldwin, could give the impression that the movement was driven by extraordinary individuals.

Most of his work shows that history is not shaped by prominent individuals alone. Instead, it highlights how great change was created by ordinary people, many of them young, whose everyday acts of courage and commitment made lasting change possible. Winston-Salem's history contains one important example.

In 1960, 10 Wake Forest students joined students from Winston-Salem State University (then called Winston-Salem Teachers College) in sit-in protests at the lunch counter at Winston-Salem's F.W. Woolworth's. That sit-in began just a week after the famed Woolworth's lunch counter sit-in in nearby Greensboro, North Carolina, led by students from North Carolina A&T University. The Winston-Salem sit-in led to the desegregation of restaurants and lunch counters in the city. *More at bit.ly/1960sit-in*



John Lewis, center-left, and others demonstrate at a public pool in Cairo, Illinois, in 1962.

“Societies can undergo change gradually or in bursts of radical reshaping. For young people who are brave, engaged and informed, these periods of concentrated dissonance are golden opportunities to contribute to reform,” Archer says.

Lyon did not come to Winston-Salem for the sit-in, but he witnessed plenty of similar actions, which are on display in “Flash Point.” The collection includes searing images of Carmichael and Clifford Vaughns and the National Guard during 1964 demonstrations in Cambridge, Maryland. In the documentary “SNCC,” Lyon recalled photo-

“Lyon’s photo seems to ask: ‘Really, are these the scary protestors disturbing the peace?’”

—Michelle Gong (’27)

graphing a group of teenage girls who had been demonstrating in Americus, Georgia. They included girls as young as 12 and one who was pregnant, and they were confined in a stockade without beds or working toilets.

Lyon said in the documentary that after his photos of the Leesburg Stockade girls were published in the Congressional Record and Jet magazine, public attention helped secure their release. For Lyon, the episode proved that documentary photography could do more than preserve history; it could contribute directly to political change.

For Michelle Gong (’27), an art his-

tory minor, Lyon's photographs of more routine activism are as important as what he showed in pivotal moments. "Take, for example, the photo of a young John Lewis kneeling in prayer outside a segregated swimming pool," Gong says. "In that photo, Lewis is this 22-year-old kid bowing his head with other students. I really love the quiet irony of this shot. ... Lyon's photo seems to ask: 'Really, are these the scary protestors disturbing the peace?'"

Archer describes Lyon's photos as a metric for America's success at living up to its founding ideals, showing "how challenging it was, a century after emancipation, for Black Americans to exercise their constitutional rights to vote, to assemble in public, to read and speak without governmental censorship."

Now, visitors to Reynolda have an opportunity to reflect on those themes as we mark America's semiquincenten-

nial. The art collection at Reynolda asks viewers to "think afresh about declarations that were inscribed, treaties that were honored or broken and constitutional provisions that were observed or amended," Archer says.

SEE FOR YOURSELF

Events marking and reflecting on the nation's semiquincentennial are ongoing at Wake Forest this year, including several exhibits this fall on or near the Reynolda campus. Together, they invite guests to examine the stories and perspectives that have shaped and continue to shape America. Here's how to plan your visit:

Art & Democracy: A Reconsideration of Reynolda House's Permanent Collection THROUGH JUNE 30, 2027

Northwest Bedroom Gallery and West Bedroom Gallery, Reynolda House Museum of American Art

A reflection on the nation's 250th anniversary, with works that span centuries and examine the American experience and the ideals that shaped it.

Tickets are available on-site or at reynolda.org

Flash Point: The Civil Rights Photography of Danny Lyon THROUGH JAN. 3, 2027

Mary and Charlie Babcock Wing Gallery, Reynolda House Museum of American Art

More than 50 iconic photographs will be on display, featuring pivotal figures in the Civil Rights Movement and acts of protest that changed America.

Tickets are available on-site or at reynolda.org

Hank Willis Thomas: High Visibility THROUGH DEC. 2

Hanes Art Gallery in Scales Fine Arts Center

Conceptual artist Hank Willis Thomas addresses themes of race, identity, history and mass media through his multidisciplinary practice. This is an interactive exhibit featuring a selection of Thomas' retroreflective and lenticular artworks.

Admission is free and open to the public. Visit hanesgallery.wfu.edu for hours of operation.

Reading the Revolution: Print Culture in 18th Century America THROUGH DEC. 31

Special Collections & Archives, Z. Smith Reynolds Library, Room 625

Wake Forest archivists have curated a collection of rare printed texts from figures including Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine and Phillis Wheatley Peters in an exhibition examining the key role printed materials played in shaping the American Revolution and the nation's founding.

Admission is free and open to the public Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Guided tours or group visits available by request: archives@wfu.edu



Read more about the Special Collections & Archives exhibit and other reflections on America's 250th anniversary.

Emily Giffin's Wake Forest Sequel

The acclaimed author and alum was back on campus in August to help launch her youngest child into her first year here.

BY NATALIE JENNINGS

There are busy summers, and then there are summers like Emily Giffin ('94, P '30) had this year.

Her youngest child graduated high school in May, and her twin sons graduated from Columbia University the same month. Her 13th novel, "Love You More," was published in early July, followed by a multi-city book tour. While on tour, she was preparing to help her sons move to two different cities for graduate school.

The hectic season culminated in

August with the biggest milestone of all: Arriving back at Wake Forest, where her daughter, Harriet Blaha ('30), is beginning her first year. Helping Harriet settle into the same dorm where Giffin lived for two years was a "pretty special and surreal experience," she says.

"Of course, it was difficult to leave her, but I love knowing she's beginning this next chapter in a place that means so much to me," Giffin says. "Wake Forest shaped the person I've become, and I'm

incredibly excited to watch Harriet make the place her own."

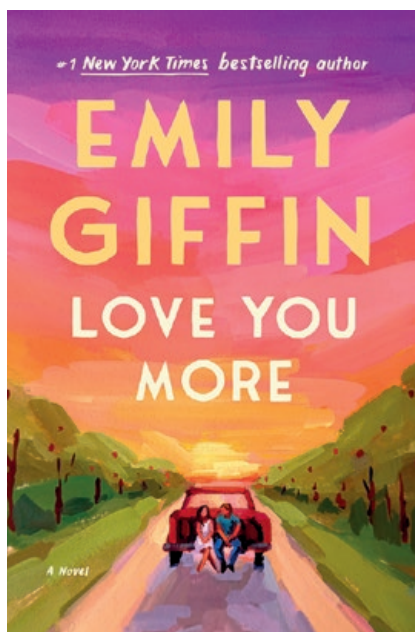
After Giffin returned home to Atlanta, I asked her to reflect on the whirlwind summer and coming back to Wake Forest in a new capacity.

NATALIE JENNINGS: I could not put down "Love You More." Without spoiling it, Billie, the main character, is thrust back into her hometown many years after she left it for a big city and big career. It occurred to me that you are diving back into this place after building a big life beyond Wake Forest. Was this transition on your mind as you were writing the book?

EMILY GIFFIN: Although the main characters in the book went to the University of Wisconsin rather than Wake Forest, I thought a lot about how instrumental college is in forging our identities. Billie built a very successful life in New York, but going home forced her to look at the choices she'd made and ask herself a pretty fundamental question: What still matters to me?

Emily Giffin ('94, P '30) helped her daughter, Harriet Blaha ('30), get settled as a first-year student this fall.





I think returning to Wake at this stage of my life raises some of those same questions. There's something powerful about revisiting a place you knew at 18 and discovering what still resonates with you — and what you now see differently.

NJ: What are you most looking forward to as your daughter starts at Wake? Are there any parts of your Wake Forest journey you hope she will experience or avoid?

EG: Harriet is running cross-country and track at Wake, so I know she'll develop close relationships with her teammates and coaches, but I hope she gets to know her professors, too. I'm most excited for her to discover things she doesn't even know she's interested in yet and to take some intellectual risks. One of the great gifts of a liberal arts education is that you arrive thinking you know yourself pretty well, and then a class, a conversation, a friend or an experience opens a door you didn't even know was there.

As for what I hope she avoids? Probably some of my fashion choices!

NJ: How do you think Wake has changed since you were a student?

EG: It has obviously grown tremendously since the '90s. It feels like a much bigger and more ambitious institution than the Wake I attended — the facilities, the programs, the opportunities available to



Nancy LeCroy Mohler and Emily Giffin at Commencement in 1994

students and the University's reach and reputation have all expanded tremendously. I'm very excited for the arrival of President Rodriguez and look forward to seeing what he does in the years ahead.

But what makes me happiest is how much of the core still feels familiar. Wake still seems to place enormous value on relationships, and there's still this deep-seated belief that success is about more than collecting credentials or landing a great job. So much has changed, but the things that made Wake feel like Wake to me are still there.

NJ: Walk us through what you would do on your best day at Wake Forest as a student, and if you know it yet, as a parent.

EG: I spent my four years as the men's basketball manager for Coach Dave Odom. Rodney Rogers ('94, LHD '22), Randolph Childress ('94, P '20), Marc Blucas ('94), TreLonnie Owens ('95) and Stan King ('94) were all part of my incoming class, so it was a very magical time for Wake hoops. Being part of that team experience gave me some of the greatest friendships and memories of my life. The energy of home games was always amazing, but I also loved the routine of practices — sweeping the hardwood floors of the old gymnasium before the players arrived, rebounding free throws to close out practice and spending time with Roxann Moody ('82) in the equipment room. Roxann is still in charge today, and her office is always my first stop when I visit campus!

Other great memories include talking

with my professors during office hours and studying in a quiet, tucked-away corner of the stacks in Z. Smith Reynolds Library. I loved the silence, the smell of the old books and the feeling of having found a little world of my own. Most of all, I cherish the simple moments with friends, whether eating in the Pit, strolling through Reynolda Gardens or studying in the Benson Center.

As a parent, I want to be there for whatever Harriet wants to share with me. I want to see the places she loves, meet the people who matter to her and experience this next chapter alongside her.

NJ: Can you leave us with some advice?

EG: For the students, I'd say: Don't arrive with too rigid an idea of who you're supposed to become. Take the class that has nothing to do with your major. Talk to the professor whose office hours you're intimidated to attend. Make friends with people who grew up differently than you did. Try something you might fail at. Some of the most important parts of your college experience will be the things you never could have planned.

I hope Harriet and her classmates leave Wake not only knowing more, but knowing themselves better. One of the things I appreciate most now is that Wake has always been interested in more than what you're going to do with your life. There's also this idea of who you're going to be and what you're going to do with the opportunities you've been given. To me, that's really the heart of *Pro Humanitate*.

Fit?

President Peter Rodriguez
has landed at a university
that is “congruent” with his
background and his values.

BY ELAINE TOOLEY

*Illustration by
Mona Eing &
Michael Meissner*

Check.



P

eter Rodriguez reached into the cardboard box, retrieved another 3.5-inch floppy disk, and slotted it into the computer drive. He and his mentor, Professor Arthur James, stared at the glowing monitor, examining the data that would bolster the student's ideas.

It was 1989, and faculty members at Texas A&M had encouraged the economics major to write a senior thesis on a topic that truly fascinated him: airline deregulation. Intrigued but starving for raw data to elevate his analysis, Rodriguez had hit a wall in his research. Sensing his student's drive, Professor James encouraged Rodriguez to contact influential economist Severin Borenstein. Weeks later, a heavy box of floppy disks arrived in the mail with a handwritten note: "Do your best."

Because Rodriguez didn't own a computer, James opened his own home to the young scholar. The two spent months dissecting the specifics of load factors, revenue passenger miles and yield management — analyzing how a newly free market dictated flight frequencies and ticket prices through the principles of supply and demand.

"I was at Professor James' house day and night," remembers Rodriguez. "If I stayed there long enough, his wife would make me grilled cheese sandwiches."

In March 1990, Rodriguez published "Economic Impacts of Airline Deregulation," earning the title of Outstanding Undergraduate Researcher in the Social Sciences. The paper was much more than an academic milestone. It set him on a career that has been defined by academic achievements and a commitment to paying forward the mentoring he received.

ON JULY 1, Wake Forest officially welcomed Peter Rodriguez as its 15th president. He is an economist and professor of strategic management who has spent his career at the intersection of business, leadership and education. Having lived and worked within the educational envi-

ronments of Texas A&M, Princeton, the University of Virginia and Rice University, he is now at the helm of Wake Forest with a deep sense of alignment.

"I'm so optimistic about what I see at Wake Forest," Rodriguez told the University Board of Trustees over the summer. "I feel it's so congruent with my own background and where I come from."

His instinct to seek out demanding

and transformative education didn't happen by accident. It was forged by his parents, Pete and Dee, who modeled two distinct definitions of grit.

His father, Pete, first stepped onto the Texas A&M campus as a catcher for the baseball team. "I don't think he expected to love organic chemistry," Rodriguez laughs. Yet that unexpected spark led Pete to earn a PhD in the field, eventually becoming a university professor himself.



“My dad changed our entire family’s trajectory,” Rodriguez says. “He opened up a world of opportunities. He was inquisitive, scientific and challenging — a wonderful, charismatic guy who made me feel confident in math and science. Without even knowing it, I was born believing I belonged at a university.”

His mother, Dee, instilled a different but equally fierce standard of excellence. She entered the workforce as a secretary in the 1970s and refused to stop there. The first in her family to pursue higher education, she attended night school for 12 years. She took a single class at a time while working full-time and raising her family. She never earned a grade lower than an A.

“You can’t offer an excuse to a woman like that,” Rodriguez says. “My mother was tougher than all of us put together. She expected so much of herself, we couldn’t expect less of ourselves. More than anything, my parents taught me that education was a virtuous path — one aimed at moral formation and being part of something bigger than yourself.”

THAT FOUNDATIONAL drive carried Rodriguez far beyond his home state of Texas. Fueled by his undergraduate thesis, he earned a spot in a prestigious summer program at the University of Michigan, which paved the way to Princeton University, where he completed his PhD in economics.

At Princeton, he found another mentor in legendary economist Gene Grossman, who routinely invited the young scholar to dinners with world-renowned colleagues. “I learned from these great economists how to think, how to write and what to look for,” Rodriguez says. The network blossomed; Rodriguez soon found himself working as a teaching assistant for economist and future Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke and markets pioneer Burton Malkiel.

When Rodriguez landed his first major teaching role at the University of Virginia’s Darden School of Business, his pattern of finding valuable





"I don't think anybody ever learns leadership before leading. You have to be in the moment."

You try on the jacket, and if it fits, it fits. If it doesn't, it doesn't. For me, it really fit."

mentors repeated itself. His office neighbor happened to be Robert Bruner, the future dean of the school. Bruner took the young professor under his wing, co-authoring projects and trading teaching pointers.

"Professor James had no reason to help me. Gene had no reason to invite me to dinner. Bob had no reason to invest in me," Rodriguez reflects. "They just cared. They wanted me to succeed without expecting any pay-back. Those are the people who came to mind the moment I heard about Wake Forest."



“The challenge all leaders face is that there are no hard-scripted answers for what to do. Your job is to act with the information and the team you have to get things done.

I really enjoy the personal side of that — working with people to figure it out.”

Before fully committing to the academy, Rodriguez briefly tested his economic acumen as an associate in the Global Energy Group at JPMorgan Chase. It was an era of dizzying growth in the sector, and many of his banking peers were abandoning Wall Street to join a fast-rising Texas energy giant called Enron. His colleagues joked about ruling the world together, briefly making Rodriguez question his instinct to return to the halls of a university.

But his passion for developing human potential won out, and he chose academia. Not long after, Enron collapsed.

“A year and a half later, I saw one of my former colleagues testifying on C-SPAN,” Rodriguez recalls.

The moment cemented a key component of his leadership philosophy: Organizations must be anchored in values, integrity and humanity, not just short-term optimization.

He instilled that philosophy at Rice University’s Jones Graduate School of Business, where he was dean for a decade. Known there as a builder, he expanded the faculty, launched a top-tier online MBA program and dramatically amplified the school’s national footprint — all while preserving an accessible, student-first culture.

The transition from faculty member to administrator felt natural for Rodriguez. “I don’t think anybody ever learns leadership before leading,” he says. “You have to be in the moment. You try on the jacket, and if it fits, it fits. If it doesn’t, it doesn’t. For me, it really fit.”

For an economist who analyzes optimization strategies and margins, Rodriguez’s leadership style is distinctly human.

“As a leader, I tend to be analytical, but focused on the people — setting a direction, keeping focus and finding ways to get there,” Rodriguez

explains. “The challenge all leaders face is that there are no hard-scripted answers for what to do. Your job is to act with the information and the team you have to get things done. I really enjoy the personal side of that — working with people to figure it out.”

Three virtues form the core of his approach to leadership: attentiveness, responsiveness and kindness.

“A leader’s job is to set the standards for the organization,” Rodriguez says. “What is excellence for us? A leader has to live that, exemplify it and celebrate it. First, we need to understand our students, faculty and staff better than anyone else — that’s attentiveness. Responsiveness is how we demonstrate respect and professional courtesy to everyone. And kindness is being as generous and empathetic as you can with the resources you have, even when making hard or unpopular decisions.”

The combination of academic rigor and profound personal care is what drew Rodriguez to Winston-Salem. His own blend of corporate insight — including through his board chairmanship of a Federal Reserve Bank branch — and devotion to the human side of education made him a perfect fit for Wake Forest.

“Peter blends all of the characteristics that the Wake Forest community said were important,” says Curt Farmer (’84, MBA ’91, P ’16), chair of the University Board of Trustees and co-chair of the Presidential Search Committee. “He brings a strong academic background with great grounding and experience. He’s an entrepreneur; he thinks outside the box. He’s had good experience outside the university setting and in the business community. Stylistically, he is a very thoughtful, collaborative and relationship-oriented leader. Over and over again, the search committee

heard how much people enjoy working alongside him.”

“One of my early jobs was at Wake Forest, where I observed some of the figures who formed what we now understand as the particular character of the institution — people such as Lu Leake, James Barefield, Tom Mullen, Bern Beatty, Ed Wilson, Al Martin, Katy Harriger — any of us could name dozens,” notes Jeanne Whitman Bobbitt (’79, MBA ’87), vice chair of the Board of Trustees and co-chair of the Presidential Search Committee. “They are luminous figures who shaped who and what we are. I am confident in saying that in Peter Rodriguez, we have found a worthy heir.”

Taking the helm of Wake Forest feels like a homecoming for Rodriguez. He’s arrived at a place where he can honor the values his parents taught him and the mentors who



COMING HOME

Introducing Board Chair Curt Farmer

By Elaine Tooley



LAST SUMMER brought a season of transition for the Wake Forest community. Alongside the arrival of President Peter Rodriguez, the University Board of Trustees installed a new leader: Curt Farmer (’84, MBA ’91, P ’16). Farmer, who recently co-chaired the Presidential Search Committee, officially assumed the role of board chair on July 1.

“I recognize the weight of this inflection point in the history of Wake Forest,” Farmer says, “and I am humbled, honored and excited to serve

as board chair. I’m fortunate to follow some great leaders of the board, including Jeanne Whitman Bobbitt (’79, MBA ’87), and I am grateful that she will stay on as vice chair alongside Mit Shah (’91, P ’25) and Gary Pinkus (P ’20, ’22).”

Farmer was born and raised in Winston-Salem and graduated from R.J. Reynolds High School. At just 16 years old, he met classmate Alice Whitler, whom he would later marry. Growing up in Winston-Salem, Farmer held Wake Forest in high regard, but reasoned that he needed to get away from his hometown for his college years. As the decision loomed closer, a visit to campus changed everything.

“As soon as I spent time on campus, I was drawn to the University,” Farmer says. “I fell in love with the campus and the personal attention.”

A liberal arts student who majored in history and religion, Farmer orig-

“Every generation has the obligation to ensure that the bulk of human knowledge is passed on beautifully and augmented.”

Education is not just career-oriented; it is for the betterment of humanity in the long run.”

guided him. When he looks at the University’s motto, *Pro Humanitate*, he sees a duty that transcends the modern, transactional view of higher education.

“Every generation has the obliga-

tion to ensure that the bulk of human knowledge is passed on beautifully and augmented,” Rodriguez says. “Education is not just career-oriented; it is for the betterment of humanity in the long run. The foundations of

Wake Forest are granite, and I could not be happier to build on them.”

As Rodriguez steps into this new chapter, he is joined by his wife of 32 years, Kathleen, a former elementary school teacher eager to invest herself in the campus community. They have three children: Gabriella, a social worker in Durham; Sam, an aspiring CPA in Houston; and Michael, a freshman at Trinity University in San Antonio, Texas.

Decades after sitting at a professor’s kitchen table eating grilled cheese sandwiches and chasing data, Rodriguez’s journey has brought him to a community that mirrors his own story.

The leader who can balance data and be a champion for people plans to do what he’s done from the beginning of his educational journey — research, build relationships, learn from others and work hard.

inally intended to go into the ministry. However, a conversation with a mentor professor reoriented Farmer toward finance. He attended the evening MBA program to further his knowledge base and develop lifelong friends in the industry.

He also began his career in Winston-Salem, at Wachovia Bank on Main Street, eventually rising to become executive vice president and wealth management director for the Southeast. In 2008, at the height of the financial crisis, Farmer made a leap of faith and moved from North Carolina to Dallas to become Comerica Bank’s executive vice president of wealth management. In 2015, he was named president of Comerica and became CEO in 2019. He assumed the role of chairman of the board in 2020. Comerica merged with Fifth Third Bank earlier this year, and Farmer is now vice chair of Fifth Third. He also

sits on Texas Instruments’ board and is active on numerous nonprofit and business organizations’ boards as well.

Through it all, Wake Forest remained a family affair for the Farmers. Alice (P ’16) became a physical therapist, practicing at the outpatient clinic at what was then known as Baptist Hospital and with Demon Deacon athletics.

Curt Farmer has been an active alum at Wake Forest, serving as a member of the College Board of Visitors, Divinity Board of Visitors and Babcock Graduate School of Business Alumni Council. Prior to becoming chair of the University Board of Trustees, Farmer served as vice chair. The Farmers passed on their love for the Demon Deacons to their three children: Allison (’16, MSM ’17), Katie and Jack; and their grandson, Henry.

Partnering with Rodriguez, Farmer will help lead Wake Forest as it

approaches its third century.

“I’m extremely grateful for the opportunity to work with Curt,” Rodriguez says. “He’s thoughtful, deeply experienced and comfortable in his own skin. He has steered large organizations through challenging situations as a CEO, which is incredibly helpful to me. He’s the perfect board chair for this moment.”

For Farmer, the mandate of the board is clear: Maintain a steady, supportive hand while keeping a focus on what’s next.

“Our job as board members is to balance fiduciary responsibility and supporting the president,” Farmer says. “There’s no shortage of challenges out there, but we’ve also got some tremendous opportunities to capitalize on. I am confident that our best years are not in the rearview mirror. Our best years are ahead of us.”

BACK

These four Deacs see big opportunities for Wake Forest and its new president.

By Kelly Greene ('91)

TO SCHOOL

WE ASKED SEVERAL Wake Forest alumni leading higher education institutions across the country to share their insights as President Rodriguez begins his tenure.

- **Ed Bonahue ('87)**, President, Suffolk County (N.Y.) Community College
- **Bonita (Hairston) Brown ('94, JD '97)**, Chancellor, Winston-Salem State University
- **Peter Mohler ('95)**, President, The University of Alabama
- **Rachel Davis Mersey ('00)**, Executive Vice President and Provost, Southern Methodist University

They remember what they loved at Wake Forest — and what he will, too.

Brown: Wake Forest's smaller numbers, personalized education and mentorship — I think they need to keep that. A lot of the elite schools, larger schools, are losing that touch. I think that's going to be Wake Forest's secret sauce. And there's something to be said about the different perspectives you can gain from people who've had different experiences. It just makes the University stronger. And so if Wake Forest can continue to lean into that in the ways they have

done in the past, I think that's going to make them powerful.



Ed Bonahue ('87)

Bonahue: For me, Wake Forest was a really eye-opening experience in terms of exposure to the liberal arts and sciences. I took seriously that it was the foundation for lifelong learning, that there were so many things you could get from a liberal arts education, just all the general education pieces that students sometimes complain about because it doesn't seem directly related to your career. But in my case, I think it made me curious. It gave me breadth in terms of my appreciation for all the academic disciplines. And in some ways, that set me up for being first a chief academic officer and then as president. It was great that I had had the privilege of having to take a core bio class and a calculus class. It

meant that I had some basic understanding of what faculty in those areas really valued. And that's really been helpful.

Mohler: I had a great mentor (Biology Professor Emerita Carole Gibson) and people that really invested time in me that didn't have to and got me involved and really changed the course of my career. So I owe where I am today to Wake, and it's pushed me as a leader in this position to really think about the university not just as a population of students, but where every student really matters.



Rachel Davis Mersey ('00)

Mersey: Wake is the perfect size to be able to have incredible opportunities, but small enough to still be intimate. And I think that's one of Wake's most special assets. But I also think its

relationship with Winston-Salem is important, and the way the University engages with the community. (Students have) the opportunity to be within a community that's not so overwhelming, that's not so all-encompassing. Wake is truly part of the center of gravity in Winston-Salem. You'll never have the most alumni in the country, but the willingness of Wake alums to watch out for other Demon Deacons is really special. People just care for each other in a way that doesn't always happen at a huge institution.

They told us what excites them about Wake Forest's next chapter.

Mersey: For me, a big part of it was the *Pro Humanitate* piece of the education, that it wasn't just about what you were going to learn in the classroom, but your character development inside and outside of the classroom. Thinking about the types of leaders that Wake is going to put out into the world, regardless of their major, is why I chose Wake — and I think that's something important for a new president to know to capture and to capitalize on. ... And then there is the network.

Bonahue: Higher education is not only devoted to research and the pursuit of new knowledge and to developing the next generation of leaders, but in my tier of higher education, it's devoted to access to opportunity. And access to educational opportunity also means access to economic opportunity. I'm really delighted to see that Wake Forest is creating that access. I think the commitment is good for Wake. It's a great platform for social change.

Brown: I hope that all the partnerships that Wake Forest has continue with (Winston-Salem State), and I hope we can do more. We have the physician assistant partnership, the Wake Law partnership, we have a research partnership with the Institute for Regenerative Medicine. Those partnerships show that Wake Forest is serious about collaboration, is serious about getting to the answers for these great societal problems and challenges, and they're going to work with everybody to get to those answers. Wake Forest is a good anchor institution for Winston-Salem, as are we. Together we can have a powerful voice for this city and for the region.

They shared how they're thinking about leading in higher education now.



Peter Mohler ('95)

Mohler: We're at this very, very important time in history where so much is changing. So much is changing both from a worldview and a country view, but also with all these enabling technologies, that the link between a single discipline in a future career isn't a direct line anymore. It's more important than ever that we're really making sure that we empower the stu-

dents to not just be able to be great at physics or chemistry or economics or literature, but we really teach them not what to think, but really how to think, and how to evolve and how to pivot. I think "pivot" is going to be the most important word going forward for the next generation. ...

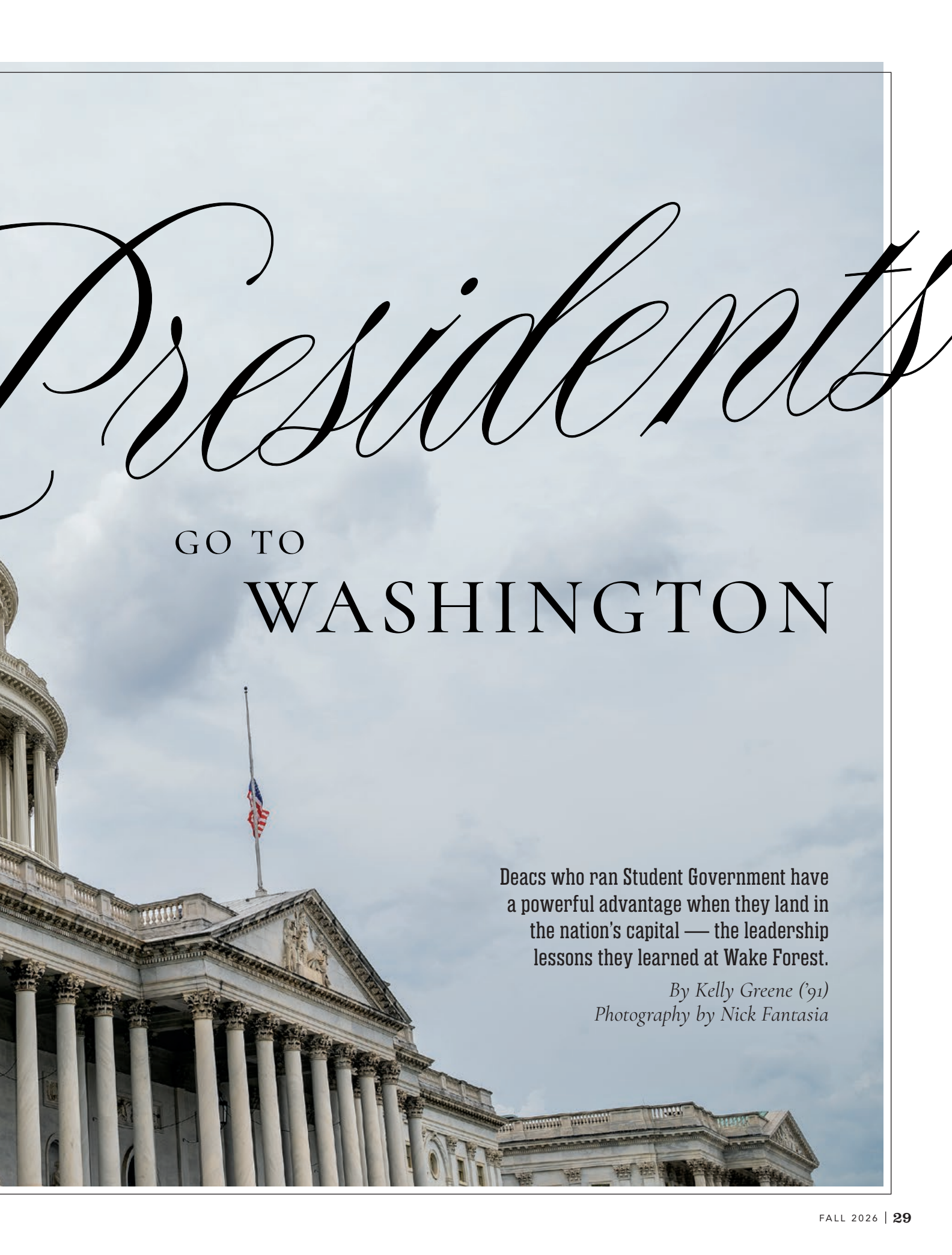
There are a lot of people that are very worried about higher education now. I think if we approach it the right way and almost say, "We're going to stop thinking or worrying about what happened 50 years ago," and (instead) say, "What are the tools that we need to give our kids for the world ahead of us?" then it's a really exciting time.



Bonita (Hairston) Brown ('94, JD '97)

Brown: Storms are going to come. We're just at a time where nothing is normal. And so every day is going to be a new challenge and adventure and you just have to embrace that and know that it's going to be difficult. At the same time, remain inspired by the innovation and excellence that's on the campus. Those faculty over there are phenomenal. You have the resources, you have the facilities. Just embrace that and celebrate that and magnify that at all turns.





Presidents

GO TO

WASHINGTON

Deacs who ran Student Government have a powerful advantage when they land in the nation's capital — the leadership lessons they learned at Wake Forest.

By Kelly Greene '91
Photography by Nick Fantasia



WASHINGTON, D.C. — Natalie Halpern Hales ('11) fondly remembers the office she enjoyed as Student Government president: The window framing magnolias in bloom. The expansive space for cabinet meetings or studying when the library got crowded.

Then she graduated and moved to Washington, trading her presidential digs for a windowless cubicle. “Wow. Maybe I peaked when I was 22,” she remembers thinking during her stint as an assistant for a political action committee.

Danny Reeves ('19) was thrilled to address the thousands of graduates, friends and family members assembled on the Quad for Commencement — then watched his business-major friends starting six-figure jobs while he scraped to land a “barely paid internship” in the House of Representatives.

But Hales and Reeves discovered during Capitol Hill job interviews the one thing that set them apart in the sea of political science majors. “Being a Student Government president was actually unique,” Hales says, “a small club across the country of people who can say, ‘My peers elected me to do this job.’”

They are two of at least a dozen former Wake Forest Student Government presidents who emerged from their terms so smitten with politics and public service that they went on to careers in the nation’s capital.

Spoiler alert: *None* of them peaked at 22. Hales worked for two members of Congress before becoming a lobbyist for the American Dental Association, where she now leads the congressional affairs team. Reeves played a key role in the negotiations and passage of July’s historic housing bill. Other presidential alumni now run congressional offices, proselytize think-tank research, put out campaign fires and shepherd the work of the Library of Congress. (See “Who’s Who” on page 41.)

They rely on the leadership lessons gained in Benson University Center, the epicenter of Student Government. And they uniformly describe their year in office as simultaneously challenging, isolating and wonderful. It was also instructive, and they still apply what they learned about leadership during their terms. Here are some of those lessons:



Danny Reeves ('19) says he uses the relationship-building skills he practiced at Wake Forest every day as member services and coalitions director for the House Financial Services Committee's majority staff.



This page, below: Natalie Halpern Hales ('11) and other SG executives meet with then-President Nathan O. Hatch (LHD '21). Now, she lobbies Congress for the American Dental Association.

Opposite page, from top: Danny Reeves ('19) at the podium as SG president. Jacqueline Sutherland ('14) shakes hands with Margaret Mulkerrin ('15) in front of the White House.



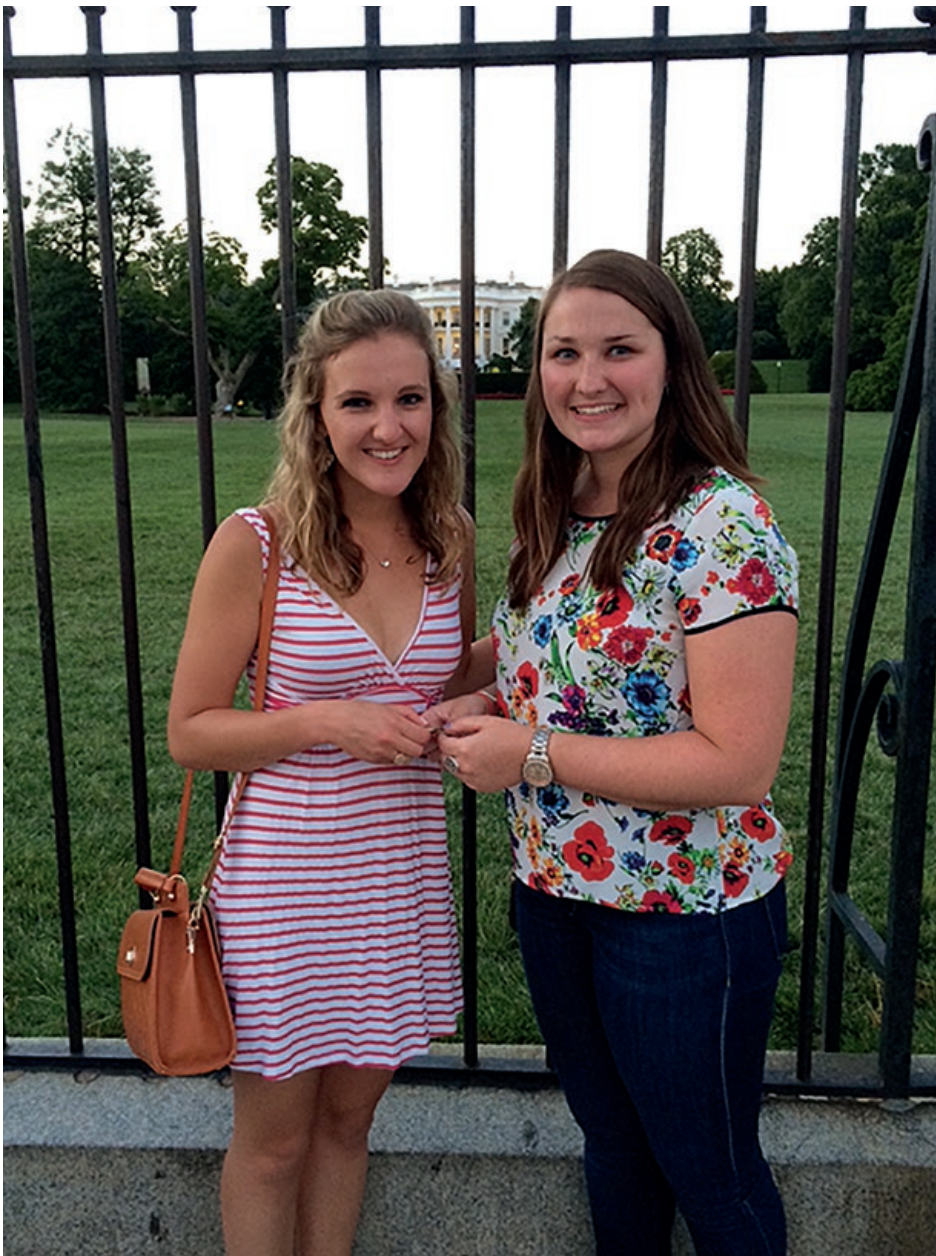
1. Relationships are everything.



REEVES CHOSE WAKE FOREST as his “dream school” in 10th grade even though he considered it a stretch, crediting his acceptance to the test-optional policy. Once on campus, he expected to focus full-time on his classes, scaling back the leadership posts he’d enjoyed in high school.

Instead, an information session for Student Government drew him in, and Reeves ran for a first-year Senate seat and won. As SG secretary his sophomore year, Reeves was surprised to see how much time President Jordan Monaghan ('17) spent nurturing relationships. “Even though you think of leadership as the big speeches,” Reeves says, “it’s how you treat people every day and that the relationships you make are authentic and true.”

Those relationship-building skills are “something I use every day” as member services and coalitions director for the House Financial Services Committee’s majority staff, he adds. “It’s vote-counting and



“BEING A STUDENT
GOVERNMENT
PRESIDENT WAS
ACTUALLY UNIQUE, A
SMALL CLUB ACROSS
THE COUNTRY OF
PEOPLE WHO CAN
SAY, ‘MY PEERS
ELECTED ME TO DO
THIS JOB.’”

—Natalie Halpern Hales ('11)

relationships, and also knowing, like at Wake Forest, who cares about what.”

Last summer, Reeves negotiated the text for portions of the 21st Century Road to Housing Act, widely considered the most significant housing legislation enacted in decades. “When there’s an issue with a bill, I need to be able to call someone and have a very honest conversation about where we are and where we’re trying to go,” he says. “If you don’t have an authentic relationship, especially in a town like Washington where it’s so give-and-take, it’s going to be hard to get the result you want.”

2. *Get in the
room and find
common ground.*

Then-President Hatch swears
in Jordan Monaghan ('17).



MONAGHAN REMEMBERS watching then-SG President Jacqueline Sutherland ('14) model the office as a “cool opportunity to make Wake Forest a better place for everybody.” It made him want to follow in her footsteps, he says. “I still believe that politics is the best way to do the most good.”

The 2016 U.S. presidential election happened during his tenure, with some students rolling the Quad in celebration, and others writing anti-Trump messages in sidewalk chalk. He realized that “leadership is about helping to create the space where people can have conversations about tough issues.” Monaghan continued that approach through his work on campaigns in Maine and Michigan and then on the communications team of former Gov. Roy Cooper, North Carolina’s Democratic candidate for Senate.

Monaghan watched how politicians he worked for gathered decision-makers across divides to solve thorny problems, for example, bringing together “Republican county commissioners and sheriffs and people who were struggling and not able to afford their medica-



Natalie Halpern Hales ('11) held onto a few campaign signs.



tions,” he says. “The power of convening was something I learned as Student Government president, and I have seen have lasting power and impact through my time on campaigns and particularly in [Cooper’s] office.”

During Scott Plumridge’s (’98) term as SG president, the on-campus judicial system, run back then by students, “had degraded” so badly that students were in danger of having it “stripped away,” he says. “We had to bring together administrators, teachers and students to figure out a path forward. It was a very thorny issue.”

He describes his role back then as bringing “different parties together and finding a suitable common ground for everybody.”

Now, Plumridge is a managing partner of Halifax Group, a private equity firm whose founders include David W. Dupree (MBA ’78, P ’20, ’22) and that works with middle-market businesses across industries. Helping different parties agree is “very much what I do professionally as well,” Plumridge says. “We find an opportunity we want to be involved with and

invest our money behind, but we have to convince somebody ... that it’s a good idea for them as well. And so, it’s give and take on both sides to find that appropriate middle-ground meeting point to make something actually happen.”

3. *Leadership isn't one-size-fits-all.*

JACQUELINE SUTHERLAND (’14) was inspired to run for SG president after spending a semester in Istanbul. She started her campaign with the goal of expanding the University’s global offerings, but she soon shifted to what she saw as a bigger leadership challenge: “There were these independent pockets on campus of the student athletes, who need something a little different



This summer, seven former SG presidents gathered at the Wake Washington Center to reminisce about the leadership lessons they learned back then that they use in government and public service today. From left, Margaret Mulkerrin ('15), Tré Easton ('13), Natalie Halpern Hales ('11), Danny Reeves ('19), Jacqueline Sutherland ('14), Jackson Buttler ('24) and Ryan Ramsey ('03).



from students in Greek life, whose needs are different from international students,” she says. “I was thinking about ways to hear all those different individual thoughts and concerns and then be able to speak to them.”

Her platform, “Together for Wake,” sparked her “Talk to Me” initiative, for which she recruited a team to host conversations where diverse groups of students could connect openly and honestly. The questions were simple: What drew you to Wake Forest? What makes you you? The answers were heavy: How they were navigating racism, sexual abuse, discrimination in class as athletes and more, Sutherland says. The campaign continued at least a few years beyond her presidency, and she was delighted to spot its buttons and banners on return trips to campus.



Opposite page, Jacqueline Sutherland ('14) created the "Talk to Me" initiative from her campaign platform. She recently caught up with Natalie Halpern Hales ('11) at the Wake Washington Center. **This page,** Margaret Mulkerrin ('15) frequently participates in events at Wake Washington, run by Senior Executive Director Jennifer Richwine ('93).



"ALMOST ALL OF [MY CAREER IN GOVERNMENT] HAS BEEN MANAGING OR WORKING ON CRISES, SO I REALLY TRY TO ANTICIPATE WHAT'S COMING AROUND THE BEND, AND THEN TRY TO CRAFT A FLEXIBLE AND AGILE STRATEGY SO WE CAN BEST NAVIGATE THAT WHEN IT INEVITABLY COMES."

—Jacqueline Sutherland ('14)

Sutherland has followed the same blueprint, developing action plans and empowering teams, in increasingly critical roles in Washington. In 2017, following a master's degree focused on political Islam at the London School of Economics and two years at a security and risk management advisory firm in Washington, she went to work for the federal government as a national security expert, specializing in the Middle East and state sponsors of terrorism. That included a one-year stint as the president's daily briefer for the Biden administration, arriving at the office by 2 a.m. to develop "the book, ... sort of like a classified newspaper for senior White House officials in the West Wing — the deputy national security adviser, the White House Homeland Security adviser and others," she says. "I still remember mornings, just walking through the Rose Garden at 7 a.m. by myself to drop off the book for President Biden."

That role led to more leadership roles in national security. The people-first philosophy she developed through "Together for Wake" still guides her today,

she says. "I want to advocate for my officers and then empower them, so they know I have their backs, their best interests at heart. And I hope that enables them to do their very best work for the mission."

4. *You have to really listen.*

SUTHERLAND HANDED THE GAVEL to Margaret Mulkerrin ('15), who says her biggest discovery about leadership was that it needs to start with listening. It began when someone really heard her: As a freshman, she felt so adrift as a New Englander that she was weighing a transfer to a school in Washington, D.C., figuring she could start interning and networking there. Through her tears, Mulkerrin confessed to then-SG Secretary Tré Easton ('13): "I don't think this is the place for me. It doesn't feel right."



Easton acknowledged how she felt, and pointed out her choice: She could transfer — or she could choose to “try to make this a university where someone like you would want to stay,” Mulkerrin recalls.

That clicked. She doubled down on Wake Forest, got more involved in Student Government and ultimately ran for president. Active listening — “making sure that people feel heard” — was her go-to strategy during her term, which saw a steep rise in student activism over the treatment of students of color.

In Washington, Mulkerrin got her start as a confidential assistant in the Department of the Treasury, a job she landed while crashing on Easton’s couch between interviews. Fast-forward to her current role as chief of staff for longtime U.S. Rep. Steny Hoyer, D-Md., managing a team of nearly two dozen staffers, in which Mulkerrin continues to focus on listening first, she says. “So much of what people want is to feel

validated, to feel heard, to feel like they have a place to take their concerns.”

Easton, after his year as SG president, headed straight to Washington and landed his first government job in the Department of Energy with help from an earlier SG president, Ryan Ramsey (’03). Easton worked on Capitol Hill as a deputy chief of staff and legislative director and is now vice president for public affairs at a think tank.

Like Mulkerrin, Easton has spent his career focused on listening, in his case to understand what he calls the “politics of the situation” — learning why people are angry or stuck and then focusing on how to solve the problem. At the Department of Energy, for example, “it’s not a partisan thing. People don’t care if it’s Republicans or Democrats cleaning up nuclear waste. They just want that to be taken care of.”



From the top, the Cannon House Office Building, just south of the Capitol. Some past SG presidents have worked for members of Congress during their time in Washington, including Tré Easton ('13). When Margaret Mulkerrin ('15), shown here in her SG president days, went to Washington to find a job, she crashed on Easton's couch.



Who's Who

A SAMPLING OF STUDENT GOVERNMENT PRESIDENT ALUMNI (AND ONE STUDENT) WITH A DC CONNECTION



Scott Plumridge ('98)
*Managing Partner,
Halifax Group*

Ryan Ramsey ('03)
Chief of Staff, Library of Congress



Natalie Halpern Hales ('11)
*Senior Congressional Lobbyist,
American Dental Association*

Tré Easton ('13)
*Vice President for Public Affairs,
Searchlight Institute*



Jacqueline Sutherland ('14)
U.S. Government, National Security

Margaret Mulkerrin ('15)
*Chief of Staff, U.S. Rep.
Steny Hoyer (D-Md.)*



Jordan Monaghan ('17)
*Rapid Response Director,
Cooper for North Carolina**

Danny Reeves ('19)
*Director of Member Services
& Coalitions, House Financial
Services Committee's majority staff*



Jackson Buttler ('24)
*Deputy National Press Secretary,
Democratic Senatorial Campaign
Committee*

Hannah Elluru ('25)
*JD candidate, Georgetown
University Law Center*



Gray Lowder ('27)
Fall 2025 Wake Washington student

**in Raleigh*

5. *The art of influence*

DURING RAMSEY'S TERM 23 years ago, he learned from longtime student-life administrator Mike Ford ('72), son of President Gerald Ford (P '72, LLD '80), that the art of leadership is "to try to get other people to want to do the thing that you want them to do."

When a fraternity vacated a student lounge on the Quad, Ramsey and his executive team swung into action to turn it into Campus Grounds, a student-run coffee house still caffeinating undergrads today. Their secret weapon: then-President Thomas K. Hearn Jr. (LHD '04). "We knew President Hearn was a great scholar of 19th-century Austria, where coffee culture was king," Ramsey says. "We were able to appeal to him and get the project done at warp speed."

As chief of staff at the Library of Congress, whose

mission is to engage, inspire and inform Congress and the American people as an enduring source of knowledge and creativity, he influences projects ranging from the National Book Festival, featuring 100 authors, to filmmaking preservation with Martin Scorsese and other luminaries. "I think in most things that I do today in my job, and that I've done for the last 20 years, I've tried to build coalitions and bring people along, using the training that Wake Forest taught me," he says.

6. *Build a team that will challenge you.*

WHEN HALES TOOK OFFICE in 2011, students were clamoring for more space — for both studying and socializing. SG advocated to open classroom space for studying, especially during exams, and expanded "Seize the Quad," an on-campus bash, she says.

Now, as the American Dental Association's main conduit to Congress, she advocates for a bipartisan group and works on both sides of the aisle to push for better coverage of oral health, including fixing children's cleft palates, missing teeth and other problems that make it hard to eat or breathe normally, she says.

Through it all, she's taken the same approach she used during her presidency: "It's always been really important for me for things to feel like group efforts, and everyone (feeling) really comfortable with decisions as much as possible," she says.

"Most importantly for me was knowing that, even though I was student body president, it was not just going to be all about what I wanted to do or what my thoughts and opinions were," Hales says. "I really tried to view it as an opportunity to get buy-in and surround myself with people who would be really honest with me. I think that made me a strong leader at that point, and has continued with me to this point, because I know that if you're a leader who isn't challenged, that is actually going to come back to hurt you in the long run."



"SO MUCH OF WHAT PEOPLE WANT IS TO FEEL VALIDATED, TO FEEL HEARD, TO FEEL LIKE THEY HAVE A PLACE TO TAKE THEIR CONCERNS."

—Margaret Mulkerrin ('15)



Tré Easton ('13), now a vice president at a think tank, focuses on listening to people's needs and finding solutions, just as he did as SG president.

Ally Swartzberg
2021-2022

Everyone who came before
you also closed the office
door and cried - it's ok
to feel the weight of
this job. You got it. We believe
in you.

weaver fac/Winter/rapid
Raccoons/covid/sexual
assault protest/climate
survey

To identify music from
NAP-Tribble 19



Jackson Butler
2023-2024

You can't control what this
year will throw at you. Keep
your head up and do your best.
We'll all be cheering you on.
Savor every single moment, you
got this.



Mil
H.M.
COVID/Election/S
President

2020-2021

The Best
is
yet

Mellie Mesfi
2019-2020

It's the next you'll
ever grow as a leader
over it. Trust you



Tradition: SG presidents leave messages for their successors on the bottom of the desk in the president's office.

7. *Be ready and willing to shift gears.*

SHORTLY AFTER HANNAH ELLURU ('25) took office in spring 2024, campus anti-war demonstrations and encampments escalated, demanding her attention. "It was challenging, but also a good lesson in thinking fast on my feet and turning to people to ask questions and not just thinking that I had everything figured out," she says.

Her canvassing of previous student leaders, other SG executives and University administrators helped start campuswide conversations about freedom of expression, she says. "It was not something I had really thought about going into my senior year in Student Government, but it was the thing I became very passionate about." It's a passion she took with her to Georgetown University Law Center, where she is in her second year.

Sutherland also learned to proactively pivot while she was SG president. "You spend a lot of your time working on your campaign, but then so much of your presidency becomes reacting to events that unfold," she says. "When I think about my career in government, almost all of it has been managing or working on crises, so I really try to anticipate what's coming around the bend, and then try to craft a flexible and agile strategy so we can best navigate that when it inevitably comes."

Jackson Buttler ('24), right and below, works to elect Democratic Senate candidates. He started his Student Government career as liaison to University administrators on COVID-19. Opposite page, Danny Reeves ('19) is the House Financial Services Committee majority staff's member services and coalitions director.

8. *The power of the platform*

CURRENT PRESIDENT GRAY LOWDER ('27) spent fall 2025 at Wake Washington. He interned for Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, R-La., for five weeks, until the federal government shut down, and then did research at the Consumer Bankers Association.

Lowder's time in Washington affirmed his goal of making Student Government a more visible advocate for student interests. His main concerns: housing and dining. In April, shortly after he was elected, Student Government garnered attention with a resolution opposing further enrollment increases without adequate facilities. He has been heartened by expanded food options on North campus and incentives to better balance the number of students going overseas in spring instead of fall.

Student Government traditionally gets a heads-up on administration announcements, but not much input, Lowder says. Now, "I'm having impromptu phone calls about things, and we're putting in our two cents."



9. *Ask for help.*

JACKSON BUTTLER ('24) faced hurdles unlike almost any other SG member. As a first-year in Student Government, he was named SG liaison to the University's administration on COVID-19 issues. In the October of his presidential term, the latest Israel-Hamas war broke out.

Buttler found guidance from a predecessor, Ally Swartzberg ('22), he says. She "told me something about leadership that I still think about to this day: 'The true mark of a great leader is making a decision in a challenging time and being able to stick with that decision.'" He also consulted frequently with Monaghan and Reeves, who advised him to focus on University issues where students needed Student Government's direct help, rather than international conflicts.

"As president, you allocate all of the student-activity funds to all the organizations. So, you're managing a \$1 million-plus budget. You're not only effectively representing 5,400 undergrads, you're also leading an organization of 100-some people who all have

“[ALLY SWARTZBERG] TOLD ME SOMETHING ABOUT LEADERSHIP THAT I STILL THINK ABOUT TO THIS DAY: ‘THE TRUE MARK OF A GREAT LEADER IS MAKING A DECISION IN A CHALLENGING TIME AND BEING ABLE TO STICK WITH THAT DECISION.’”

—Jackson Buttler ('24)



*Watch video interviews
with the SG presidents who
went to Washington here.*

different beliefs, and you're trying to bring everyone together," Buttler says. "I'm really proud that we didn't have any big drama happen, because I think I became really adept in navigating those sorts of things."

He essentially created his own board of advisers, mainly presidential alumni. Monaghan, for example, was working in Raleigh, Buttler's hometown, so Buttler would ask Monaghan to coffee — and they even ran a marathon together. "When I became president," Buttler says, "I would call Jordan about everything, just because he was such a helpful resource for me."

Buttler is now deputy national press secretary for the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee — a job Monaghan encouraged him to go for, and at the same organization where Ramsey worked years ago.

"My biggest piece of advice to current students," he says, "is don't be scared to reach out to those who are older and have the experience and wisdom to provide to you, because they want to offer it as much as you want to ask for it."



LEADERSHIP IN



Michael Lamb teaches a course called Commencing Character to first-year Leadership and Character Scholars.

The Program for Leadership and Character has expanded into a campuswide movement rooted in *Pro Humanitate* — and become part of the Wake Forest experience.

By Caroline Khalaf ('27)
Illustrations by Will Hackley

CHARACTER



While Associate Professor of Communication Rebecca Gill watched documentaries on fraudsters Anna Delvey and Elizabeth Holmes, she sensed a teaching opportunity. She took that hunch to a workshop offered by the Program for Leadership and Character, which helped her turn it into a real class: *How to Be a Con Artist: Stories of Fraud, Entrepreneurship and the Social Imagination*.

It “gave me the space and the time to just sit back and really think about the characteristics of leaders that I want us to focus on when we look at these case studies,” Gill says. Twenty-five students took the course in 2023, and it will be offered again in 2027.

Kal Wuor ('28) heard about the program's regular Wednesday Night Dinners as a first-year and was hooked by the atmosphere: the meaningful conversation, the welcoming company, the break from usual campus life. Now, Wuor is an official student ambassador of the program, part of a group of students who complete workbook activities tied to the fundamentals of leadership and character.

The program has become part of the fabric of campus since its start nine years ago, giving faculty and staff a way to put Wake Forest's *Pro Humanitate* ethos into words and actions. More than 300 faculty and staff have participated in training through the program and have applied that training in courses ranging from law and business to the arts and humanities. By the end of the 2025 calendar year, more than 5,500 Wake Forest students had taken those courses.

As the program flourished and word spread, colleges and universities across the country began looking to Wake Forest for guidance on how to bring character education to their own institutions. With major support from national foundations including the Lilly Endowment Inc., Kern Family Foundation and John Templeton Foundation, the program has



Leadership and Character Scholars Rute Ayalew ('24, MSM '25) and Sofia Ramirez Pedroza ('24) interview author Malcolm Gladwell, above, at a Face to Face event in 2021. The program hosted a 2024 conference, below, on communities of character that included academics from universities around the country.

extended its impact far beyond the Reynolda campus. The Educating Character Initiative has distributed \$58 million in grants to other institutions of higher education to advance character education nationwide and facilitate cross-institutional communities exploring character in higher education.

This past summer, Wake Forest received a grant from the Kern Family Foundation to expand character-based legal education and establish a network of law schools focused on leadership and character. Support from alumni, parents and other individuals continues to sustain the program's work.

"The Program for Leadership and Character is proof of what happens when commitment to a good idea is matched by the capacity to realize it," said Wake Forest President Peter Rodriguez. "The program has become an integral part of the Wake Forest experience that gives students tools to act out our motto, *Pro Humanitate*. And the program's Educating Character Initiative is allowing us to export that ethos. This work has already reached thousands of students and will reach many more."

The program got its start in 2016 when then-

President Nathan O. Hatch (LHD '21) recruited Michael Lamb to explore starting an initiative that drew from the Oxford Character Project, which Lamb helped kickstart as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Oxford. (Read more from Hatch on page 54.)

Lamb spent a year meeting with faculty, staff and alumni, creating pilot programming and building support. He noticed what Wake Forest alumni already knew: The University is an unusually supportive community with a tradition of friendliness and honor and an eagerness to develop leaders for humanity. In 2018, the fledgling Program for Leadership and Character introduced undergraduate discussion groups and, a year later, selected the first class of 10 Leadership and Character Scholars, who receive merit-based scholarships.

"Wake Forest has been focusing on educating leaders of character since our founding, so the Program for Leadership and Character seeks to make what has been implicit explicit," says Lamb, who is now the senior executive director of the program and F. M. Kirby Foundation Chair of Leadership and Character. "Since we started in 2017, we've worked



“The program has become an integral part of the Wake Forest experience that gives students tools to act out our motto, *Pro Humanitate*.”

—WAKE FOREST PRESIDENT PETER RODRIGUEZ

with campus partners to nurture a community where character is core to who we are.”

The program applied the seven strategies for character development, which Lamb developed with colleagues at the Oxford Character Project, to Wake Forest education, creating a framework whose influence has rippled through classrooms and campus life. (Read about those strategies on page 52.)

“Our program works directly with students, and hundreds of faculty, staff and administrators across campus have opted in as well,” Lamb says. “We pursue research to make our work better and to share our knowledge with the field, and we’ve been entrusted

to offer grants and steward a national community of colleges and universities who are educating character in their contexts. It’s really exciting to see this movement take off.”

The scholarship program provides mentoring, retreats and opportunities to hear from leaders and visiting speakers. “Once you learn enough of virtue ethics, it’s like a light gets turned on, and you can’t turn it back off. It was hard not to

apply it everywhere in my life,” says Alfredo Diaz (’26), who was a Leadership and Character Scholar and now works in the program’s office as a University Fellow.

After a summer internship in finance, Diaz decided against a career in that field. “I ended up choosing this job instead of going back and working for a bank, because what I have learned here changed how I make my decisions.”

As the program has grown, so has the need for professors. Daniel Henry, assistant teaching professor in African American and African Studies, was hired specifically to teach courses grounded in leadership and character. His recent class, *Organic Leadership: Lessons from the Black Freedom Struggle*, explores the Civil Rights Movement and what it means to lead a democratic life. It focuses on virtues including sacrifice, hopefulness, self-determination and love.

When he taught elsewhere, “I did talk in class about questions of citizenship, certainly, but it was emphasizing the students’ familiarity with different conversations about these questions. [It wasn’t] grounded in questions of practice or the personal dimensions of character,” he says. “Because we’re focused on character specifically here, it allows me to have conversations with students and design projects that are much more about practicing the things we’re learning.”

Faculty like Rebecca Gill, now the Larry J. and LeeAnn E. Merlo Presidential Chair for Communication and Entrepreneurship, and students like Kal Wuor are now studying leadership and character in ways they never expected. “The way they run the program, it doesn’t make it seem like you have to already be a leader in order to be a part of it,” says Wuor. “In my high school I never really got involved in leadership capacities, because I didn’t see myself as someone who could be a leader, but it’s different here. It’s definitely taught me that being a leader is more than just what you do — it’s also how you do it.”





THE PROGRAM FOR

LEADERSHIP AND CHARACTER

BY THE NUMBERS

84 LEADERSHIP AND CHARACTER SCHOLARS

Including 42 graduates and 42 current students

245 UNIVERSITY STAFF

have enrolled in the Leadership and Character Certificate Program

130 FACULTY MEMBERS

completed a workshop to integrate leadership and character into their courses

5,694 STUDENTS

had taken courses influenced by the program by the end of 2025

SEVEN STRATEGIES FOR CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT

These strategies, identified through research in philosophy, psychology, education and other fields, shape the Program for Leadership and Character's approach:



1 Practice: Repeating good thoughts, feelings and actions until they become habits.



2 Reflection: Finding meaning in our past successes, failures and challenges and considering how to improve going forward.



3 Exemplars: Emulating the virtues modeled by our role models and using their example to shape how we want to live.



4 Virtue literacy: Learning about the virtues and applying that knowledge to inform our lives.



5 Awareness of self, situations and systems: Recognizing how our personal tendencies, situational pressures and cultural contexts affect actions and decisions.



6 Moral reminders: Identifying reminders such as quotes, mantras or moral symbols to recall our values and commitments.



7 Friendships of support and accountability: Developing meaningful relationships that reinforce growth and improvement.

THE EDUCATING CHARACTER INITIATIVE

The Educating Character Initiative, a project of the Program for Leadership and Character, launched in 2023 and provides resources, funding and coaching to support character education at hundreds of U.S. colleges and universities.

BY THE NUMBERS

- ▶ \$118 million in grant funding received since 2024 for character education outside Wake Forest
- ▶ \$58 million already distributed
- ▶ 203 institutions impacted by ECI grants
- ▶ 179,994 engagements with participants in courses, workshops, conferences and other programs
- ▶ 1.5 million people expected to be reached through 2030

“Wake Forest has been focusing on educating leaders of character since our founding, so the program for leadership and character seeks to make what has been implicit explicit.”

— Michael Lamb,
Senior Executive Director of the
Program for Leadership and Character

SPREADING CHARACTER EDUCATION BEYOND WAKE FOREST

Hundreds of programs and institutions across the country have secured grant funding from Wake Forest's Educating Character Initiative. They include:

- Rice University, collaborating with Spelman College and Harvard Divinity School
- University of Georgia
- University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez
- Rowan-Cabarrus Community College
- Campbell University
- Howard University
- UCLA
- Berry College
- Occidental College
- UC Irvine
- Arizona State University
- United States Naval Academy
- Syracuse University
- Fort Lewis College
- Austin [Texas] Community College



A Tradition REIMAGINED

Wake Forest's Program for Leadership and Character is a powerful example of what can happen when tradition and innovation come together in the hands of a creative leader.

BY NATHAN O. HATCH (LHD '21)

Traditions matter. They give institutions identity, continuity and purpose. But traditions can also become commonplace — taken for granted and gradually drained of the power they once conveyed. From time to time, the most important traditions need to be recovered, renewed and reimagined.

Wake Forest has long believed in educating the whole person: engaging intellect and character, head and heart. The question I had during my tenure as president was how to renew that tradition in a modern, pluralistic university. Wake Forest, like many universities, had invested deeply in strengthening the quality of teaching and research. More challenging was finding ways to make the formation of character intellectually rigorous, educationally compelling and credible to contemporary faculty and students.

The answer to that question sprang from an unexpected opportunity.

Jim O'Connell ('13), who was studying at the University of Oxford as a Rhodes Scholar, called me out of the blue in the spring of 2015 and said there was a young scholar I needed to meet. Jim was part of a discussion group at Oxford led by Michael Lamb and sensed a striking overlap in our interests — particularly in the question of how character could be woven into liberal arts education, an issue of vital importance at Wake Forest.

A few months later, Michael and I met in North Carolina. I had long dreamed of creating a scholarship program at Wake Forest focused on character development, and Michael and I began brainstorming about what such an effort might become.

Six months later, we invited Michael to Wake Forest for an extended visit. Both of us were exploring two questions: Was such a program really feasible, and was Michael the right person to lead it? In the summer of 2016, we welcomed Michael to the Wake Forest faculty and gave him the challenge — and the opportunity — to imagine and develop a signature program in leadership and character.

From the beginning, nothing was certain. But I was convinced we had two critical ingredients: the right leader and a University culture that offered fertile soil in which an innovative program could take root and grow.

The scale and depth of what has emerged is nothing short of breathtaking. At least four features help explain why the Program for Leadership and Character has become so innovative and compelling.

Character formation can be intellectually rigorous. The program began with the conviction that character development could be approached with the same intellectual seriousness as other dimensions of a university education. Its work draws on seven strategies of character development rooted in the Aristotelian tradition and increasingly supported by research in education, psychology and the social sciences.

The goal is formation, not simply information. The program is concerned not only with helping students study character but with helping them become people of character. The ultimate question is not simply what students know about courage, justice, humility or practical wisdom, but how those virtues begin to shape the way they actually live.

Character has been woven across the curriculum. Rather than isolating character education in a single program or set of courses, the program has worked to embed it throughout the University. Faculty grants have enabled professors to deepen their expertise in character-development pedagogy, develop new courses and revise existing ones so that students' growth as people and leaders of character becomes part of the educational experience across disciplines.

The program has transcended polarization. Perhaps most remarkably, the program has avoided the riptide of polarization that has characterized so much of American public life — and university life — in recent years. It has built bridges across political, intellectual and religious differences without being easily categorized as liberal or conservative, secular or religious. Instead, it has focused on enduring questions of human flourishing and the common good, challenging students to pursue lives of purpose and meaning with courage, grace and humility. Students of widely differing political convictions and religious traditions have flourished in the program.

That may be the deepest lesson from what has happened at Wake Forest. Innovation need not mean abandoning tradition. At its best, innovation can recover the deepest purposes of a tradition and find new ways to make them compelling for a new generation.

Nathan O. Hatch (LHD '21) was the president of Wake Forest from 2005 to 2021.

Opposite page:
President Emeritus
Nathan O. Hatch
(LHD '21)

WHY WAKE FOREST?

Hatch saw four reasons why the University was the right place to launch a character-focused initiative.

1. A culture premised on relationships. Wake Forest has long been a place where people are taken seriously for who they are — a community in which strong relationships, personal attention and hospitality matter.

2. Faculty-student engagement. Faculty have long developed strong relationships with students, taking an interest not simply in their academic performance but in what it means to mature as a young adult and enter the world as a person of purpose and character.

3. Big and important questions. Wake Forest has also been a place willing to pose large questions to students: What gives life meaning? What are our gifts for? What do we owe to others? Toward what ends should a life be lived?

4. The study of character. Over the last two decades, Wake Forest has become a significant center for the academic study of character. Under the leadership of Christian Miller, the A. C. Reid Professor of Philosophy, Wake Forest faculty have developed the Character Project and the Honesty Project, two major research initiatives examining character and virtue.

What is it like to participate in character education?

*The following exercise is adapted from a workbook used in
the Program for Leadership and Character's seminars and workshops.*

YOUR CHARACTER AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Personal reflection is one of the most effective ways to foster character development. This assignment invites you to explore your own personal narrative.

Every story has a main character. In your life, that character happens to be you. "Character" has multiple meanings. In addition to

naming a person in a story, it can also mean a collection of virtues, vices and personality traits that a person dependably exhibits.

You can answer these prompts in paragraph form, or include bullet points, poetic phrases or drawings — anything that helps you reflect on who you are in the world.

Describe the community into which you were born. Who lived in the place you called home? What was the setting and landscape? Who were your neighbors? What did your community value?

What elements of your early life brought you comfort and joy? Is there a moment or specific memory that encapsulates that? Where in that early life did you encounter struggle? What aspects of that world do you intentionally carry with you?

Who is someone who was not there in that original home but shaped those early years? Maybe a teacher, friend or visitor who introduced a new idea or different perspective?

These seasons of change are challenging and can require assistance or guidance. Is there a person or group you turned to for help as you made sense of that situation? How did they help? What led you to trust them?

As you entered your teenage years, what tensions did you feel in your community? What made you different from your peers? In what ways were you a part of a community? Is there a particular event or specific moment when your character was visible to you and recognized by others?

As you look forward to the person you hope to become, are there others whom you seek to emulate? What about them is valuable to you? To the world?

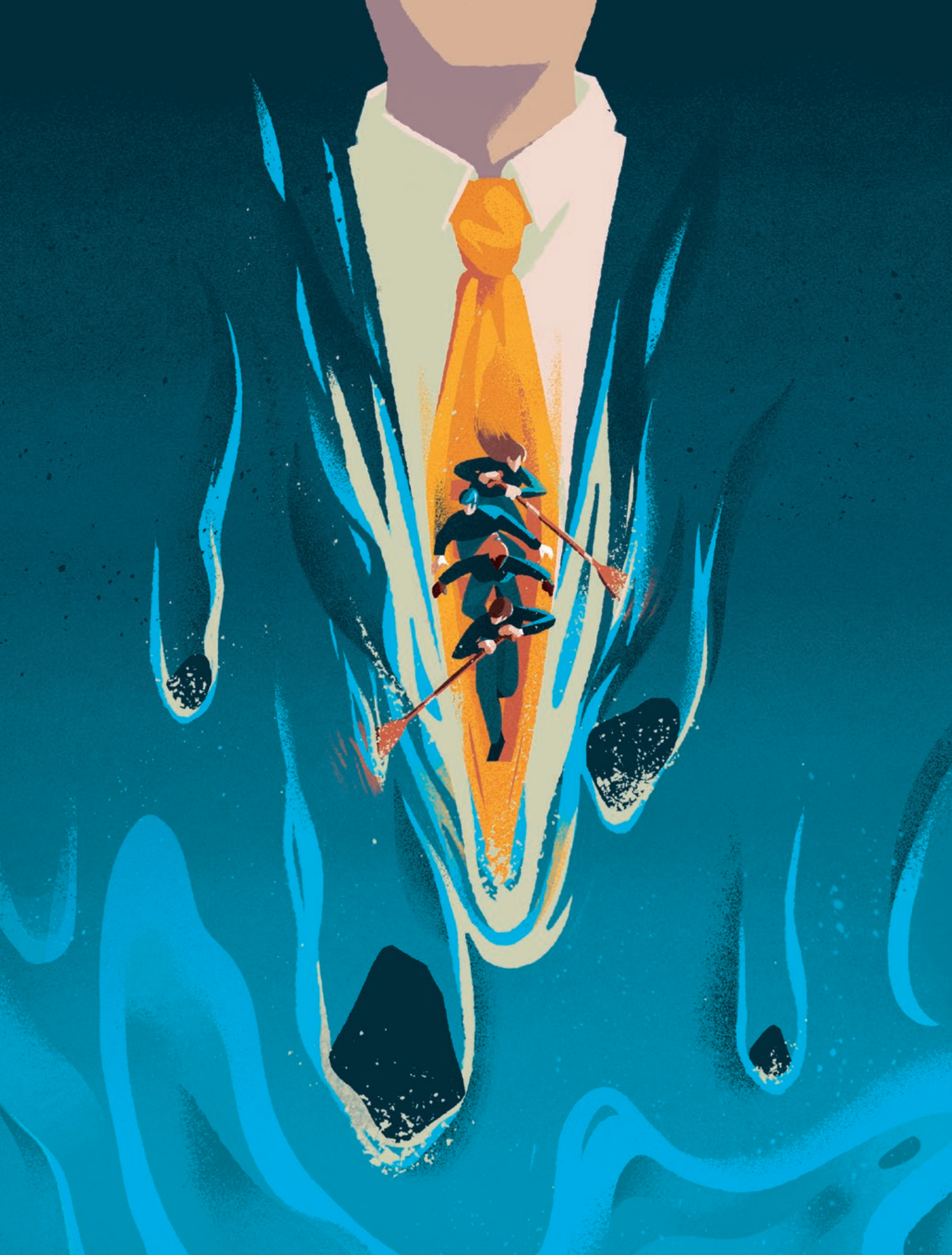
Was there a time in your adolescence when your character was challenged? Have there been ways that you have profoundly changed from who you once were, and what brought about that change?

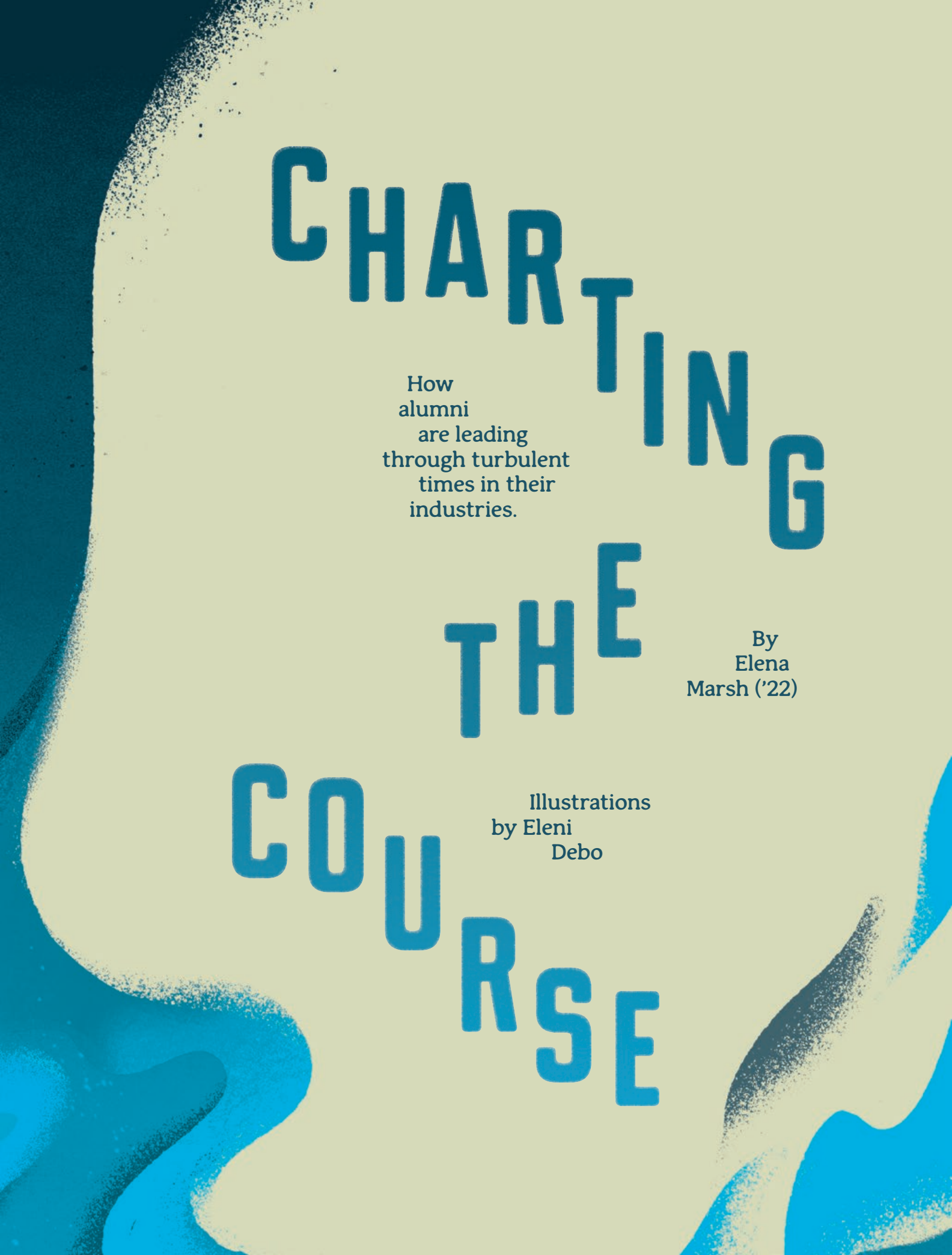
How would you describe the legacy you hope to leave? How does it relate to your home of origin, your family and your expanding community? How could it depend on those you have yet to meet? What do you hope to do to become that person?

To complete the exercise online, follow the QR code:



What did you learn about yourself? Email us at magazine@wfu.edu, and we may include your feedback on our social media accounts or in a future issue.





CHARTING

How
alumni
are leading
through turbulent
times in their
industries.

By
Elena
Marsh ('22)

THE

COURSE

Illustrations
by Eleni
Debo

They're guiding clients through crises, rapid technology advances and political turmoil. Shoring up the teacher-to-principal pipeline in the face of budget cuts and low morale. Building the market for a misunderstood sport. Cutting through the noise to reach clients — and an audience.

We asked five Wake Forest alumni who are navigating these challenges every day how they pilot such choppy waters. **Here's how they are meeting the moment:**

GARRETT PUTMAN

['98, P '29]

Senior Director, Events and
Experience Marketing
SAS, Cary, North Carolina

THE CHALLENGE:
**Making meetings worth
the trouble**

THE COSTS OF a bad meeting stack up fast: a plane ticket, days away from family and lost productivity. Garrett Putman ('98, P '29) spends his days as senior director of events and experience marketing at SAS, a software company,

working to disprove the adage that “this meeting could have been an email.”

He does so by focusing his team of 30 employees on one goal: Design experiences that artificial intelligence can't touch. “AI ... cannot bring groups of people together in person to connect, learn and find inspiration,” Putman says. So he targets what he sees as the ultimate objective for meeting in person — building relationships.

His secondary goal for his team at SAS, considered a “legacy” technology company, is to work against that stereotype by creating experiences and events that audiences find fresh and surprising. For one conference, he pushed for

SAS's chief technology officer to ditch his standard speech with slides, instead getting Sean Evans, host of the YouTube show “Hot Ones,” to replicate the show's format onstage. Evans asked the CTO increasingly tough questions as they bit into spicier hot wings.

“Our CTO could have written a blog,” Putman says. Instead, the hot wings made the message stick.

What's his hot take on AI? As a tech leader and father of a Wake Forest sophomore, Putman sees AI transforming daily life at work and with his family. “I have these two mindsets I play with every day,” he says. “How do I maximize the use of AI while also putting people and ideas together in person more often? That work has been super fun for me, and I think the *Pro Humanitate* spirit has been infused in that.”



CARY LAMBERT

['13]

CARY LAMBERT ['13] grew up playing video games, building a following through massively multiplayer online strategy games, including “World of Warcraft” and “League of Legends,” that connect legions of online players in the same virtual experience. She made videos for YouTube and livestreamed on Twitch.

And just as many Little Leaguers dream of growing up to play pro ball, she dreamed of turning her childhood passion into her day job — “helping the world understand that gaming is a sport,” says Lambert. And she managed to do it, now as Logitech’s global marketing lead for esports in San Jose, California.

Even while playing traditional intramurals at Wake Forest, Lambert was proselytizing esports through online videos. She moved to Canada after graduation and began working for Ubisoft, a video-game publisher in Quebec, managing its esports program and taking pro

players’ needs to the game development team. “I saw how (the pros) were training, and I saw how they were practicing and playing on stage,” she says. “It’s not just a game for them. Hundreds of thousands of dollars are on the line.”

Her next stop was Nike, where she was charged with “helping them understand why esports athletes are athletes,” she says. From there, Lambert went to Logitech, where she works alongside product developers and researchers on players’ needs.

“When you really get into the science behind what it takes to be good at video games and what actually goes into it —

Global Marketing Lead, Esports
Logitech, San Jose, California

THE CHALLENGE: Winning respect for esports

either a decision that’s made, or a flick of the mouse, the g-forces that are generated in a movement and the skill that it takes to be able to do something like that — it is very cool,” Lambert says.

She sees a growing need for coaching and family support. Instead of helping esports athletes train and eat to fuel their competitions, “parents will tell kids to ‘stop playing those video games,’” she says. “These kids climb an individually ranked ladder in the majority of these games, and it takes a lot of initiative.”

TIFFANY NEWSOME ['13]

Assistant Professor of
Educational Leadership
Western Carolina University,
Cullowhee, North Carolina

THE CHALLENGE:
**Keeping educators in
the classroom**

TIFFANY NEWSOME ['13] knows first-hand the toll that teaching can take. She taught English before becoming an elementary school principal in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, at the same time earning a doctorate in educational leadership at UNC Greensboro.

Now teaching teachers about school leadership at Western Carolina University, she often sees her graduate students arrive as the “battered and wounded soldiers of education.”

To keep the crucial teacher-to-principal pipeline from collapsing under

funding threats and mounting debt, Newsome focuses on what she can control: how she shares her passion, care and empathy with her students. She strives to ensure “that the care is felt,” reminding her students often “of why they even chose this profession.”

Demonstrating that the value of learning to think and collaborate outweighs an end product or perceived right answer has helped Newsome in her research on the use of artificial intelligence in the classroom, including the question of when and whether it’s ethical. “I am dealing with it (by), No. 1, debunking the myth that we should be afraid. I think to stay in that place would leave me behind or ignorant to what is being developed that can be leveraged in a responsible and ethical way,” she says.



Vice President,
Addressable Sales
The Walt Disney Co., New York

THE CHALLENGE:
**Helping brands reach
streaming audiences**

STREAMING SERVICES have eclipsed cable, and traditional commercials are easier to avoid, so advertisers now rely on experts like Lexi Swift Sindall ('05) to get them in front of potential customers.

As vice president of what's called "addressable sales" at The Walt Disney Co., Swift ensures that advertisers can reach the viewers they want on Disney+, Hulu and ESPN. She juggles multiple teams, inside and outside of Disney, with the common goal of targeting viewers with advertisers' preferred messages. Many projects involve what are called

in-show integrations, including product placements, through which a brand becomes part of the story (think "Project Runway" or "Dancing with the Stars").

Sindall started her career with a traditional advertising agency and two years later jumped to Hulu, then a tiny startup with 30 employees. For the past two decades, her career has grown as streaming has expanded.

She credits the trust she's won from clients and employees to "servant leadership," which includes being curious and adaptable, she says. "At the core, my job when I'm talking to marketers is to help them solve their business needs and challenges. You don't really leave that mission just because maybe the marketplace looks a little bit different."

LEXI
SWIFT
SINDALL
['05]

JONATHAN
DOORLEY ['06]

WITH TECH INNOVATIONS and geopolitical issues upending business models, Jonathan Doorley ('06) advises corporate clients on ever tougher challenges as a partner and global co-head of Brunswick Group's financial practice. He leads a global team of about 400 advisers on stakeholder relations in capital markets issues, including mergers and acquisitions, and also heads the firm's New York office of 250.

"Leadership today is no longer just

about managing operations or driving efficiency but about charting a course through uncertainty," he says. "What once seemed like (events) that might only happen once or twice a generation now seem to be all in a day's work."

Doorley urges his clients to reckon with any gaps in their business performance — and how they're achieving results — before focusing on their communications. He gives the same advice to individual executives as well.

"One aspect of my job, I believe, is to help organizations play their most positive and effective role in society," he says.

Partner and Head of
New York Office
Brunswick Group, a global
strategic advisory firm

THE CHALLENGE:
**Protecting reputations
amid uncertainty**

"And that can only happen if leaders and those on the teams around them all have that mindset."

As a history major at Wake Forest, Doorley learned how to identify patterns and understand how unrelated themes or events connect, which helps him explain to clients that "every generation thinks it's living through unprecedented change," he says. "What changes are the technologies and the headlines and the actors. What doesn't change is that organizations still need leaders who can earn trust, make decisions with imperfect information and bring people along with them."



Filling the Leadership Gap

Support from Tom Dingledine and other benefactors has helped Wake Forest's Program for Leadership and Character become a national model.

BY CHAD CHEEK (MBA '05)

What drives Tom Dingledine's (MBA '78) passion for the Program for Leadership and Character? It's a combination of gratitude for his own Wake Forest education — anchored in *Pro Humanitate* — and the desire to help address the leadership challenges he observes in today's world.

Dingledine, a Life Trustee of the University, helped elevate the program, which is now a model in higher education. He also inspired others to join him.

His early donations, and subsequent contributions made by other supporters, provided \$5 million to advance the program.

Dingledine's motivation for pouring his energy, time and resources into the program stems from a clear-eyed look at the modern global landscape. He sees a growing need for grounded, principled leadership. When ethical missteps and compromised integrity take center stage, he says, the ripple effects touch every corner of society.

Decades ago, Dingledine says he advised a federal initiative that aimed to integrate character education into schools' curricula through books and other media. They crafted materials, but the effort stalled, he recalls, in part because teachers were not given sufficient training to bring those lessons to life.

Rather than stepping away from the issue, Dingledine looked to Wake Forest and saw an opportunity. "There's a cost to society of the absence of leadership and character, and that cost is extreme," says Dingledine. Driven by that insight, and intrigued by a burgeoning initiative that President Emeritus Nathan O. Hatch (LHD '21) had set in motion at Wake Forest, he decided to support a program that could fill that gap.

The Program for Leadership and Character develops faculty, staff and overall pedagogy across many academic subjects. From history and philosophy to computer science, psychology and law, the program has ensured that character development is woven naturally into the academic experience.

While character education sounds straightforward, it takes intentional effort. "It requires a tremendous amount of time, reflection and attention," says Michael Lamb, senior executive director of the Program for Leadership and Character. "What makes Wake Forest distinctive is that we situate our teaching, programming and research on leader-

ship and character within a committed community of care. Character is shaped not only by programs, but by people. Our faculty and staff provide the transformative mentoring and personal support that make authentic character development possible.”

In addition to supporting the program himself, Dingledine established a \$1 million endowment match in honor of Hatch.

Dingledine’s initial gift prompted seven additional donors to give a combined total of \$1 million. Building on that momentum, Dingledine launched a \$500,000 current-use challenge match, which inspired 23 more supporters. His original gift even motivated another benefactor, Jen Toll (P ’12, ’18), to establish a complementary \$1 million matching fund. All told, Dingledine’s commitment yielded a \$5 million total impact for the program, and he recently committed to

donate another \$200,000.

Even with the momentum he created, Dingledine is quick to pass the credit along. He consistently redirects questions about how he inspired such giving back to the students, faculty, Wake Forest and the community. For him, the ultimate goal is simple: creating a culture of character where individuals regularly reflect on their core virtues and how

they show up when tested.

With the support of Dingledine and fellow donors, Wake Forest has become a national model in the field of character education. Through the generosity of many, Wake Forest has been able to award more than 200 higher-education institutions grants through the Educating Character Initiative and steward \$118 million in support for character education across higher education from major philanthropic foundations.

Looking forward, Dingledine sees even greater potential. “It helps us in attracting the best and brightest students and those who want to be a part of this program. ... We haven’t really even touched where this program may go.”

He shares the story of a former business school classmate who envisioned a future where Wake Forest graduates enter boardrooms, courtrooms, classrooms and community centers, leading with such humility and moral clarity that others ask, “By chance, did you go to Wake Forest University?”

Through his philanthropic leadership and personal commitment, Dingledine has helped equip students with the tools to navigate a complex world with clarity, courage and a strong moral compass.

“THERE’S A COST TO SOCIETY OF THE ABSENCE OF LEADERSHIP AND CHARACTER, AND THAT COST IS EXTREME.”

—Tom Dingledine (MBA ’78)



Tom Dingledine
and Michael Lamb



► See more from
our conversation
at magazine.wfu.edu

CLASSNOTES



It warmed my heart to read in the note President Peter Rodriguez sent to students, faculty and staff on his first day that he had “already learned something important about Wake: It’s a deeply relational place.” He also said that when you meet him, you can expect him to ask: “Who makes Wake Forest special to you?”

How would you answer that question? And has it changed over time? For me, the list of people who make Wake Forest special grows every year. At this point, it’s probably as long as our football field. I have always believed that supporting one another is one of the Wake Forest community’s deepest shared values, and our special people make that happen.

President Rodriguez is leading the way by asking everyone to introduce themselves to him as he develops relationships here on the Reynolda Campus. His example got me thinking about the ways we can all reconnect with the people we find so special, and also expand our Wake Forest network — the mentors and friends who at different times inspire, embolden or comfort us.

About the time this issue arrives in your mailbox, we’ll be putting the finishing touches on Homecoming & Reunion Weekend, November 6-8. There’s still time to make plans to join us, and doing so might be the simplest way to reconnect with the people who make our University special. I will caution you that a few individual events may have already sold out — it was standing room only at last year’s Golden Deacs lunch with Coach Dickert! But at most other events, the more the merrier. That includes Party So Dear, which kicks off at 4:30 p.m. on Friday evening on Manchester Plaza. (That’s the Magnolia Quad, for those of us from a certain era.) Don’t worry about finding friends if this is not your reunion year. I suggest you sign up for the next nearest class’s reunion party — you’ll be amazed how many familiar faces you encounter.

Beyond Homecoming, there are many other ways to connect: You can start with where you live, through WAKECommunities (wakecommunities.wfu.edu). This past summer, Wake Foresters hosted a series of get-togethers in beach towns where alumni could meet up while welcoming incoming students and parents. And at the holidays, alumni in spots around the country have hosted gatherings to join Lovefeast — virtually, but together. If you want to host a similar gathering in your city, let us know. We’ll even send you a kit with candles!

You can look for new hires or a new job, or simply offer kudos through our LinkedIn alumni group (bit.ly/linkedinwفالumni). Looking for a way to pay it back to your major? A few academic departments are creating ambassador programs for alumni to

mentor students. And a number of affinity groups, including the Association of Wake Forest University Black Alumni, Wake NOW (Network of Women) and the WF Veterans Network, have sprung up in recent years. You can find more information about those groups and others at bit.ly/WFaffinity.

Hands down the easiest, and maybe most overlooked, way to stay connected is to keep your contact information current on the Wake Network (wakenetwork.wfu.edu). It’s not only a way for alumni to connect with one another — it’s a way for students to find you. My daughter Joanna, a second-year student, is using it to reach out to alumni to increase their involvement in Hit the Bricks, the annual fundraiser to fight cancer in honor of football hero Brian Piccolo (’65, P ’87, ’89).

I am inspired by the many ways in which my fellow alumni are willing to give back to Wake Forest to keep our community strong and deepen the relationships within it. You are what makes Wake Forest special for me.

As always, Go Deacs!

— **Shelley Slaughter Holden (’00, JD ’03, P ’29), Winston-Salem**
President
Wake Forest Alumni Council



LET US HEAR FROM YOU

Have a question? Contact the Alumni Engagement Office at 800.752.8568 or alumni.wfu.edu

Pro Humanitate Days: Mark it on your calendar!

bit.ly/ProHumanitateDaysAlumni

Save the date for another event that makes Wake Forest special: Pro Humanitate Days, our annual days of service, March 13-21. Alumni, families, students, faculty, staff and friends come together to volunteer. There are two ways to help: Join a project in your community or take action on your own.

The spark for Pro Humanitate Days, which started in 2007, was alumni who came to us seeking ways to help as a community after natural disasters. We have deepened our relationships with many community partners over the years, with alumni joining their boards or going to work for them, and we're adding new partners along the way. Now, hundreds of alumni participate in about 50 projects a year. We hope you will join us!



Past trips included Antelope Canyon in Arizona, left, and the Apulia region of southern Italy.

TRAVEL RESOLUTIONS

bit.ly/Deacontravel

Join fellow alumni for a trip through "Deacon Destinations" in 2027:

Australia and New Zealand
Feb. 13-March 3

Africa by Private Jet
March 13-April 1

Across Spain and Portugal
March 26-April 11

Mysteries of Peru and Machu Picchu
June 9-17

Canadian Rockies by Rail
Aug. 4-10

Flavors of Northern Italy
Sept. 10-18

Northern Lights and Alaskan Wildlife
Oct. 4-9

Civil War Battlefields
Oct. 10-14

Southwest National Parks
Oct. 13-21

Antarctica Direct — Fly and Sail
Nov. 19-28

Holiday Markets Along the Danube
Dec. 9-17

DID YOU KNOW...

that Wake Forest can help you with career advice long after you graduate?

alumni.opcd.wfu.edu

No matter where you are in your professional journey, Wake Forest has a team ready to help. Check out the wide range of resources available through the Alumni Personal & Career Development Center, many of which you can access virtually.

LEARN Model: Get Started

Follow a self-directed, personal learning framework to develop professionally and take the next step in your career path.

Connect with a Career Adviser

Get advice from a fellow alum who has volunteered to offer career advice and connect with fellow Deacs.

Out of the Forest

Several offices on campus combined efforts to create one place for new grads and their families to get information to prepare for Commencement and life after Wake. Read more at seniors.wfu.edu

Year One

The first year after college is a pivotal one, and this program can help you embrace the new adult you, full of intention and compassion for yourself. For any alum in Year One, check out the Post-College Starter Kit, Year One book and online course to support your transition from school to work.

Five for Your First Five

Explore the five areas you should master in your first five years after college to help build a career and meaningful life. Learn how to show up professionally, seek out opportunities to increase your skill set, build relationships to support your growth and development, seek feedback, navigate imposter syndrome and create a plan for what's next.



May
(‘71)



Martin
(‘81)



Mitchell
(‘86, JD ‘89)

1950s

At age 90, **Mary “Ches” Applewhite (‘56)** is a world traveler living in St. Petersburg, FL. She says she fondly remembers her trip to St. Petersburg, Russia, when she was cruising the world’s oceans and visiting several ports.

1960s

Maurice Horne (‘60, JD ‘66) is retired and lives at River Landing retirement community in Colfax, NC. He regularly publishes poetry in the River Currents magazine. He graduated with a degree in applied music, served in the U.S. Army during the Cuban Missile Crisis and then returned to Wake Forest School of Law. He was a federal administrative law judge for 32 years, including 10 years as chief judge, until retiring in 2011.

Glenn Blackburn (‘63) wrote “A Spectacular Coast and Its Guardians,” a book on the North Carolina Coastal Federation’s 45 years of conservation, restoration, education and advocacy work. He is a professor emeritus of history at the University of Virginia’s College at Wise. He and his wife, **Jere Noel Blackburn (‘63)**, live in Holden Beach, NC.

Fred G. Morrison Jr. (JD ‘63) was honored by the North Carolina Sentencing and Policy Advisory Commission for his longtime service. He

was appointed to the commission in 1993 to represent the Justice Fellowship Task Force. He retired in 2023 as senior administrative law judge in the North Carolina Office of Administrative Hearings.

Sheldon Frank “Mac” McLeod (‘65, MDIV ‘15) is a volunteer clinical pastoral education chaplain at St. Mary’s Hospital in Richmond, VA. He retired in 2020 as a United Methodist Church pastor.

Douglas Punger (‘69, JD ‘72, P ‘06, ‘10) was elected president of The Torch Foundation, which supports the International Association of Torch Clubs in fostering intellectual and social interaction among professions. As co-chair of the association’s Centennial History Project from 2023 to 2025, Punger led a team of more than a dozen volunteers to research and write “Sharing the Light: Celebrating the Second Half-Century of the International Association of Torch Clubs.” He wrote the chapter on the association’s history from 2015 to 2025. Punger is retired general counsel for Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools.

1970s

Philip A. May (MA ‘71, P ‘02) retired after a 50-year career in public health, specializing in epidemiological research, teaching and applied prevention programs. After serving in the U.S. Public Health Service in South Dakota, May was a professor at the University of New Mexico for 33 years and a research professor at the University of North Carolina Nutrition Research Institute in Kannapolis, NC, for 13 years. He has received multiple honors for his work on fetal alcohol spectrum disorders. He and his wife, Doreen, live in Salisbury, NC, and Corrales, NM.

Laura Raines Yaramishyn (‘72, P ‘00, ‘09) wrote her first novel, “The Red Coat,” a middle-grade history/mystery story, with her sister, Beth Raines. Yaramishyn has been a freelance writer for The Atlanta-Journal Constitution, Atlanta Business Chronicle and Georgia Magazine. She lives in Atlanta with her husband.

Catharine Biggs Arrowood (‘73, JD ‘76, P ‘05) received the Trailblazer Award for Women in Law from the North Carolina Bar Association. Now retired of counsel in Parker Poe’s Raleigh office, she was a bet-the-company litigator, the first female partner at Parker Poe and one of the first female chairs of an executive committee at a major law firm in the Southeast.

Clint McCown (‘74, JD ‘78) wrote “Son of the Secret Service: A Memoir,” a collection of essays about growing up with a father who was a Secret Service agent. McCown is an award-winning novelist, essayist and journalist who was named to the Wake Forest Writers Hall of Fame in 2020. He lives in Manakin Sabot, VA.

Joe Williford (‘78, JD ‘81, P ‘16) and **Gary Thomas (JD ‘81)** completed the Portuguese Camino (240 miles) in 2026 and the French Camino (500 miles) last year. Williford lives in Raleigh, and Thomas lives in Statesville, NC.

1980s

Thomas Mark Kruea (‘80) was elected mayor of Myrtle Beach, SC, in November. He was the Myrtle Beach public information director for 26 years before retiring in 2024.

John D. Martin (‘81) received the North Carolina Lawyers Weekly 2026 Leaders in the Law Award shortly before his death in May. He was a partner at Cranfill Sumner LLP in Wilmington.

Gary Thomas (JD ‘81) and **Joe Williford (‘78, JD ‘81, P ‘16)** completed the Portuguese Camino (240 miles) in 2026 and the French Camino (500 miles) last year. Thomas lives in Statesville, NC, and Williford lives in Raleigh.

Jennifer Early Calvert (‘82) wrote and produced “Crossroads,” streaming on YouTube. The Christian film, starring Kevin Sorbo, is about the consequences of an 18-year-old’s decision to drive drunk. Calvert and her husband, Dave Calvert, are also traveling to Europe to retrace the path of her father, **Wallace Albert Early (‘48, P ‘73, ‘82)**, and the U.S. Army’s 100th Division during World War II. She received a grant from AARP to document their journey.

Jim Wheaton (‘82) was promoted to clinical professor of law at William & Mary Law School. He is director of the Special Education Advocacy Clinic. He and his wife, **Laurie Weinel Wheaton (‘83)**, live in Williamsburg, VA.

Rhonda Kahan Amoroso (JD ‘85, P ‘97) wrote “Bless Your Heart,” the second book in her “Orange Glow Stampers” series. Amoroso says this cozy murder mystery takes place on the North Carolina coast and includes a shout-out to Wake Forest. She lives in Wilmington, NC, and is involved in WAKEWilmington.

Beth Langley (‘86, JD ‘92) was installed as president of the North Carolina Bar Association. She is a partner at Brooks Pierce in Greensboro, NC.

Mike Mitchell (‘86, JD ‘89, P ‘18, ‘24) received the North Carolina Bar Association’s Citizen Lawyer Award. He is a partner at Smith Anderson in Raleigh.

Terrill Johnson Harris (‘87, P ‘26), a partner at law firm Fox Rothschild, was named co-chair of its national health law practice group. She lives in Greensboro, NC.

Bobby Williams (‘87) was promoted from offensive coordinator to head football coach at Dixon High School in Holly Ridge, NC.

Wake Forest Magazine welcomes Class Notes submissions from alumni. There are three ways to submit information:



ONLINE:
magazine.wfu.edu/submit



EMAIL:
classnotes@wfu.edu



STANDARD MAIL:
Wake Forest Magazine
1834 Wake Forest Road
PO Box 7205
Winston-Salem, NC 27109-7205

1990s

Patrick Flanagan (JD '90) was honored in North Carolina Lawyers Weekly's Legal 250 list in employment law. He is a partner at Cranfill Sumner LLP in Charlotte.

Dana Hoffman (JD '90) was named to North Carolina Lawyers Weekly's Legal 250 list in personal injury defense. She is a shareholder at law firm Young Moore in Raleigh.

The Law Offices of **Timothy D. Welborn ('90)** was the presenting sponsor for the third year in a row for the "Home Runs For Heroes" initiative, which raised \$6,000 for Victory Junction, a camp in Randleman, NC, for children with serious illnesses. The Winston-Salem-based firm pledged \$100 for every home run hit by Wake Forest at David F. Couch Ballpark.

Steve Brown ('91, P '29) wrote "The Complete Square: An Olympian's Equation for Life," a memoir that "takes readers ... into the reality of elite competition, revealing the resilience, faith and determination required to pursue a dream over multiple Olympic cycles." He recently completed his EdD at Penn Graduate School of Education. Brown was a four-time ACC champion and two-time All-American in track at Wake Forest.



Flanagan
(JD '90)



Helms
(JD '92)



Coil
(93)



Marmion
(93)

He represented Trinidad and Tobago, his father's native country, in the 2000 Sydney Summer Olympic Games. He lives in Atlanta.

Linda Lovely Helms (JD '92) joined Robinson & Lawing LLP in Winston-Salem as a partner. She is a fellow of the American College of Trial Lawyers and was named Lawyer of the Year in medical malpractice law, defendants, in the Triad in the 2026 edition of The Best Lawyers in America.

Diana Palecek (JD '92) was appointed managing partner at Fox Rothschild in Charlotte.

Nicole Tipton Coil ('93, P '22, '25) was appointed as a judge to the Washington County Court of Common Pleas in the general and domestic relations division. She was previously the Washington County prosecuting attorney in Marietta, OH.

Susan McNear Fradenburg (JD '93) was appointed office managing partner of Fox Rothschild LLP in Greensboro, NC.

Joyce Gist Lewis ('93) received the 2026 Professionalism Award from the Atlanta Bar Association and the Honorable Debra Bernes Community Volunteer Award from the Georgia Association for Women Lawyers. She is a co-managing partner at law firm Krevolin & Horst in Atlanta.

Dave Marmion ('93) was named president and CEO of the Cotton Bowl Athletic Association. He leads the association, Goodyear Cotton Bowl Classic and Cotton Bowl Foundation. He previously spent nine years as CFO and chief revenue officer of the College Football Playoff. The Goodyear Cotton Bowl Classic will host a College Football Playoff quarterfinal on Jan. 1. Marmion lives in Southlake, TX, with his wife,

This is an
ad for an ad

... that celebrates how Wake Forest shapes people.

Visit wake.wfu.edu/commercial to watch
Wake Forest's new television ad and learn the story behind it.



Kuramoto
(’96, MA ’98)



Odom
(JD ’96)



Katzenbach
(JD ’97)



Evans
(’98, JD ’02)

Allyson Bobo Marmion (’95), and their two sons.

Allison Orr (’93) received a 2026 Doris Duke Artist Award for her community-based choreography, which engages community members as co-authors and performers in the creation of large-scale civic spectacles. Orr is a Texas-based choreographer and founder of Forklift Danceworks.

Emily Giffin (’94, P ’30), author of numerous New York Times bestsellers, wrote her 13th book, “Love You More,” a contemporary women’s fiction novel. It was published by Ballantine Books in July 2026. Giffin lives in Atlanta.

Joe Meadows (’94) joined Fox Rothschild in Washington, DC, as a partner in the litigation department.

Dawn M. Dillon (JD ’95) was named to North Carolina Lawyers Weekly’s Legal 250 list in workers’ compensation law. She is managing partner at law firm Young Moore in Raleigh and is the first woman to lead the firm, founded in 1954.

Joe Weeks (’95, MBA ’01) and his wife, Christina Weeks, launched Sequel Web Studio, which helps small and medium-sized businesses improve their online visibility as AI-based search tools take hold. Weeks lives in Fort Worth, TX.

Rachelle Kuramoto (’96, MA ’98) was named president of Selfority, a menopause education platform that was created by one of the few Menopause Society-certified OB-GYNs in the United States.

Jonathan G. Odom (JD ’96) joined the civilian faculty of the U.S. Naval Academy as the Dis-

tinguished Military Professor of Leadership and Law. He was an adjunct professor of law last year at Wake Forest, where he taught national security law and coached the military law moot court team. Odom served on active duty as a judge advocate general in the U.S. Navy for 28 years before retiring in 2024. He lives in Annapolis, MD.

William “Bill” Greene (’97) was promoted to clinical professor at the University of Florida College of Medicine. He is medical director of UF Health’s Adult Psychiatry Outpatient Clinic.

Daniel Katzenbach (JD ’97) was honored in North Carolina Lawyers Weekly’s Legal 250 list in construction law. He is a partner at Cranfill Sumner LLP in Raleigh.

Kenneth Lachlan (’97) was named associate dean for social sciences and regional campuses at the University of Connecticut College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. He had been a professor and head of the communication department at UConn since 2017.

Bradley “Brad” Evans (’98, JD ’02, P ’27) was elected president of the North Carolina Bar Association. He is co-managing director and a litigator at Ward and Smith PA in Greenville, NC.

Kenneth “Ken” Feeley (’98) was named Aresty Professor of Tropical Ecology at the University of

DEACTOWN IS HEADED TO **WAKE**Dallas-Fort Worth and **WAKE**Atlanta

ALLAS-FORT WORTH & **WAKE**ATLANTA **WAKE**DALLAS-FORT WORTH & **WAKE**ATLANTA **WAKE**DALLAS-FORT WORTH & **WAKE**ATLANTA **WAKE**DALLAS-FORT WORTH & **WAKE**ATLANTA

IT’S TIME TO PAINT YOUR TOWN OLD GOLD & BLACK!
JOIN LOCAL DEACS (AND A FEW SPECIAL GUESTS) FOR AN INCREDIBLE
LINEUP OF EVENTS YOU DON’T WANT TO MISS.



TO VIEW THE FULL SCHEDULE AND REGISTER, VISIT
[WAKECOMMUNITIES.WFU.EDU/FEATURED-EVENTS](https://wakecommunities.wfu.edu/featured-events)

Miami. The endowed professorship will allow him to teach new summer field courses and develop research experiences for undergraduates.

Kristin Wontka Longo ('98) was inducted into the East Greenwich (RI) High School Wall of Honor. She is currently senior vice president in global compliance and risk at DraftKings in Boston.

Marcia Pennefather (JD/MBA '98) joined Williams Mullen law firm in Raleigh as a partner in its corporate sector.

Carlton Ward ('98) was named to the 2026 National Geographic 33 list, honoring 33 adventurers, creators and visionaries who are finding innovative solutions to today's problems. Ward is a National Geographic Explorer and photographer whose visual storytelling has driven policy change to protect wildlife. His film about the endangered Florida panther, "Path of the Panther," won a 2024 Emmy Award for Outstanding Nature Documentary.

2000s

Tripper Clancy ('02) is writing the next "Night at the Museum" movie for production company 21 Laps Entertainment and a Paramount movie starring Glen Powell. "Hoppers," a movie he wrote

for Pixar, hit theaters in March. Clancy lives in Los Angeles.

Alicia Diane Lee ('02) was elected a fraternity vice president on Kappa Alpha Theta's Grand Council for 2026-28. She lives in Houston.

Tripp Mickle ('03) was on the New York Times team that won the Pulitzer Prize for Investigative Reporting. The Pulitzer Prize board cited the Times' "deeply reported stories that exposed how President Trump has shattered constraints on conflicts of interest and exploited the money-making opportunities that come with power, enriching his family and allies." Mickle lives in San Francisco.

Chris Shepard ('03) celebrated his fifth year as partner at Apollo Health Ventures, a venture capital firm that invests in medicines for age-related and chronic diseases. He was one of four investigators in the United States recently awarded \$144 million by the Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health to develop medicines to enhance human health spans. Shepard's work was also highlighted in Nature.

William "Will" Daniel ('04) joined Alchemist Group, a global leadership and sales development company, as global vice president of prod-



Shepard
('03)



Daniel
('04)



Wells
('06)

uct and technology. Daniel was vice president of sales enablement at 3Pillar. He lives in Raleigh.

Daniel Robinson (MBA '04) partnered with Grammy-nominated singer-songwriter Tift Merritt to restore and renovate The Gables, a 1920s motorlodge in downtown Raleigh, into a boutique hotel. Robinson is a real estate developer based in Durham, NC.

Mike Glick (MBA '05) is CEO of NIMA Partners, which makes a portable gluten sensor to help people with celiac disease test their food and eat safely. Glick helped relaunch the device, which has been reengineered to detect gluten levels as low as 10 parts per million across wheat, barley and rye.

Caitlin Torney ('05, JD '10) received the 2026 Law & Liberty Award from the Knoxville (TN) Bar Association. She is the director of career services and alumni relations at Lincoln Memorial University Duncan School of Law in Knoxville.

Mark Pendleton ('06, JD '10) joined Norton Rose Fulbright as a partner in the law firm's Dallas office.

Meredith Gilbert Wells ('06) was named McCormick & Company's first chief of staff. She lives in Baltimore.

Emily Watson Gregory ('07) was elected to the Florida House of Representatives for the 87th district.

Jennifer Lee Selin (JD '07) was appointed a public member of the Administrative Conference of the United States, a federal agency in the executive branch dedicated to improving federal regulatory processes. She is an associate professor at Arizona State University Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law.

Andy Albert ('08) won the 2026 Triple Play Award from the Country Music Association for writing three No. 1 hits in a 12-month period: "Bigger Houses," recorded by Dan + Shay; "Hometown Home," recorded by Locash; and "Somewhere Over Laredo," recorded by Lainey Wilson. "Somewhere Over Laredo" was nominated for a Grammy for Best Country Song and for the Academy of Country Music's Song of the Year and Single of the Year. Albert is a songwriter in Nashville, TN. *More at bit.ly/NashvilleNetwork.*

Kimberly Louise Paschall ('09) joined Riley Safer Holmes & Cancila in Chicago after nine years with the U.S. Attorney's Office in Washington, DC.

MEET MORE DEACONS

A group of alumni had a spontaneous reunion at a Chick-fil-A conference in San Diego.



From left: Lukas Johnson ('97), George Demetriades Jr. ('97), David Villiger ('92, MBA '00, P '24), Jennifer "Jenny" Rhodes Villiger ('94, P '24), Monet Aviance Scott ('14, MSA '15), Ross Hartman (MBA '17), Christina Jones Coleman ('03), Courtney Moore LaVallee (MBA '99), Barrett Nichols ('11) and Bynum Marshall ('85)



SHINING A LIGHT ON WAKE WOMEN

By Mary Tribble ('82, MA '19)

When I graduated from Wake Forest some 40 years ago, I naively assumed that all my classmates crossing the stage that day had had the same Wake Forest experience that I did. My time at Wake felt typical — developing new friendships, choosing a field of study, joining organizations, trying on new ideas and negotiating the liminal space between childhood and adulthood. It wasn't until I returned to lead the alumni engagement team that I understood that people's experiences at Wake Forest were as varied as the students who landed here. Wake Forest is not a single story. It is the sum of every individual experience of those who have passed through this institution.

But here is what I believe we share from our individual experiences. Whatever we learned here — whether

in a classroom, on an athletic field, in student government or on the sticky dance floor of a fraternity house — was embedded in the person we became. We took what we learned here and set out to make a difference in some corner of the world.

In the two years since I was asked to host the Wake Women podcast, I have been reminded of the rich variety in students' Wake Forest experience. I've interviewed a member of Congress and a firefighter, a bestselling novelist and a professional football player, a surgeon and a coffee shop founder, a golf pro and an inventor, a stand-up science comedian and a choreographer.

Over five seasons, I interviewed more than 70 women who changed, or were changed, by Wake Forest. My intention was to tell as many stories about Wake Forest women as



possible, because no single profile can capture the essence of this institution. It's impossible to name every attribute I admire in these women, but as the podcast wound down, I reviewed the archives to see what themes bubbled up. Four qualities kept rising to the top:

Connection. The pull of place brought them here in the beginning, and it became a fixed point they carried with them for the rest of their lives. The Quad on the first cool day of spring. The fall leaves dancing across the pathway leading to Reynolda Gardens. The smell of the ZSR stacks. The sound of longtime Provost Ed Wilson reciting Keats.

Heart. *Pro Humanitate* in action. There are so many women who stepped off the Quad and out into the world to serve. Whether their cause is food justice, institutional change, philanthropy, community building or guiding people through the last threshold of life, these women gave themselves to something larger than themselves — and reminded me that our motto is truly a way of life.

Courage. A firefighter, a civil rights trailblazer, a disability activist, a pro athlete. The women I met along the way had the courage to go first and keep going. They taught me that courage isn't the absence of fear. It's the decision to face fear and go anyway.

Wonder. The women I met didn't finish learning when they got their diplomas. They have continued to be curious. Whether they are embarking on a spiritual pilgrimage, creating places of beauty or chasing the questions that matter most, these women find meaning in every place they look and everything they do. They know that bewilderment isn't a failure. It's the threshold of wisdom.

And what did I learn over the last two years? Every conversation seeped into my life. I changed some of my daily habits. I learned

how to face life transitions, even the ultimate one. I was reminded of the genius of giving, the healing power of writing, the potential of transformational travel, the power of humor and the value of beauty in the world around us. There was a lot of laughter, a lot of reflection and more than a few tears.

But the thing I learned most was this: The kids will be fine. The next generation is in excellent hands — as long as we keep investing in them, inspiring them and showing

up for them the way the women on this podcast have shown up for the world. I interviewed faculty, staff and students, and I can say with confidence that the young people coming through this institution are bright, creative and committed. They are inspired every day by the Wake Foresters who surround them, teach them and nurture them. The young women students and their professors moved me deeply with their intellect, their compassion and their desire to change the world.

What this podcast gave me, and what I hope it gave its listeners, is a sustaining reminder that the Wake Forest experience doesn't end at graduation. It keeps showing up in the work these women do, the lives they lead and the world they are shaping, one conversation, one community, one act of courage at a time.

The Wake Women podcast has wrapped but is still available on Spotify and Apple Podcasts.

1. Mary Tribble ('82, MA '19), left, with Megan Manassah and Rylee Mulhollen ('27) 2. Becca Eaton Atchison ('03), Jeanne Matthews Sommer ('83), Amy Shack (Shackleford) Egan ('14) and Tribble 3. The Rev. Laurie Furr-Vancini ('87), Tribble and Dr. Rebecca Omlor (MD '13) 4. Ann Phelps 5. Tribble at work



PHOTOS COURTESY OF MARY TRIBBLE

WAKE FOREST UNIVERSITY

FACE TO FACE

SPEAKER FORUM

JOIN US FOR
SEASON SIX



SEPTEMBER 16, 2026
CYNTHIA ERIVO

OCTOBER 21, 2026
KEN BURNS

SPECIAL ADD-ON EVENT

DECEMBER 3, 2026
MICHAEL SCHUR

FEBRUARY 25, 2027
JOSÉ ANDRÉS

APRIL 20, 2027
JACK NICKLAUS



Subscribe Today
facetoface.wfu.edu



Morse
(JD '11)



Tsacoumangos
(MBA '11)



Patel
(12)



Moore
(JD '14)

Zack Schilawski ('09) returned to Wake Forest's men's soccer program as assistant coach and director of player development. He played on the 2007 NCAA National Championship team.

2010s

Nathan Evans Fox ('11) released his first album, "Heirloom," on Free Dirt Records as a label-signed artist. He says the songs "wrestle with cycles of harm, faith and the hope that something better can be handed down." He lives in Nashville, TN.

Stephen W. Morse II (JD '11) argued before the Florida Supreme Court on behalf of the petitioner on whether a building code violation is sufficient for a premises liability case to reach the jury. He is managing partner at The Morse Injury Firm in Fort Lauderdale, FL.

Courtlyn Reeves ('11) was appointed senior executive director of human resources at Novant Health and was selected to the Program Advisory Board for the Wake Forest School of Professional Studies. He lives in Charlotte.

Shonna Brackett Tsacoumangos (MBA '11) published her debut memoir, "She Wasn't Supposed to Fly: Told to Be Small. Born to Be Boundless." The book traces her journey from a childhood shaped by instability to joining the U.S. Army and becoming a corporate leader and ultimately to a pivotal moment that she says "forced a deeper examination of identity beyond achievement."

Amanda Burton (MBA '12) was named executive director of Bethesda Center for the Homeless, a nonprofit in Winston-Salem. She was previously associate vice president of primary care and behavioral health service lines at Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist. She is a past president of the Bethesda Center's board of directors.

Jeremy Carlton (MDIV '12) was named university chaplain/director of religious and spiritual life and an adjunct professor of business and philosophy at Stetson University. Previously, Carlton was a senior lecturer and business faculty member at Southern Oregon University.

Kasha Patel ('12) is a science and space reporter for CNN Weather in Washington, DC. Previously, she was a weather, climate and science reporter and editor with The Washington Post. She is also a stand-up comedian.

Jillian Anzalone ('13) was production manager for the America250 "Giving 4th" initiative, which encouraged Americans to support nonprofits on July 4. Her team launched a wave of eight ball drops synced across every U.S. time zone to kick off a new season of charitable giving. Anzalone lives in Cream Ridge, NJ.

Brad Beauregard ('13) joined Wake Forest's University Advancement office as senior associate director, philanthropy and donor engagement. He was senior director of development and operations at NC Child, a nonprofit advocacy organization. He and his wife, **Abbe Brooks Beauregard ('13)**, and their two daughters, Eleanor (4) and Olivia (2), live in Winston-Salem.

Christina "Tina" Jeanne Bice ('13) was promoted to senior project manager in Wake Forest's Human Resources office. She lives in Winston-Salem with her husband, **Damian Matthew Blankenship ('12)**, and their son, Holden.

Blake Michael Chandler Briggs ('13) is assistant medical director of the emergency department and associate professor of emergency medicine at the University of Tennessee Medical Center. He earned his MD from the University of Tennessee Health Science Center College of Medicine in 2017 and completed an emergency medicine residency at Wake Forest School of Medicine. He lives in Knoxville, TN, with his wife, Jessica Briggs, and their son.

Ama Frimpong (JD '14) was promoted from legal director to chief of services at We Are CASA, an immigrant advocacy organization. She lives in Glen Burnie, MD.

Kathryn Harvey Moore (JD '14) joined law firm Bass, Berry & Sims in Nashville, TN.

Megan Jarrell ('15) received the 2026 Bellwether League Future Famer Award from the Bellwether League Foundation, honoring professionals in the first decade of their health-care careers. Jarrell was also named Advocate Health's 2025 Supply Chain Innovator of the Year and a Rising Leader in Supply Chain by The Journal of Healthcare Contracting in 2025. Jarrell is director of supply chain finance and analytics for Advocate Health in Charlotte.

Emily Casey (MA '16) received the National Science Foundation's Mathematical Sciences Postdoctoral Research Fellowship. She is a postdoctoral associate in the School of Mathematics at the University of Minnesota.

Shelby Jones (MSA '17) joined law firm Fox Rothschild in Exton, PA, as an associate in the taxation and wealth planning department.

Ashley Barton Chandler (JD '18) was promoted to partner at Fox Rothschild in Greensboro, NC. She represents companies and their shareholders in commercial disputes.

Joseph P. Chaves (JD '18) joined the Independent Community Bankers of America as senior director, safety and soundness regulatory policy, in the Government Relations division in Washington, DC. He previously worked at the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency.

Alistair Johnston ('19) represented Canada in his second FIFA World Cup. Johnston was one of the ACC's top players and helped Wake Forest reach the College Cup in 2019. He plays for the Celtic Football Club in Glasgow, Scotland, which has won five consecutive Scottish Premiership titles.

Cameron Young ('19) won the 2026 Cadillac Championship at Trump National Doral in Miami in May, defeating Scottie Scheffler by six strokes.

2020s

Bradley Chestnut (MDIV '20) finished his doctoral work at Duke University and published two books. "Other People: The fragile line between enemy and friend" was No. 1 and "Progress, In Process: What leaders miss when they manage only the work" was No. 4 on Amazon's Best Sellers of June 2026. Chestnut lives in Bluffton, SC, with his wife and two children.

Gerald M. Davis Jr. ('20) pursued his dream of becoming a dentist and earned his Doctor of Dental Surgery from Marquette University School of Dentistry last year. He practices in Waukesha, WI.

Carson Markland ('20) wrote her debut novel, "Men Like Us," a story about Bobby Kennedy. The book started as Markland's undergraduate thesis. She lives in New York. (See story on page 80.)

Blake Buchanan ('21) was named director of development and external relations for the William H. Bowen School of Law at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Previously, he was donor relations officer at the Arkansas Foodbank and an account executive with Wake Forest Athletics. He and his wife, **Elaina Roeder Buchanan ('22)**, live in Little Rock.

Maggie Kuhn ('21) is associate director, workforce strategy at Braven, a national nonprofit that prepares college students to secure a strong first opportunity after graduation through a career-accelerating program. She lives in New York.

Mark McKenzie ('21) played for the United States in the FIFA World Cup. McKenzie helped Wake Forest win the ACC Championship and advance deep into the NCAA tournament in 2017.



Jones
(MSA '17)



Chaves
(JD '18)



Markland
(JD '20)



Kuhn
(21)

He has played the last two seasons with the Toulouse Football Club in France.

Hugo Hernandez Villagra ('21) joined the historic Kimball Theatre in Colonial Williamsburg, VA, as senior audio/visual technician. He led the audio/visual production for programming during PBS's July 4 broadcast.

Samuel Dalton Collins ('22) graduated from Elon University School of Law in 2024. He is a lawyer at Nodell, Glass & Haskell in Raleigh. Collins and his wife, **Kenzey Tracy Collins ('22)**, live in Raleigh. He is the son of **Lisa Ashburn Collins ('84)**.

Alex Fitzpatrick ('22) overcame a six-shot deficit to win his first DP World Tour Title at the Hero Indian Open in Gurugram, India, in March.

Dawson Yates ('22) was promoted to captain in the U.S. Army. A field artillery officer, he has served overseas and is now stationed at the U.S. Army New York City Recruiting Battalion, based at Fort Hamilton in Brooklyn, NY.

Elizabeth Miller-Derstine (MFA '23) directed a short documentary, "Once Upon a Wetland," about the annual Beaver Queen Pageant in Durham, NC. The film was screened at the RiverRun International Film Festival in Winston-Salem. Miller-Derstine lives in Harrisonburg, VA.

Matthew Gulbin ('24) was selected by the Washington Commanders in the sixth round of the NFL Draft in April. He was an Honorable Mention All-ACC player at left guard and center in 2024.

Zongyue Teng ('24) won second place for her study on network clustering in the 2026 Clifford Spiegelman Student Paper Competition in the Biostatistics Graduate Program at Vanderbilt University.

Darby Slaughter (MDIV '25) began a Bible and cultures PhD program at Drew University. She is studying the impact of narratives on marginalized communities, ways to uplift novels by authors from those communities and stories of liberation from the rejected texts of the Bible, including the Old Testament Apocrypha and the writings of gnostic Christians.

Abby Stubelis ('25) ran the Boston Marathon for Boston Children's Hospital two years after she had brain surgery.

Peter Tkac (MA '25) directed a film, "Back on Track," about a wheelchair basketball team in

Winston-Salem. The film was screened at the RiverRun International Film Festival in Winston-Salem. Tkac lives in Glendale, CA.

Carter Kowalski ('26) was among 100 students named to Poets & Quants' 2026 Best & Brightest Undergraduate Business Majors, selected from business programs nationwide. He is an analyst at JPMorgan Chase in Philadelphia.

Maddie Shannon ('26) was among 100 students named to Poets & Quants' 2026 Best & Brightest Undergraduate Business Majors, selected from business programs nationwide. Shannon is a corporate finance and operations associate at Barings in Charlotte.

Marriages

Joseph "Allen" Lewis Jr. ('68) and Beverly Braine, 03/03/26 in Tybee Island, GA. They live in Hayesville, NC.

Canaan Huie ('93) and Guilherme Ferreira, 01/28/26 in Raleigh, where they live.

Jason Lowe ('98, MBA '02) and Becky Saunders, 06/12/26 in Portsmouth, NH. The wedding party included Jon Cox ('98). They live in Houston.

Ben Casstevens ('19, MA '21) and Ashley Frank ('22), 05/23/26 in Winston-Salem, where they live. The wedding party included Christian Bartholomew ('16), John McCarren ('17), Rand Fisher ('19), Abby McNamara ('20), Morgan McSweeney ('20), Gi Demarco ('21, MA '22), Alysia Nielson ('21, MSBA '22), Bryn Davis ('22), Katie Jean ('22), Hite Merrifield ('22) and Madeline Allburn ('23). The groom is the son of Randy Scott Casstevens ('87, MBA '95).

Lucas Tommervik ('19) and Gwyneth Lonergan ('21), 06/27/26 in Petaluma, CA. They live in Haverford, PA. The wedding party included Hannah Faulkner ('21) and Goran Jovanovic ('21).

Jaime "Alex" Alejandro Delgado ('20) and Elizabeth Mary Guariglia ('20), 06/06/26 in Long Island, NY. The wedding party included Nicholas Beglane ('20), Katherine Dougherty Bordes ('20), Jack McGowen ('20, MSM '21), Matthew Konigsberg ('20, MSBA '21) and Lauren Gray Curry ('21). They live in New York.

Chris David Verrill ('20) and Katie Grace Wooten ('22, MA '24), 06/06/26 in Winston-Salem. They live in Kernersville, NC. They met in the

Spirit of the Old Gold & Black. The wedding party included Gretchen Boyles ('21), Madison Morgan Wilson ('22), Tommy Mehaffey ('23), Rachel Thomas (MA '23, MAEd '24), Jack Wooten ('25) and Rachel Rosen (MA '25, MAEd '26). The groom is the son of Susie Brock Verrill ('90). The bride is the daughter of Brent Wooten ('95) and Stacy Saladin Wooten ('95).

James Wesley Childs III ('23) and **Avalyn Mary Warfield ('24)**, 03/07/26 in Birmingham, AL, where they live. The wedding party included Avery Warfield ('22), Mason Pope ('23), Thomas Smith ('23), Drew Snyder ('23), Henry Wood ('23), Ellie Casteel ('24), Kate Childs (JD '24), Skylar Dailley ('24) and Tori O'Brien ('24). The bride is the daughter of Robb Warfield ('96, MAEd '00).

Births

John Stuart Fitch ('91) and **Andrea Milagros Fitch**, Alexandria, VA: a daughter, Magnolia Athena Fitch, in April 2026. She joined her brother, Alexander (2).

Mary Scott Balys ('07) and **Matt Balys**, Washington, DC: a daughter, Evelyn McAuley Balys, in February 2026. She joined her brother, Teddy (3).

David Earl Chace ('07) and **Ann Meade Chace ('09)**, Holly Springs, NC: a daughter, Elaine Elizabeth Chace, in March 2026. She joined her sister, Meredith (11), and brother, James (7).

Brian Farrell ('10) and **Laura Ator Farrell ('12)**, Paoli, PA: a son, Caleb Henry Farrell, in March 2026. He joined his brothers, Jack (6) and Liam (3).

Caitlin Bush Birkhead ('14, MA '16, JD '19) and **Samuel Hunter Birkhead**, Raleigh: a son, Hunter Davis Birkhead, in March 2026. He joined his sister, Maggie Jane (2).

Alexander Godinho ('14, MSM '15) and **Emily Mannon Godinho ('14)**, Tampa, FL: twin daughters, Elizabeth "Ellie" James Godinho and Madelyn "Maddie" Mannon Godinho, in February 2026. They joined their sister, Lydia (2).

Hampton B. Sasser ('14) and **Andrea Estopinal Sasser ('15)**, Charleston, SC: a son, Samuel Brooks Sasser, in June 2026.

Katherine Laws Waters ('20) and **Luke Waters**, Concord, NC: a daughter, Anne "Annie" Louise Waters, in May 2026. She is the granddaughter of Kevin Laws ('89) and the niece of Thomas Laws ('22).

NEW OBITUARY POLICY

Wake Forest Magazine has changed the obituary policy. We acknowledge the deaths of alumni, faculty, staff, students and friends by including their name, class year (if applicable), date of death and where they lived. We will list the same information at magazine.wfu.edu and link to the full obituary when the link is provided.

Obituaries

Erin Virginia Gardner ('47), May 6, 2026, Highland Beach, FL

Morton Clifton Miles Jr. ('49), April 22, 2026, Williamsburg, VA

Wade Conrad Motsinger ('51), June 27, 2026, Winston-Salem



A gift to the Wake Forest Fund, at any amount, is a commitment to seizing opportunity in real time. From student aid to research to technology to faculty support to experiential learning, your gifts keep our student experience unrivaled by any.

To make a gift, or learn more about how you can support deserving students and faculty at Wake Forest, visit giving.wfu.edu/wake-forest-fund

Stanley "Stan" Joseph Najeway ('51), April 26, 2026, Akron, OH

Osby Zachary "Zack" Gentry Jr. ('53), September 23, 2025, Virginia Beach, VA

Judith Ann Mathews Johnson ('53), June 17, 2026, Gloucester, VA

Paul Batteux Scott Jr. ('53), May 25, 2026, Snow Hill, NC

Russell Owen Woody Jr. ('53), May 29, 2026, Venice, FL

John Samuel Johnson Jr. ('55, JD '57), April 11, 2026, Allen, TX

George Thomas "Tom" Arnold Morris ('55, MD '59, P '82, '87), March 18, 2026, Durham, NC

Varion Herndon Spear ('55), April 11, 2026, Sandy Springs, GA

Marietta Perry Shelly Dormire ('56, P '83), May 15, 2026, Richmond, VA

Wallace Jackson Conner ('57, P '82, '87), May 17, 2026, Newport, NC

Frank H. Crumpler ('57), July 13, 2026, Atlanta

Nancy Weaver Hamilton ('57), April 6, 2026, Virginia Beach, VA

Currie Linwood Holt ('57), April 16, 2026, Clarksville, VA

Jack Murdock ('57), May 25, 2026, Raleigh

David Gordon Ogilvie III ('57), March 30, 2026, Frankfort, IL

Larry Jones Reavis ('57), April 30, 2026, Winston-Salem

John Alsa "Pete" Eberhart Jr. ('58, P '89), June 9, 2026, Raleigh

Jane Linder Falls ('58), July 3, 2026, Bessemer City, NC

Paul Jennings Kennedy Jr. ('58, P '82), May 13, 2026, Aiken, SC

Samuel Franklin Vance III ('58, P '96), April 19, 2026, Roanoke, VA

Bettie Mobley Church ('59, P '89), May 27, 2026, Richmond, VA

Jay Donald Dickerson ('59), May 12, 2026, Atlanta

Harvey Ralph Durham ('59, P '90), May 15, 2026, Boone, NC

Norman Bryant Kellum Jr. ('59, JD '65, P '96), May 11, 2026, Trent Woods, NC

Barbara Horton Bellamy ('60), May 31, 2026, Marietta, GA

Lois Dempsey Bentley ('60, P '82), February 10, 2026, Raleigh

Betty Lou Hollifield Roberts ('60), June 17, 2026, Weaverville, NC

Allen "Jack" Smith ('60), April 26, 2026, Carthage, NC

Dale Oren Steele ('60), May 5, 2026, Burlington, NC

Frederick "Fred" Monroe Tate ('60), June 16, 2026, Elizabethtown, NC

Janice "Jan" Lee Allen ('61), April 12, 2026, Longwood, FL

Pruette Leroy Carter ('61), June 18, 2026, Greensboro, NC

Louise Floyd Gorham ('61), May 10, 2026, Wilmington, NC

Paul Gray Hauser ('61), April 23, 2026, Sevierville, TN

John Elledge Hutchins ('61), April 5, 2026, Winston-Salem

Benjamin Alan Long ('61), May 23, 2026, Raleigh

Richard Lou Witcofski ('61, PhD '67, P '80), June 26, 2026, Winston-Salem

David Brady Morrison ('62), June 23, 2026, Statesville, NC

Mary Catherine Baker Porchey ('62), April 6, 2026, Yadkinville, NC

John Robert Smerznak ('62), March 31, 2026, Fairhope, AL

Dorothy Copenhagen Edes ('63), July 8, 2026, Kennebunk, ME

H. Edward "Eddie" Knox (JD '63), June 22, 2026, Cornelius, NC

Thomas Marshall Wilson ('63), June 6, 2026, Chapel Hill, NC

Robert "Bob" William Yelton ('64, JD '67), May 27, 2026, Shelby, NC

Stephen "Steve" John Bozarth ('65), April 28, 2026, Winter Park, FL

David Chamberlain ('65), April 28, 2026, San Francisco

Phyllis Eileen Steele ('65), June 28, 2026, Quincy, IL

Thomas "Tom" Myers Grady (JD '66), May 28, 2026, Concord, NC

James Willard Parker ('66, P '01), April 15, 2026, Afton, VA

Richard Thomas "Dick" Jamback ('67), June 16, 2026, Winston-Salem

John Joyner Snow Jr. ('67, JD '70), June 16, 2026, Murphy, NC

Louise Matheny Squires York ('67), May 28, 2026, Cary, NC

Jerry Alan Bovenizer ('68), April 6, 2025, Cary, NC

Durante Avan Griffin Jr. ('68, P '06), May 24, 2026, Greensboro, NC

Robert Joseph Scott (JD '68), March 22, 2026, Kernersville, NC

Stephen "Steve" Searle ('68), April 15, 2026, Edgartown, MA

Edgar "Ed" M. Roach Jr. ('69), April 1, 2026, Chapel Hill, NC

Richard John Staiger Jr. ('69), May 8, 2026, Knoxville, MD

David Roger Alden ('70), April 24, 2026, Summerfield, NC

Nancy Miller Culp (MA '70), May 25, 2026, Winston-Salem

Thomas Bryan Ingram ('71), April 28, 2026, Glen Allen, VA

Daniel Zalacain ('71), July 9, 2026, South Orange, NJ

Timothy "Tim" Joe Evans (MA '74), April 3, 2026, Colonial Heights, VA

David Sigmon Williams ('74, JD '77), April 25, 2026, Vero Beach, FL

Stephen N. Weed ('75), June 16, 2026, Wynnewood, PA

Jeanne Thompson Holmes ('76), May 9, 2026, Durham, NC

Leslie "Glenn" Tyndall (MA '77), March 5, 2026, Ashburn, VA

Mark Dudley Robertson ('78), June 5, 2026, Charlotte

Hiroshi "Hiro" Takahashi ('79), June 21, 2026, Ridgewood, NJ

Howard Mark Ward ('80), October 7, 2025, Virginia Beach, VA

John D. Martin ('81), May 11, 2026, Wilmington, NC

Susan Kathleen Starkey ('81), March 29, 2025, Winston-Salem

William "Bill" Marion Wilcox IV (JD '83), April 16, 2026, Greensboro, NC

Amy Katherine Badgett ('84), May 12, 2026, Mount Airy, NC

David Gregory Keane ('85), May 12, 2026, Atlanta

Joyce Hayes Shealy ('88), May 20, 2026, Charlotte

Erika Michelle York Ray ('89), April 28, 2026, Winston-Salem

Warren Elliott Belin ('90), May 1, 2026, Clemmons, NC

John Thaddeus Dorsey (JD '91), April 14, 2026, Arlington, VA

David Markham Dalton (MBA '92), April 21, 2026, Danbury, NC

Robert Fletcher Mann Jr. ('92), May 30, 2025, Norfolk, VA

Kenneth Percy Sugden Jr. ('93, MBA '03), May 10, 2026, Winston-Salem

Marshall "Gus" August Wakat III ('95), February 21, 2026, Vail, CO

Lindsay Nicole Chambers ('00), August 26, 2026, Malibu, CA

Marcus Edward Tunstall ('01), January 23, 2026, Warrenton, NC

Myrna J. Mackin (MALS '03), April 14, 2026, Winston-Salem

Mark James Edwards (MBA '04), June 9, 2026, Charlotte

William "Alex" Alexander McHenry III ('04), April 10, 2026, Raleigh

Patricia "Pat" Eastburn Boswell (MDIV '15), June 4, 2026, Greensboro, NC

Taylor Elizabeth Clark ('19), June 27, 2026, Birmingham, AL

Roger Wain Clarke (MLS '30, P '30), May 4, 2026, Apex, NC

Friends, Faculty, Staff, Students

Marjorie Beth Boyd, April 3, 2026, Winston-Salem

Margaret W. Burns, May 5, 2026, Winston-Salem

Harold McKenzie "Mackie" Eagle Jr., April 11, 2026, Greensboro, NC

Carl Douglas Fulp Jr., June 8, 2026, Winston-Salem

Sandra Holder, April 29, 2026, Winston-Salem

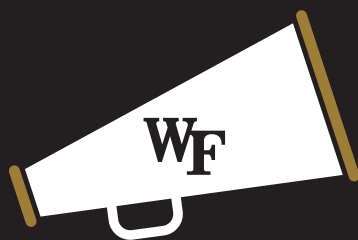
Mary "Elen" Read Knott, June 27, 2026, Winston-Salem

Ellen Elisabeth Meachum, July 2, 2026, Lexington, NC

Andrew "Andy" Jerome Schindler, July 4, 2026, Winston-Salem



You can see this information online and click on the full obituary if the link has been provided.



Roll Call!

**NEW JOB OR PROMOTION? JUST MARRIED?
NEW ADDITION TO THE FAMILY? NEW AWARD?**

Let Wake Forest Magazine know: classnotes@wfu.edu or submit at magazine.wfu.edu

STAR TREATMENT

Two iconic professors are honored with spots on Winston-Salem's arts walk of fame.

By Ken Johnson ('68)

The induction of Winston-Salem's seminal rock group, the "5" Royales, into Cleveland's Rock & Roll Hall of Fame inspired Winston-Salem's mayor and city council to start a local "Arts, Culture & Entertainment Memorial Walk of Fame" — and added two beloved professors this summer.

The walk's bronze stars, downtown next to Benton Convention Center, already included the late Reynolds Professor of American Studies Maya Angelou (LHD '77). Joining her are Julian Burroughs ('51, P '80, '83), professor emeritus of communication, who died in 2008; and Harold Tedford (P '83, '85, '90), professor emeritus of theatre, who died in 2021. (Full disclosure: I wrote the application for Professor Burroughs and was a big fan of Professor Tedford.)

Tedford directed plays and worked with theater technicians and actors at Wake Forest and around the community. He had an ecumenical fondness for the arts, including visual media, volunteering at Artworks Gallery on Trade Street, where he sought out artists and patrons, advocating passionately for the local art on display. He was on the board of the Winston-Salem Theatre Alliance, assisted The Little Theatre of Winston-Salem in play selection and

created a weekly "Lunch Bunch" for arts leaders.

In 2016, Wake Forest named the Mainstage at Scales Fine Arts Center in Tedford's honor. It was the perfect recognition of a career dedicated to theater and the arts in Winston-Salem. As a young child, Tedford was fascinated by the magical world of theater. He created it in any space he could find — and involved family and friends. To the benefit of Winston-Salem and Wake Forest, he continued that work as an adult.

Some will recall the powerful College Theatre productions that unfolded "on the boards" on the eighth floor of Z. Smith Reynolds Library. With constrained technical resources in what was to have been a "temporary" location when the campus opened in the 1950s, Professor Tedford and his colleagues, including Professor Burroughs, created theatrical magic that continued when thespian activities migrated to Scales in 1976.

Starting with his days as a Wake Forest undergrad on the "old campus," **Burroughs** and WFDD were synonymous. He was the student station manager, and after graduation and two years of U.S. Army service in Korea, he earned a PhD in broadcasting from the

University of Michigan. As he was about to head to the airport for a job interview in Virginia, he received a phone call from the "new campus" in Winston-Salem: Would he be interested in heading WFDD, along with teaching, coaching debate and working with the theatre program? He cancelled the trip to Richmond.

For decades, Burroughs helped lead the station's growth. In 1961, WFDD secured one of the first "over-the-air" broadcasting licenses on the "educational band" of the FM spectrum. In 1967, working with a local nonprofit group called Friends of Fine Broadcasting and corporate supporters, the station's power and coverage area expanded, along with its broadcasting schedule, to 365 days a year. In 1971, WFDD became the first FM station in North Carolina to join newly created National Public Radio.

Today, the station's signal reaches west into the mountains and east beyond Burlington, North Carolina. WFDD has developed one of the area's largest newsrooms, earning a national Edward R. Murrow Award.

These professors' contributions will continue to reverberate well into the future. On July 24, they were remembered for their untiring efforts to promote theater and communication.

Ken Johnson ('68) majored in speech communication and worked at WFDD, including as the student station manager from 1966-68.



Bold Like Us

The author of a new novel about the Kennedy brothers says they provided a template for leading in the 21st century.

By Carson Markland ('20)

DURING MY SENIOR year at Wake Forest, I wrote a story about the Kennedy family for my thesis project. The story — a fictional telling of the family's rise to power during the 1950s, as seen through the eyes of Bobby Kennedy — was inspired by an excellent historical fiction workshop I took with English Professor Joanna Ruocco, as well as my own experience growing up in a large, unruly family. This summer, it was published as my first novel, "Men Like Us."

I didn't intend for that assignment — or any assignment — to change my life. At the time, I was newly 21 and had two goals: 1) Drink with my friends as often as possible, and 2) Write something that fulfilled the requirements for graduation quickly so that I could get back to (1).

In fall 2019, noodling around with the story in Tribble or my dorm, I didn't imagine the places it would take me — across states, into the archives, back to the height of the Cold War. I didn't imagine that the very next semester, a global pandemic would hit and I'd finish

college from my childhood bedroom. Easily the biggest surprise is that it became a book at all.

At a book launch event this summer, an attendee asked me, "If you could ask JFK or RFK one thing, what would it be?"

First, obviously, I'd ask if they liked my book.

Once they assured me, "Of course, Carson, we loved it!" I would move on to more serious business, namely what they made of the world now, 60 years after they occupied the most consequential jobs in the world. How would they approach a time when technology is changing career paths faster than higher education can redesign itself, societal divisions multiply overnight, and institutions scramble to adapt and keep trust?

The more I thought about the question, the more I realized I didn't need to break out the Ouija board to ask about these things. The Kennedys had already given us their answers in their leadership style.

Take one of our most pressing issues: artificial intelligence. Poised to reshape academia, the job market, society at large — an existential threat, according to some; the thing that will save us, according to others. A rapidly accelerating technology we neither fully understand nor can fully control that might give us the upper hand over Russia, China and other global competitors.

Read that back. Couldn't we just as easily be talking about the space race?

The Kennedys responded to that challenge not with hand-wringing or fear, but with a call to action: "We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard."

That line isn't just a good sound bite, it's a guiding ethos for leadership



in times of uncertainty. To the Kennedys, the right question wasn't, "Can we guarantee success?" but instead, "Can we try in spite of the fact that we might fail?" That philosophy calls for us to be bold and rise to the challenge instead of shrinking from it.

This attitude wasn't limited to speeches; it was embedded in how they came to power at all. The Kennedys' leadership was embodied by an ability to adapt — to new televisual media, to new technology, to a shifting racial landscape in the South — and to communicate their vision to the country. Their view of America was expansive and outward-looking; it offered a broader purpose beyond private interest, not unlike Wake Forest's *Pro Humanitate* spirit. That motto reminds us that it's easier to navigate change when we remember why we're changing: for the betterment of humanity.

That's what "leading in this moment" looks like to me — not a promise that everything will go right, but the willingness to keep going in spite of the bits that go wrong, to resist both paralysis and certainty. In a divided, uncertain world, the Kennedys offer something more useful than comfort: a model for action. Hard problems, met head-on, with enough courage to try, fail and try again.

Carson Markland ('20) is the author of the novel "Men Like Us." Her short stories have been selected for the Best Microfiction anthology and long-listed for the Disquiet International Literary Prize. She lives in New York.



#17

LinkedIn ranks
Wake Forest #17
in their list of the
top 50 U.S. schools.



Wake Forest University is proud to be listed in LinkedIn's Top Colleges ranking, identifying the 50 U.S. schools that best prepare graduates for long-term success. This ranking uses alumni career outcomes, job placement rates, advancement to senior-level positions and alumni entrepreneurial achievement in its methodology.

Office of University Advancement
1834 Wake Forest Road
P.O. Box 7227
Winston-Salem, NC 27109
CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

The Next Generation

Wake Forest welcomed about 100 children of alumni to the Class of 2030 this fall amid the students arriving from such farflung spots as northern California, Toronto and Palm Beach, Florida.

Balloons, cheers and the marching band accompanied several muggy days of unloading first-years' possessions along the South campus and western side of the Quad. Rowan Kimmer ('30) moved into Johnson Residence Hall with the help of his father, Garland Kimmer ('89), of Taunton, Massachusetts.

"I think I've sort of lived around Wake Forest my whole life," Rowan says. "Not in the literal sense, but it's always been a part of my family." His father's advice: "Get out and meet people. Don't be afraid to be yourself, even when it feels like the worst thing possible to do. And go to basketball games."

Joe Fogleman's ('30) trek from eastern Winston-Salem was shorter but marks a full-circle journey for his family. Joe was 6 years old when he helped his brother, Cy Fogleman ('18), move into his dorm for the first time. This fall, Cy, now a family medicine resident at Wake Forest School of Medicine, was one of five family members helping Joe, who remembers sleepovers with Cy in Polo Residence Hall

"Wake was the only school for me," the youngest Fogleman says.

More at bit.ly/wfmovein2026



GWEN FLETCHER, RED CARDINAL STUDIO



Alumni families who moved in this fall include, from the top, clockwise: Erin Dawson with her parents, Kesha Merritt Dawson ('02) and Craig Dawson ('02); Cy Fogleman ('18) with brother Joe Fogleman; and Garland Kimmer ('89) with son Rowan Kimmer.