

SPRING
2019

UNCPTODAY

SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Groundbreaking
a new era in
business education

Page 7



PLUS+

FLIGHT PLAN:

The Roy Bacot story

Page 39

MEET THE ABUMOHSENS:

It's a family affair

Page 8

CONFERENCE CHAMPIONS:

Cross Country earns
2nd title

Page 24

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UNCP TODAY

THE MAGAZINE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT PEMBROKE | SPRING 2019 |

4 University News
UNCP has positioned itself to meet the health care needs of the region through the formation of the new College of Health Sciences.

18 Student Success
The Health Careers Access Program (HCAP) is doing its part to increase the number of minorities trained, educated and employed in the state's health professions.

24 Athletics
Football, swimming and diving; men's and women's indoor track and field; and wrestling will soon flex their muscles in the Mountain East Conference (MEC).

28 Advancement
The Office of Advancement is transforming for the future under new leadership and a fresh philanthropic approach.

39 Alumni News
We catch up with Roy Bacot '93, who credits the university's ROTC program for jump-starting his 21-year career in the Air Force followed by his career as a commercial pilot.

ON THE COVER: UNC Board of Governor Kellie Blue (left), Sally and Jim Thomas, Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings, and Aaron Thomas dig in at the future School of Business groundbreaking ceremony.

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OPEN 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
MONDAY TO FRIDAY

MUSEUM OF THE SOUTHEAST AMERICAN INDIAN

An exciting variety of exhibits on display, including prehistoric tools and weapons, 19th-century Lumbee artifacts, contemporary Indian art, and items that represent Native Americans from all over North America. New items are continuously being collected and put on display.

STATE AWARD

Nancy Fields (left), Becky Goins and Alisha Locklear Monroe

The Museum of the Southeast American Indian received the North Carolina Museums Council Award of Excellence for the "Return from Exile" exhibit and programming.

The museum hosted the national fine art exhibition "Return from Exile," which featured 33 Native artists with over 40 works ranging in media from paintings to sculpture to multi-media installations.

Alumna Emma Lee Locklear received the Award for Distinguished Service for her dedication to the museum and donation of the Maggie Lowry pine cone patchwork quilt.

The awards were presented at the 2019 NCMC Annual Conference in Asheville.



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These are exciting times to be a UNCP Brave! And as another academic year has drawn to a close, we have much to celebrate—from our rich heritage to exciting projects that will position our university for even greater success and impact.



faculty as they acquire the skills to promote economic development within our state and region. Equally important to our future, the new College of Health Sciences (see pages 4-5) will train future health professionals to meet the region's growing health care demands.

Yet as we look to the future, we also honor our past. The university last year, commissioned a new ceremonial mace befitting the distinctiveness and importance of UNCP. This year, we rededicated the restored statue of Hamilton McMillan outside Old Main (see page 15). A man instrumental in our founding, McMillan believed in the power and promise of education, and today his legacy shines as brightly as it did 132 years ago at our institution's founding.

These high points merely scratch the surface of another memorable year at UNCP. In the pages that follow, you will also read about athletic successes, exceptional students and distinguished alumni who represent their alma mater with pride.

And—as always—we want to thank you for your support. See you on campus soon!

Go Braves!

Robin Gary Cummings, M.D.

Last fall, UNCP welcomed its first students enrolled under the NC Promise Tuition Plan (see pages 10-11). Through this program, in-state students can attend UNCP at a tuition rate of just \$500 a semester; out-of-state students also enjoy incredible savings at a tuition rate of \$2,500 a semester. One of three UNC System institutions selected to offer this plan, we have experienced an overwhelmingly positive response with record applications and growing enrollment—and we look forward to welcoming these new students to campus in the fall.

And as even more talented students join the UNCP family, we are creating a campus environment second to none in southeastern North Carolina. The university recently broke ground on a state-of-the-art home for the School of Business (see page 7). An innovative learning center, this cutting-edge facility will allow tomorrow's business leaders to collaborate with our world-class



MOVING THE NEEDLE ON HEALTH CARE

The College of Health Sciences at UNCP demonstrates the university's commitment to meet the health care needs and improve health outcomes of rural southeastern North Carolina.

The new college is composed of the departments of counseling, kinesiology, nursing and social work—with more than 1,500 students and 100 faculty, including 54 full time.

The comprehensive college marks the university's sixth college and the first since 1999.

"The College of Health Sciences is part of our mission to build upon the foundation in place at UNC Pembroke,

and to serve as an engine, a driver to strengthen our communities and meet southeastern North Carolina's economic and health care needs," said Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings.

"With the experienced leadership in place, and the unwavering support of our regional partners, our new college will begin immediately to produce highly skilled health professionals for a region where they are greatly needed.

"We have enjoyed unprecedented success in our existing health care programs, but the demand is only going to grow. We know the need is there, and we know we can meet it," Cummings said.

Dr. Todd Telemeco, highly regarded for his experience in implementing high-quality health science programs, was selected after a nationwide search to lead the college as its founding dean. Telemeco comes to UNCP from Methodist University where he served as dean of the School of Health Sciences. He is responsible for establishing the Doctor of Physical Therapy program there as well.

Health-related undergraduate and graduate programs presently offered by departments being combined to form the new college will include nursing, social work, school counseling, clinical mental health counseling, athletic training, and exercise and sport science.

Further development plans for the college include a three-phased approach adding additional bachelor's, master's and doctoral programs, such as nurse practitioner, optometry, occupational therapy, physical therapy, public health, nutrition and dietetics, health informatics, and health administration. In addition, a two-year-degree completion program is envisioned in rural health equity for individuals working in patient support roles who wish to transition to leadership positions in the health field.

Provost Dr. David Ward has served as dean of the College of Health Sciences at Armstrong State University and the University of New England. Ward has 30 years of experience in teaching, health care practice and administration in higher education.

"By taking strong existing programs and strategically developing new high-demand programs, the new College of Health Sciences will be able to focus directly and singularly on educating and training the high-quality, team-oriented health care workforce of the future," Ward added.

"UNCP can be a catalyst for change in southeastern North Carolina. We can have a direct impact on health profession shortages and health outcomes for citizens throughout the region and beyond."

The state budget adopted in 2017 provided up to \$100,000 to perform a study on the feasibility of establishing the college. The legislatively directed study charged the UNC Board of Governors with considering the health care needs of the region as well as economic benefits.

During the planning phase, 81 regional health care professionals participated in five focus groups led by Dr. Jeff Frederick, dean of the College of Arts and Sciences. Results showed health care partners support the establishment of a new college and its potential to supply the providers needed in our region in the future and to positively transform health outcomes.

Dr. Cheryl Davis, chief medical officer for Scotland Health Care System, said the expansion represents a new era in the approach to health care for the region.

"It creates alignment between the university and the front line of patient care within our surrounding communities," said Davis, a member of the UNCP Board of Visitors.

"Our community has some of the most challenging and complex patients and some of the greatest provider needs. Therefore, this endeavor marries a supply of students with one of the best learning environments in the state, a rural community."



Incubator making **GOOD** on promise for **PROGRESS**



Judy Sampson (left), Harvey Godwin, Ron Oxendine, Terry Hunt and Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings.

The Thomas Entrepreneurship Hub supports local entrepreneurs through education, networking events, unique resources and professional assistance. The Hub provides a wide range of resources to help start-ups and small businesses succeed and create jobs. It also provides a bridge as businesses are poised to branch out on their own.

Officials with Lumbee Tribe Enterprises LLC can attest to the services being provided at the Hub in downtown Pembroke. The information technology (IT) company began in the Entrepreneurship Incubator, located inside the Hub. Within two years, company officials were able to expand its services and relocate to a nearby strip mall.

Thomas Hall, Thomas Entrepreneurship Hub's executive director, said that is the overall goal for all businesses at the incubator.

"We are here to support business growth, but the goal is to move companies out into the community," Hall said. "The center has a plan of action where anyone with a business idea, or existing business owners, can come to the center for help.

"The center supports growth for the southeast region

of North Carolina and has developed strong partnerships statewide to help businesses in any industry."

Terry Hunt, president of Lumbee Tribe Enterprises LLC, said he was thankful for the hands-on support he received from the Hub staff.

"The incubator and the Thomas Center's staff has helped more than I could ever imagine," Hunt said.

"We worked on all aspects of the company, such as contract recruitment, local partnerships, human resources, computer skills, business marketing and general business development."

The company's headquarters is now at Foxglove Place on Candy Park Road.

Lumbee Tribe Enterprises LLC was the first company to locate its business within the incubator. The business is a leading provider of IT, systems engineering, enterprise applications, professional services and program management to the U.S. Department of Defense and other federal agencies.

The incubator, located at 202 Main St. in Pembroke, is designed to provide start-up clients access to the resources and expertise offered at UNCP and in the local area.

The center provides opportunities for UNCP students to get hands-on learning experiences through internships and other learning opportunities.

Since opening its doors in 2016, the Hub has partnered with 156 clients and helped create 147 jobs. Today, there are 65 active businesses associated with the Hub.

"We are grateful for the support the university, Robeson County and the state have given the Thomas Entrepreneurship Hub over the past year," Hall said.

A NEW ERA IN BUSINESS EDUCATION



On a beautiful April morning, UNC Pembroke officials broke ground on the future \$37.5 million, state-of-the-art School of Business building where students will have access to cutting-edge programs for generations to come.

Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings said the ceremony represented a "high-water mark" in the life of the university.

"This building will be a modern learning environment second to none, a space worthy of our world-class faculty, our exceptional staff and, most importantly, our students."

The future facility will be located facing Prospect Road between Sampson Hall and the Dial Humanities building. It is anticipated to be completed by spring 2021.

In addition to 14 classrooms, the building will include a career services center, a 300-seat auditorium, an interactive market-style trading room, a video conference room, a computer lab, collaborative study spaces, a food court and a multimedia resource room.

"This is where we will educate the future generation of business leaders," said Dr. Barry O'Brien, dean of the School of Business.

UNCP received \$23 million from the 2016 NC Connect Bond and a \$6 million appropriation from the General Assembly toward the construction of the building. Private individuals and foundations contributed the remaining



UNCP Trustee Jim Thomas (left) and Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings beam with pride during the School of Business groundbreaking ceremony.

"It's really moving to hear Chancellor Cummings talk about what it means to the community. We made the gift based on the passion he has and his belief in what this building will mean for the community and the entire region." - Jim Thomas

funding needed for the \$37.5 million building.

Cummings acknowledged state Sen. Danny Britt, Jim and Sally Thomas, UNCP Trustee Mary Ann Elliot and the Golden LEAF Foundation for their roles in securing the funding.

Jim Thomas, a Pembroke native and Los Angeles commercial developer, along with his wife, Sally, contributed \$7 million to the School of Business—the largest individual donation in the university's 132-year history.

"This is one step along a journey," Thomas said after participating in the ceremonial dirt toss. "We have a long way to go in terms of getting the building underway and getting it built, but a long journey begins with a first step."

Glavé & Holmes Architecture and Sfl+a Architects will oversee the design of the new building. Metcon of Pembroke will serve as the general contractor.

Metcon President Aaron Thomas predicted the new building will be a "game changer" and a major catalyst for economic growth. It will boost enrollment as well.

"The business school is already growing by leaps and bounds. I am proud to be a part of this project and a witness to the continued growth here on campus," said Thomas, a UNCP alumnus.



Rawan Abumohsen (far left), Yara Abumohsen, Abir Abumohsen, Ahmad Abumohsen (gentleman seated in the middle) and Aseel Abumohsen (far right).

MEET THE ABUMOHSENS:

'IT'S A FAMILY AFFAIR'

Bashir and Amal Abumohsen came to the United States in search of better-paying jobs and to escape their war-torn city of Jerusalem.

Bashir worked as a registered nurse in the cardiac unit at Amassed Hospital for 14 years. It was a conference in Orlando, Florida, in 2005 that steered him to an opportunity in the states.

"I found out how much they were making here, and I called my wife," he said. "I said if I work three years, we can pay off all our debt; then we can live wherever we want. We could live in Rafah where we bought a piece of land, or we could return to Jerusalem."

Bashir accepted a position in the intensive care unit at Southeastern Health. What began as a three-year commitment evolved into a 14-year love affair with the community and an even tighter bond with UNCP.

"After three years, we came back to Jerusalem," he said. "It was a war zone. There was always fighting, conflicts and problems. No electricity. No power. My children looked at me and said, 'Daddy, let's go home,'" referring to their newly adopted hometown of Lumberton.

The Abumohsens have a deep commitment to community. When it came time for their children to apply to college, they looked no further than UNCP.

Bashir and Amal have five—that's right five—children who have either graduated or are currently enrolled at UNCP. One daughter recently joined the faculty.

The Abumohsens are a walking billboard for BraveNation.

Abir, 27, was the first to make UNCP her alma mater, earning an art degree in 2014. She went on to earn a graduate degree at East Carolina University and currently teaches art at Purnell Swett and is a lecturer in the art department at UNCP.

Ahmad, 25, graduated in December 2018 with a degree in chemistry and is considering pharmacy school.

Yara, 22, a 2019 graduate who majored in biology, plans to be a pediatric nephrologist, a decision that was made after she was diagnosed her freshman year with end-stage renal disease, also known as kidney failure. Her college career has been challenging.

She fell ill during student orientation and spent a month in intensive care at UNC Medical Center. But like all the Abumohsen siblings, she is not only bright, but resilient,

undergoing dialysis and later a kidney transplant while maintaining her status as an honor student.

"She missed a whole semester," said Bashir, whose wife is a homemaker. "But she was able to make it up with the help and support she received from her professors."

Next in line to Yara is Aseel, 21. She is also a 2019 graduate, with degrees in biology and chemistry. Aseel graduated a year early from Lumberton High School in order to support Yara as she battled through her health issues. She, too, was an honor student and aspires to be a dentist.

Rawan, a 19-year-old rising junior also has her sights set on a career in the health care profession. Like her sisters, Rawan is an honor student. In fact, all three serve as Chancellor's Ambassadors.

Rawan is studying biology and chemistry. And, like Aseel, she graduated a year early from high school. Her career goal is to be a pediatrician.

"We believe in being part of the community," Bashir said. "And that is how we raised our children—to always support their community."

"Robeson County is home. My kids care about their community. They care about the people around them. They care about their teachers. They care about their school. That is how we raised them."

Each talented and academically gifted in their own right, the Abumohsen siblings could have sought out any college. However, they all agree that UNCP offers a high-quality education that would set them on a course to success.

The personal attention from professors was a plus.

"They knew they could achieve what they wanted to at UNCP just as they could at any other university," Bashir said. "Getting a great education depends just as much on the student as it does the university."

"At UNCP, you are a person. Why would you want to go to a bigger place where nobody knows you? Here, the chancellor knows my kids' names."

In a few years, the chancellor may have to learn two more names of the Abumohsen family, as Dina, a rising high school sophomore and budding chef, and Abraham, a rising fifth grader and future astronaut, have their sights set on joining the BraveNation family, just like their siblings.

RECORD ENROLLMENT | PLANNING FOR FUTURE GROWTH



UNCP smashed its enrollment record last fall when **7,137** students arrived on campus. The spike represented a 14 percent increase compared with fall 2017—a surge of some 885 additional students.

The previous record enrollment was 6,944 in fall 2010.

The first semester as an NC Promise campus also began with a record number of transfer, graduate and continuing students adding to the total growth of the university. Of the total enrollment, 2,867 were new to campus. UNCP also saw spikes in continuing students indicated by a more than 5 percent increase in retention—the percentage of first-time, full-time freshmen returning for their second year.

The NC Promise Tuition Plan, which was part of the state legislature’s college affordability program passed in 2016. The North Carolina General Assembly provided the \$51 million to make the plan possible.

The plan reduces undergraduate tuition each semester to \$500 for in-state and \$2,500 for out-of-state students, resulting in significant overall savings of approximately \$2,600 and \$10,000 a year, respectively.

University leaders began preparing for the enrollment surge well in advance. Provost David Ward led a university-wide task force with the purpose of preparing for the expected growth, identifying potential solutions for adding faculty, housing, dining and parking.

The task force assessed needs for fall 2019 and beyond.

“We are committed to making sure that as we grow, our students continue to receive a high-quality, student-focused education.”

With a focus on continuing to deliver a highly personalized education, UNCP has not only grown its enrollment and improved the retention rate but also strengthened the academic profile of the incoming class.

Average freshman SAT scores were up nearly 100 points compared with the previous year, while both ACT scores and GPAs also rose.

“It is clear that NC Promise has made a high-quality college education more accessible to North Carolina students,” said Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings. “Over the long term, this will lead to a more highly educated workforce, a more engaged citizenry and improved economic growth for the state and the region.”

“We are grateful to the leadership in our state for making this significant investment in the future of our students and in our university’s potential to drive our region forward.”

DR. KEVIN FREEMAN | WINS UNC SYSTEM AWARD FOR TEACHING EXCELLENCE



Dr. Kevin Freeman (left), 2019 recipient of the UNC Board of Governors’ Award for Excellence in Teaching, and UNCP Provost Dr. David Ward (right) at the Faculty Appreciation Banquet in April 2019.

Dr. Kevin Freeman has a profound impact on his students—both in and out of the classroom.

He connects with his students and, as a mentor, is responsible for preparing countless students for a political life beyond UNC Pembroke. Fellow colleague Dr. Emily Neff-Sharum describes Freeman’s classroom experience as transformative.

“I can’t tell you how many students walk through this department and seem lost at the beginning of the semester, but once they come out of Dr. Freeman’s class they hit the ground running. They become leaders on campus, fully taking advantage of what UNCP has to offer.

“It takes someone special to be transformative and that’s what makes Kevin a great professor.”

Freeman, an associate professor in the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, is the recipient of the 2019 UNC Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching. He was presented with a commemorative bronze medallion and a \$12,500 cash

prize at spring commencement. Freeman will give the keynote address at winter commencement in December.

“It’s nice to be selected,” he said. “I am very appreciative of being recognized by the awards committee. I am honored to represent UNCP as our representative for the award this year.”

Freeman’s lectures are filled with spirited debate mixed with humor. He uses levity as a teaching tool.

“I try to keep a fairly relaxed, comfortable classroom environment that makes the students feel welcome and not afraid to ask questions,” he said. “I try to get students to laugh. I tell a lot of bad dad jokes. I tell a lot of jokes that are related to the material. There are no sacred cows in my class.”

Freeman has remained active on campus since joining the faculty in 2004. He has taught study abroad courses in Berlin, Germany, and Tokyo, Japan. He serves as the faculty athletics representative and has previous experience as a faculty associate for men’s soccer and baseball. He was the public address announcer for UNCP football home games for many years.

An advisor to UNCP’s Model United Nations team since 2009, Freeman has helped build the team into a recognized leader in regional competition. Model UN is developing student leaders. The last four SGA presidents at UNCP all have Model UN experience.

Freeman is married to Carole Graham, an assistant professor and pre-law advisor in UNCP’s Department of Political Science and Public Administration. They have a son, Carter.

Dr. Neff-Sharum, department chair, labeled Freeman a ‘model professor.’

“He is a role model for not just our department, but is a shining example of what it means to put students first.” - Dr. Emily Neff-Sharum

FULL STEAM AHEAD

University leaders thrive when opportunities arise to pair local school-age children with the innovative faculty on campus. They understand the importance of developing critical thinking skills at a young age.

The latest example came on a Saturday in April when 170 curious youth flooded the School of Education building for Family STEAM Day.

The event was loaded with creative fun and hands-on mini projects, each exploring various topics in science, technology, engineering, art and math.

UNCP students guided the students to 20 stations specifically designed to teach them how the subjects are interconnected.

Participants ranged in age from pre-k to eighth grade from schools in Robeson and surrounding counties. At the Air Blasters station, participants were supplied with paper cups, a plastic tube, balloons and scissors and tasked with creating a device to launch a fluffy pom-pom.

Another station required students to build plastic bridges. Others designed catapults using plastic spoons and Popsicle sticks. Just outside the School of Education building, students dissected owl pellets to discover the eating habits of birds of prey.

On this day, 86 volunteers, including School of Education faculty and students, teamed up with community partners representing the Robeson Planetarium and Lumber River State Park.

Event organizers Kay Pitchford and Marisa Scott, both School of Education faculty members, said the event was a success.

"This event provides our education majors an opportunity to interact with families while honing their teaching skills through the planning and implementation of the activities. It also provides families with the opportunity to learn alongside their children while having fun. We are proud to host this event for the families in our region and hope that it continues to grow each semester."

Scott added, "UNCP STEAM Day is a wonderful inclusive opportunity for our undergraduate and graduate education majors to interact with pre-K to eighth grade students as we all learn about science, technology, engineering, the arts and math."



What's the BUZZ about BEES?



Biology professors Drs. Kaitlin Campbell (left) and Rita Hagevik established the Kids in the Garden program to teach the importance of pollen and pollinators to students in grades seven through 12.

With most flowers and crops needing pollination to prosper, the concern for pollinators has increased.

That's when biology professors Drs. Kaitlin Campbell and Rita Hagevik combined their research interests to start the Kids in the Garden (KIG) program.

"My research focuses on insect biodiversity and conservation. I first became interested in insects when I was a child turning over rocks in my backyard. Since then, I've kind of entered into bees and studying bees for this project," Campbell said.

"I'm interested in STEM research and helping middle and high school students identify as scientists and explore future careers in science."

KIG is for local students of Bladen, Cumberland, Robeson and Scotland counties in grades seven through 12. The mission is to increase the students' bee awareness and ability to identify all bee species to avoid them being mistaken as wasps or other aggressive stinging insects.

Helping kids learn to identify all species of bees is vital due to the growing disconnect between people wanting to participate in conservancy efforts for bees and actually knowing what a bee is.

In the beginning, students could identify bumblebees and honeybees, but native bees like sweat, mining and mason

were often tough to identify. The intensive two-week program educated the students on the diversity of bees, the difference between honeybees and native bees, and the important role bees play in agriculture. The program involved a pre- and post-test to evaluate if students' ability to identify all the bee species increased.

Following the two-week program, students are invited back to campus on Saturdays to gain hands-on experience and conduct research in a college setting on issues like colony collapse.

Both Campbell and Hagevik hope to enhance the students' enthusiasm for and interest in science careers.

The KIG program is funded through a STEM grant by the Burroughs Wellcome Fund, which selected only 13 of 89 projects.

"Our next project out of the garden is going to focus on citizen science work, where we have ordinary citizens who aren't actual trained scientists conduct the research and collect data for us," Campbell said.

"We hope that teachers, parents and families will be able to participate in the scientific endeavor and also think about how science, science careers and what we find out about bees and bumblebees relate to their everyday lives," Hagevik said.

NEW UNCP TRUSTEES

Two prominent UNCP alumnae—Allison Harrington '95 and Karen Sampson '76—have been appointed to the Board of Trustees.

Harrington is owner and president of Speech Solutions Inc. Sampson, a philanthropist and former educator, is married to Kelvin Sampson, a Division I college basketball coach and UNCP alumnus.

Sampson, the daughter of Willie Von and Sue Lowry of Pembroke, graduated cum laude with a degree in early childhood education. She taught school before moving to East Lansing, Michigan, in 1979 where Kelvin was enrolled in graduate school. She has supported her husband's 37-year coaching career from Montana Tech to his current position as head coach for the University of Houston.

Sampson has been involved with the Philanthropic Educational Organization for 25 years. In 1993, she chaired the committee for the Washington State Games opening ceremonies. At UNCP, the Sampsons established the John W. "Ned" and Eva B. Sampson Endowed Men's Basketball Scholarship. She and her husband live in Houston. They have two children, Kellen and Lauren.

Harrington began a speech language pathology company in her home with six employees in 2003. Today, there are four locations and 72 employees.

She has served on the Alumni Association Board of Directors and holds a master's degree from North Carolina Central University. She established the Allison Harrington Endowed Scholarship. She recently served as chair of the North Carolina Board of Examiners for Speech and Language Pathologists and Audiologists.

In 2014, Harrington received the UNCP Outstanding Alumna Award and the 2015 Small Business Award by the Lumberton Area Chamber of Commerce. She has one son, Seth, a student at NC State.



MISS UNCP: ALAINA MALCOLM



Alaina Malcolm, who graduated in May, was crowned Miss UNCP earlier this year. The Malcolm family has strong ties to the university, dating back to 1927 when UNCP was known as Cherokee Indian Normal School. Malcolm's great-grandfather, C.E. Locklear, was among the first graduates.

Her grandmother Vera Locklear Malcolm is a 1967 graduate. Her parents are Meloria and Joshua Malcolm of Pembroke. Joshua is a UNCP alumnus and serves as general counsel for the university.

Malcolm, a professional tap dancer, wooed the judges and audience with her footwork, performing a rhythm tap dance routine. She plans to pursue a graduate degree in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program at UNCP. Her career goal is to become an alcohol law enforcement agent with the State Bureau of Investigation. Malcolm was also a member of UNCP's golf team.

BOARD OF VISITORS:

Enhancing UNCP's mission, strengthening its visibility



The Board of Visitors is tasked with advising the chancellor and serving as ambassadors. The 23-member board, composed of alumni and friends of the university from across the region and state, meets twice a year and hosts events for alumni and friends.

- Tim Brooks, president, HealthKeeperz
- Luanne Caudell, retired educator*
- Dr. Cheryl Davis, physician, Scotland Health Care
- Rob Davis, attorney
- Howie DeVane, partner, DeVane Realty
- Terry Garner, attorney
- Michelle Ingram, trial coordinator, Brunswick County*
- Thomas Jones II, business owner*
- Tracy Lee, director of Community Corrections*
- Jessica Locklear, attorney
- Jarrod Lowery, North Carolina Dept. of Insurance*

- Chris Maples, constituent relations, U.S. Rep. Hudson*
- Leon Martin, retired banking executive*
- Clayton Maynor, Pfizer executive*
- Carla Hobbs Morgan, finance director, Fuquay Varina*
- Lou Olivera, district court judge*
- Belinda Oxendine Patrick, retired biotech executive*
- Mark Petersen, administrator, Robeson Pediatrics*
- Michael Stone, district court judge
- David Sumner, vice president, Southeastern Health
- Ron Sutton, attorney, former N.C. Rep.*
- Dr. Daniel Walters, dentist
- Stacy Williamson, owner, Coastal Southeastern United Care*

NOT PICTURED are Stacy Williamson, Cheryl Davis, Michael Stone, Mark Peterson, Clayton Maynor and Thomas Jones
*UNCP graduate

HAMILTON MCMILLAN STATUE REDEDICATED

More than 100 people gathered on the UNC Pembroke campus on March 28 to witness the unveiling and rededication of the newly restored Hamilton McMillan statue.

Several of the university's earliest graduates, along with McMillan's great-grandson, were recognized at the event. McMillan was the state representative who sponsored the legislation in 1887 that created the Croatan Normal School, now UNCP.

The life-size bronze statue facing Old Main has been a fixture on campus since 1987 when it was erected as part of the university's centennial celebration.

Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings said the statue reminds the university of its heritage, mission and commitment to making Robeson County and southeastern North Carolina better than we found it.



Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings (left) poses in front of the Hamilton McMillan statue with alumni Dorothy Blue '55, James C. Dial '54, Josephus Locklear '54, Cattie Mae Hunt '41 (seated), Josephine Ransom '48 and her twin sister Catherine Locklear '48, Bernice Brooks Lowry '53, and Doris Hall '51.



SPIRIT & PERSEVERANCE

"I definitely accomplished something big that day."

-Dustin Chavis

Dozens were moved to tears as Dustin Chavis stood from his wheelchair—and with assistance—walked across the stage to accept his well-earned diploma.

The inspirational moment was a high point of the 2018 Winter Commencement. Chavis, who was born with cerebral palsy, refused to allow his disability to come in the way of his college education.

Chavis lined up at the stage with his classmates. His heart was racing. Butterflies filled his stomach.

Finally his name was called.



From atop the stage, he looked out at the 3,000 audience members on their feet, cheering. In that instant, his anxiety disappeared.

"Once I stood up and got all that support from my peers, my confidence shot up," he said. "I started walking, and when I got to the chancellor, he had tears in his eyes. He whispered to me, 'I'm proud of you.'

"I definitely accomplished something big that day."

He earned his degree in psychology and plans to enroll in medical school and study psychiatry. In the meantime, he is completing a paid internship at the NC Works Career Center in Lumberton.

"I'm assisting those folks seeking employment, helping them build resumes to give them a better shot at the possibility of landing employment, and providing them with the necessary skills to accomplish their goals."

Chavis, who lives in Rowland, said he thoroughly enjoyed his time at UNCP, especially the connections he made through community outreach and networking with his two fraternities, Phi Beta Sigma and Phi Mu Alpha.

"I have always been heavy into community service and helping better the community around me, so naturally UNCP had certain events students could get volunteer hours. The community service opportunities forced me to step outside my comfort zone and to become more social."

On campus, Chavis received overwhelming support from the professors and Dr. Nicolette Campos and her Accessibility Resource Center staff.

"For the most part, the ARC staff came in and assisted me when I needed help. They were very friendly and had an open-door policy."

In the days leading up to graduation, Chavis said he accomplished everything he set out to achieve at UNCP. He thought to himself, How can I leave with a bang?

"About a month before graduation, I thought, Wouldn't it be cool to actually walk across the stage? I got with Nicolette and pitched the idea to her. I had a great support system of friends, family and staff. But if it wasn't for Dr. Campos and her dream team, I would not have been able to do it.

"In the end, I went out the way I wanted to. That was a big milestone for me."

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE:

PROMOTING STUDENT RETENTION



Freshman year is guaranteed to be full of excitement yet challenging for most college students.

Academic challenges. Being your own boss. Time management. Financial challenges. The list goes on.

To ease the transition from high school to college, UNCP has recently launched a University College.

A growing number of universities have introduced this initiative on campuses nationwide to support networks necessary for making sophomores out of first-year students.

The University College serves as the portal for all first-year and most transfer students to enter the university and begin exploring the curriculum. The ultimate goal is to promote retention.

The college is a comprehensive framework that integrates curricular, co-curricular and advising programming in order to enhance their first-year experience, develop skills and prepare them for sustained, advanced coursework in their major programs.

"The University College will serve as an academic umbrella providing support for all stakeholders from faculty to staff as they provide the support needed to enhance the academic lives of our students," said Dr. Beth Holder, associate vice chancellor and dean of University College.

HCAP:

TRANSFORMING
STUDENTS INTO HEALTH
CARE PROFESSIONALS

This summer, 13 UNCP students were placed throughout Robeson and surrounding counties in internships that gave them firsthand and sometimes hands-on experience with a variety of health careers.

"HCAP is a one-of-a-kind program," said Natalya Locklear-Freeman, senior coordinator of HCAP. "We host a One Stop Shop—where students gain specific course selection and advisement, extracurricular experience with like-

minded students, summer experiences, test-prep services, and the ability to network with a broad variety of professional programs, schools and alumni.

"Our students are academically sound, and HCAP prepares them for the interprofessional health care workforce."

Abigail Clark, a rising senior, got a jump start on her career in emergency medicine at Robeson Family Practice in Red Springs. There she got a chance to interact with patients, hone her lab skills, draw blood and measure blood pressure.

"Most of the patients we saw were on some type of opioid, so I got to see how that affected their lives, which also drew a connection with my interest in substance abuse," said Clark, a biology major.

Through HCAP, Clark and other participants receive assistance applying to medical school or other health professional programs. Students toured UNC Chapel Hill, Campbell, ECU, Duke, Elon and High Point

as well as universities in Georgia, South Carolina and New York. Clark decided to apply to Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine in Spartanburg, S.C., after touring the campus.

"I've been involved with HCAP since my freshman year," Clark said. "You get a lot of exposure through this program. When you apply for medical school, or dental school or PA school, they require you to have a certain number of contact hours of you working with patients. HCAP gives you exposure of working directly with patients. You are not simply shadowing."

Evalyne Muhia began her summer internship at Southeastern Cardiology and Cardiovascular Clinic with thoughts of one day becoming a physician assistant.

At the conclusion of the intense, six-week clinical experience working alongside some of the area's elite cardiologists, the UNCP senior had a change of heart.

"It opened my mind," Muhia said. "I had never thought about going into specialized cardiologist training, but the doctors and the physician assistants were encouraging me to go for it."

Summer internships are among the many perks the North Carolina Health Careers Access Program (NC-HCAP) offers to UNCP students in addition to counseling and advising services on health career opportunities, educational field trips, workshops and seminars.

NC-HCAP's mission is to increase representation of minorities and disadvantaged population groups who are trained, educated and employed in the state's health professions.

Over the years, students have been accepted into some of the top medical schools and programs. Since 2015, 62 students have been accepted into schools specializing in chiropractic medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, optometry, pharmacy, physical therapy, physician assistants and occupational therapy.

The program has produced dozens of highly successful medical professionals who are currently practicing across the region and the state.



Nathan Kelley, 2019 graduate and HCAP alumnus, has been accepted to the Doctorate of Physical Therapy program at Duke University



Front Row: Taylor McMillian (left), Asil Abudayeh, Evalyne Muhia, Abigail Clark, India Johnson, Mikalya Williams, Jocelyn Bullard and Natalya Freeman Locklear, senior coordinator. Back Row: Genna Locklear (left), Lauren Oxendine, Bailee Jones, Anteja Gore, Brent Locklear and Kelsey Locklear.

Genna Locklear, a recent graduate with a degree in exercise and sport science, completed 240 hours during her summer internship at Southeastern Health's Rehab Outpatient Clinic in her hometown of Pembroke.

"I've wanted to be a physical therapist for many years, and working at their site gave me the validation I needed that this is what I want to further my career in.

"It was real exciting to see what the physical therapists do every day and to see their interaction with the patients. And the fact that they let me do hands-on work with patients was really beneficial. We did ultrasounds on patients, and I got to see dry needling, which is used to ease muscular pain.

"HCAP allows you to network and find physical therapists in the community who can help you get into graduate school and help with letters of recommendation or offer clinical hours.

"You get to interact with other students who are in the same degree field. Without HCAP, I don't know where I would be. In just one year, it has changed my life dramatically."

After graduate school, Locklear said she plans to return to Robeson County and specialize in pediatric physical therapy.

Nathan Kelley, an HCAP alumnus and recent graduate, plans to open his own gym one day. One that would double as a clinic, allowing him to combine his love for physical fitness and physical therapy.

In the fall of 2019, Kelley will begin training at one of the nation's top physical therapy programs. He has been accepted into Duke University's Doctorate of Physical Therapy Program.

Kelley is very familiar with Duke's campus after attending the Doctorate of Physical Therapy (DPT) Summer Discovery program the summer of his junior year.

"This is a great opportunity for me to expand my knowledge and network with so many of the top physical therapists in the profession," he said. "With the resources and opportunities available at Duke, I plan to take full advantage of this opportunity."

He earned a degree in exercise and sport science.

MAYNOR HONORS COLLEGE



For more than two decades, the Maynor Honors College has been attracting the state's top student scholars to UNCP.

This year was no exception.

There are 223 students enrolled in the Honors College – the largest enrollment since the college was established in 2001. It was named the Maynor Honors College in 2006 following a \$1.2 million endowment by the generous Esther G. Maynor. More than 80 new scholars were enrolled in fall 2019.

The Maynor Honors College was created to recruit and offer academic and cultural enrichment to outstanding students. The admission process is very competitive, requiring a minimum SAT score of 1170, ACT of 24 and a high school GPA of 3.5.

Each year, the university awards four-year Maynor Scholarships to qualified incoming freshmen, and it is considered the most prestigious scholarship at UNCP. Five freshmen were selected as Maynor Scholars for the 2018-2019 academic year.

Nicole Lawrence hails from Richmond County. She graduated from Richmond Early College with a criminal justice certificate. At UNCP, she is studying social work.

Upon graduation, Lawrence plans to earn a master's degree in social work.

Unlike Lawrence, who has lived all her life in Hamlet, fellow Maynor Scholar Jessica Muniz has lived in Germany, Italy, Texas and South Korea before settling in Fayetteville where her father, a 20-year veteran of the U.S. Army, is stationed at Fort Bragg.

Every three years since she was a child, Muniz was uprooted from her home and school and relocated across the country or overseas.

Her adventurous childhood played a major role in her decision to study history and pursue a minor in American studies.

Saadq Coleman is studying computer science but plans to switch his major to mass communication. After graduation, he hopes to land a job as a newscaster on a

major sports network.

A native of Albany, N.Y., Coleman resides in Harrisburg and graduated from Hickory Ridge High. The oldest of seven children, he applied and was accepted to 11 universities.

UNCP's diverse student body was a strong selling point for Alexis Strong when she was narrowing her college choices.

The Scotland High graduate is an accounting major. She is also seeking a minor in American Indian studies.

Raised on a family farm in Salemburg, Caileb Carter is used to hard work. Carter possessed that same drive in the classroom, graduating third in his class at Sampson Early College.

He is an applied physics major with plans to attend an aerospace engineering program after graduation. Carter's career goal is to become an aeronautical aerospace engineer, building jets for Lockheed Martin.



Saadq Coleman (left), Nicole Lawrence, Jessica Muniz and Alexis Strong. Not pictured: Caileb Carter.

INVESTING IN EDUCATION UNCP TEACHES LIFE SKILLS

UNCP is partnering with the Public Schools of Robeson County to incorporate a life skills development program in the county's high schools.

Every year, a strategic plan requires all universities of the UNC system to identify a project that focuses on community engagement. Universities have the option to start a new project or increase the resources of an existing project.

Christie Poteet, director of the Office for Community and Civic Engagement, said she wanted to explore ways to help students transition into adult life, regardless of where they were going after they graduated high school.

The Life Skills Development program is coordinated by UNCP's Office for Community and Civic Engagement. The program was designed to engage high school students in educational workshops focused on life skills and transitioning to adulthood post-graduation.

The workshops were led by UNCP students and focused on financial literacy, career and college readiness, goal-setting, time management, and leadership.



Shown in the image above are South Robeson High School students who participated in the Life Skills Development. Principal Jonathan Blue and Gokanile Jacobs (far right), UNCP student responsible for organizing and overseeing the program.



SERVICE-LEARNING EXTENDS BEYOND THE CLASSROOM



UNC Pembroke students are logging more service-learning and co-curricular volunteer service hours, per capita, than several other schools in the UNC System in recent years.

UNCP students logged 33,891 volunteer hours in the most recent academic year—the equivalent of in-kind contributions valued at \$818,128. The service hours are results of a combination of service-learning classes and co-curricular volunteer opportunities.

During the 2018-2019 academic year, 135 service-learning classes were offered to students. Volunteer hours were earned through 185 community partnerships. Since service-learning was institutionalized in 2010, UNCP has seen a steady climb in the hours students are logging.

An informal survey was conducted by the Office for Community and Civic Engagement.

Of those surveyed, UNCP also has one of the highest number of students enrolled in service-learning courses and also ranks among the top regarding the number of faculty engaged in teaching service-learning.

Students gain real-life experience through service-learning classes, while seeing how their efforts are making a positive impact in the community.

ETHAN WILLIAMSON

Veterinarian-in-Training

Securing a spot in vet school can be difficult for any aspiring animal healer.

Only 12 percent of applicants are accepted. And to make the odds even slimmer, there are only 28 veterinary schools nationwide. In comparison, there are 179 med schools.

Ethan Williamson ignored the odds, boasting six acceptance letters to six vet schools. Two of the schools are ranked among the top in the nation.

Growing up on a farm in the small community of Evergreen, N.C., rooted Williamson's dream of becoming a vet.

He knew his future career after witnessing one of the family's cows on the farm in severe distress giving birth.

He saw how his father struggled with not being able to help the cow and with the financial burden of losing her. It was then he realized there was a need for farm animal veterinarians in the southeastern North Carolina region.

"It starts to get to you after a while. You're not able to take care of the things that need your care," Williamson said.

Williamson wants to pursue veterinary medicine with a focus in farm animals, a specialty known as food animal medicine.

Williamson, a West Columbus High graduate, was recently accepted into six veterinary medicine programs including Auburn University, Lincoln Memorial University, Louisiana State University, Midwestern University, University of Tennessee and North Carolina State University.

After visiting each school, touring and interviewing, Williamson chose NC State and is excited to start his journey toward earning a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine in its class of 2023.

On top of his successful admission to six schools, he is also graduating a year early from UNCP with a bachelor's degree in chemistry. Since his freshman year, he has taken a full load every semester, including the summer semesters.

And for the past three and a half years, Williamson has been gaining valuable experience alongside skilled animal doctors at Columbus Veterinary Clinic in Cerro Gordo.

"My career in the vet office started as cleaning kennels and mopping floors, and before I left, I was assisting in surgery, performing basic dental work, and working side by side with the veterinarian. My job taught me more than just basic veterinary



science. It taught me how to work with the public and interact with clients and patients in a way that left a memorable impact."

Williamson knew his success would not be possible without his professors and advisors at UNCP who often encouraged him and surrounded him with the support needed.

"Without a lot of the faculty at UNCP, I would not be where I am today. They encouraged me to stick with my major, encouraged me to apply; they encouraged me to do just about anything. That's one of the highlights about UNCP; obviously without my family I wouldn't have been able to do this either, but having that school family really helps," Williamson said.

Williamson earned his degree in May and will enroll at NC State this fall.

CONFERENCE CHAMPIONS



Men's cross country team has now logged three appearances at the NCAA Division II Championships

Back Row (L-R): Curtis Haynie, Jarett Arabie, Matthew Martin, Ean Ormsby, Kellen Corson, Joshua Chepkesir, Jose Castellanos and Logan Ward.
Front Row: Jonathan Martin, Adam White, Holden Newman and Silus Kipkoech.

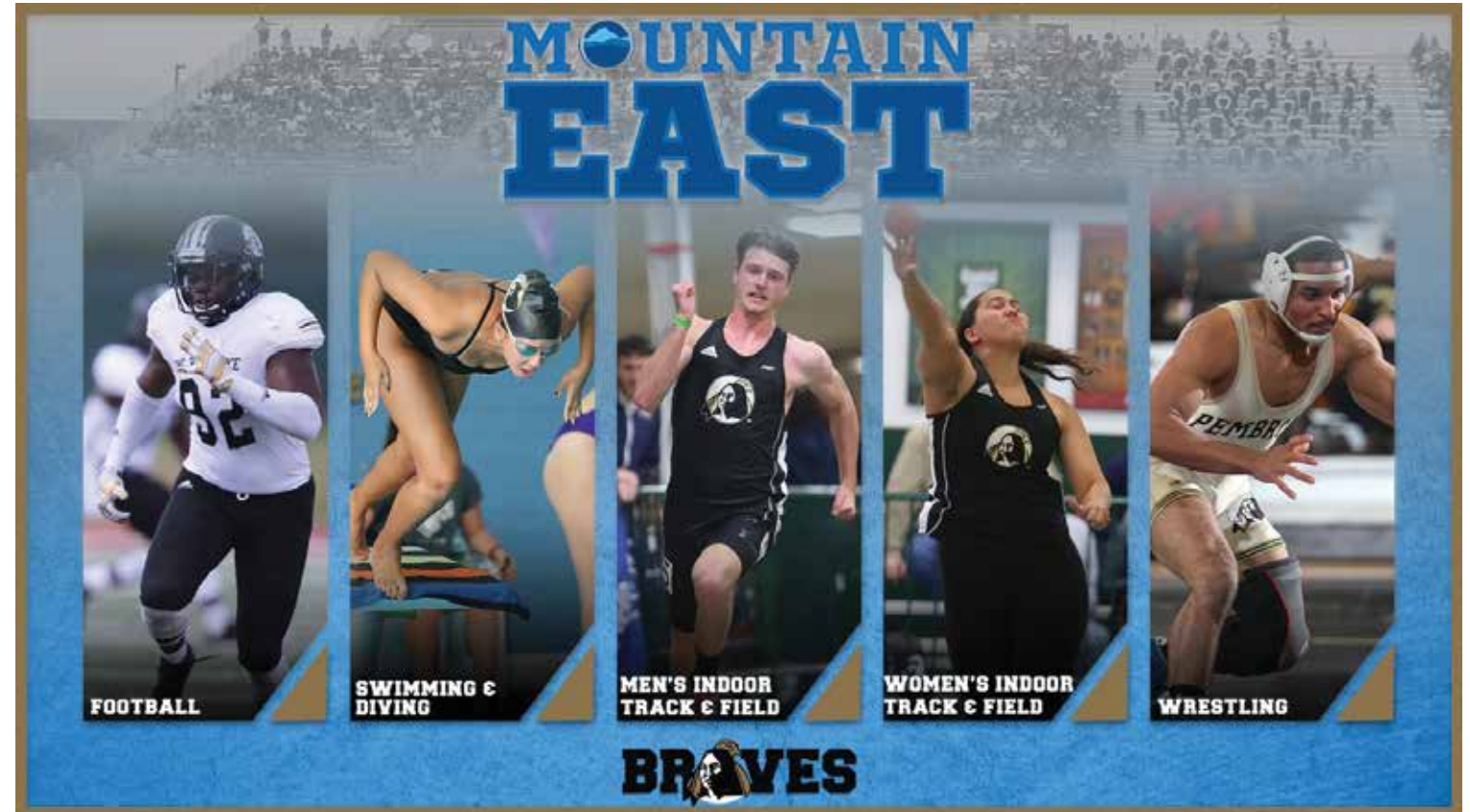
Three runners finished among the top six for the UNCP men's cross country team—including a 1-2 finish by Kenyans Joshua Chepkesir and Silus Kipkoech—to help lead the Braves to their second Peach Belt Conference title in four seasons in early November.

Chepkesir covered the 8K course at Redcliffe Plantation in 24:22.3 on the way to becoming the second UNCP freshman in as many years to take home top honors at the conference championship. Kipkoech was 19 seconds back (24:41.4) in the runner-up position, while senior Logan Ward was sixth with a time of 25:07.6, and Matthew Martin crossed in 11th place in 25:49.0. All four runners were lauded with all-conference crowns as well.

The league championship was the first step in a busy November for the Braves. Chepkesir covered the 10K course at the NCAA Southeast Region Championships in just more than 31 minutes to capture medalist honors at that event two weeks later and lead UNCP to a fourth-place finish on the team leaderboard.

Just 48 hours after that race, the Braves received one of 10 at-large bids to the NCAA Division II National Championships in Pittsburgh, Pa. That event marked the first team appearance for the men's squad since it registered a 15th-place finish at the 1981 NCAA Championships in Cape Girardeau, Mo.

The men's cross country team has seven team appearances at the NAIA National Championships, including an NAIA National Championship in 1978.



MEC

Officials at the Mountain East Conference (MEC) announced in late August that they have unanimously approved an associate membership agreement with UNCP that will affect the sports of football, swimming and diving, men's and women's indoor track and field and wrestling.

As part of the partnership, all five teams will now be eligible to receive conference awards associated with those sports, including conference team and individual championships, all-conference awards, and conference weekly awards. The Braves will compete as early as the 2019-2020 season in swimming and diving, as well as indoor track and field and wrestling, while football will begin MEC competition in fall 2020.

The MEC's proposed football scheduling format will allow UNCP to preserve a Non-Conference Week 1 format for local in-state rivalries. UNCP will continue with its South Atlantic scheduling agreement in football through the 2019 season.

The partnership also marks a historic point in the NCAA Division II era (1992-present) for UNCP Athletics in that all 16 of its varsity sports will now have conference homes for the first time. It will also allow the university to further expand its recruiting footprint into the northeast United States as well.

UNCP has a history of competition against MEC teams. The football team has competed an astounding 20 times against MEC opponents, while the wrestling team has faced MEC competition 16 times. The football team has played at least one MEC team in 10 of the last 12 years and faced Concord, a charter member of the MEC, as part of Homecoming week in October.

Established in 2013, the MEC has quickly established itself as one of the top all-sports conferences in the country. In just five years, MEC institutions have produced two NCAA Division II team champions, seven national finalists and 13 semifinalists. In addition to the athletic success, the MEC recognizes over 1,500 student-athletes annually for their academic success and has additionally had seven "NCAA Elite 90" winners, which honors the individual with the highest cumulative grade-point average at the finals site for each of the NCAA's 90 championships.





2019 UNC PEMBROKE FOOTBALL SEASON TICKETS ON SALE

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|--|--|
| SEPTEMBER 5  WINSTON-SALEM STATE | SEPTEMBER 21  CATAWBA | SEPTEMBER 28  LIMESTONE | OCTOBER 12  MARS HILL | NOVEMBER 16  UVA WISE |
|---|--|---|--|--|

CALL 910.775.4339
OR VISIT WWW.UNCPCBRAVES.COM/TICKETS



The illustrious history of the UNC Pembroke wrestling program was celebrated on Jan. 26 on Lumbee Guaranty Bank Court as more than 50 current and former student-athletes were on hand as the Braves defeated Queens 45-3. The contest, along with a reception after the event, successfully capped the program's yearlong "55 Years of Excellence" celebration.

What started off as a club team during the 1964-1965 academic year has progressively turned into a dominant program, both on the regional and national levels. The Black & Gold matched a program record with eight national qualifiers during the most current campaign and registered a 21st-place finish at the NCAA Division II National Championships, March 8-9, in Cleveland, Ohio. That performance marked the 13th-straight season that the Braves have finished among the nation's top 25 teams.

The Black & Gold has made 22 appearances at the NCAA Division II National Championships, including a run that has it competing at each of the last 18 events dating back to the 2001-02 season. That span includes 17 seasons in which the

Braves have sent two or more wrestlers to NCAA Division II's biggest stage, with eight wrestlers making the trip in both the 2003-04 and 2018-19 campaigns. UNCP has twice finished inside the top 10 at the NCAA's premier event, including a seventh-place showing in 2003-04.

Boasting two national champions, including back-to-back 141-pound national titles by Daniel Ownbey in 2013-14 and 2014-15, the program has also collected 62 NCAA all-America honors and 16 NAIA all-America nods since 1971-72 but also takes pride in 48 NCAA Division II Coaches All-Academic Team honors over the last 34 seasons. The 2011-12 season marked a first for the club, as Shane Nolan was decorated with CoSIDA Academic All-America accolades, widely considered to be the most prestigious academic honor that can be bestowed upon a collegiate student-athlete.

The region and conference levels have seen an even more extreme show of dominance for the program. From 1970 to 1987, the Braves combined to rake in more than 100 NAIA all-district laurels and collected more than 40 all-conference nods during their seven years of competition as a member of the Carolinas Conference. In just three seasons (2015-18) as a member of the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC), the Black & Gold collected 12 all-conference nods, with Robert "Blaze" Shade taking home ECAC Wrestler of the Year honors following the 2015-16 campaign. The Braves captured the 2017-18 ECAC title, the first conference title of any kind for the program since it tallied six Carolinas Conference championships.



JOIN OUR TEAM
UNCP BRAVES CLUB
ADAM HARDIN 910.775.4339 OR BRAVES.CLUB@UNCP.EDU

Paul O'Neil's 600th victory

UNCP's veteran skipper Paul O'Neil collected his 600th victory with a 9-3 win over Young Harris on March 3 at Sammy Cox Field.

The Braves have grown accustomed to winning under Coach O'Neil. He is enjoying his 19th season at the helm, having assumed head coaching duties prior to the 2001 campaign. UNCP has long cemented itself among the perennial contenders in the always-tough Peach Belt Conference with 30-win seasons in 13 of the last 14 years, including 40-win campaigns in both 2011 and 2017. O'Neil also serves the Athletics Department as senior associate athletics director.

O'Neil became the 11th head coach in program history when he arrived on campus 18 years ago. Having attained the distinction of UNCP's all-time winningest coach in 2011, O'Neil's teams have shattered nearly 90 percent of the existing program records in Pembroke, including 11 marks over the last 10 years. His tutelage with the Black & Gold has produced 17 all-Americans, nine preseason all-Americans, 40 all-region honorees and 59 all-Peach Belt Conference laurels.



BRAVES BASEBALL
#DOITFOR6
600 WINS AT UNCP

POISED FOR THE FUTURE

WITH NEW
LEADERSHIP,
NEW STAFF
& NEW VISION



ADVANCEMENT

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA AT PEMBROKE

Challenged to generate more philanthropic support for UNC Pembroke through alumni and donor engagement, the Office of Advancement is transforming for the future under the new leadership of Vice Chancellor Dr. Bryan Robinson.

A highly successful fundraiser with a strong track record of higher education leadership, Robinson arrived in the summer of 2018. He brings more than a decade of fundraising and development experience in higher education, including health care education. He came to UNCP after serving as the senior assistant vice president and interim vice president for Advancement at the University of Louisville. He also served in a senior director of development and campaign planning role at Indiana University.

"It is a privilege to lead the Office of Advancement at UNC Pembroke during an exciting time in this university's proud history," Robinson said. "We are committed to developing lasting, meaningful relationships with alumni, donors and friends who believe in the transformative power of a UNCP education."

Robinson is leading efforts to position the team for future success, with resources committed to enhanced technology as well as new and restructured staff positions.

ADVANCEMENT HAS WELCOMED SEVERAL NEW STAFF MEMBERS:



Alexis Locklear '14, '16—Director of Alumni Engagement. A Pembroke native, Locklear previously worked in the Admissions office and also served as assistant director of the Braves Club. She is leading efforts to build the Alumni Association brand and, with the association, developing affinity groups and other opportunities to provide a wide array of ways for alumni to stay connected to the university.



Paris Roebuck—Assistant Director of Annual Giving. Roebuck will lead strategy on UNCP's baseline fundraising efforts, developing targeted appeals to enlist support from prospective donors, alumni, parents and friends to enhance our major giving pipeline. He comes to UNCP from Ruffalo Noel Levitz, where he worked with alumni engagement teams at NC State, UCLA, University of Western Australia and University of Sydney.



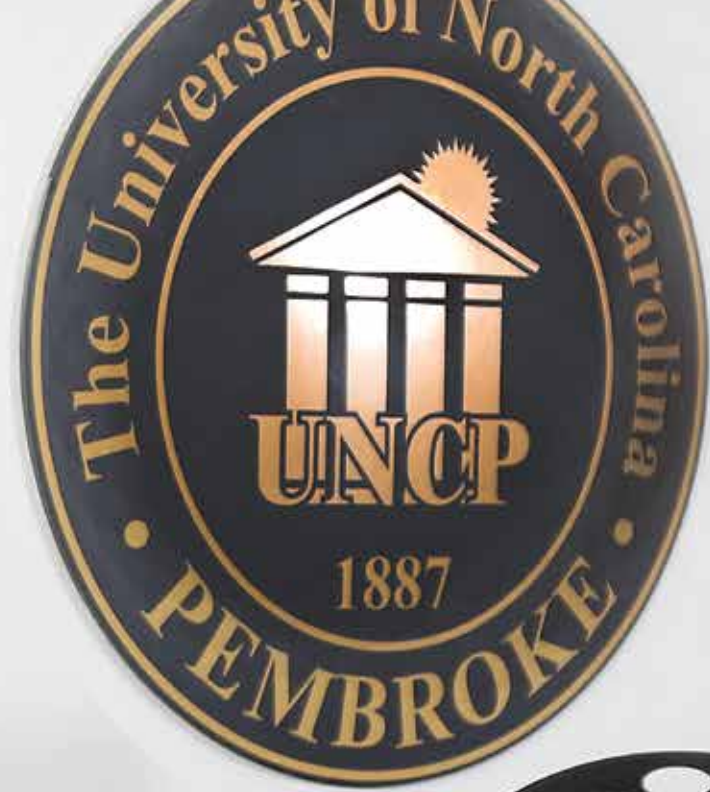
Jessica Bullard '07—Assistant Director of Development for American Indian Programs. Bullard has been a lead fundraiser for community events, including the Julian Pierce Memorial Art Dinner. She holds an American Indian Studies degree from UNCP and has a strong affinity for the program and the Museum of the Southeast American Indian.



Alexis Rising '18—Assistant Director of Development for the School of Business. Rising has specific community intervention and fundraising experience benefiting drug prevention awareness, child literacy, and hurricane and disaster relief support. She returns to her alma mater from the Robeson County Sheriff's Office and also has experience working in the public schools and the accounting industry.



In addition to these new staff members, **Brittany Sandefur** has been promoted to permanent assistant vice chancellor for Advancement, after previously serving in the role in an interim capacity. Sandefur will oversee a portion of the division's fundraisers, have executive oversight of daily office operations, and work with major gift donors. She joined UNCP in 2016 as director of development.



GIVING BACK ON TWO CONTINENTS

Teaching isn't what Dr. Cliff Mensah does. It's who he is.

The economics professor in the School of Business is quick to tell you of his love for UNCP, which he discovered while still a doctoral candidate at NC State in 2004.

"I was able to teach here while I was finishing my doctoral work," says Mensah. He joined the UNCP faculty full time in 2005. "I fell in love with the students, and personally, I just love the teaching environment of this university."

But UNCP students aren't the only ones who benefit from his knowledge. Most summers, he returns to Ghana in West Africa to teach students in his native country, where opportunities for higher education have been limited and choices are few.

"When I was getting ready to go to college in Ghana, we had basically three universities. To gain admission to one of them was tough, very difficult," Mensah says.

As an educator, Mensah said he became determined to do something for students back home in Ghana.

"I felt like I owed it to my country to give back, to reverse this brain drain Africa has suffered from," Mensah says. "Anybody who's had the opportunity to acquire some knowledge in a developed country should export that knowledge back to his home country."

When he lived in Ghana, Mensah attended church with Ernest Ansah, who eventually founded Data Link University College.

The men kept in touch, opening the door for Mensah to help Ghanaian students. Mensah teaches economics at Data Link, as well as Valley View University, and also works with administrators and faculty to enhance the student experience.

"Being in the United States, you learn so much," Mensah says. "I'm able to bring those things to students, faculty and administrators in Ghana. I really believe if every African who has had the chance to come to the U.S., like me, would go back and give of their time, Africa would be transformed."

The relationship between Mensah and Ansah has proved fruitful on this side of the Atlantic too. Ansah previously served on the School of Business Advisory Board, becoming its first international representative. He has also made a gift to benefit the new building that will house the School of Business.

"Mr. Ansah's passion for good causes in education is overwhelming," says Mensah. "When he learned about UNCP and what we are doing here, it was easy for him to consider supporting the School of Business."

Mensah believes the time he spends in the classroom in Ghana also pays dividends for his UNCP students.

"My exposure to the things that are happening in Ghana expands my knowledge and gives me the opportunity to add more for our students here at UNCP," Mensah says. "I think it helps me energize them and push them to think about things in a new way."

Blue Cross Blue Shield

invests \$775,000 to establish
Community Health and Wellness Institute



Blue Cross CEO and President Dr. Patrick Conway (second from left) and Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings (third from left) join Blue Cross representatives to celebrate the establishment of the Community Health and Wellness Institute of Southeastern NC at UNCP.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina and its Healthy Blue plan, which will serve Medicaid beneficiaries beginning Nov. 1, announced a \$775,000 investment to establish the Community Health and Wellness Institute of Southeastern NC at UNCP.

The Institute will launch new university programs and expand on existing community initiatives intended to diversify the regional workforce and improve health outcomes in southeastern North Carolina. The Community Health and Wellness Institute will connect UNCP, its students and its resources to the community.

Other planned initiatives include collaborations to address mental health in Robeson County by allowing faculty and staff to provide outreach to rural communities. It also calls for UNCP students to engage local high school students to participate in health and wellness programs as well as establishing a speaker series.

Of the total investment, \$225,000 will be provided by Blue Cross' Healthy Blue plan to support Medicaid beneficiaries in Robeson County through the work of the College of Health Sciences.

"UNCP holds a unique position to provide the innovation, outreach and well-trained workforce necessary to dramatically improve the health outcomes of their community," said Blue Cross CEO and President Patrick Conway.

The Institute will be housed in the College of Health Sciences. Several initiatives planned include collaborations to address mental health in Robeson County by allowing faculty and staff to provide outreach to rural communities.

Funding will be used to expand the CARE Resource Center and increase academic service-learning opportunities.

Pierce Memorial Scholarship surpasses \$100,000



Members of the Julian T. Pierce Memorial Scholarship Initiative Committee presented a \$16,000 contribution to UNCP in December.

The proceeds were raised during the annual Julian Pierce Art Auction held at UNCP during Lumbee Homecoming. Lumbee Tribal Chairman and committee member Harvey Godwin Jr. was on hand to present the check to Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings, Assistant General Counsel Kelvin Jacobs and Assistant Vice Chancellor for Development Brittany Sandefur.

The check presentation was held at North Carolina Legal Aid, a law office in Pembroke where Pierce was the founding director. Established in 1991, the scholarship now totals more than \$110,000.

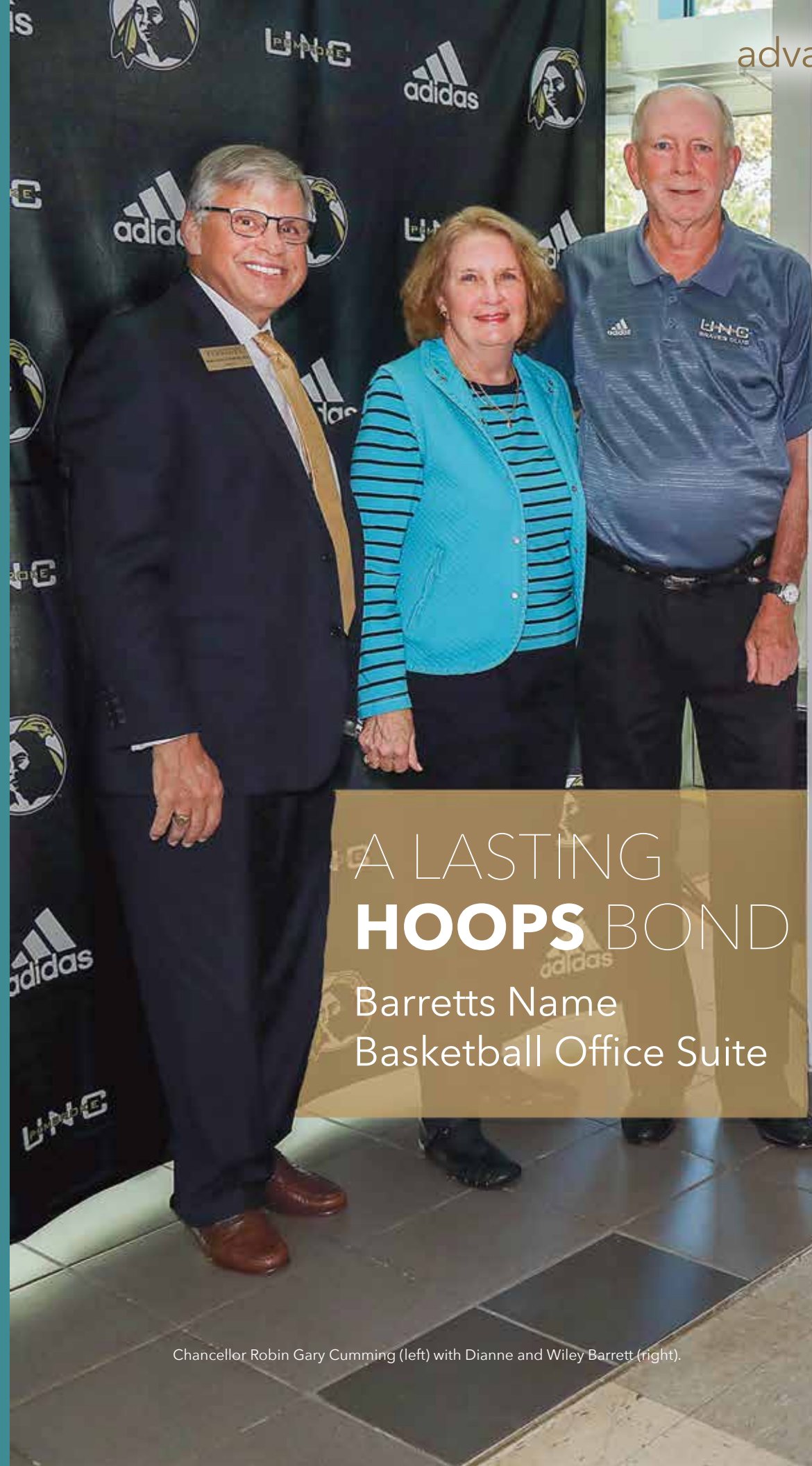
The scholarship supports UNCP students from Robeson County with financial need who demonstrate scholastic and leadership abilities.

Proceeds also go to the Julian T. Pierce Memorial Scholarship at Robeson Community College and the North Carolina Central University School of Law, where Pierce earned his law degree.

Julian Pierce was an attorney and civil rights activist in Robeson County. He was a 1966 graduate of what was then known as Pembroke State University. As a lawyer and through his civic involvement, Pierce fought for education, equality and justice for all persons.

In 1978, he became the first director of Lumbee River Legal Services, known today as North Carolina Legal Aid. In 1988, Pierce was murdered while running for election to the Superior Court. He was 42. He would have been the first American Indian to hold the position of Superior Court judge in North Carolina.

The seventh annual Julian T. Pierce Memorial Art Dinner will be held June 28 at the University Center Annex. Tickets are \$50. For information, call 910.521.6361.



A LASTING HOOPS BOND Barretts Name Basketball Office Suite

Chancellor Robin Gary Cumming (left) with Dianne and Wiley Barrett (right).

UNCP Trustee Dr. Wiley Barrett and his wife, Dianne, recently made a generous gift to name the men's and women's basketball office suite in the Jones Center.

The Southern Pines couple were surprised Oct. 18 when several of Wiley's former college teammates, friends, current players and coaches gathered for a dedication ceremony in the Jones Center lobby.

"I thought we were just coming down to take a picture with the plaque," Wiley said. "I had no idea that a couple of my former teammates would be here. The fact that they thought enough to come back really means a lot."

Joe Gallagher and Barry Hopkins, who played alongside Barrett from 1965 to 1969, made the trip. As did Jim Gane, the son of former head coach Lacey Gane.

The Barretts, who have enjoyed successful careers—Wiley in education and Dianne in banking—were motivated to give back to provide opportunities for UNCP students to do the same one day.

Wiley spent 30 years as a teacher, coach and principal with Moore County public schools. He served the last six years on the UNCP Board of Trustees.

Dianne, a lifelong resident of Southern Pines, received her undergraduate degree from UNC Chapel Hill and subsequently enjoyed a long and successful career in banking.

DUKE ENERGY FOUNDATION

grant supports Lumber River Conservancy



A \$100,000 grant from the Duke Energy Foundation will allow the Lumber River Conservancy (LRC) and its partners in the UNCP biology department to study the effects of agricultural runoff, drought and recent hurricanes on the river's overall health.

The LRC is a nonprofit land trust organization that strives to preserve the Lumber River for natural, scenic and recreational purposes. The conservancy played an instrumental role in the development of Lumber River State Park and has protected more than 4,000 acres of land that adjoin the river in Scotland, Robeson, Hoke and Columbus counties.

Dr. Joseph White, executive director of the LRC and lecturer in the UNCP biology department, said grant funds will support research that will be crucial to understanding the river's delicate ecosystem.

"This research will dovetail nicely with the LRC's mission of understanding the river and what threatens it," White said. "The findings of the project can help us understand how to best move forward to protect the river."

Grant funds will help purchase equipment, materials and testing kits to collect water samples and analyze the river's microbial health and composition, according to Dr. Conner Sandefur, assistant professor of biology.

Sandefur, who will lead scientific study under the grant, along with Drs. Lisa Kelly and Amber Rock of the biology faculty, said the research will help the LRC and researchers understand the effect of various nutrients on the river's microbial health. "Part of the grant goes toward understanding if there are nutrient excesses, such as extra nitrogen from agricultural runoff, in certain areas and how that affects the microbial communities." Results from the study, which will be completed in 2020, will be published in scientific journals and shared with policymakers to guide efforts to preserve the river.

The Duke Energy Foundation provides philanthropic support to address the needs of communities where its customers live and work. The foundation provides more than \$30 million annually in charitable gifts. The foundation's education focus spans kindergarten to career, particularly science, technology, engineering and math (STEM), early childhood literacy, and workforce development. It also supports the environment and community impact initiatives, including arts and culture.



NEWLY ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS BENEFIT STUDENTS

VETERANS DESCENDANTS ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

Lumbee Warriors Association and the Lumbee River Electric Membership Corporation Veterans Descendants Endowed Scholarship

The donors wish to support the children and grandchildren of veterans who further their education at UNCP. The Lumbee Warriors Association is a group of Lumbee and non-Lumbee men and women who have served our country dutifully in the armed services. They meet regularly to fellowship and support their communities, as demonstrated through the establishment of this scholarship. Lumbee River Electric Membership Corporation is a not-for-profit electric utility owned by the more than 50,000 members throughout Cumberland, Hoke, Robeson and Scotland counties. Generous friends to UNCP, Lumbee River EMC wishes to honor veteran members of its community through this scholarship. The scholarship will be awarded to current or incoming students in any major at UNCP.

GLENN E. SAMPSON SCHOLARSHIP

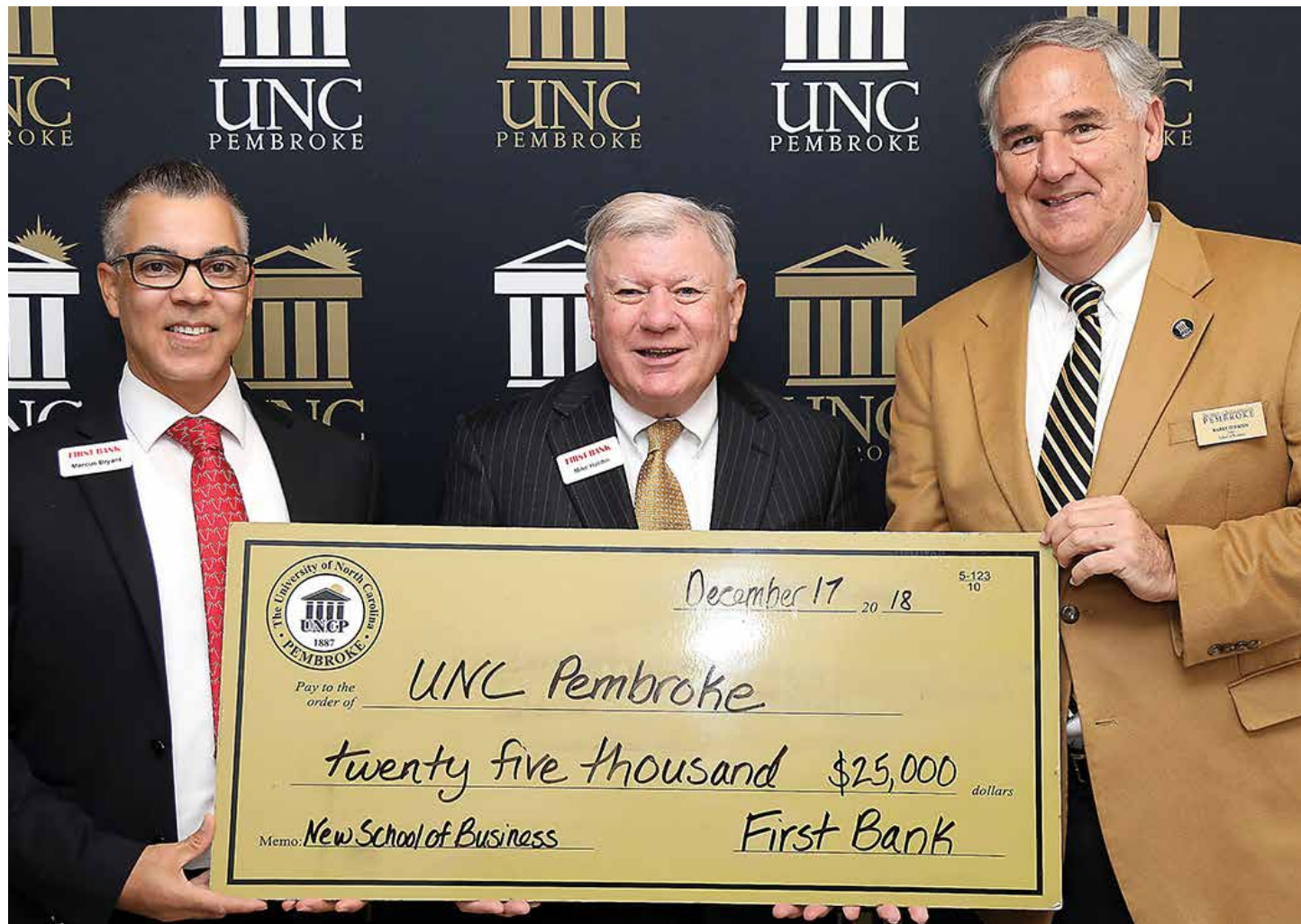
The scholarship was established by the Glenn E. Sampson Family to honor the memory of Glenn Sampson, a 2000 alumnus. Glenn Sampson was full of life. He faced health and life limitations but accepted them as life challenges. He was active in the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) program, participating in summer camps in Wisconsin, Iowa, New Mexico and California. He chose to remain active in AISES beyond his graduation from UNCP, from which he graduated with a Bachelor of Science in mathematics. His work experience took him to Asheville, Lumberton, Raleigh and Wilson before an accident took his life. The scholarship will provide financial assistance to a student who is a member of AISES to attend a major (state or national) AISES conference. The scholarship can also be awarded to provide financial assistance to a declared math major.

LACY AND ALICE BACOT HIGHER EDUCATION SCHOLARSHIP

The scholarship was established by Greg Bacot '85 to honor his parents, Lacy and Alice Bacot, who stressed the importance of education and the fact that education is a lifelong possession that can never be taken away. Lacy Bacot was born in Cumberland County to a farming family. He served in the U.S. Army before a career with Burlington Industries that spanned more than 30 years. Alice Bacot grew up in Columbus County, also part of a farming family. She picked cotton as a young girl to help with family expenses and worked at Southeastern General Hospital in Lumberton during her adult life. The scholarship will benefit full-time students with demonstrated financial need. Students from Robeson, Scotland, Columbus and Bladen counties will receive first consideration for the award.

UNCP AIR FORCE ROTC ALUMNI ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP

The scholarship was established by Air Force ROTC alumni Lt. Col. (retired) Roy Bacot '93, Lt. Col. (retired) Thomas Helms '96, Lt. Col. (retired) Caleb Malcolm '97 and Mr. Kelvin Jacobs '95 to recognize the impacts made by the program on the lives of graduates in both their public and private career development. The UNCP AFROTC program is a catalyst for the successful development of men and women, contributions made by the Air Force ROTC to the lives of military leaders, corporate professionals and civic mentors. This scholarship will provide similar opportunities for future program graduates. The donors recognize how important the ROTC program was to their UNCP education and wish to create an endowed scholarship to ensure similar students have ample opportunities to succeed. The recipient will be a full-time undergraduate AFROTC cadet.



From left, Marcus Bryant and Mike Hardin of First Bank with Dr. Barry O'Brien, dean of the School of Business.

FIRST BANK SUPPORTS SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

First Bank has made a \$25,000 gift to name the recruiter war room in the new School of Business building at UNCP, providing a dedicated space for students to connect and build relationships with industry recruiters.

Southeastern North Carolina relies on the UNCP School of Business, said Marcus Bryant, business development officer and senior vice president with First Bank. Naming this space affirms the bank's commitment to support the region.

"We are thrilled to support UNC Pembroke's new building for the School of Business," Bryant said. "It's such a crucial

development for our community and will have such a positive impact on all of southeastern North Carolina."

First Bank and other employers in the region are impressed by the talent UNCP Business graduates possess, said Mike Hardin, who recently retired as First Bank's regional executive and senior vice president.

"They are able to think critically and also interact well with people," Hardin said. "The academic programs are strong, and with the MBA program, UNCP provides a whole new level of talent for businesses in our region to draw upon."

The new home for the School of Business will be a state-of-the-art facility, designed to prepare future generations of business leaders. In addition to the recruiter war room, the building will include a career center, an auditorium, a video conference room, a computer lab, a trading room and a multimedia resource room.

Gift from **ELECTRIC COOPERATIVES** Benefits Computer Science, Cyber Programs

North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives will donate \$75,000 over the next three years to support expanded opportunities for cybersecurity and computer science students at UNCP. Cybersecurity is critically important to electric cooperatives across the state.

The gift will support student competitions, conferences, exchange programs and presentations. Projects that enhance students' classroom learning and expose students to a broader range of cybersecurity, networking and information technology topics and training outside the classroom will also be supported.

The gift will assist the university as it acquires and updates technologies in the classroom to ensure student training and knowledge is capturing innovative developments in the computer science field. Electric cooperatives will also offer internships to UNCP computer science students.



REYNOLDS TRUST GIFT Promotes Regional Job Growth

The Thomas Entrepreneurship Hub at UNCP hopes to bring 30 new jobs to the region over three years thanks to a \$198,000 gift from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust.

"We're grateful to receive this grant and believe it will dramatically improve the support we give to leading-edge health care start-ups," said Thomas Hall, executive director of the Hub.

The goal is to attract jobs in the home health care and agribusiness sectors, specifically in the areas of aging in place and nutrition. Addressing poverty as an underlying driver of poor health is also a key aim of this project.

"Economic opportunity, health and education are intertwined issues that our founder, Kate B. Reynolds, focused on during her lifetime. We work to interpret her vision today, and we know there is a lack of economic opportunities for many Robeson County residents," said Dr. Laura Gerald, president of the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust and a Robeson County native.

Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings said UNC Pembroke is grateful for the investment by the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust under the leadership of Dr. Gerald.

"Dr. Gerald appreciates the needs of our region, and as a physician and former state health director like myself, she understands the clear linkages between economic conditions and health outcomes."

AN ESTATE PLANNING TIP

From BraveHawk

Any account with a beneficiary designation (such as retirement funds, life insurance policies and annuities) can be used to support UNCP.

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- Easy on your heirs
- Easy to learn

To discover more, call UNCP Advancement at **910.521.6252**.



MY FELLOW ALUMNI AND FRIENDS:

On behalf of the Alumni Association Board of Directors, it is a pleasure to serve as your president. With your help, we have strengthened our beloved University of North Carolina at Pembroke and are far from being done.

Alumni play a pivotal role in the success of each student and the university as an institution. Full-spectrum alumni give of their time, talent and treasure and often don't realize the full impact on UNCP. You, too, can realize how easy it is to become a full-spectrum alumnus.

For this year, I ask you to consider three areas of opportunity. First, for talent, I encourage you to reach out to Career Services and present your mentorship or your organization as an opportunity for student internship and learning.

Second, for time, I offer you Campus Engagement and Leadership. Your engagement with affinity groups is a great way to support students and organizations on campus. Whether your affinity is related to athletics, fraternities/sororities, professional or social areas, the dedicated members of Campus Engagement and Leadership can link you to an interest. And don't forget that while your affinities in college may have been on one list, your personal and professional path may have opened your aperture to other interests.

Third and finally, and probably the most important of the three, is treasure. Supporting the university financially can be accomplished in many ways. Attending phenomenal shows at GPAC and other arts events on campus is one way. Others include showing up for athletic events or providing direct support for scholarships, general funds or building funds.

I conclude with a push for each of you to stay in touch! Make sure the Office of Alumni Engagement has your contact information, and update the office each time you move. Like or follow our UNC Pembroke Alumni Association on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

The Alumni Association Board of Directors welcomes your involvement. I hope you'll contact the Office of Alumni Engagement at alumni@uncp.edu or 910.521.6252 if you have ideas or suggestions on ways to involve your fellow alumni. With our UNCP pride behind us, we can ensure this place we love remains strong well into the future.

Best wishes,

Caleb Malcolm '97
President

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**Executive Director
Alumni Association**



FLIGHT PLAN

Roy Bacot '93 sits in the cockpit of a C-17 Globemaster III.

As he guided the C-17 plane in summer of 2003, bringing troops and cargo into a war zone, the thought kept coming to U.S. Air Force pilot Roy Bacot '93 as he surveyed the landscape below: Iraq looked just like the scenes on television.

"The oil wells were on fire," Bacot says. "All those things on television, and now here I was seeing them in person. It was surreal."

It was worlds away from Robeson County, where Bacot grew up, earned his driver's and pilot's licenses within a month of one another at age 16, and graduated from then-Pembroke State University.

"The bad guys would sit off the perimeter of the base, and sometimes they would lob these mortars in trying to hit the airplane," Bacot says. "Here I am a little boy from Lumberton, and all I wanted to do is fly airplanes. I never thought I'd be evading mortars in a combat zone."

AN EARLY START IN THE AIR

Those days are over now, and Bacot has made the transition from 21 years in the Air Force to a successful second career as a pilot for Delta Air Lines. The dedication and determination of his mother, Joan, was critical in his formative years, Bacot says.

"Her priority was to make sure her children got an education," Bacot says of his mother, who was elected to Lumberton City Council during his childhood. "She worked a couple jobs because her goal was to have us come out [of school] without debt. She was a single parent, so that was quite a feat for her at the time." Bacot also gained an advocate during his high school years when his mother married Mike Lassiter '73, a retired biology teacher who now lives in Lumberton. "He really supported my flying and education."

"Flying was just something I was drawn to. I started with the Civil Air Patrol out at the Lumberton airport when I was 13 years old, took flight lessons, and did a solo flight a month after my 16th birthday."

As he approached high school graduation, he sought colleges and universities that offered computer science.

"Pembroke had the computer science program, which really interested me," Bacot said. It also had an ROTC program, which was attractive because of his affinity for flying.

Between his sophomore and junior years at UNCP, Bacot signed papers that committed him to the Air Force after graduation.

"I was in the ROTC program the entire four years I was there. That set the path to where I am now."

WAITING FOR A CHANCE

Pilot slots for incoming Air Force members were extremely limited as Bacot joined in 1993.

"It was a little bit of a hit when I couldn't go right into the Air Force as a pilot," Bacot says. "But I didn't want to give up on it. I kept applying to go to pilot training and finally got it."

Bacot completed the yearlong pilot training program before being shipped to Germany for his first flight assignment in a C-9 aircraft used for medical missions. His March 2003 transfer to Joint Base Charleston in South Carolina to fly C-17s coincided with the start of the Iraq war.

C-17 pilots handle a variety of missions, including assault landings and air refueling, each with unique risks.

"You're trained to handle the emergencies. And it's busy, so there's really no time to sit around and think about all the possibilities of what could go wrong. Your head is thinking about everything that has to be done."

Some missions were memorable for the people involved, not the dangers.

"We would fly the prime minister of Iraq out of Baghdad to meet with President Bush with F-16 fighter escorts on our wings," Bacot says. "We'd take him to Incirlik Air Base in Turkey. He'd hop on another plane to go from Turkey to Washington to meet with the president."

FLYING THE FRIENDLIER SKIES

Bacot flew missions into Iraq and Afghanistan for more than four years and enjoyed several more assignments until retiring from the Air Force in 2015 as a lieutenant colonel at the age of 44. He earned a long list of awards and decorations, including the Bronze Star Medal and the Defense Meritorious Service Medal.

Though his Air Force career was over, there were still lots of good flying years left for Bacot.

"The airlines tend to hire a lot of military pilots because they like the background, and they know the training you've had," Bacot says. "It just seemed like a natural progression for me if I wanted to keep flying."

Delta came through with an offer, and Bacot joined the airline less than a month after his Air Force retirement date, in May 2015. He and his wife, Alana, live in Charlotte, but New York City is a prominent part of their lives. Alana works for an accounting firm based in the city, and Bacot flies transcontinental and international routes for Delta from LaGuardia, Kennedy and Newark airports.

The transition from military to commercial flight requires a pivot for pilots. For one, the aircraft is completely different. But Bacot says the most fundamental difference between commercial passenger and military flight is the tolerance for risk.

"The flying public and the safety of the passengers always comes first," Bacot says. "There are no national security implications if we don't take a passenger flight. In the military, we may have to fly in riskier conditions to deliver ammunition to a SEAL team to complete their mission. In commercial passenger aviation, the tolerance for risk is going to be very low, and rightly so."

PAYING IT FORWARD

Bacot jumped at the chance to attend a 2017 Homecoming reunion of other ROTC alumni at UNCP. As they reminisced, they also realized they wanted to do something to help future generations of students achieve their academic dreams. "That's when the wheels started turning and we started talking about doing this scholarship," Bacot says.

Bacot joined fellow ROTC alumni Thomas Helms '96, Kelvin Jacobs '95 and Caleb Malcolm '97 last year to establish the UNCP Air Force ROTC Endowed Scholarship. "We all recognized there are people who want an education, but maybe can't afford it," Bacot says. "The ROTC program can definitely help the right person. It did that for me. We just want to be able to pay that forward through this scholarship and help somebody if we can."

The kid from Lumberton who loved aviation and realized his dream of becoming a pilot says things could have been much different for him if not for UNCP.

"Without Pembroke and the ROTC program, there's no way I'd be where I am today," Bacot says. "To fly in the Air Force, you have to have a four-year degree. Pembroke made that possible for me, and I'll never forget that."



A DREAM FULFILLED

Learning is for all ages, and Bernadine Bullard proves it



"You always hear people talk about seeing the light at the end of the tunnel. For me, it was like that, a feeling that all of this is really going to come together after almost 40 years."

Much of Bernadine "Bernie" Bullard's career has been spent on the roads of eastern North Carolina. So it's appropriate that the quest to complete her degree at UNCP was on a road of its own—one that took more than 35 years to finish from the time she first enrolled in 1975.

She attended two years of classes before earning her optician's license, becoming the first Lumbee in North Carolina to do so. She started out seeing patients in Fayetteville, Rocky Mount, Lumberton and Raleigh before becoming a traveling sales representative for an optical company in 1989.

But she always wanted to finish her degree and never seriously considered going anywhere besides UNCP.

"Oh no, there was no question," says Bullard. "There's a sense of loyalty and community here that you don't get anywhere else."

In 2011, she re-enrolled at UNCP but took it slow at first.

"With a husband, a house and a job, I didn't know how much I could handle. I just had no feel for that, so I started out taking just one class per semester."

She increased the number of hours she took each semester. "It was tremendously challenging at times, but I was determined to make it work."

For the woman who grew up just five minutes from campus in the Prospect community, there was immense satisfaction in the spring of 2014 when she completed her sociology degree.

Whether you are 18, fresh from high school or a nontraditional student, like Bullard, the dedicated faculty and staff at UNCP ensures all students are equipped with the tools to succeed beyond their college experience.

UNC PEMBROKE ESTABLISHES NEW ALUMNI COUNCILS



Chancellor Cummings with members of the Young Alumni Council.

The recent creation of two new Alumni Councils will provide meaningful ways for alumni to engage with UNCP.

The American Indian Alumni Council will advise the UNCP Alumni Association and the Office of Alumni Engagement on matters important to the university's American Indian alumni. The Council will consist of 10-12 members.

"I am humbled and honored to serve as president of the newly established UNCP American Indian Alumni Council," said Tamra Lowry '12. "It is my goal to give a stronger presence and voice to our UNCP American Indian alumni and future UNCP alumni."

Similarly, the Young Alumni Council will connect with current students and represent the interests of alumni who have graduated within the last 10 years. Dalton Hoffer '13, assistant director for student engagement, will serve as president of the five-member council.

Alexis Locklear '14, '16, director of alumni engagement at UNCP, is excited about the work both councils will do to strengthen the bonds between their groups and the university. She expects more alumni councils to be added in the future to reach an ever-growing number of graduates.

"Councils offer specific groups of alumni the opportunity to reconnect with the university in ways that are particularly significant to them," Locklear said. "I look forward to working with the Alumni Association and so many others to provide those opportunities to even more UNCP alums."

“I like the challenge of taking something from scratch and making the end product.”



Thomas Jones '72, with wife, Vi, launched their successful business together.

LIVING the SWEET LIFE

If the origins of a future cheesecake business were somewhere in the brick mortar he used to mix for his father during childhood, Thomas Jones '72 didn't know it at the time. The Maxton native and his family were simply trying to carve out a living.

“I always tell people we weren't 'poor,' we were 'po.' We couldn't even afford the 'or' to finish the word,” Jones says.

Perhaps it's not surprising that Jones, after retiring from a successful career with Carolina Power & Light and Lumbee River Electric Membership Corp., has found success with SweeDeePie Cheesecakes in Whiteville, a business he and his wife, Vi, founded in 2007. The idea of building and designing things has always interested him.

“I like the challenge of taking something from scratch and making the end product,” says Jones, who serves on the UNCP Board of Visitors and previously served on the Board of Trustees. “When I was a kid, one of the things I always wanted to do was be an architect. I think that came from my dad, because as a brick mason, he drew up building plans. I think that sparked an interest for me.”

Another important influence from his father means it's no coincidence that Jones' business today revolves around a kitchen.

“On those days where it rained and my dad couldn't work laying brick, we would come home from school, and we could tell who

had cooked. We could tell just from the smell that it wasn't mama; it was daddy. So I guess that's where I picked it up.”

But a lot of years would go by before Jones' penchant for baking would take center stage.

As he graduated high school, Jones says he didn't see college as a possibility from a financial standpoint.

“I had gone to Raleigh with two other friends, and we were going to enter the Air Force,” Jones says. But when Jones was the only one of the three to pass the entrance exams, the trio returned to Maxton. “I wasn't going in the service by myself.”

Only a month passed before a persistent Air Force recruiter and a hot July day combined to change the course of Jones' life.

“I was working with my father at Carolina Military Academy in Maxton. The recruiter finds me, gets me in the car. I talked to him for a few minutes and went back to my father and said, ‘Dad, I'm gone.’”

After an Air Force tour in Vietnam, Jones went to work at the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport and soon realized a college education might be possible with the GI Bill.

“I got accepted at Pembroke in the fall of 1968,” Jones says. “I took a job at Belk in Laurinburg and worked there the entire time I went to school.”

When he graduated with an accounting degree, Jones joined CP&L as a trainee in the company's Maxton office. It was the start of a career that spanned nearly 25 years in progressively responsible roles before he retired from the company in 1997.

A few months later, Jones joined Lumbee River EMC as manager of the corporation's new for-profit subsidiary company, a role he held for the next 10 years. But the seeds of a new business venture would be planted during this time at a family Christmas dinner.

Jones' niece showed up with a sweet potato cheesecake baked in a pie shell. It was a hit, but when the man who made it

wouldn't share the recipe, Jones took it as a challenge. Through some trial and error in the kitchen, Jones replicated the recipe, and it was his own sweet potato cheesecake that played to rave reviews at next year's Christmas dinner.

“Then I started making some and taking them to work at Lumbee Electric,” Jones says. “People started asking if I could bake a cheesecake because they wanted to buy them.”

Jones and his wife soon connected with a couple whose daughter was set to open a restaurant in Southport in 2006. The Joneses asked if they could bring a sample of their cheesecake for her to try, and soon, it was on the restaurant's menu.

“We began to think there might be a business opportunity here,” Jones says.

Vi Jones pointed out a few other factors came together to encourage the couple to give the business a try.

“Thomas started making other types of cheesecakes besides sweet potato,” Vi says. “That was one thing. The real estate market was booming, so we would take samples of our cakes to realtors in the area. We had plenty of taste-testers. We were building a base.”

In 2007, SweeDeePie Cheesecakes—the name is a combination of a nickname for the niece who brought the cheesecake to the family Christmas dinner and Jones' granddaughter's pet name for him—opened in Whiteville. There was still a lot to learn.

“We were baking with a conventional oven at the house,” Jones says. “We ordered convection ovens here at the store, and those are totally different, but I didn't know that. The first cheesecake I did, I burned it to a crisp. It turns out, you cook cheesecakes at 25 degrees cooler in a convection oven.”

The business made it through well-done cheesecakes and the economy of 2008 and 2009 and is thriving today.

“The lights are still on,” Vi says. “We expanded our offerings, and over time, Thomas got comfortable working with fondant because we felt we needed to start doing some wedding cakes. If you bring him a picture of something and ask ‘Can you make this?’, the creative genes in him go to work.”

Vi still works full time in the banking industry—she makes the sweet potato pie topping throughout the year and helps with the rush of orders during the holiday season—but it is Thomas who does most of the baking. He puts in 12-hour days Monday through Friday, creating delicacies for customers and finding satisfaction for himself.

“I don't want to go home and try to figure out what to do with myself,” Jones says. “The idea of doing something like this has always intrigued me.”

KELVIN SAMPSON '78

PICKS UP 600TH CAREER WIN



University of Houston men's basketball coach Kelvin Sampson '78 earned his 600th career head coaching victory Jan. 16 with a 69-58 win over Southern Methodist University. He is the 57th coach in NCAA Division I history to reach 600 wins.

The 2018-19 season was Sampson's 30th as a head coach, and Houston finished the season with a 33-4 overall record.

Sampson has twice been selected National Coach of the Year, with previous stops at Montana Tech, Washington State, University of Oklahoma and Indiana University. He has led his teams to 15 NCAA Tournament appearances, including the 2002 Final Four and 2003 Elite Eight at Oklahoma. This year's Houston team advanced to the Sweet Sixteen.

Sampson was named American Athletic Conference Coach of the Year for the second straight year. He was also a semifinalist for the Naismith Coach of the Year Award. His 2018-2019 team reached the top-10 in the national rankings for the first time since the mid-1980s.

Sampson was inducted into the UNC Pembroke Athletic Hall of Fame in 1998. He earned four letters in basketball and three in baseball for the Braves and was a team captain on the basketball team his senior season.

CLASS NOTES



1985

Wayland B. Lennon III is president of AnyTable Inc. He purchased Dairy Queen in Lumberton in November 2018.

1987

Jamie K. Oxendine is a part-time professor of Native American Studies at Lourdes University and the University of Toledo, both in Ohio. He is a Native American actor in the 2019 movie "Heartland" about the incidents at Standing Rock Reservation in 2016 and "Battle of the River Basin," a movie about the War of 1812. In 2018, he published a book titled "Southeastern Woodland Designs" on the ancient artwork of the Woodland Indians of the Southeast.

1988

Allen Johnson received the Order of the Long Leaf Pine when he retired from the North Carolina Highway Patrol in December 2016. He also won the Highway Patrol's Humanitarian Award in 2013. Allen served as a Boy Scout Troop master from 1993 to 2015. He and his wife, Carol, have a son who attends UNCP.

Marion Williams Jr.

is a Developmental Services Unit consultant at the O'Berry Neuro-Medical Treatment Center in Goldsboro. He was recently nominated and selected to participate in the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Management Development Certification Program. He and his wife, Deana Tigner-Williams '93, have three daughters, including Joi '19.



1990

Barbie Dees Coble (also class of 2002) retired in 2017 after 25 years as an art teacher with the public schools in Robeson County. Her husband's job with International Paper then took the couple to Magnolia, Miss. Barbie works as a graphic artist at Eighteen-Seventeen Custom Screen Printing in Summit, Miss. She also teaches social painting classes under the title Barb's Party Palette in partnership with a vendors' mall in McComb, Miss.

1991

William Deese

is a coach and educator at Purnell Swett High School. He was a member of the Braves baseball team during his undergraduate years. His son, William, is a member of the UNCP wrestling team.

2001

Rebecca Jackson,

strategic performance analytics director for the City of Fayetteville, was part of a team that helped the city earn recognition by Governing magazine as the top-performing municipality in its second-annual Equipt to Innovate survey. Jackson and Fayetteville Mayor Mitch Colvin traveled to Los Angeles in 2018 to accept the award. The survey evaluates seven key characteristics of high-performing government.

2002

Camille Locklear Goins

has been promoted to assistant professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Specialties, which is part of UNCP's School of Education. She is also director of Middle Grades Programs. She was recently awarded a \$1.1 million Indian Professional Development Grant through the U.S. Department of Education to assist UNCP students pursuing a master's degree in school administration.

WELCOME NEW ALUMNI!



Avery Locklear '19 is awarded senior of the year.

More than 175 members of the Class of 2019 gathered for the Senior Social, celebrating the highlights and contributions throughout their UNCP journeys.

Avery Locklear was recognized as the 2018-19 Senior of the Year, chosen by a committee representing faculty, staff and the UNCP Alumni Association.

A 25-game starter for women's basketball, Locklear also maintained a 3.99 cumulative grade point average in the classroom as a history major. The senior award is the latest in a long line of academic awards that includes a pair of Peach Belt Conference Elite 15 honors.

She was also the only PBC student-athlete to be named to the 2018-19 Google Cloud Academic All-District® Women's Basketball Team which recognizes the nation's top student-athletes for their combined performances on the field and in the classroom.

Hosted at the Chancellor's Residence, attendees received a commemorative UNCP item during the annual event.

Sarah Locklear Brewington is a physician at Sandhills Pediatrics, which has locations in Raeford, Southern Pines and Seven Lakes. She attended medical school at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and completed her residency at UNC Hospitals. She is certified by the American Board of Pediatrics and has a special interest in decreasing health disparities for Native American children.

2003

Ty Collins is a freelance sportscaster, handling play-by-play assignments for the ACC Network on ESPN3, CBS-U Live and WakeForestSports.com. He has called Wake Forest men's and women's soccer, volleyball, field hockey, baseball and men's basketball games. He is the host and creator of Fan Interference, a national podcast covering the world of sports. He also works as an editor at WXII-TV in Winston-Salem.

2005

Ronnie Hamilton just finished his first season as men's assistant basketball coach at the University of Mississippi. He earned a master's degree in physical education with a concentration in sports administration from UNCP and was a graduate assistant coach with the Braves from 2003 to 2005. He has also coached at Tarleton State, The Citadel, Tulane, University of Houston and Middle Tennessee State.

Genevieve Lebeau

welcomed a baby boy, Asher, in October 2018. She is also celebrating her 10th year as a Zumba instructor.

2006

Laura Heberling is in her first season as assistant softball coach at Utah State University, where she works for former UNCP head coach Steve Johnson. She played for the Braves in spring 2006 and was a UNCP student assistant coach in fall 2006 while she completed her bachelor's degree in exercise/sport science.

Henry Martin (also class of 2008) and his wife, Hope, have a four-year-old son, Hughes. They live in Longs, S.C., and Henry is a teacher and coach at Green Sea Floyds High School in Green Sea, S.C..

Erin L. Berry-McCrea

earned a doctoral degree in language, literacy and culture from the University of Maryland-Baltimore County in December 2018. She is assistant professor of media and communications at St. Augustine's University in Raleigh. She was recently awarded the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) Early Career Educator of Color Leadership Award for her work in and outside the classroom with Black women.

2007

Adam Fenwick

was promoted to news director of Speed Sport in July 2018, one of the most authoritative outlets for coverage of motorsports. He leads the daily news operations of Speed Sport's parent company, Turn 3 Media, including websites, social media and daily e-newsletters.

Justin Jacobs

lives in Richmond, Va., with his wife, Amy '11, where he works as a special agent for the federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). He has also worked in law enforcement in Greensboro and High Point and was a special agent with the NC State Bureau of Investigation in the Southeastern district. Justin also worked for the Lumbee Tribe as a vocational rehabilitation counselor. His mother, Belinda '00, and brother, James '08, '14, are also UNCP alumni.

Nicole Jacobs

is a physician at Sandhills Pediatrics, which has locations in Raeford, Southern Pines and Seven Lakes. She completed her medical degree at the Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University and a residency in general psychiatry at UNC Hospitals. Her interests include pediatric mental health, and she completed an adolescent psychiatry fellowship at UNC Hospitals in 2018.

2008

Marquita Brazier

is assistant director of Regional Recruitment for Undergraduate Admissions at UNC Charlotte. Based in Wake County, she recruits prospective students from the Triangle and Eastern North Carolina. Previously, she served as assistant director of Prospect Management at UNC's Kenan-Flagler School of Business.

2010

Jon Baez

is a lead communications director at USAA in San Antonio, Texas. Since graduating with a degree in mass communications and journalism, Jon has moved around the country working in various communications, public relations and marketing roles at Capital One, Microsoft, IBM and Triangle Orthopaedic Associates. Jon married Yanissa Perez de Leon '11 in March 2018. Yanissa works in communications for a start-up company based in Washington, D.C.

Whitney (Hanlin) Wilson

and her husband, Dan, welcomed their first child, Kellan Daniel, on June 29, 2018.

2012

Michael Robinson

is putting his entrepreneurial skills to use again in the Winston-Salem area. Robinson, who owns Carolina's Vineyard & Hops with his brother, Chris Megginson, has created a new line of non-alcoholic craft beverages. Bingo Bango Beverage Co. came to life after Robinson recognized a market for the drinks, which he created by experimenting in his kitchen. Robinson's company produces four flavors of fruit-based drinks that contain no artificial flavors or colors. Sold in several stores in the Winston-Salem area, a portion of the proceeds benefit the Enrichment Center, which helps adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Robinson was recognized with UNCP's Young Alumnus of the Year Award in 2018.

2013

Emily Oxendine

and her husband, Brandon '17, live in Raeford with their daughter, Kendall Presley, who was born Nov. 29, 2017. Emily is a recruiter and enrollment coordinator in the Graduate School at UNCP, and Brandon is an agent with the North Carolina Department of Revenue. Emily is serving as secretary on the UNCP Alumni Association Board of Directors.

2016

Davina Studley

is program director for the MEMA4KIDS program with the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency. She is responsible for delivering the agency's disaster preparedness program to children in kindergarten through fifth grade statewide. She earned a master's of public administration with a concentration in emergency management from UNCP. She lives in Pearl, Miss., with her partner, Dr. Barbara Russo.

2018

Crystal Peguese McDonald

is a first grade teacher at I.E. Johnson Elementary School in Laurinburg. She is pursuing a master's degree in middle grades education with an English concentration. She enjoys teaching, loves her students and says she is excited about all the great things happening in her life.

IN MEMORIAM

- Vernon Ray Thompson '50
- Fannie Maynor Oxendine '53
- Delton Ray Locklear '54
- Adeline Lowry Maynor '54
- Mary L. Carter '55
- Sarah Locklear Lowery '55
- Herbert H. Lloyd '56
- Luadahlia J. Jacobs '58
- Macy Dial Keyworth '59
- James Benford Hardin '65
- Gloria Ruth Shook '67
- Ray Coleman Rudacille Jr. '73
- Thomas J. Nielsen '76
- Felecia Maynor Locklear '93
- Franklin Lewis Batson Jr. '97
- Steven Douglas Bourquin
- Chester "Chet" Jordan
- Raymond B. Pennington '84
- Francine L. Rizzo
- Charles Monroe Sampson
- Louie M. Amos
- Irwin Belk
- Martin L. Brooks
- Dr. C.D. Spangler Jr.
- Wyatt Upchurch
- David Whitesell

Any omission is unintentional. If you would like to submit an item for in memoriam in a future edition, please email alumni@uncp.edu.



ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Submit your Class Notes and alumni updates at uncp.edu/alumni.



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ALUMNI
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GET INVOLVED WITH YOUR UNCP ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO BECOME ACTIVE
IN THE LIFE OF YOUR ALMA MATER:

- Attend a UNCP Alumni Association event in your area, and bring a fellow Brave with you.
- Update your contact information, and learn more at uncp.edu/alumni.
- Join us on social media.
- Support UNCP athletics. Cheer loudly.
- Nominate someone you know to serve on the Alumni Association Board.
- Nominate a worthy candidate for one of our many alumni awards.



To learn more about getting involved, visit us online at uncp.edu/alumni or email us at alumni@uncp.edu.