University News
The largest gift in the history of the university brings UNCP closer to breaking ground on a state-of-the-art facility that will be home to the School of Business.

Student Success
A UNCP graduate student earns statewide recognition for her efforts to address hunger and homelessness on campus.

Athletics
Three teams bring home Peach Belt Conference championships to UNCP.

Advancement
A UNCP alumnus commits $1 million to establish the first endowed professorship in accounting and a longtime chemistry professor creates scholarship for American Indians training in the field of chemistry, physics or nursing.

Alumni News
We examine the distinguished career of 1974 graduate Jerry Lanier, a retired U.S. Ambassador to Sudan and the Republic of Uganda. In his 33 years as a diplomat, he also served as head of the State Department’s Bureau of Counterterrorism.

ON THE COVER: Aliyah Lynch ’17, student in Wingate University’s doctor of physical therapy program.
Categorizing ourselves is a natural activity, even if we rebel against the pigeonhole concept. For the reader of this publication, there are likely a few categories that we have shared or do share, regardless of where you may call home, and two specifically: “the next alum” and “the now alum.” Collectively, these two categories, along with others, unite under the BraveNation brand. That brand is a point of pride for all of us, both young and experienced.

To “the next alum” (aka the student), you likely have weekly reminders of your ambition as you plow through that assignment or prepare for the next measured step your professor has planned. Accompanying that grind is an abundance of opportunities to leverage all the university has to offer and better equip you for the professional future you are chasing. One of those underutilized opportunities, I would argue, is right at your fingertips and taps into a deep and wide-reaching reservoir of alumni in professions who likely have walked a similar path from student to professional as you are pursuing. Ordinarily, undergraduates wait for mentors to present themselves but with today’s digital footprint, it applies to our ability as alumni to engage students beyond just in person. I challenge all of us to reach back to our major’s department, sport, club, organization or the catchalls – Career Services and Alumni Relations – and make our willingness to mentor known.

At the end of the day, being an alumus is like being a player on a team, and all the players each have an important role in the success of that team. Whether you are a “next alum” or a “now alum,” it is critical to recognize the extraordinary players we can be for the BraveNation team. There are three basic positions: giver of time, giver of treasure or giver of talent. The evolution from freshman to a 25-year alum will afford opportunities to play one, two or all three positions at one time, but the key is to get on the field! BraveNation is strong because of the strength of “next alum,” “now alum,” the faculty/staff and the many friends of the university. That continued strength will be dependent on you playing your position.

To “the now alum” (aka the graduate), you likely gave up at your wall with pride and/or periodically don that cap or shirt with the red-tailed hawk and smile a bit as the memories flash in your mind of your college days. As a student, you probably had a mentor who inspired you to take an extra class or join a student organization as a way to expand your educational career outside of the classroom. Now you have the opportunity to be that inspiration for a younger version of yourself. That digital footprint applies to our ability as alumni to engage students beyond just in person. I challenge all of us to reach back to our major’s department, sport, club, organization or the catchalls – Career Services and Alumni Relations – and make our willingness to mentor known.

O ne of the themes running throughout this issue of UNCP Today is the strong spirit of pride and generosity that abounds in BraveNation. This is exemplified by the landmark $7 million gift from UNCP Board of Trustees member Jim Thomas and his wife, Sally, to benefit our new School of Business. (See next page.)

Other recent examples include Chemistry Professor Len Holmes’ endowment of four scholarships for local American Indian students (pg. 22) as well as the private support for our new, state-of-the-art Brave Health Center (pg. ‘9). At UNCP, we believe in honoring those who advance our mission through their generosity. Earlier this year, the university recognized decades of giving and advocacy by naming the Health Sciences Building in honor of former State Senator David Weinstein (pg. 10). And as we celebrate three teams bringing home PBC championships (pg. 16), we give thanks for the many alumni and boosters who support our athletic programs. In so many ways, the generosity exhibited by our campus community is simply remarkable.

No issue of this magazine would be complete without inspiring stories of UNCP alumni making a difference in the world. Victoria Huggins ’15 has literally become royalty in the Old North State as Miss North Carolina 2017 (pg. 27). Another alumnus highlighted is Jerry Lanier ’74, whose impressive résumé includes U.S. Ambassador to Sudan and Uganda and head of the U.S. State Department’s Counterterrorism Bureau (pg. 31). Their stories serve as a testament to UNCP’s slogan: “You can get there from here.”

In these pages, you’ll also learn about a program that will significantly increase the affordability of college for UNCP students (pg. 11). Beginning in fall 2018, NC Promise will dramatically reduce the cost of undergraduate tuition to $500 for in-state and $2,500 for out-of-state tuition per semester. The difference will be covered by the state of North Carolina’s increased investment in our campus. While NC Promise is an unprecedented opportunity for us to increase access to higher education, UNCP remains solidly committed to serving Robeson County and all of southeastern North Carolina.

Please enjoy the magazine, and visit campus soon. We enjoy seeing our alumni and friends. Whether you live just down the road or halfway around the world, you are always welcome at UNCP. With your help, UNC Pembroke will continue changing lives through education!
The largest gift in the history of The University of North Carolina at Pembroke will propel the university closer to breaking ground on a state-of-the-art facility to house its School of Business.

A landmark $7 million gift from UNCP Board of Trustee member Jim Thomas and his wife, Sally, will transform the campus and have a lasting impact on generations of executives and entrepreneurs.

Sally Thomas has simultaneously gifted $110,000 to the university’s CARE Resource Center – an on-campus resource for students in need of food, clothing and housing assistance.

Pembroke native Jim Thomas is a prominent Los Angeles real estate developer and founder of the Thomas Family Foundation. A one-time owner of the NBA’s Sacramento Kings, he was chairman of the board of Parkway Properties, which merged with Thomas Properties Group, until its recent sale.

The gift will go toward the construction of a $36 million facility that will feature a number of innovative spaces designed to foster 21st century problem-solving.

Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings was elated to announce the historic gift.

“Jim Thomas is credited with transforming the skyline of downtown Los Angeles as a world-renowned real estate developer,” Cummings said. “Now, his and Sally’s historic gift to the UNCP School of Business sets the stage for a transformation of his hometown of Pembroke and the surrounding region.

“On behalf of everyone at UNCP, especially our students, I express our heartfelt appreciation to this remarkable couple for their leadership in this vital project.”

The pledge agreement comprises both current and deferred gifts totaling $7 million. A deferred gift of $3 million for the establishment of a fund to support the maintenance of the building and promote the work of the School of Business will come from the Thomases’ estate. The balance of $4 million is a challenge gift. To receive the latter gift, the university is required to raise an additional $4 million in funding to match the gift.

“We will be asking foundations, corporations, businesses and individuals to help us make this project a reality for our students. I can think of no better way to invest in our region than by making an impact on education and training available to generations of students,” said Cummings.
The Thomas family has supported UNCP’s growth through generous donations spanning three decades. The couple has given substantial gifts to establish the Thomas Family Center for Entrepreneurship and the Thomas Family Endowed Professorship in Entrepreneurship, among others.

Thomas was raised in a home directly across the street from the university. His parents, Earl and Ophelia, both graduated from what was then Pembroke State College, before moving to Ohio in 1952. He received a degree in economics from Baldwin-Wallace University with honors.

He graduated magna cum laude from Cleveland Marshall Law School, where he was editor of the law review. He was a partner in two prominent Los Angeles law firms and served in the Chief Counsel’s Office of the Internal Revenue Service in Seattle and Los Angeles.

His expertise in real estate law, federal income taxes and development issues helped him become one of the nation’s largest mixed-use, commercial and residential developers. His vision was credited by the Los Angeles Times with helping him become one of the nation’s largest mixed-use, commercial and residential developers.

Though he moved away when he was young, Pembroke had a lasting influence on Thomas. He is a frequent visitor to campus and a strong supporter of the annual Entrepreneurship Summit. He chairs the Thomas Family Center for Entrepreneurship’s advisory board. This summer he was appointed to the university’s Board of Trustees by Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger.

To date, the Thomases have given nearly $1 million to the university. Their extensive record of giving includes an endowed scholarship in his parents’ name. The Thomas Assembly Room in the Museum of the Southeast American Indian also honors his parents. The Thomas Family Foundation also made a sizeable donation for upgrades to the Entrepreneurship Incubator.

Jim was awarded an honorary Doctor of Law degree from UNCP after his commencement speech in 1990.

This gift, and the required match, will be added to the $23 million UNCP received from the Connect NC Bond, and the $2 million in Golden LEAF funds, and several major gifts from individuals and businesses, moving UNCP closer to the $36 million needed for construction.

The ultimate goal of the $7 million gift, according to Thomas, is to improve the lives of the citizens of Robeson County.

“This gift is a continuation of what I have tried to do with the entrepreneurship center and the endowed professorship, which is to help the people in the community, to give them a better life by becoming entrepreneurs, and increasing their wealth and well-being,” Thomas said.

“The new business school is also a continuation, in a sense, with the plan to build a modern business center that will be very attractive to students – encouraging them to go into business and learn about business,” he said.

“Resources will be available, as well, to non-business majors who want to understand more about business and finance, and how to manage their money or work toward a career.

“It is my hope that these combined efforts will help the community continue to grow, changing the economic makeup of the region.”

The new facility will include a career center, a fully equipped auditorium, a video conference room, computer lab, trading room, collaborative lounges and study spaces, and a multi-media resource room.

“This gift will further advance the school’s mission of preparing students for a competitive global environment, enhance their learning experience and prepare them to serve as business leaders.”

– DR. BARRY O’BRIEN, DEAN OF THE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

Ben Bahr comes from a family with lofty goals. After all, his father was part of the space program that helped mankind reach the moon. So it should come as little surprise that Bahr wants to achieve something equally ambitious: find a way to eliminate neurodegenerative disorders, such as Alzheimer’s disease.

Bahr, the William C. Friday Chair and Distinguished Professor of Microbiology and Biochemistry at The University of North Carolina at Pembroke, has been recognized as the 2017 Oliver Max Gardner Award winner by the University of North Carolina Board of Governors. The award – the highest honor given by the University and established by the will of former Governor O. Max Gardner – recognizes faculty who have “made the greatest contribution to the welfare of the human race.”

Bahr was presented with the award during the UNC Board of Governors meeting in May 2017.

Bahr’s work is critical if researchers are going to stem neurological diseases. In America, there are more than 5 million people living with Alzheimer’s—a number that could rise to as high as 16 million by 2050. Despite his international reputation as one of the world’s leading experts on neurodegenerative diseases, Bahr knows that it’s going to take the work of many researchers across the globe to overcome conditions such as Alzheimer’s.

“I’ve been very interested in helping people with dementia,” Bahr said. “There are many types of dementia; Alzheimer’s is the most common form of dementia, but there’s Parkinson’s, Huntington’s, ALS. The list is too long, affecting too many people, so we’d like to know exactly how the brain works so we can know more about how memory disorders can occur.”

The work from his lab has been presented in 16 countries, has led to more than 140 scientific publications and has resulted in patents for first-in-class drugs to treat neurodegenerative diseases.

Most recently his lab’s research contributions include:

- Dementia science and related risk factors (Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, frontotemporal dementia);
- Early treatment avenue for pre-Alzheimer’s (mild cognitive impairment);
- Synaptic vulnerability in military blast-induced traumatic brain injury and potential influence on the risk of Alzheimer’s;
- New collaboration to study how a diabetes pathway may treat neurodegenerative disorders;
- Drug discovery efforts to treat different types of dementia.

Power of the Mind

UNC Pembroke’s Dr. Ben Bahr Honored with O. Max Gardner Award for Work in Neurological Research

Dr. Ben Bahr receives O. Max Gardner Award from Chairman Bissette and Pearl Floyd during a Board of Governors’ meeting in May 2017.
NEW UNIVERSITY MACE TELLS THE STORY OF UNC PEMBROKE

The unveiling of the new University Mace at UNC Pembroke evoked feelings of pride for many who attended a dedication ceremony in November.

“It was very moving and humbling,” said UNCP alumnus Anthony Dial, who attended with his wife, Rhonda, and extended family. “It was very emotional.”

Hundreds of people turned out for the unveiling inside the University Center Annex. The event was momentous as more than two dozen attendees, including Dial, were descendants of the university.

Atop the 4-foot-tall mace is a 13-inch red-tailed hawk, UNCP’s mascot. The hawk’s dual position — taking flight or landing — symbolizes UNC Pembroke students taking flight to soar into the future as alumni who return home to reconnect with their alma mater.

The hawk is plated in 24-karat gold. The gold-plated pinecone footer pays tribute to the longleaf pine tree.

The staff, which was crafted of wood sourced from the Lumber River basin, is adorned with the university seal, tobacco leaves, pine needle basket weave and pinecone patchwork designs.

The mace pays homage to the university’s founders whose names are detailed on the head.

The mace was designed by a committee led by chair of the art department, Carla Rokes. Each component was developed by local artisans.

The mace was carried by Dr. Cherry Maynor Basley, the 2017 UNC Board of Governors Excellence in Teaching Award winner.

TALEY STRICKLAND CROWNED MISS UNCP

Taley Strickland has served as ambassador since her freshman year at The University of North Carolina at Pembroke. The senior mass communication major from Pembroke recently accepted a more visible role on campus when she was crowned Miss UNCP 2018 in front of more than 1,100 people at Givens Performing Arts Center on February 1.

“I am really excited to serve as the new Miss UNCP. This is something that I have been working so hard toward. I feel like I have been representing UNCP with my involvement on campus for the past three years. However, I am excited to take on a more official role.”

She received a $2,000 scholarship, free student housing and a meal plan for one year. She also took home the Beissie Barnes Overcoming the Odds Scholarship.

Bryana Carrington was first runner-up. Jamielyn Johnson was second runner-up. Jasmine Carion won Miss Congeniality. Chenoa Emanuel took home both the Kelsey Cummings Spirit Award and the Community Choice Award.

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BRAVE HEALTH CENTER OPENS

With a snip from the giant ceremonial scissors, UNC Pembroke reaffirmed its commitment to provide students with quality health care.

A grand opening ceremony was held April 2017 for the Brave Health Center. The 11,532-square-foot building houses Student Health Services and Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS).

Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings said buildings on a university campus serve more than a functional purpose. A university’s facilities represent institutional priorities and obligations.

“With the Brave Health Center, UNC Pembroke has a facility that proudly and properly represents our long-standing commitment to the health and well-being of our students,” Cummings said.

The university has provided health services to its students for more than 60 years. However, Student Health Services outgrew its former facility.

Through new technology, advanced medical equipment and an increase in space, the Brave Health Center will better serve students. Lisa Schaeffer, vice chancellor for Student Affairs, said the vision for the $4 million center has been 10 years in the making.

“The vision was to create a facility that is welcoming and that supports collaboration between these two essential departments, as well as the Pembroke community,” Schaeffer said. “We are thrilled to finally get to this day.”

Student Health Services occupies the first floor, and CAPS is on the second floor. The new building offers a confidential and professional setting for students who receive counseling services.

During the ceremony, two local donors were recognized for their support of the Brave Health Center. The Student Health Director’s Office has been named in honor of Cora Bullard.

At the front of the Health Center, lies a 1,500-square-foot serenity garden, which lends itself to solitude and reflection.

The serenity garden was made possible thanks to the generosity of Dr. Kenneth and Michelle Locklear. Kenneth, a UNCP graduate, has served the Red Springs community as a family physician for 35 years.

Spectators got a glimpse of the future as UNC Pembroke hosted the 2018 FIRST Robotics district competition March 17-18.

The competition drew 37 teams from high schools across North Carolina, including teams from Lumberton, Laurinburg and Southern Pines. Students spent six weeks to conceptualize, design, build, program, modify and test a robot to participate in a competition that changes each year. The teams then take their creation to regional or district competitions prior to the FIRST Championship.

The Pitt Pirates from Greenville were the overall winner. The RobCoBots from the Robeson Early College placed fifth and took home the Imagery Award.

Talea Strickland

(Taley Strickland was crowned Miss UNCP 2018.)
Former State Sen. David Weinstein was joined by more than 100 friends and family to celebrate the naming of the Health Sciences Building in his honor.

A ceremony to reveal the David F. Weinstein Health Sciences Building, now permanently etched across the glass front, was held May 17.

The building is home to the undergraduate and graduate nursing and social work departments. During his 13 years as a senator, Weinstein guided a $6.9 million special appropriation to build the first new residence hall in 25 years. From a successful $2 billion bond referendum, Weinstein carved out $5.7 million that transformed the university.

Weinstein joined the university’s Board of Trustees in 1992 and served two years as chairman. He served until his selection to the General Assembly in 1997. The former Lumberton mayor was instrumental in changing the name of the university, which helped boost enrollment.

Weinstein has repeatedly proclaimed, and again during the ceremony, that the funding of the Health Sciences Building was his greatest accomplishment as a legislator.

“I continue to believe that UNCP is the jewel in the crown of southeastern North Carolina,” he said. “This is an honor I will never forget.”

Weinstein was joined by his wife, Bobbie; his son, Aaron; daughter, Melinda; and nephews, David and Dajer Fernandez, student body president, and Kimberly Gold, a professor in the Bretton Department of Communications.

“Senator Weinstein has been a monumental game changer for this university,” said Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings. “David Weinstein recognized the need for trained health care professionals in this region. Whenever he went to Raleigh, he went to work for us,” he said. “That is the result of this building, which is the largest construction project in university history.”

Sen. Weinstein was awarded the first Alumni Association Special Award of Distinction in 2010. He established a $25,000 endowed nursing scholarship in 2013. He also established the Max Weinstein Endowed Scholarship in History, in honor of his father.

The Health Sciences Building in his honor.

“NC Promise tuition does not apply to students in graduate programs. Dajer Fernandez, student body president, says NC Promise is more than an opportunity for UNCP to provide an even more affordable education. It provides a basis and push for the university to renew and re-energize its programs to better serve its population.

“NC Promise is about providing opportunities and allowing students to focus on the main reasons they came to college.”
NEW APPOINTMENTS AT UNC PEMBROKE

James “Jim” Thomas and Jack Lowery were appointed by the state General Assembly to the UNCP Board of Trustees. Thomas and Lowery are both Pembroke natives and loyal supporters of the university. Lowery is a 1958 graduate, while Thomas holds an honorary doctorate degree from his hometown university.

Allen Jamerson, a two-time UNCP graduate, and Mary Ann Elliott, who was raised in Lumberton, were also appointed to the Board of Trustees last summer. Jamerson is a retired Air Force brigadier general. After his retirement in 2016, he served as director of Security Forces, Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics, Engineering and Force Protection for the U.S. Air Force.

Elliott, an expert in military satellite communications, has been instrumental in the founding and funding of six firms, including Arrowhead Global Solutions, Inc.

Dr. James “Jim” Jones is serving as board chair for the 2017-2018 academic year. A Pembroke native, Jones was honored as the 2017 Distinguished Alumni Award recipient at Wake Forest University. He founded the family medicine program at East Carolina University and was the first American Indian to graduate from Wake Forest and the Bowman Gray School of Medicine.

REMEMBERING DR. MARTIN BROOKS: RESPECTED COMMUNITY LEADER AND UNCP SUPPORTER

Dr. Martin Brooks was considered one of the most influential physicians and respected community leaders in Robeson County. He was the longest practicing Lumbee doctor, opening his practice in Pembroke in 1958.

After earning degrees from the University of Michigan, Brooks returned home to embark on a remarkable career of caring for others, regardless of ethnicity, religion or disability. He was a loyal supporter of UNC Pembroke and its mission, serving as its representative to the UNCP Board of Trustees since 1961.

Brooks passed away on January 4. He was 88.

He opened Brooks Medical Clinic, directly beside his home. From 1961 to 1973, he was the only doctor in Pembroke.

A trusted leader and a community activist, Brooks gave his time and effort to several professional memberships and elected offices. He fought against racial discrimination and played a major role in breaking the practice of double-voting, a political tool used during the Robeson County Board of Education elections in the 1960s. He was the first American Indian on the medical staff at Southeastern Regional Medical Center. A doctor’s lounge is named in his honor.

He was a charter member of Lumbee Guaranty Bank and dedicated 20 years to the Robeson County branches of NAACP.

He was awarded the Order of the Long Leaf Pine by Gov. Michael Easley in 2006. He was also the recipient of the Henry Berry Lowry Award, the highest honor bestowed on a member of the Lumbee Tribe.

“Dr. Brooks was a man of great integrity and was unwilling to let others suffer,” said UNCP Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings.

GETTING AHEAD IN THE BUSINESS WORLD

UNCP Trustee Mary Ann Elliott is an internationally renowned satellite communications entrepreneur. As one of the nation’s top female satellite communications executives, Elliott understands that a qualified workforce is needed to drive the economy of southeastern North Carolina.

That was among the factors motivating the donation of $500,000 toward the new multimillion-dollar facility to house the School of Business at UNCP. A career center in the new facility will be named The Mary Ann Elliott Business Career Center in her honor.

Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings commended Elliott for her generosity and firm belief in the mission of the university. “Given Mary Ann Elliott’s leadership and remarkable accomplishments in her field, she knows how to get ahead in the business world,” said Cummings.

“She understands the importance of interpersonal and team dynamic skills that UNC Pembroke’s Business Career Center will develop in our students. Mary Ann’s generous gift distinguishes our School of Business and enhances its impact by providing vital, value-added resources outside of the classroom to help our students excel.”

The Career Center will provide opportunities for business students to develop their professional skills, learn soft skills necessary for success, build and review their résumés, and provide appropriate resources to turn their practical education into careers.

“Elliott envisions the future School of Business enhancing UNCP’s reputation for producing qualified graduates who are ready to embark on careers with the right skills and background. The Career Center is vital in taking the education background of our students and turning it into a job and a way forward. Far too often, when young people graduate from college, they don’t have a clear path on how to apply for jobs. They lack an understanding of how hard it is to apply for multiple jobs and everything from needing their résumé to knowing who to write thank you letters, etc. Each of these aspects is vital to getting a job,” Elliott said. “Minor things can become major when applying for a job. I anticipate the Career Center’s influence will prepare these students for long and successful futures.”

The announcement of a new facility is welcome for current business students like senior Michelle Kasperski.

“We have a lovely faculty, hardworking students, but need a space in which we can optimize both. I believe the new building will provide our students the much-needed space, technologies and resources necessary to succeed academically and professionally. It will enhance and multiply the abilities of our already-talented faculty to develop and prepare students for the ever-changing, increasingly complex and technologically dependent business world,” said Kasperski.

Mary Ann Elliott Donates $500,000 to School of Business

The new building will mean the difference between obtaining a job versus still out there looking. For many of the students, especially international students or young people coming from underprivileged backgrounds, it is the difference between them succeeding and failing,” Elliott added.

Mary Ann Elliott’s generous gift is the latest in a long line of philanthropic support that has helped to build and sustain UNCP’s School of Business.

“I ANTICIPATE THE CAREER CENTER’S INFLUENCE WILL PREPARE UNCP STUDENTS FOR LONG AND SUCCESSFUL FUTURES.”

– MARY ANN ELLIOTT

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UNC Pembroke Graduate Student Honored As

2017 Newman Civic Fellow

Natural Breeden, a graduate student at The University of North Carolina at Pembroke, has been named a member of Campus Compact’s 2017 class of Newman Civic Fellows.

Campus Compact, a Boston-based nonprofit organization working to advance the public purposes of higher education, recently announced the 273 students who made up the 2017 cohort.

At UNC Pembroke, Breeden is a leader in the university’s efforts to address hunger and homelessness. The Master of Social Work student manages the university’s CARE Resource Center, which provides food and clothing assistance to students, faculty and staff in need.

Breeden recently worked with the Office for Community and Civic Engagement to establish an off-campus emergency housing program for homeless students. As the manager of this initiative, she was tasked with developing the policies and procedures for the program and housing facility, and works with a community-based organization to provide day-to-day oversight of the facility.

“Natural approaches her service with a level of professionalism, compassion and maturity that inspires her peers and has earned her the distinction as one of UNC Pembroke’s most impactful student leaders,” said UNC Pembroke’s Office of Community Engagement leader in the Office for Community and Civic Engagement, he has expanded UNC’s number of community partnerships, managed the online UNCP Serve volunteer system and led a group of students on an alternative fall break experience in Black Mountain, where they addressed issues such as homelessness and adoption.

He has also found time to create UNCP Votes!, a nonpartisan project designed to engage his fellow students in voting. In 2016, he and a team of students registered 200 students, garnered 600 voting pledges and held 11 voter engagement events.

“I have come to recognize that a lot of people have a voice and opinions,” he said. “If these people are voting, then their voices are being heard. So I am trying to organize individuals to ensure they are being heard.”

“Though I did not start the pantry, I have had a hand in developing a robust program that addresses a serious need on our campus and in our community.”

Breeden assisted with establishing the emergency housing program for students. Since opening, they have provided housing for 11 students who would have otherwise been homeless.

“The cultivation of community-committed leaders has never been more crucial,” said Campus Compact President Andrew Seligsohn. “We rebuilt the Newman Civic Fellowship experience because our country needs more people who know how to bring communities together for positive change.”

The Newman Civic Fellowship is supported by the KPMG Foundation and Newman’s Own Foundation.
Synergy is defined as the combined power of a group of things when they are working together that is greater than the total power achieved by each working separately. In essence, it means that you can have all of the star power in the world, but it does not equate to success if each player is not working together for the ultimate goals of the team they represent.

Synergy was a common theme for UNC Pembroke’s athletic teams during the 2016-17 athletic season as two teams – men’s basketball and men’s track & field – combined their efforts to bring home each program’s first-ever Peach Belt Conference championships. Three other teams – baseball, women’s soccer and women’s track & field – recorded runner-up showings during the regular season or at their respective PBC Championship events.

The men’s basketball team used a late run to secure its first conference title in 27 years. The Braves won the last seven athletics games of the regular season and eventually clinched a share of the league’s regular season and East Division titles with a dominant 24-point victory over Francis Marion in front of a sold-out crowd at Lumbee Guaranty Bank Court. Three days later, the Braves began an unblemished run through the PBC Tournament by toughing out an 87-83 win over North Georgia, and then cemented greatness just more than a week after that with a convincing win over Columbus State in the championship game.

The men’s track & field team all but dominated the weekend at the 2017 track & field championships. The Braves collected six individual titles over the three-day event and, despite sitting in second place following opening-day action, used a valiant effort on the second and third day of the event to top the rest of the seven-team field by 34 points. Newcomer Silus Kipkoech picked up both track athlete and freshman track athlete of the year notoriety, while head coach Peter Ormsby was named PBC Coach of the Year for the second time in three seasons. It was the first conference title for the program since it won 11-straight Conference Carolinas titles from 1977-87.

Coming off a runner-up finish in the league standings in 2016, the women’s soccer team rallied behind a nearly unbreakable defense to log 15 victories, including a trio of 1-0 shutouts that highlighted an unblemished run through the PBC Tournament. In the tournament championship game against then-No. 10 Columbus State, the Braves went out in front for good on a 20-minute penalty kick by Christine Rolfes and fought off eight shots on goal by the Cougars to secure the 17-year-old program’s first PBC title. Sophomore Gina Ryan claimed tournament most valuable player accolades, and was joined on the all-tournament team by Shannon O’Neill and Alexis Pittman. Head coach Lars Andersson and assistant Brittany Padilla would later be named as the United Soccer Coaches Association’s region coaching staff of the year.

The conference championships were just a small taste of the success that the athletics department enjoyed during the 2016-17 season – a run that eventually translated into a third place finish in the final PBC Commissioner’s Cup standings. That was the best finish for the Black & Gold in the 24 years it has been a member of the league. UNCP made the transition to NCAA Division II and the then-Peach Belt Athletic Conference prior to the 1992-93 athletic season after a very prominent history in the ranks of the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA).

Seven UNCP squads finished in fourth or better in the final PBC standings, including two squads that registered or matched their highest league finish in program history. The men’s basketball team, which won a share of the PBC’s East Division title in 2014-15, finished in a tie for first with Augusta in the final regular season standings, while the women’s soccer team shared second place with North Georgia after recording a 9-1-2
UNCP Athletics: More Than 400 Student-Athletes Make a Difference for UNCP's Club Today!

The Braves led the All-Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) recognition, the wrestling squad sent a league-best five student-athletes to send six or more student-athletes to all-PBC honors. In addition, the baseball team, which closed out the regular season with 16 victories in its last 18 outings (includes school record 14-game win streak), were one of just three teams to boast three NCAA Playoff appearances in their first 10 years of existence, while Blaze Shade made his second straight appearance in the national championship match at the NCAA Division II Wrestling Championships to give the program its fourth national finalist in the last six seasons. The Braves made their presence felt on the national stage during the 2016-17 season as well. Six teams made NCAA postseason appearances, including three squads that were represented by individuals at their respective sport’s NCAA Championships. The men’s basketball team earned an NCAA Tournament berth for the fourth time in the last seven seasons, while the baseball team grabbed its first NCAA Tournament berth since 2011 after topping the 40-win plateau for the second time in the last seven years as well. The football team became just the second team in NCAA Division II history to boast three NCAA Playoff appearances in their first 10 years of existence, as the Braves Club is the foundation of a successful career. His experiences as an alumnus, fan or both, you are an integral part of providing our student-athletes with a Championship Experience for our student-athletes. Braves Club members receive unique benefits at a variety of giving levels. We look forward to having you as part of the Championship Experience at UNCP.

For more information on the Braves Club and how to make an impact on students and employers across our area and beyond.

JOIN THE BRAVES CLUB TODAY! MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR UNCP’S MORE THAN 400 STUDENT-ATHLETES.

For more information on the Braves Club, please contact the Office of Advancement at 910.775.4339 or at braves.club@uncp.edu.

MEL ’84 AND TERESA GARDNER COMMIT $1 MILLION TO ESTABLISH ACCOUNTING PROFESSORSHIP

Mel Gardner ’84 and Teresa Gardner of Pembroke have established an endowed professorship in the School of Business at UNCP. The endowed professorship will give UNCP an edge in attracting faculty members, says Barry O’Brien ’75, dean of the School of Business. "Recruiting qualified faculty in accounting can be challenging for a dean because they’re in short supply. Making it even more special for O’Brien is the fact that Mel Gardner was one of his students. "I am so proud of his incredible success and very thankful for his generosity to our alma mater."
Wyatt Upchurch has reaped the rewards from running one of the region’s largest turkey hatchery operations. Since retired, this business leader and turkey farmer-turned-philanthropist has chosen to invest in southeastern North Carolina’s future through UNCP’s vision for a new School of Business building.

Upchurch and his wife, Mary, are donating $1 million toward the construction of a $36 million building that will house the School of Business.

“This gift will be an asset to the university and an asset for us to give to the university.”

The Upchurch Auditorium in the new building will be named in honor of their late son Wyatt Jeffrey Upchurch, who died in 1976 after battling acute lymphoblastic leukemia. He was 16.

The state-of-the-art School of Business building will be built near the main entrance of campus. Included in the plans are a career center, auditorium, a video conference room, computer lab, trading room and a multimedia resource room.

“We are overjoyed to be a part of this project,” Wyatt said. “I know it will be successful because of the support it has received from the chancellor and others.”

Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings said the university cannot thank the Raeford couple enough for their investment in the lives of our students.

“As pillars of agribusiness, Wyatt and Mary Upchurch made massive contributions to our region’s economy and laid the groundwork for a thriving food-production industry that provides so many livelihoods today.

“We wanted to do something in memory of our son,” he said. “We did some research and felt like this would be the best opportunity for him to be remembered for a long time.”

The Metzgers are contributing $150,000 to the School of Business. As part of the gift agreement, an administrative suite in the future building will be named in the Lumberton couple’s honor.

“This gift will be an asset to the university and an asset for us to give to the university.”

The Upchurches will continue to drive job creation and investment in southeastern North Carolina for generations to come.

“Linda and I have both been blessed, and over the years we have tried to share the gifts that we have received with others,” said Don Metzger, a retired business owner and former Lumberton city councilman.

“We have a passion for higher education, and we wanted to do something for the new business school because we believe it will have a dramatic impact on the future of the institution and the community as a whole.

“We consider it to be a privilege to be a part of the vision being shaped by this administration, the chancellor, as well as the Board of Trustees,” he said.

“This incredibly generous gift is the latest demonstration of Don and Linda’s unwavering commitment to UNC Pembroke,” said UNCP Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings.

“We truly believe in the mission and the purpose of the university, and we want to continue to do whatever we can to support it.”

— DON AND LINDA METZGER

“We would be hard-pressed to find stronger champions of the university’s mission. Their investment demonstrates a passion to help others, to see our region grow and to assist in the education of untold business students for generations to come.”

The Metzgers have been strong advocates of UNCP for many years. Trustee Metzger has served on the Board of Trustees since 2013 and is presently the vice chair.

Linda, a successful longtime real estate broker and former Robeson Community College trustee, has watched the university grow since moving to Lumberton in 1971.

The couple are loyal supporters of UNCP athletics and the Given Performing Arts Center. Two of their granddaughters — Lauren and Molly — are UNCP alumni.

UNCP Trustee Don Metzger and wife, Linda, contribute $150K to UNCP’s School of Business
"There just aren’t enough doctors here," he said. "We all have a go-to mechanic. We need a go-to doctor or nurse, or someone in any aspect of medical science."

To help fill this void, he established the Leonard and Hickory Holmes Medical Career Endowed Scholarship at UNC Pembroke. The $425,000 scholarship will fund four scholarships per academic year for American Indian students studying either chemistry, physics or nursing. To be eligible, the student must maintain a 3.7 GPA, be a graduate of a Robeson County high school and reside in North Carolina. The scholarship honors Holmes' son, Hickory, an Oregon farmer.

"How it makes common sense," Holmes said. "I love UNC Pembroke. I love the community. I’m not from this state, but this state accepted me and took me in and gave me a chance to make a living, so I feel indebted to the state, but this state accepted me and, in general, and UNCP, in particular.

"I’ve been working at a Native American school for 26 years ... it’s time to give something back."

Dr. Holmes said he foresees scholarship recipients opening or piling local practices, thus advancing the medical profession sector in the county and throughout the region.

"We need more of our local students to enter into the sciences, math and nursing," said Pembroke physician, Dr. Chamaire Brooks-Locklear. "So anything we can get to help our students financially is vital. College tuition and fees are a barrier for so many students. To have a scholarship designed specifically for science majors is wonderful."

Aside from teaching and researching, Holmes serves as an ambassador for UNC Pembroke. He has traveled overseas many times, including trips to India and multiple visits to Siberia and China. In October, he traveled to Tbilisi, the capital of the Republic of Georgia, and presented research conducted at UNCP.

Holmes moved to North Carolina to teach chemistry at The University of North Carolina at Pembroke. He fell in love with the university and the local community, particularly the American Indian community.

"The Lumbee people have been good to me," he said. "I love them. After 26 years, I can relate to their culture.

Living in Robeson County for more than two decades, Holmes also recognized the need for medical professionals in this area.

Education has been a priority of AT&T for more than a century. The University of North Carolina at Pembroke is on the receiving end of AT&T’s latest philanthropic support of higher education. AT&T – the world’s largest telecommunications company – is contributing $30,000 to provide scholarships for UNCP students beginning in fall 2018.

A portion of the gift — $5,000 — will be used to support the university’s CARE Resource Center, an on-campus resource for students in need of food, clothing and housing assistance.

"At AT&T, we see supporting education as investing in the future, for a well-educated workforce may be the single most important thing businesses can do to help North Carolina succeed in a digital, global economy," said John Lyon, regional director of external affairs for AT&T North Carolina.

"UNC Pembroke is not only helping students pursue their dreams and prepare for the future, but it is making a difference in lives today through the CARE Resource Center. We appreciate the opportunity to support those efforts," Lyon said.

Lyon took part in a check presentation ceremony on campus on December 9.

"UNC Pembroke is grateful for AT&T’s investment in our mission of changing lives through education," said Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings.

"Their generosity – a model for corporate philanthropy – will advance our shared commitment of driving economic development and positive change in southeastern North Carolina."

The funds will provide up to 25 need and/or merit-based scholarships ranging from $500 to $1,500.

Headquartered in Dallas, Texas, AT&T Inc. is a multi-national conglomerate holding company and is one of the nation’s leading investors in networks, communities, people and jobs.

"This funding will be used to support our efforts to alleviate hunger and address homelessness on campus. The CARE Resource Center is supported solely by donations and contributions from partners like AT&T," said Christie Potest, director of the Office for Community and Civic Engagement.

"Without their support, it would be difficult for us to address the needs of students in this way. We are very thankful for the continued investment in our program, students and campus, as it makes it a little easier for students to be successful."

The center – which is primarily managed by student workers and volunteers – prepares boxes of food, toys, hygiene products and clothing during Thanksgiving and Christmas to support community agencies.
Service to the local community, state and nation, as well as a steadfast belief in education, have been central themes in the lives of J.T. and Vera Doris Locklear Malcolm ’67. They raised seven children together in Robeson County, displaying the values of dedication and hard work.

The J.T. and Vera Doris Locklear Malcolm Endowed Scholarship in Education has been established by David Malcolm ’92, Joseph E. Malcolm ’87, Joshua D. Malcolm ’92 and Caleb A. Malcolm ’97 to honor their parents. Education majors in music or reading or cadets in any major who are in the U.S. Army or Air Force ROTC programs will be eligible for the scholarship.

J.T. Malcolm served 27 years as an enlisted soldier in the Tennessee Army National Guard and the U.S. Army with tours in Korea and Vietnam. He was also stationed in several other foreign countries and military posts in the United States. He attended Robeson Community College (RCC) after retirement from the Army, obtaining his General Education Diploma. He later worked for RCC for 10 years, retiring as a state employee.

Vera Malcolm was raised in Robeson County. A first generation college student, she graduated from Pembroke State College and later earned a master’s degree in reading education from Appalachian State University. She was a music educator in public schools in Robeson County for 25 years, including 23 years in eight different Robeson County schools. She was active in a variety of community groups, including the Robeson Civic Chorale, Pembroke Men’s Chorus and Pembroke Women’s Chorus.

She spent more than 40 years as the pianist at Mt. Olive Pentecostal Holiness Church in Pembroke.

THE LEONARD AND HILDEY HOLMES MEDICAL CAREERS ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIP
Established by Dr. Stanley Holmes, professor of Chemistry and Physics at UNCP, this endowed scholarship pays for four years in chemistry, physics and career.
s alumni, one of the most important things we can do is remain active in the life of the University. If you live close by, encourage you to visit campus often, attend some of the wonderful cultural events at GPAC or support our Braves at an athletic contest. If your life after your UNCP student days has taken you away from the local area, you can still stay involved! Make it a point to come back to campus for special events, such as Homecoming, and encourage other alumni to do the same. Ask the Office of Alumni Engagement about opportunities to host a UNCP event in your area.

Near or far, there are plenty of ways to stay connected to UNCP if you’re willing to involve your fellow alumni. With our 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 will remain strong well into the future.

Best wishes,

Owen Thomas ’11, ’13
President, Alumni Association Board of Directors

UNCP TODAY SPRING 2018

UNCP ALUMNA VICTORIA HUGGINS PURSUING THE ULTIMATE CROWN

“The asked a question that I had never encountered in my previous nearly 30 years of instructing undergraduates: She asked how I preferred to be addressed? Talk about a strong first impression,” Dehart thought. “Typically, undergraduates never think about these things … that Victoria would raise this question on the first day of class suggested to me that she was a different type of undergraduate, one who was cognizant of things which, while they may seem inconsequential, are, in fact, quite consequential,” Dehart said.

Dehart wasn’t the only UNCP professor blown away by Huggins’ bubbly and infectious personality, drive, charisma and self-motivation. During her studies at UNCP – 2011 to 2015 – she left an indelible mark on many across campus, and especially in the Mass Communication department.

The 23-year-old UNCP alumna graced the brightest of the pageant stages in September as she competed for the 2018 Miss America title in Atlantic City. Though she didn’t come home with the crown, Huggins said it was one of the best experiences of her life.

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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, I am ready to build and strengthen our beloved University of North Carolina at Pembroke.

Alumni Engagement about opportunities to host a UNCP event in your area. Near or far, there are plenty of ways to stay connected to UNCP if you’re willing to involve your fellow alumni. With our 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 will remain strong well into the future.

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“Young Victoria Dehart is a World-Citizen,” says UNCP history professor Bruce Dehart. "She is a woman who has a global perspective on the world and a personal connection to her roots. She possesses a unique ability to combine her personal experiences with her academic pursuits, making her an exceptional student and an asset to our university. Her dedication to learning and her passion for sharing her experiences with others make her a truly remarkable student."
As a young girl growing up in St. Pauls, Huggins knew she wanted to attend UNC Pembroke. The Pembroke campus was among the many places she would perform. And she has remained involved in activities on campus over the years.

The fact that her grandmother, Sybil Huggins, earned a master's degree from UNCP made her decision that much easier. "It was very special to continue her legacy," she said.

At UNCP, Huggins studied broadcast journalism. She was very active on campus, serving as president of the Lambda Sigma Honor Society and a member of Theta Alpha Kappa National Honor Society of Religious Studies and Theology.

Huggins' most proud accomplishment, however, was being a part of the inaugural group of Chancellor's Ambassadors, an honor organization comprised of exemplary graduate and undergraduate students. "That was one of my greatest honors while at UNCP," she said.

Her professors recall her as ambitious, always prepared, engaged and enthusiastic. "I cannot say enough good things about Victoria Huggins - the person and the student," Dehart said. "I felt so honored to have had the opportunity to teach her. Furthermore, I am so happy for all that she has accomplished since her graduation from UNCP. Victoria is an outstanding representative of The University of North Carolina at Pembroke."

As a broadcast major, Huggins spent most of her days in Old Main — home of the campus newspaper and WNCP-TV, a student-led television station. At WNCP, she worked her way from news anchor to reporter, where she was responsible for creating a weekly show from scratch, managing a team of student reporters and coaching the studio crew.

"She's the only student to win all three broadcasting awards from the Mass Communication department, and she racked those up three years in a row," said Dr. Jamie Litty, department chair. Huggins received the James A. Comstock Memorial Scholarship awarded to broadcast majors working at the university TV station.

She graduated with cum laude honors and earned a double minor in musical theatre and religion. She landed a job as a Morning News producer with WECT in Wilmington.

She is currently enrolled at Johns Hopkins University, studying government with an emphasis in political communication. She would love to work as a political analyst with a national news network.

Reflecting on her UNCP experience, Huggins said she gained a new family. "The element I love and appreciate the most about UNCP is that my professors mean more to me than just educators," she said. "I consider them my UNCP family. It is so humbling for them to still be invested in my life and continuing to mentor me as I begin my career as a broadcast journalist."

"I wouldn't be the woman I am today without my family, my community and my university behind me."

– VICTORIA HUGGINS

Huggins was crowned Miss North Carolina in June. Two of her first congratulatory letters were from Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings and former Chancellor Kyle Carter. "That meant the world to me," she said.

Judge James Lockemy '71 Delivers 2017 Commencement Address

Judge James Lockemy, UNCP alumnus, delivered the keynote address to more than 692 new alumni for The University of North Carolina at Pembroke spring 2017 Commencement. Lockemy, class of 1971, urged the graduates to seek a career that represents their passion, not just the need for a job.

"As you go forth, go forth with passion," Lockemy said. "Whatever you choose to do, keep passion in your life. It does not matter what profession you choose or what road you take. Passion is the important ingredient in happiness and a productive life."

Lockemy serves as chief judge of the South Carolina Court of Appeals, the second highest court in the state. He served 18 years as a Circuit Court judge before he was elected to the Court of Appeals in 2008. He was elected as chief judge in May 2018. He is only the fifth chief judge of the South Carolina Court of Appeals.

A native of Dillon, S.C., Lockemy has had an exceptional career in the military, law, politics and civic life.

During a recent interview, Lockemy reflected on his experience at what was then known as Pembroke State University. "It taught me human nature, and it made me realize we're all human beings who can make mistakes," he said.

Lockemy would go on to receive a law degree from the University of South Carolina School of Law. He served 30 years in the military, including a tour of duty in Kosovo, before retiring as a full colonel in the National Guard. He began his professional career as a legislative assistant to U.S. Sen. Strom Thurmond. He later served as legal counsel to a subcommittee on the Senate Judiciary Committee.

In 1979, Lockemy returned to Dillon and entered private practice with the law firm of Greene, Lockemy and Bailey. He served two terms in the South Carolina House of Representatives and, in 1989, began an 18-year stint as a state Circuit Court judge.

He is a former president of the National Guard Association of South Carolina and the Circuit Court Judges Association. He is also a member of the executive committee of the National Conference of State Trial Judges and the National Conference of Appellate Court Judges. In 1989, he was named Dillon County Citizen of the Year.

In 2012, the UNCP Alumni Association presented Lockemy with the Distinguished Service Award. That same year, he earned a master's degree in history from The Citadel.
Resource Center in UNCP's Office of Community and Civic Engagement. "I never knew I could follow my passion to help people who are homeless through social work," said Breeden. "Figure out what excites you, what drives you, and then work hard for it."

The alumni panelists represented some of the top academic majors chosen by current and recent UNCP students, including business administration, biology, criminal justice, exercise/sport science, and pre-nursing. The panelists were:

- Dr. Chelsea Thomas '99 - Physical Therapist
- Crystal Moore '06 - Nurse Practitioner at UNCP, pursuing a doctorate in nursing at Duke University
- Natural Breeden '18 - UNCP graduate student; manages the CARE Resource Center in the Office of Community and Civic Engagement
- Dr. Shelli B rewington '99 - Podiatrist at Cape Fear Podiatry
- Chase Johnson '15 - Sales/Account Manager, Contempora Fabrics, Inc.
- Robert Phillips '97 - Teacher and filmmaker; recently produced "Teacher of the Year," a documentary film from At Large Productions
- Caleb A. Malcolm '97 - LREMC Vice President of Information Technologies and Retired, Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Air Force

CLASS OF 2014
UNCP named Laura Bird is among 2016 MedServe Fellows participating in a training program in Chapil Hill MedServe, a first-of-its-kind program created by medical school and business school students from UNC-Chapel Hill and Duke. It will pair 13 outstanding recent college graduates with primary care clinics in rural or underserved parts of North Carolina for two years of immersive service beginning in the summer of 2016.

CLASS OF 2015
At graduation from UNCP in May 2015, Monica Espitia moved to New York City to start a master’s in international reporting at the CUNY Graduate School of Journalism. As part of the school’s curriculum, Espitia has been covering a wide array of news ranging from hyperlocal to international. She graduated in December 2016.

CLASS OF 2016
James P. Locklear, a graduate of Delta Chi, a three-sport athlete at West Columbus High School. He came to what was then known as Pembroke State University. Kirill Bumin's political science class. Lanier toured the campus and dined with Chancellor Robin Gary Cummings, faculty and staff. Raised in nearby Chadburn, Lanier was a three-sport athlete at West Columbus High School. He came to what was then known as Pembroke State University on a baseball scholarship. Shortly after his graduation, he was named the school's Athlete of the Year.
scholarship in 1970. He was a relief pitcher under Hall of Fame coach Harold Ellen. Off the field, Lanier had plans to go to law school. Those plans changed after his professor, Dr. John Chay, introduced him to diplomatic history.

“Diplomatic history class I took at UNC Pembroke got me interested in what I am doing today,” Lanier said. “Dr. Chay was an inspiration.”

During that semester in 1972, Chay brought Lanier to a foreign affairs conference at the University of Maryland.

“Dr. Chay saw something in me,” Lanier said. “I became more interested in diplomatic history because of him and his passion for the subject he taught. It was his willingness to help a student like me. I still have the textbook from that course.”

Lanier earned a history degree in 1974 and went on to obtain a master’s degree from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He taught history for three years at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte before joining the U.S. Department of State as a Foreign Service officer specializing in African affairs.

From 1983 to 2001, Lanier carried out several assignments in Washington, D.C., and overseas. He served as special assistant to the Assistant Secretary for African Affairs, country officer for the Republic of Korea, Legislative Management Officer for Africa and deputy director for the Office of West African Affairs. In 2001, he was appointed Foreign Policy Advisor to the Commander of U.S. forces during peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and worked with the military to implement the Dayton Peace Agreement. Shortly after the September 11 terrorist attacks, Lanier was assigned as deputy director for the Office of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh Affairs. He worked out of Washington, D.C., and managed and edited the drafting of briefing and policy documents for the State Department as well as the White House leadership.

From 2003 to 2006, he was the deputy Chief of Mission for the U.S. Embassy in Ghana. There he oversaw a staff of 300 U.S. and local employees and a budget of $350 million.

Lanier returned to Washington, D.C., in 2006 and served as director of the Africa Bureau Office of Regional and Security Affairs. In 2007, he was the first Foreign Policy Advisor for U.S. Africa Command headquartered in Stuttgart, Germany. He held that position until 2009.

In 2009, President Obama appointed Lanier as U.S. Ambassador to Uganda, where he led an embassy that included nine agencies and 400 U.S. and local staff. He served as ambassador for three years and later served in the same role in Sudan from 2014 to 2016.

As an ambassador and head of the U.S. Embassy, Lanier was responsible for implementing the president’s foreign policy, protecting American citizens and visitors living in that country, and being an advocate for American businesses.

Lanier also served on the faculty at the Dwight Eisenhower School at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C. He taught courses on national security issues to military and civilian leaders. Being raised in a rural area where he learned “how to deal with ordinary people” would pay dividends for Lanier later in life.

“You learned to get along with people in these small towns,” he said. “In Chadbourn, there’s only one guy who could fix your furnace if it went out in the middle of winter. You don’t burn your bridges with people. This is what diplomats do. You learn to get along and find ways to work together.”

Recalling his days as a student, Lanier said UNC Pembroke was a friendly environment. “I always tell people … what you learn here … use it as an asset,” he said. “Use the personal relationships that you build here. That’s what’s really important.”

“You can learn a lot of things online and in books, but cultivate the people and maintain your friendships,” Lanier said.

“For people in this region, we should be proud to have UNC Pembroke as an asset. The leaders at this university should be commended for making the adjustments to make it easier for people in these small towns and rural areas to have access to education.”

– JERRY LANIER

RETIRED U.S. AMBASSADOR

CLASS OF 2001

S&A Communications, a full-service integration communications firm, has promoted Jennifer Casey to senior graphic designer. In this new position, she will primarily be in charge of the design workflow for S&A Communications as well as Cherokee Media Group. She will also collaborate with her team to ensure all content meets design standards before presenting work to clients. Casey came to S&A Communications over two years ago and brought with her a slew of experience. With over 15 years under her belt, Casey has previously worked for The News & Observer, Cary Living Magazine and Chapel Hill News, while focusing her talents in the advertising field. “Jennifer’s creative and innovative ability, combined with her work ethic and motivation to succeed, make her a key component for the success of our company,” said S&A Communications Owner/Principal Chuck Norman, APR.

CLASS OF 1999

Kris Williams recently completed his first season as Head Varsity Football Coach at West Bladen High School in Bladenboro, N.C. Coach Williams has taught visual art at West Bladen since 2011. He previously served as an Assistant Varsity Football Coach and Head JV Football Coach at West Bladen. Coach Williams is the proud father of three children: Brayden, Bryce and Kaylee.

CLASS OF 1997

Dr. Vincent Castano was recently promoted to Dean of Institutional Effectiveness at Fayetteville Technical Community College.

CLASS OF 1996

Albemarle County, Virginia, announced the hiring of a new Economic Development director, Roger Johnson. He formerly served as the Special Assistant for Development for the City of Williamsburg. Johnson earned a master’s in organizational leadership and management from UNC Pembroke, a bachelor’s in personnel management from Appalachian State University, Certification from UNC Chapel Hills School of Government in City and County Administration, and pursued postbaccalaureate studies at UNC State University.

Hal Sargent accepted the position of Director of Pop Band and Percussion at Louisburg College in Louisburg, N.C. He also presented at the National Association for Music Educators National In-Service Conference in Nashville, TN, Oct. 27, 2015.

CLASS OF 2000

Katherine Alfred Cox was the recipient of the “Outstanding Health Education Award” in “Recognition of Outstanding, Long-lasting Career Contributions and Demonstrated Commitment to the Practice of Health Education in North Carolina” through NC SOFIE (NC Society of Public Health Education). She has also earned and maintained a National Certification as a Health Education Specialist since 1999. She is also working to complete a National Certification as a Chronic Care Professional (CCP).

Pardon Ndhlovu hasn’t slowed down since competing against the world’s greatest athletes at the Rio 2016 Summer Olympics. The former UNC Pembroke All-American shined for his home country of Zimbabwe in the marathon. Ndhlovu finished 41st, registering a time of 2:17:48, ahead of 114 competitors.

He finished the grueling 26.2-mile road race with a pace of 5:16 per mile.

Ndhlovu also shone as a member of the Braves cross country and track and field teams from 2009 to 2013. He was twice named an NCAA All-American and twice the Peach Belt Conference’s Runner of the Year.

He holds the 15 of the best times recorded in the 8k run, including the top seven times in school history. His school record of 24:15.0 was set in 2012, as the only Division II runner at the NCAA Division I Pre-National Invitational in Louisville, Ky. He is heralded as one of the most decorated student-athletes in the history of UNCP cross country.

He earned a degree in international business from UNCP and went on to complete his master’s degree from Augusta University, while serving as an assistant coach for the university’s cross country team.

Five years removed from his time at UNCP, Ndhlovu remains connected to the Braves family.

“It’s been a fulfilling journey,” he said. “I am still involved in coaching, volunteering and making appearances here and there. But, honestly, I don’t think I would be where I am today without the support from UNCP”.

Today, the 30-year-old is training for his next major event – the Chicago Marathon. Afterward, he will have his sights set on the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games. Ndhlovu relocated to Boone, N.C., to be closer to his trainer and nationally renowned distance coach Pete Rea.

As he continues to thrive in the sport he began when he was 13, Ndhlovu said he is grateful for the individuals and experiences while at UNCP.

“I will never forget my business professors at UNCP,” he said. “They challenged me to think differently, to open my mind and look at things differently. They taught me to not only be the best student I can be, but to be the best person I can be.”
Enrolling at 14 years old, alumnus Ethan Sanford has the distinction of having been one of the university’s youngest and most accomplished students. He received the Biology Department’s 2016 Faculty Award and the university’s Outstanding Senior Award. He was active in the Esther G. Maynor Honors College and in Tri-Beta, while conducting research with the RISE (Research Initiative for Scientific Enhancement) Program. Shortly after graduation in May 2016, he joined the department of Molecular Biology and Genetics at Cornell University as a Ph.D. student. Cornell is one of the foremost research institutions in the world, possessing state-of-the-art life sciences research facilities, including Weill Hall, a $163 million biomedical research facility.

Have you chosen a laboratory for your graduate research?

Yes, I joined Marcus Smolka’s lab in Weill Hall. Our lab is broadly interested in the mechanisms of genome maintenance with a focus on DNA lesion detection and signaling. Our lab uses a technique known as quantitative mass spectrometry (in combination with genetic and biochemical approaches) to elucidate the dynamics and regulation of complex DNA damage signaling pathways in yeast and mammals. My thesis project, in its current form, seeks to understand how a very important yeast signaling protein, Mec1, prevents mutagenic events known as gross chromosomal rearrangements (GCRs). This may all sound quite esoteric, but in reality, GCRs are a hallmark of a number of human pathologies, including cancer. By studying these events in yeast, we can make informed decisions about what lines of inquiry to pursue in mammalian cells, which tend to be more arduous to work with than budding yeast. Indeed, our lab has a number of people doing cell culture, and we even have a person working with mice. This means we have a robust pipeline to make interesting discoveries in the field of genome stability.

Which courses have you taken? Have you met any famous scientists on campus?

Graduate courses tend to be niche but interesting. In addition to full-semester courses, our department also offers short, intensive courses that I have taken include one about protein biology titled “Protein Structure and Function,” a course about replication and DNA lesion detection and signaling. Our lab uses a technique known as quantitative mass spectrometry (in combination with genetic and biochemical approaches) to elucidate the dynamics and regulation of complex DNA damage signaling pathways in yeast and mammals. My thesis project, in its current form, seeks to understand how a very important yeast signaling protein, Mec1, prevents mutagenic events known as gross chromosomal rearrangements (GCRs). This may all sound quite esoteric, but in reality, GCRs are a hallmark of a number of human pathologies, including cancer. By studying these events in yeast, we can make informed decisions about what lines of inquiry to pursue in mammalian cells, which tend to be more arduous to work with than budding yeast. Indeed, our lab has a number of people doing cell culture, and we even have a person working with mice. This means we have a robust pipeline to make interesting discoveries in the field of genome stability.

include a lot of mandatory coursework – the primary focus is conducting research and defending a thesis within five or six years. I am presently preparing to take what is called the A Exam over the summer. The A Exam is an oral exam in which we must defend an original research proposal in front of our committee. I must admit, I’m a little nervous!

As for famous scientists, Cornell does a good job of bringing renowned researchers to campus. I have been fortunate to attend three talks given by Nobel laureates in my field. There was William Campbell, who discovered ivermectin, a very widely used antiparasitic drug was Michael Brown, who uncovered cholesterol regulation and, subsequently, receptor-mediated endocytosis; and Martin Chalfie, one of the discoverers of Green Fluorescent Protein (GFP), a staple of molecular biology research. A couple of years ago, the department hosted the illustrious Jennifer Doudna. She is a pioneer in the field of genome editing and discovered CRISPR-Cas9, a genome-editing technology that is sure to revolutionize medicine in the very near future. All this is to say that it isn’t difficult to find good seminars to attend at Cornell.

How is life at Cornell?

In short, life at Cornell is everything I had hoped it would be, and graduate school is about as stressful as I expected it to be. Ithaca is a fun and quirky place, and there is no shortage of things to do. For people who enjoy the outdoors, for example, we have hundreds of trails to explore. There is a reason for the expression “Ithaca is Gorges.” Cornell possesses a wealth of resources for its students, and as an example of this, there are over 1,000 student organizations, most of which are available to graduate students. All of that being said, I tend to spend the majority of my time in Weill Hall. I don’t really miss – it’s simply the nature of the work I chose.

While I can’t speak for the undergrads or for other departments, I will say that my department is not competitive, at least not in the sense that there is much competition between students. We try to cultivate a collaborative, supportive atmosphere, because graduate school is itself stressful enough without the added pressure of competition between graduate students. Becoming a scientist isn’t easy. I think that’s the key to building a career in science, though – you’ve got to feel constantly overwhelmed, constantly under pressure to learn new things and to challenge your thinking. And, of course, you’ve got to be constantly fascinated by and curious about your topic of study.

It goes without saying that Cornell is much different than UNCP; no two college campuses are the same. For one, it’s much colder! The environment at Cornell is quite rigorous, and I rarely feel caught up with all of my academic responsibilities. Every day presents a new challenge, be it in the lab or in the library. I try to engage myself in activities outside of my line of work to keep me on my toes, so to speak. For example, I edit a newsletter on campus, and I recently participated in an intensive four-day leadership program through the College of Engineering.

I often reflect on my time at UNCP and on the excellent mentorship I received. I would never have made it to Cornell without the support of such amazing mentors as Dr. Scott Hicks and Dr. Coriner Sandefur, both of whom coached me to achieve my graduate school aspirations.

What advice can you offer UNCP students who wish to pursue graduate school?

I’ll start by saying that I do enjoy graduate school. This statement is important because not all people share this view. I was determined to get here, and once I got here, I quickly realized that I had made the right choice. I know there are quite a few people like me at UNCP who share my interest in research, and I’ve met some of them. To those people, I would say, yes, go to graduate school. To the people who are more or less unsure of what they want to do, I would say, consider other options. Graduate school should not be the method of choice for delaying career decisions by an additional five to six years. The hours are long, the work is hard, and validation can be scarce unless you are truly passionate about research.

UNCP’s motto is absolutely true. Education changes lives – it certainly changed mine.
CLASS OF 1992
Angela Revels-Bullard graduated from the BRIDGES Academy. BRIDGES Academy is an academic leadership program and is a curriculum of the UNC-William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education, Professional Development and Enrichment Program. Angela joined an elite group of women in higher education and represented UNCP. She was selected from over 80 applicants from all North Carolina private and public institutions.

The Division of Adult Corention and Juvenile Justice has named Chandra Ransom ’92 as the new superintendent at Randolph Correctional Center in Asheboro. Ransom is a 22-year corrections veteran who most recently served as assistant superintendent for Forsyth Correctional Center in Winston-Salem. She started her career as a correctional officer at Sandhills Youth Center.

CLASS OF 1993
Danny Cook, Owner of Cook Insurance Services in Lumberton, was recently elected to the board of directors for Independent Insurance Agents of North Carolina. The 22-year insurance industry veteran received his bachelor's degree in business administration from The University of North Carolina at Pembroke, followed by his master's degree in risk management and Insurance from Florida State University. Ted White will be the "voice for the southwest" as the newest member of the North Carolina Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation. White, who lives in Lumberton, also serves as president of the Lumber River River Chapter.

CLASS OF 1994
Alfredo DiPinto and wife, Samantha M. DiPinto ’95, own Southern Style Barbeque in Clinton, N.C. Alfredo recently opened an Italian restaurant called Alfredo’s in Clinton. After graduating from PSU, Alfredo embarked on a career as a financial analyst. He still makes the daily 45-minute commute from Clinton to Fayetteville, where he works for Wells Fargo. But he never forgot those extended Italian meals growing up in a family that believed in sharing love and big platters of food. On Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, he’s the one at the restaurant greeting customers, most of whom he and his servers know by name.

CLASS OF 1995
Dr. Paul Nelson Locklear of Pembroke, N.C., graduated with a Doctorate of Educational Leadership degree at Wingate University’s commencement exercises held on May 20, 2017. He is married to Mrs. Sharon Joy Locklear ’94 and they have two children, Michaela and Jordan. Dr. Locklear currently works for the Public Schools of Robeson County, serving as the school administrator/principal at Quidemine Elementary School in Wakuila, N.C.

CLASS OF 1996
Glenn Edward Sampson ’00 is the new executive director of the University of North Carolina Pembroke’s Career Center and take advantage of job opportunities right to your inbox.

NEW APPOINTMENTS AT UNC PEMBROKE
Dr. David Ward assumed the role of provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs in June. Ward comes to UNC from Armstrong State University, where he served as dean of the College of Health Professions.

Dr. William "Stewart" Thomas was promoted to vice chancellor for Finance and Administration in August. Thomas has spent the majority of his 17-year career at UNC in the School of Business as a lecturer, associate professor and associate dean.

IN MEMORIAM
Bruce Barton ’86
Walker Clarence Bell Jr. ’65
Stephen M. Clark ’69
Russell P. Guenther ’62
Dr. Carol Hoyt
Meadland Hunt ’49
Dr. Chester "Chet" Jordan
Biya Cheva Lindsey ’99
Dalton Ray Locklear ’54
Ethel O. Locklear ’51
Rosette O. Locklear ’62
James Clee Maynor ’50
Dr. Waltz Maynor ’59
Cynthia Locklear Oxendine ’03
Gervais O admirable ’54
Michael Erxton Perry ’73
Arnie Ruth Locklear Reeves ’58
Ellen Lucille Revels ’69
Glenn Edward Sampson ’00
Dr. Patrick Sollars
Watson Benjamin "Bent" Thomas Jr. ’05
Rudolph Turbulence ’64
Rose Reeves Winfree ’59

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

NEW ALUMNI AT EVENTS
On Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, get info about alumni events and volunteer opportunities right to your inbox.

COMEBACK TO CAMPUS
We hope the college experience has to stop once you graduate. Ask what you can do for alumni to honor your academic department or organization to celebrate your achievements and success. The Alumni Platform ensures that you remain connected, engaged and supported.

GIVE BACK
UNC Pembroke is a vibrant community of give to ensure that students have the opportunity of hope that impact higher education.

KEY ALUMNI AT EVENTS
Be an active alum. Keep your records up-to-date so we can stay in touch.

UNCP.EDU/ALUMNI
UNC.EDU/ALUMNI
PO BOX 1510, PEMBROKE, NC 28372
UNCP.EDU/ALUMNI
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 Assoc. 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.