

A PUBLICATION FOR ALUMNI, STUDENTS AND FRIENDS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS

# SILVER & BLUE

A photograph of a dolphin leaping from the water, captured mid-air with a splash of water below it. The dolphin is dark grey on top and white on the bottom. The background is a clear blue sky and ocean.

FALL 2018

## DOLPHIN TALES

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Alumna Morgan Martin's  
research helps decode  
dolphin communication.

FIRST  
LOOK

UNIVERSITY CENTER



THE UNIVERSITY of  
NEW ORLEANS



# DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS:

IT IS A WONDERFUL TIME TO BE A UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS PRIVATEER!

I am thrilled to be able to tell you that, for the first time in nearly a decade, the University's student enrollment is growing. This is not something that was easily achieved. Our multifaceted strategy to recruit more students and retain them once they're on campus is being implemented by our team of dedicated faculty and staff. Their hard work and determination are fueling this resurgence. And the best news is that we are just getting started.

For the first time in seven years, we have brought in more than 1,000 freshmen. We are not, however, sacrificing quality for quantity. This is our most academically prepared freshman class in years. We are also seeing gains in some key areas that reflect our identity as the only public, urban-serving research university in the entire state of Louisiana. We have our largest enrollment of African-American students in six years and the most Hispanic students in more than a decade. Our more aggressive and consistent approach to marketing the University to prospective students and their families is paying off, both in Louisiana and beyond. Enrollment of in-state students rose two percent and out-of-state domestic students jumped eight percent. There is unquestionably a renewed interest in the University of New Orleans. I can say this with confidence because our freshman applications increased by 24 percent compared to last year.

I am far from objective on this subject, but I believe that our value as an institution is nearly unsurpassed. We offer rigorous, in-demand programs that prepare our students to thrive in the professional world. They receive first-class instruction from our faculty and an array of support services to ensure they stay on track to graduation. And when they earn that degree, they are not saddled with the kind of astronomical debt that plagues so many college graduates. But don't just take my word for it. This year, the University was again named a top college by *Forbes* and The Princeton Review, and *U.S. News & World Report* ranked UNO in the top 25 national universities whose students graduate with the least average debt.

I hope you share my pride in what we are accomplishing and my enthusiasm for what's to come. I invite you to experience our momentum!

Sincerely,

**John Nicklow**  
PRESIDENT

 @UNOPresidentJN  @unopresident

# SILVER & BLUE

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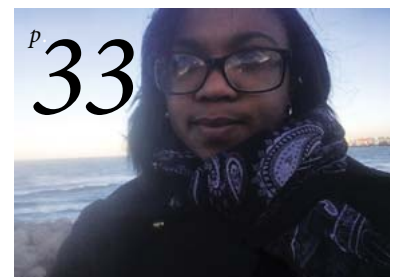
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*Alumnus Marco Perez has had a front row seat for 30 years.*

# CAMPUS SCENE

HEADLINES AND HAPPENINGS



## MOVE-IN DAY AT PONTCHARTRAIN HALL

*A small army of University of New Orleans volunteers, including President John Nicklow, helped incoming students and their relatives get settled into their campus digs on Aug. 16.*

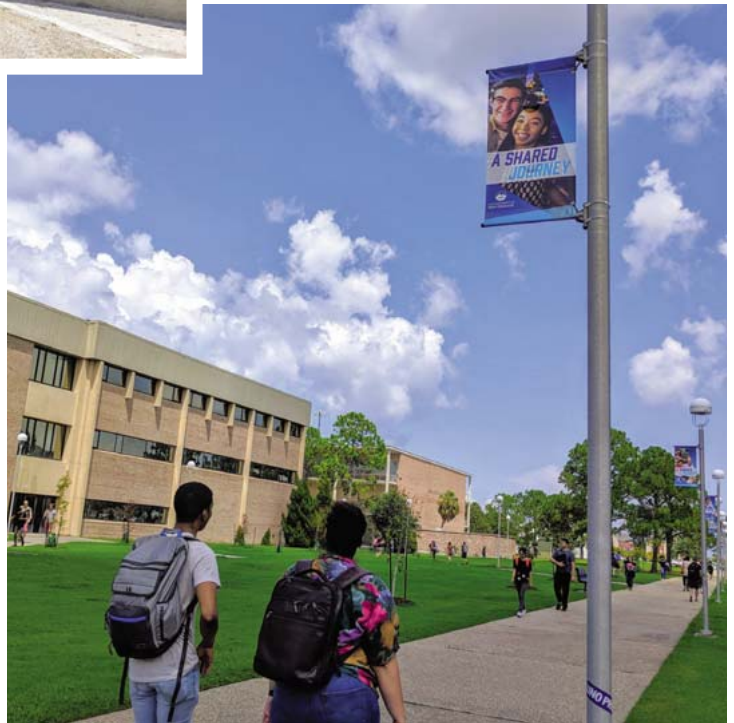
*Good thing the volunteer army was prepared with plenty of hands and carts because the students came bearing luggage, microwaves, televisions, comforters, pillows, tons of gadgets and other stuff.*





## ON THE UPSWING: STUDENT ENROLLMENT INCREASES

Enrollment is growing again at the University of New Orleans. By increasing both the undergraduate and graduate student population, the University saw a 2.4 percent increase in total student enrollment this fall. The 2018 freshman class has the highest average ACT score (23) of the past four years and the highest high school grade point average (3.3) in the past 10 years. In addition, first-year retention—the percentage of students who remained enrolled from freshman to sophomore year—increased from 62.4 percent to 71.2 percent.



## GOOGLE ENGINEER RETURNS TO ALMA MATER

Google engineer and University of New Orleans alumna Sabrina Farmer was the principal speaker at the University's spring commencement in May. Farmer, who earned a bachelor's degree in computer science in 1995, is senior engineering director for site reliability at Google responsible for products that include Google search, Gmail—the world's largest Internet email service, and Google Maps among other products.



## NEW STUDENT CONVOCATION

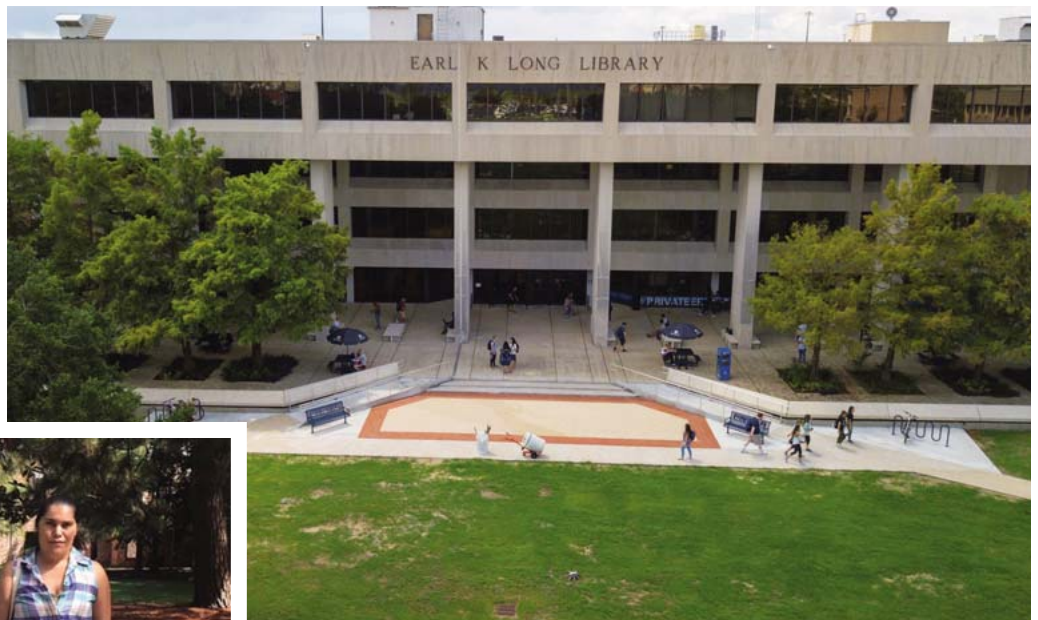
The University of New Orleans Class of 2022 got a welcome to campus party in their honor. As a precursor to the first day of class, first year students were feted during convocation at the UNO Lakefront Arena.

The University's tradition, which included faculty marching into the arena in full academic regalia while "Pomp and Circumstance" played, commemorates the start of the academic journey for new students with a formal opening ceremony followed by free food and games.

It is in this same venue that these students will don their own gown and mortar board to culminate their undergraduate journey to a college degree.

University President John Nicklow told students that college is a "transformative experience," but that they must be open to growing, learning and getting involved on campus.





## CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS

*This summer, the University of New Orleans undertook a series of campus improvement projects and classroom renovations, all of which are designed to improve the student, faculty and staff experience.*

*Those improvements included:*

- *Opening up the breezeway of Earl K. Long Library by removing barriers that separate the building from the sprawling green lawn it faces. This project includes adding new walkways that cut through part of that space and lead directly to the library's entrance. Funding for this project comes through a combination of Student Government Association and UNO Foundation funds.*
- *Adding 27 new benches across campus and repainting existing benches.*
- *Sealcoating and restriping campus parking lots and roads to improve pedestrian and vehicle safety, better protect the pavement from the elements and enhance the University's overall look.*
- *Installing four new bike racks for a more bicycle-friendly campus: One near the Biology Building, two near the Science Building and one near the University Center.*

# NEWS & EVENTS

## THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS NAMED A 'BEST COLLEGE' BY THE PRINCETON REVIEW



THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans is one of the nation's best higher education institutions, according to The Princeton Review. The Princeton Review features UNO in the new 2019 edition of its college guide, "The Best 384 Colleges."

"It's a great honor to once again be included in The Princeton Review's annual guide to the best colleges," said President John Nicklow. "The University of New Orleans is a major public research university that offers the student support and enrichment activities of

a much smaller campus. Our engaged faculty and staff help our students explore their passions and prepare them for careers in their chosen fields."

"We picked the 384 'best' colleges for our book primarily for their outstanding academics; we highly recommend each one," said Robert Franek, The Princeton Review's editor-in-chief and the book's lead author. "However, we know applicants need far more than an academic rating or ranking to find the college that will be best for them."

The book also lists 62

ranking lists to help students narrow their search. The Princeton Review tallied rankings for the 2019 edition based on its surveys of 138,000 students attending the 384 colleges in the book for 2017-18 and/or the previous two years. The survey asks students 84 questions about their school's academics, administration, student body and themselves.

In its profile on the University of New Orleans, The Princeton Review reports that students say the University is a "diverse environment that makes

*In its profile on the University of New Orleans, The Princeton Review reports that students say the University's diversity makes it welcoming and that professors are "generous with their time and knowledge."*

it a welcoming area to be" giving students "the opportunity to get an education that helps students to get a better future." One student commented that, "My professors are always generous with their time and knowledge." Another student characterized fellow students as "determined, hardworking and considerate."

## INSTANT ADMIT PROGRAM FOR ORLEANS PARISH STUDENTS ANNOUNCED

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans has signed an instant admit program for graduates of Orleans Parish Public Schools. Orleans Parish public high school graduates who meet the required grade point average and ACT requirements are guaranteed admission to the University.

President John Nicklow and Orleans Parish Schools Superintendent Henderson Lewis signed a memorandum of understanding during a University

ceremony in July.

Students must meet the following requirements:

- Be a graduate of an Orleans Parish Public High School with a 2.5 GPA or greater
- Scored at least a 19 in math and an 18 in English on the ACT
- Submitted an application for admission (no application fee is required for students in metro New Orleans).

The objective of the program is to reduce barriers that may prevent some students



*Orleans Parish Schools Superintendent Henderson Lewis and University of New Orleans President John Nicklow sign a memorandum of understanding on July 31.*

from applying to college and to help local high school students envision themselves as college students and, ultimately, graduates.

"We want students in our backyard to know that applying to their local public research university can actually be quite

simple," Nicklow says. "Those students who are admitted are also eligible for thousands of dollars in academic scholarships."

The University signed a similar agreement with St. Charles Parish Public Schools in September.

## STUDENTS TAKE HOME FIRST PLACE AWARDS IN NATIONAL ELECTRIC/SOLAR BOAT DESIGN COMPETITION



A TEAM OF UNIVERSITY OF New Orleans engineering students made a splash at Solar Splash, the world championship of intercollegiate solar/electric boating.

Following a seven-year hiatus from the event, the University of New Orleans returned to the regatta with Milneburg Joy, a sleek, Privateer-blue boat that took home two first-place awards in the five-event competition, held June 5-9 in Springfield, Ohio.

Ryan Thiel, research engineer in the School of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering and the staff adviser for the team, said it felt great to be back in the competition. Competing with teams from 11 other universities, the University placed first in the sprint and solar endurance competitions. It also took third overall and third place in qualifying.

"I hope it's the start of us rebuilding this tradition," says Thiel.

The University started partici-

pating in Solar Splash in 1996, bringing home a number of awards over the years, including first-place overall in 2010. Thiel said that student interest in the extracurricular event waned following 2011 in part due to student participation in paid internships. But when a group of motivated students approached him in the fall of 2017 asking if he'd consider getting involved it in again, Thiel was on board. Thiel first participated in the event when he was a student at the University in 2005 and went on to become the team's adviser through 2011.

"We dominated the sprint competition for many, many years," says Thiel. "And we were always finishing close to the top."

He said the interdisciplinary nature of the hands-on project offers student engineers a great opportunity to apply what they have learned in the classroom. When designing a solar/electric boat that will move swiftly

over long periods of time, naval architecture students must work hand-in-hand with mechanical engineering students and electrical engineering students to solve problems.

"This teaches the students how to communicate and work with engineers of different disciplines, an important skill in engineering," Thiel says.

When the team started working on the project anew in the fall of 2017, they formulated a new, exciting boat design. By the spring, it became clear they were running out of time to build the new vessel, so the team took the Milneburg Joy out of storage and began making modifications to the design in order to meet the competition's updated requirements.

While the new boat remains in development, Thiel said the hope is to get it built, tested and in the water in time for the 2019 Solar Splash contest.

"We left the event with a lot of

Milneburg Joy, a sleek, Privateer-blue boat that took home two first-place awards in the five-event competition.

excitement," Thiel says.

Besides Thiel, several faculty and staff members provided consulting and guidance during the project, including Nikolas Xiros, George Morrissey, Lothar Birk, Kim Jovanovich, Michael Dauenhauer and Brandon Taravella.

The team's participation in the event was made possible by support from the College of Engineering, Fluor Federal Petroleum Operations, Austal USA and Deborah D. Keller & Partners.

The University of New Orleans has the only electrical, mechanical and civil engineering programs in the city. It is also home to the only naval architecture and marine engineering program in the region and one of the few in the country.

## ONLINE CREATIVE WRITING MASTER'S DEGREE PROGRAM EARNS TOP RANKING

THE MASTER'S DEGREE program in creative writing at the University of New Orleans was ranked first among programs of its kind by Best College Reviews, an online college review journal.

The Creative Writing Workshop low residency graduate program combines distance learning with study abroad. During the fall and

spring semesters, students participate in online workshops and literature classes. Every summer, writers attend a month-long summer residency in Europe. The traditional form of the degree program has been nurturing New Orleans writers for 25 years.

"A lot of MFA programs get the reputation for being really cut-throat and competitive

in petty ways," says program director M. O. Walsh. "This place is not like that at all. Everyone really supports one another and we celebrate each other's work and it feels like a real close-knit community."

The Best College Reviews website says the University "encourages a community-centered degree experience, where students can interact

with peers and benefit from a broader breadth of curriculum. Creative writing students learn from a faculty of published authors."

The site also notes that online students do not pay out-of-state tuition costs.

Considerations for ranking the online programs includes the range of courses, options for genre specialization, and faculty.

## EARL K. LONG LIBRARY UNDERGOES IMPROVEMENTS TO BECOME MORE ACCESSIBLE TO STUDENTS

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans' Earl K. Long Library has undergone renovations to make it more accessible and inviting to students both inside and out.

A capital project this summer opened up the library's breezeway by removing barriers that separated the building from the sprawling green lawn it faces. A good portion of the first floor

of the library is now dedicated to student services—such as the bursar's office and student study rooms and nooks. The library coffee shop is also now open 24 hours, five days a week, the same as the library.

The goal is to have all student services located under one roof, President John Nicklow says.

University officials gathered

for a ribbon cutting ceremony on Sept. 12 to celebrate the improvements, which also added a "meditation zone" on the third floor that includes reclining chairs and sofas, as well as tables and regular chairs. The space offers students a chance to "rejuvenate," after putting in long study hours, says Ray Wang, dean of library and information services.



*ABOVE: The Meditation Zone on the third floor of the library. INSET: Student Government Association President Kenady Hills and President Nicklow take part in a ceremony at the library.*

## ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES DEPARTMENTS AWARDED \$613K FOR ONLINE INNOVATIONS

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans Department of English and Foreign Languages was awarded \$613,000 to revolutionize the way it delivers digital content for online courses while also expanding instruction in professional writing. Funding for the five-year comprehensive enhancement project comes from the Louisiana Board of Regents.

Peter Schock, chair of English and foreign languages, says the grant is by far the largest the department has ever received, and its impact will be significant.

"It will transform the teaching mission of our department, enabling faculty members to more effectively adapt their already lively classroom instruction into high-quality online learning for students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels,"

Schock says. "Not only the traditional student, but the place-bound and non-traditional student will benefit as well. Simply stated, the resources provided by this grant will support UNO's strategic effort to increase access to higher learning."

The grant takes a multi-faceted approach to enhancing course offerings for all students seeking instruction in English and foreign languages—including expanding dual enrollment partnerships with area high schools—but some of its key initiatives include:

- The creation of two state-of-the-art course content studios and a faculty training facility. Faculty will have access to what Reggie Poché, associate chair of the department and principal investigator of the grant, describes as two "one-button" studios, where

they can produce quality video content for use in their digital courses with just the press of a button. One of the studios will include what is known as a "lightboard" that will enable the instructor to face the camera and write on a transparent board as they might on a chalkboard. The lightboard's technology transposes the writing so that it is legible to the online student. The other studio will have a green screen that they can use to superimpose themselves over PowerPoint presentations.

- The implementation of a program that aims to train and mentor faculty in best practices for teaching literature, language and creative writing online. While many of the department's faculty members are already delivering online instruction, the grant will enable the department to better

assess the quality of current course offerings and to incorporate innovative, research-based strategies to engage online students.

- The creation and implementation of two new online graduate courses in professional and technical writing and translation studies. By the spring of 2020, the University of New Orleans plans to implement a non-credit certificate and a 15-hour graduate certificate option in professional writing as well as a non-credit certificate and a 15-hour graduate certificate in Spanish.

The Department of English and Foreign Languages is the largest department on campus, housing five degree granting programs: B.A. in English, B.A. in Romance Languages, M.A. in English, M.A. in Romance Languages and an M.F.A. in Creative Writing.

## UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES EXPAND WITH \$50,000 GIFT

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans has long enjoyed a reputation for providing students with rigorous instruction and solid preparation for the real world. Now, a \$50,000 gift from the Oscar J. Tolmas Charitable Trust will expand two signature campus programs that directly engage undergraduate students in research with mentors and exemplify the kind of robust student experience for which the University of New Orleans is widely known.

The Privateer Undergraduate Research and Scholarly UNO Experience (PURSUE) program matches students from any class level and academic discipline to faculty mentors with shared academic interests and provides an award of up to \$1,500 for a student worker position focused on research, scholarly or creative activity to be conducted under the guidance of the mentor. Students earn \$15 per hour and can work as many as 10 hours per week, up to 100 hours per semester. Students must have a minimum 2.0 grade point average and maintain at least half-time enrollment, which is at least 6 credit hours during the spring and fall semesters.

The College of Sciences Undergraduate Research Program (COSURP) is similar to PURSUE but designed specifically for students pursuing an undergraduate degree from the College of Sciences. Students can earn \$10 per hour and work up to 10 hours per week in the fall and spring semesters on research projects in areas such as biology, chemistry, computer science, mathematics, earth and environmental sciences, physics or psychology.



“It is not an overstatement to say that the University of New Orleans changes lives when we are able to directly engage our students in research early and throughout their undergraduate studies,” says Matthew Tarr, vice president for research and economic development at the University of New Orleans. “Engaging in scholarly activity and working closely with a faculty member can sometimes spark an interest in graduate school or a career in research that the student couldn’t have otherwise imagined. These programs are also highly effective in keeping students on track in their academic careers and motivating them to persist through to graduation when outside obstacles present retention challenges.”

Beyond the benefits associated with mentorship and career exploration, these undergraduate research programs sometimes produce a

more immediate impact on the student’s academic career. For some students, the opportunity to spend time in a laboratory reinforcing concepts presented during a classroom lecture wouldn’t be possible without the financial award.

“That’s why we are so pleased to have this new support from the Oscar J. Tolmas Charitable Trust to help us expand and enhance the life-changing work we do here at the University of New Orleans,” Tarr says. “We look forward to naming the 2019 class of Tolmas Scholars.”

Oscar J. Tolmas was born in 1920 to parents who entered the United States through Ellis Island in New York in 1915. He graduated from Tulane University in 1941 and Tulane Law School in 1943. A WWII Veteran, he was honorably discharged in 1946 with the rank of Lieutenant Commander. Tolmas was married in 1963

*A \$50,000 gift from the Oscar J. Tolmas Charitable Trust will expand two signature campus programs that directly engage undergraduate students in research with mentors*

to Ms. Marjorie Ella Skinner, who served as chief of nursing at two different hospitals in the New Orleans area. They were married until her death in September 2013, and his death quickly followed on December 2, 2013. Throughout his life in New Orleans, Tolmas was an active businessman, attorney and real estate developer. But his real passion was horse racing. A regular at the New Orleans Fair Grounds racetrack for decades, Tolmas was a member of the Louisiana Racing Commission for 12 years and served as its chairman for four years. He left his entire estate to the Oscar J. Tolmas Charitable Trust, which supports various charitable organizations.



## STEM SCHOLARS PROGRAM REACHES 'CRITICAL MASS'

CRITICAL MASS. FOUR years and nearly 250 students later, that is the term biological sciences professor and department chair Wendy Schluchter uses to describe the progress of the University of New Orleans' STEM Scholars program.

The intensive six-day residential program aimed at solidifying the academic undergirding of freshmen who have chosen to pursue majors in science, technology, engineering and math wrapped up its fourth year at the University on Aug. 7.

In its inaugural year, the camp enrolled 33 students and has increased participation each year. This year, the camp attracted 110 students with representatives from each STEM field.

"Our goal has always been to try to get up to at least 100," Schluchter says. "We had representatives from all of the majors, so that makes me think that we are reaching out to every potential major, every potential student."

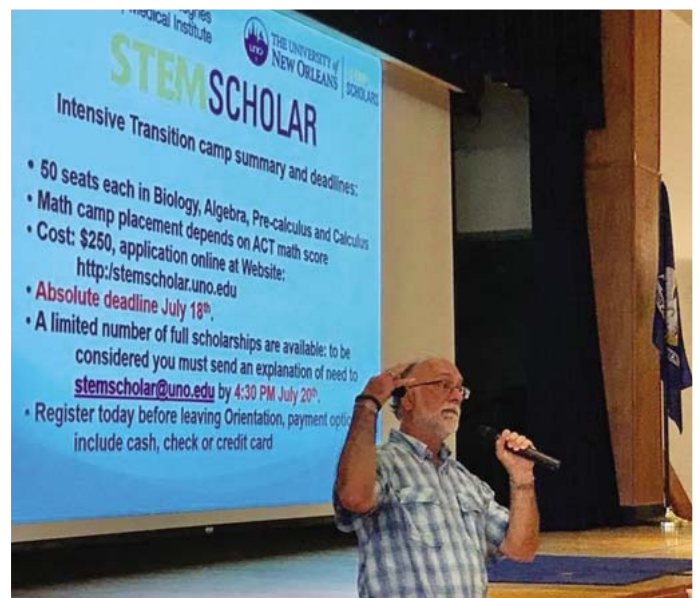
Schluchter attributes the growth in part to the program becoming better known. However, having a record of accomplishment to tout also makes the camp more attractive to parents and students, she says.

The retention rates for STEM Scholars students have run three to 12 percent higher than all first-time, full-time freshmen, according to Schluchter.

"After three years we can show retention data, that this improves retention," she says. "I think parents and students respond to that; they know what's happened in the past."

Several STEM Scholars said the camp helps to ease some of their freshmen jitters and makes them feel better prepared.

"I went into (camp) not strong in math, and came out with the highest average in the class! I even got an award for it," says Joshua Zickler, of St. Louis, Mo., who plans to major in biology and become a veterinarian. "So it's definitely



prepared me for the pace of college."

The STEM Scholars program also aims to tackle the nationwide shortage of STEM graduates and to counteract a troubling national statistic: 40 percent of students who start as STEM majors do not graduate in that same major within six years, according to Schluchter.

Schluchter says the program helps students understand the expectations of college.

"We are piloting a program such that every camp student

*This year the STEM Scholars program attracted 110 students with representatives from each STEM field. BOTTOM: Biology professor Jerry Howard talks to STEM Scholars participants.*

gets a peer mentor who meets with them once a week to make sure they are on track, help answer any questions, give them advice on handling tough situations, etc.," Schluchter says.

By pairing students with STEM mentors, the camp also helps students to make the social

## CHAUVIN, LEE HONORED AT 2018 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI GALA

RETIRED INSURANCE executive William Chauvin is the recipient of the 2018 University of New Orleans Homer L. Hitt Distinguished Alumni Award, the UNO Alumni Association announced. Additionally Bivian “Sonny” Lee has been named the 2018 Homer Hitt Young Alumnus of the Year. Both men were honored at the Distinguished Alumni Gala, on Nov. 1 in the National WWII Museum’s United States Freedom Pavilion: The Boeing Center.

“It’s difficult to think of two individuals who embody the values of the University of New Orleans more than Bill and Sonny,” says University of New Orleans President John Nicklow. “Both men exemplify determination and selflessness in their professional and community work. They have made a mark on their city and their alma mater through their positive influence and career accomplishments.”

Before retiring in 2016, Chauvin served as senior vice president of finance and treasurer for XL Catlin, Inc., a global insurance and reinsurance company. He was previously an executive with Global Special

Risks, Inc. and Southern Marine & Aviation Underwriters, Inc. Chauvin began his career as an accountant for Price Waterhouse & Co. in New Orleans. He earned a bachelor’s degree in accounting from the University of New Orleans in 1974.

Chauvin has remained actively involved with his alma mater. He is a board member of the University of New Orleans Foundation. He was the president of the UNO Alumni Association from 1999-2000. He has also served as a board member for several local elementary schools and high schools.

Lee is the president and executive director of Son of a Saint, a nonprofit that inspires mentorship and enhances the lives of fatherless boys. He founded the organization in 2011 in honor of his father, former Saints player Bivian Lee Jr., who died of a heart attack at the age of 36. Son of a Saint provides emotional support, life skills development and exposure to constructive experiences to its mentees. He was named New Orleanian of the Year by *Gambit* in 2016.

Son of a Saint has a partnership with Privateer Athletics, which serves to benefit both the UNO student athletes and the boys from Son of a Saint through community service and mentorship activities. The student-athletes hold tutoring hours on campus for the mentees and serve as role models to the boys.

Lee earned a bachelor’s degree in marketing and management in 2006 from the University of Orleans.

Chauvin is the 35th honoree to receive the Homer L. Hitt Distinguished Alumni Award. Previous recipients include State Rep. Julie Stokes, New Orleans Tourism Marketing Corporation President and CEO Mark Romig, engineer and executive Roy Glapion, television news executive Kim Bondy, former Gambit Communications Chairman Clancy DuBos and former Lieutenant Governor Melinda Schwegmann. The honoree is selected by a committee of former award recipients. The Distinguished Alumni Gala also recognized a distinguished alumnus or alumna from each of the Univer-



William Chauvin



Bivian “Sonny” Lee

sity’s four academic colleges.

The gala’s venue is a testament to UNO’s lasting impact on the community—the National WWII Museum was conceived in UNO’s history department by professors Stephen Ambrose and Nick Mueller, the museum’s former president and CEO.

Proceeds from the Distinguished Alumni Gala will increase funding for student scholarships and support the UNO Alumni Association’s programming to ensure student success and alumni engagement.

connections earlier so they can build a new social network at the University, she says.

Student mentors also were on hand during the camp.

The Howard Hughes Medical Institute finances the camp in part with a five-year \$1.5 million grant. Organizers also depend on a crowd-funding project to help offset a portion of the fee that students pay to participate. Students pay \$250 for the program.

In exchange, they get five days of on-campus room and

board; academic training that includes refresher courses in math and science; and tips on recognizing and avoiding transitional pitfalls, such as a lack of effective study habits.

“My first year of college was a train wreck,” Jerry Howard, professor of biological sciences tells scholars during a segment he leads on learning strategies. “My second year was a dumpster fire.”

His audience laughs appreciatively. However, Howard lays bare the difference between high

school and university expectations for student learning using Bloom’s taxonomy to explain the required cognitive progression.

Students will need to know not only how to apply information they have learned, but to analyze that data, pull together the facts and create solutions.

“This is not a continuation of high school,” says Howard. “Information is no longer the important thing; it’s what you can do with it.”

Schluchter says the STEM Scholars program is Howard’s

“baby,” an initiative he researched and helped birth at the University of New Orleans.

“This is what I wished someone had told me,” Howard explains. “I had counselors who told me, ‘You should go to college,’ and that’s as far as it went. I got to (the University of California at) Davis and it was like, ‘Oh, my God!’ I eventually got through.”

His goal, Howard says, is to help as many students as possible to avoid that transitional shock.



## HALL OF DISTINCTION'S INAUGURAL CLASS HONORED AT GALA

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans celebrated its 60th anniversary by honoring the inaugural class of the Hall of Distinction at a black tie gala at the downtown NOPSI Hotel on

Friday, Sept. 7. The elegant affair, presented by Hancock Whitney, honored 11 people who have made significant contributions to the University of New Orleans and the city of New Orleans

throughout the University's six-decade history.

"Inclusion in the Hall of Distinction reflects the respect and admiration held by the University of New Orleans for

these individuals, both living and deceased," President Nicklow said. "They serve as an inspiration to our current and future students."

The honorees were:

**Stephen Ambrose (1936-2002):** UNO history professor, author and co-founder of *The National WWII Museum*

**Tom (1927-2018) and Gayle Benson:** owners of the *New Orleans Saints*, *New Orleans Pelicans* and *GMB Racing Stables*

**Raymond Brandt:** president and CEO of the *Ray Brandt Automotive Group*

**Thomas Kitchen:** UNO alumnus, former president of *Stewart Enterprises* and *Avondale Industries*

**Robert Merrick:** chairman and CEO of *Latter & Blum*

**James Moffett:** chairman emeritus of *Freeport-McMoRan*

**Gordon "Nick" Mueller:** president and CEO emeritus of *The National WWII Museum*, co-founder of *The National WWII Museum*, former UNO history professor and administrator

**Gary Solomon Sr.:** UNO alumnus, chairman and CEO of *Crescent Bank & Trust*

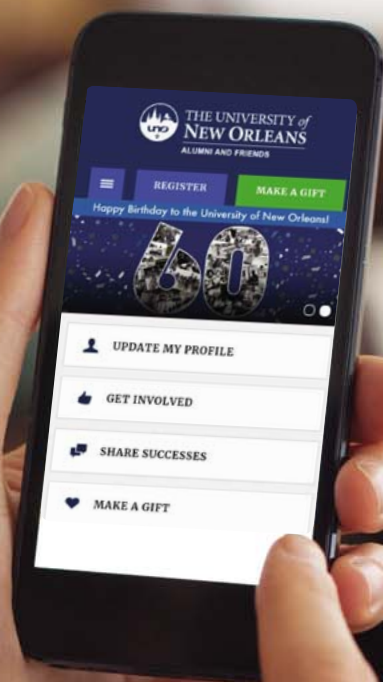
**Patrick Taylor (1937-2004):** chairman, president and CEO of *Taylor Energy Co.*, creator of the *TOPS* program

**Alexander Tureaud Sr. (1899-1972):** attorney and civil rights activist whose successful lawsuit ensured that the University of New Orleans opened as the first racially integrated public university in the South



Promotion? New job? Receive an award? Relocation? Marriage?

# We want to hear from you!



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**NEW ORLEANS**

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# FACULTY FOCUS



## 15 NEW FACULTY MEMBERS JOIN UNIVERSITY

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans is welcoming 15 new faculty members to campus this academic year. The disciplines for the new professors and instructor range from fine arts to STEM, from political science to linguistics, and from management and marketing to hospitality, restaurant and tourism.

They bring insight from research that explores cybersecurity and malware attacks and Albert Einstein's quantum physics theory of "spooky entanglements" to financial analytics, strategic management, the horrors of horror movie relationships and many other perceptions.

"The talent is incredible," President John Nicklow says. "I tell parents all the time that we have the brains of a national research institution with all of the heart of a small college."

New faculty members joining the University of New Orleans are:

**Sarah Black, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, PSYCHOLOGY:**

Black was previously a post-doctoral researcher at The Ohio State University Wexner Medical Center. Her area of expertise is developmental psychopathology, with a focus on environmental

and hormonal processes that confer risk for mood disorders during adolescence.

"I have long been interested in life experiences and biological processes that lead some individuals to develop psychiatric disorders but leave others unaffected," Black says. "Adolescence is a particularly vulnerable period for developing these disorders, especially depression, and especially for women and girls."

Black says her research investigates the biological, social and environmental changes of puberty, and how those changes may lead certain adolescents to be more vulnerable to depression than their peers.

**Peter Bierhorst, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, MATHEMATICS:**

Bierhorst was a postdoctoral researcher at the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in Boulder, Colo. His areas of expertise are statistics and quantum information theory. Specifically, Bierhorst said he was drawn to quantum mechanics as a high school student after reading newspaper articles about experiments that demonstrated the curious quantum phenomenon of "spooky action at a distance."

It is a phrase used by Albert Einstein to describe quantum entanglement, whereby two microscopic particles such as photons or electrons, can appear to act in concert instantaneously even when tested miles apart, Bierhorst says.

Bierhorst says the news articles intrigued, but did not explain the phenomenon very well.

"I wanted to learn exactly what was going on," Bierhorst says.

Bierhorst studied ways to apply the quantum experiment to practical problems in secure communication and cryptography. While at NIST, Bierhorst helped to construct a random number generator that is used to make online passwords more secure. Because of the random nature of quantum mechanics, there is no predictable pattern to the numerical sequence. The device and experiment that led to its creation was featured in stories on NPR radio, *WIRED* magazine and in the April 2018 issue of the nature research journal *Nature*.

**Angela Catalano, INSTRUCTOR, FILM AND THEATRE:**

Catalano, who has a master's degree in cinema, media and digital studies from

*New faculty members joining the University of New Orleans include back row (from left to right): Peter Bierhorst, Robert Mahon, Lucca Pezzo, L.Kalo Gow, Randy Kearns and Steve Mumford. Front row (from left to right) Han Chen, Sarah Black and Sherry Liu.*

the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, is co-founder and executive director of Shotgun Cinema, an independent New Orleans movie house that screens "off the beaten path" films.

Catalano's research interest includes post-9/11 surveillance studies and mother/daughter and mother/son relationships in horror films. A film festival curator, Catalano also helps produce a horror film festival in New Orleans and works as a projectionist at festivals across the U.S.

While an undergraduate professor encouraged her to apply for a film exhibition internship, Catalano says the movie *Jurassic Park* was her original spark for pursuing a career in film studies.

"I want to recreate that feeling I experienced when I first saw the brachiosaurus enter the frame every time I present a film," Catalano says.

**Han Chen**, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, LESTER E. KABACOFF SCHOOL OF HOTEL, RESTAURANT AND TOURISM ADMINISTRATION:

Chen, who comes to the University from Wiley College in Marshall, Texas, teaches revenue management, research methods and hospitality, and tourism marketing courses.

Chen's research interest focuses on exploring how certain human resource practices and organizational behaviors can reduce hospitality employees' turnover. She has also conducted research in the area of international hospitality management and consumer behaviors.

"I enjoy helping people learn and grow," Chen says. "Being a professor allows me to do both things that I am passionate about."

**Nicole Fuller**, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING:

Fuller, whose previous corporate position was a partner compensation analyst at Hogan Lovells law firm in Washington, D.C., studies strategic management. She said she is especially interested in entrepreneurship and how businesses behave in urban communities.

"I previously worked in corporate, but felt misaligned," Fuller says. "My goal was to pursue a career that allowed for continuous learning, mentoring future leaders, and producing work that impacts the community in meaningful ways."

Fuller holds a doctorate in business management from Texas A&M University, a master's degree from the University of Arkansas, and a bachelor's in finance and new business management from Georgetown University.

**L. Kalo Gow**, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, FILM AND THEATRE:

Gow, who teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in performance, will also direct and assist on voice and movement for stage productions.

Gow holds master's degrees in acting and creative arts learning with a theater specialty. Her academic publications include "Teaching the Totality of Self: The Roy Hart Theatre" and "The Vocal Vision: Views on Voice by 24 Leading Teachers, Coaches and Directors" from Applause Books.

Her research studies have included historical dance and gender gestures and movement

throughout history and experimental voice work and human octave voice range.

"I'm thrilled to be here in this amazing, wonderful place," Gow says. "And I have my dream job because I get to teach both voice and movement and that's very rare."

**Randy Kearns**, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING:

Kearns, who worked as a paramedic for a decade and spent eight years as a Federal Emergency Management Agency reservist responding to federally declared disasters, including Hurricane Katrina, is well versed in the field of trauma. His area of expertise is in healthcare management, policy, operations, disaster medicine, trauma and burn care.

Prior to coming to UNO, Kearns was an associate professor and healthcare management department chair at the University of Mount Olive in North Carolina.

"I enjoy history and understanding the path from a historical perspective, to where we are today in healthcare and medicine," Kearns says. "I just published a book with Arcadia Publishing regarding historical

sanatoriums and asylums of eastern North Carolina."

**Xueyan Sherry Liu**, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, MATHEMATICS:

Liu, who will teach pre-calculus and introductory statistics, arrives at the University after spending two years as a postdoctoral fellow in the biostatistics department at St. Jude Children's Research Hospital and three years as a visiting assistant professor at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

"I am more than happy to teach what I have to students and lead them to a higher level of knowledge in sciences to facilitate their future pursuits," Liu says. "Hence, being a faculty is my dream job.

Liu's research focus is in count data and generalized linear statistical models.

**Robert Mahon**, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, EARTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES:

Mahon, a geologist whose work focuses on sediment transport in modern and ancient depositional environments, has a dual nature depending of his audience. His work, Mahon said, lies at the intersection of sedimentary processes and stratigraphy, which is the study of the layers created by the deposited sediments.

"I do quantitative stratigraphy," Mahon says, "so looking at earth's ancient record of surface processes and trying to put quantitative bounds on some of those ancient conditions to get a better understanding of the long time scale evolution of surface processes and their response to changes and environment."

Mahon holds a joint appointment in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences and the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. →



*New faculty members joining the University of New Orleans include (from left to right) Nicole Fuller, Anna Mecugni, Angela Catalano, Lisbeth Philip and Phani Vadrevu.*

**Anna Mecugni, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, FINE ARTS:**

Mecugni's focus is on contemporary art and curatorial studies. She also is slated to take over as director of the UNO-St. Claude Gallery.

Her previous positions include being a lecturer in art history at Loyola University New Orleans, visiting scholar and lecturer at the University of Pennsylvania, exhibition assistant at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and research assistant and lecturer at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

Mecugni, who laughingly

evaluating and implementing performance measurements systems for accountability and learning in the nonprofit sector. He also has worked as a research consultant evaluating programs.

"I study and advise local nonprofit organizations, particularly in the areas of program evaluation and data-based decision-making," Mumford said.

Mumford has a doctorate in public policy and administration from George Washington University, and a master's in public administration. His interest in public service was piqued by his

tured around two broad questions: What are the determinants of the wedge between theoretical and actual prices in financial markets? What are the implications for investment decisions?

"During my studies I came to realize how our capitalistic reality is exclusively founded on the principle of profit maximization," said Pezzo, who holds a doctorate in finance from Washington University in St. Louis. "Even if very efficient, I don't always find this principle ethical. So one of my objectives has become to teach people the tools to be able

to independently assess financial markets, and be aware of their threats."

**Lisbeth Philip,**

*ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, ENGLISH AND FOREIGN LANGUAGES:*

The department's search committee set out to find a Spanish linguist. They found that and more with Philip, who has expertise in translation and interpreting. Indeed, prior to joining the University of New Orleans, Philip was the academic director and lead professor of Loyola University's Translation and Interpreting Certificate program.

She has worked as a translator and interpreter in Louisiana for more than 25 years and is a certified Spanish court interpreter, a registered interpreter in French in Louisiana, and a certified healthcare interpreter in Spanish.

At Loyola, she developed and taught courses in translation and interpreting in the legal and healthcare settings, Philip said.

She wants to expand the program at the University of New Orleans.

"I'm looking forward to taking it to a different level, where we can have a lot of service learning, experiential learning," says Philip.

Philip holds a doctorate from Tulane University in linguistics and master's degree from UNO in romance languages, linguistics and a master's degree in secondary education from Loyola.

**Phani Vadrevu, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, COMPUTER SCIENCE:**

Vadrevu is a bug person—in the technical sense. His expertise is in cybersecurity. Specifically, he has researched web security, network security and malware, those testy "bugs" that gives us the computer blues.

Vadrevu, whose undergraduate major was in mechanical engineering, says he was so intrigued with computer science that he pursued the subject in graduate school.

"It was fascinating to study about the building blocks of Internet communication," he said. "For grad school, I specifically chose computer science and for the first time, got acquainted with research in computer security."

Vadrevu was enamored.

"It was fun to learn how the fight between the bad and good guys has been evolving for the past several years," he says. "I felt like reading research papers on this topic was almost like watching a movie!"

His first research project at the University of Georgia was a system called AMICO that was used to detect malware downloads. The project was so successful that it garnered a \$400,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Vadrevu says.

Erin Cox, assistant professor, biological sciences, will join the faculty in January.

**"I tell parents all the time that we have the brains of a national research institution with all of the heart of a small college."**

UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT JOHN NICKLOW

says she hails from "the south of the north of Italy," said an uncle inspired her career path. Her uncle, Alessandro Palladini, is an architect and painter who studied architecture at the University of Venice, she said.

When Mecugni was born, her uncle created a mural on a discarded wooden door that hung in her bedroom.

"Every night before going to sleep I would look at this work and find new things every single day," Mecugni says. "The painting is both figurative and abstract, very colorful, with interlocking geometric shapes, buildings, winding streets, trees, and fantastic forms and creatures that make you imagine all kinds of stories about them."

**Steve Mumford, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, POLITICAL SCIENCE:**

Mumford, who will teach in the Master of Public Administration program, has more than a decade of experience

mother, who was a public school teacher, and later through his own volunteer work, including a stint with the Peace Corps in West Africa while in college, he said.

"I pursued an MPA to turn these passions into career prospects," Mumford says.

Mumford will teach "The Profession of Public Administration" and two online courses: "The Nonprofit Sector" and "Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations."

**Luca Pezzo, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, ECONOMICS AND FINANCE:**

Pezzo, who teaches research, portfolio analysis and economics, says he has always been interested and fascinated by financial markets. That interest also made him want to learn how to properly invest his money, and to share that knowledge with others, he said.

He said his focus is struc-

## BIOLOGIST LANDS FEDERAL GRANT TO IMPROVE OYSTER REEF SUSTAINABILITY

GULF OYSTERS MORE THAN a culinary delight. According to the Louisiana Seafood Promotion and Marketing Board, Louisiana's commercial oyster industry accounts for almost 4,000 jobs and has an economic impact of \$317 million annually. Unfortunately, oyster habitat in the Gulf of Mexico may not be robust enough to maintain these figures over time.

Now, Thomas Soniat, a research professor in the Department of Biological Sciences and associate director of the Canizaro/Livingston Gulf States Center for Environmental Informatics at the University of New Orleans, has been awarded almost \$300,000 from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administra-

tion's National Marine Fisheries Service Saltonstall/Kennedy Program to lead a collaborative effort that will apply a model for determining sustainable harvest of oysters across the Gulf of Mexico. The team will be co-led by professor Eric N. Powell from the University of Southern Mississippi's Department of Coastal Sciences and includes representatives from state wildlife and fisheries agencies in Texas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Florida, as well as seafood industry partners from those states.

"Funding from the Saltonstall/Kennedy Program provides a unique opportunity to bring together academic scientists, state regulators and industry leaders from the Gulf States to



ensure that oyster reef quality is maintained and enhanced, and that oyster populations are sustainably fished," Soniat says.

Soniat's team will focus on a key aspect of recovering and better managing oyster habitat in the face of environmental impacts and climate change. Oysters produce their own habitat—the oyster reef—in part through dying, which adds shell carbonate to the reef. According to Soniat, most Gulf oyster reefs are losing more carbonate than they are recovering through the deaths of oysters. Adding more shell material into the reef systems to correct the carbonate

imbalance would need to be carefully managed. To that end, Soniat's team will develop an integrated data collection and analysis program that will allow oyster stock and its habitat to be measured and managed as a comprehensive whole.

The Canizaro/Livingston Gulf States Center for Environmental Informatics fosters interdisciplinary collaboration within the University and among investigators across the Gulf of Mexico, empowering scientists and engineers with modern informatics tools to solve environmental problems facing states that border the Gulf of Mexico.

## PHILOSOPHY PROFESSOR AWARDED \$1.8M GRANT TO STUDY AND SUPPORT MINORITY ENTREPRENEURSHIP

CHRIS SURPRENANT, associate professor of philosophy and director of the University of New Orleans honors program, has been awarded a three-year, \$1.8 million grant from the John Templeton Foundation to examine entrepreneurship patterns in urban communities and support would-be entrepreneurs, with specific focus on black communities, throughout the southeastern United States.

Surprenant said that social scientists who study entrepreneurial outcomes between various racial and ethnic groups often conclude not only that smaller percentages of black

Americans engage in entrepreneurial activities, but also that they are less successful as entrepreneurs when compared to their non-black counterparts.

However, Surprenant argues that these statistics may not

be reliable or at least may not tell the whole story. A significant amount of entrepreneurial activity in these communities may not be accounted for in existing data sets—activity such as selling homemade food, fixing cars, reselling goods, or watching

other people's children. Little research has been done to try to understand how much activity is taking place, in what areas, and

where future opportunities may lie as a result.

"Entrepreneurship matters because it's one of the best ways for people to escape poverty," Surprenant says. "The challenge is trying to understand and document what is going on, both the obstacles and successes, in a way that would make possible outside investment, either from public or private sources."

As Surprenant structured the project, it calls for collaboration among academics from historically black colleges and universities, including Dillard University, Jackson State University, Southern University Law Center and Morehouse College, as well as policy professionals who specialize in studying free markets and

community, such as the Pelican Institute and Austin Institute for the Study of Family and Culture.

"I'm excited to get started," Surprenant says. "We have a great coalition of people working with us on this project, most of whom are from the communities we're interested in better understanding. I'm thankful to the Templeton Foundation for seeing the importance of this project and providing us with the financial support to make it happen."

Established in 1987 by investor and philanthropist Sir John Templeton, the Templeton Foundation supports interdisciplinary research focusing on areas such as science and the big questions, individual freedom and markets, character and virtue development, and genetics. 🌱



Chris Surprenant

A photograph of a dolphin leaping from the water, creating a splash. The dolphin is dark grey with a white patch on its side. The background shows a sandy beach and dunes under a clear sky. The title 'Dolphin Tales' is overlaid on the image in a large, white, sans-serif font.

# Dolphin Tales

From a kayak floating along a southern African coastline, biologist Morgan Martin eavesdrops on the little studied Heaviside's dolphins and makes a surprising discovery.

BY MALLORY MOORE

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF MORGAN MARTIN



FROM A KAYAK OFF THE WEST COAST OF SOUTHERN Africa, Morgan Martin, a 2010 University of New Orleans alumna, records sounds made by a little-studied species of dolphin and surprised experts with what she discovered by analyzing them.

Martin authored a research paper about her findings that was featured on the cover of the flagship biology journal published by the Royal Society, the independent scientific academy of the United Kingdom.

“Heaviside’s dolphins seem to be hunting and navigating using typical narrowband high-frequency sounds, but they use riskier lower frequency sounds when they communicate with each other,” Martin explains.

Martin, 30, is wrapping up work on her doctorate at the University of Pretoria in South Africa. She has been based in Namibia for nearly three years researching Heaviside’s dolphins, a species found only in the coastal waters along southern Africa’s west coast. Heaviside’s are some of the smallest dolphins on Earth and little is known about them.

Martin used a kayak to gather recordings of Heaviside’s. She took care to get close enough for clear recordings but remained far enough away that she wouldn’t disturb natural behavior. She gathered a healthy sample of recordings and began to analyze them, expecting she would find that Heaviside’s use the high-frequency clicks in communication and echolocation like other similar dolphin species.

Instead, Martin’s recordings seemed to indicate that the

Heaviside’s were using both high-frequency sounds that would be inaudible to predators as well as a lower-frequency sound. These lower frequency clicks are risky to produce because they can easily be heard by killer whales, potentially increasing the chances that Heaviside’s dolphins end up as prey themselves.

“Could this be right?” Martin wondered.

### **VISIT SOWS CAREER SEEDS, SERENDIPITY ADDS DIRECTION**

Martin’s journey to Namibia and eventual research on the communication habits of the Heaviside’s dolphin began decades earlier when her interest in marine biology was first piqued at age seven during a visit to Florida.

Martin discovered something at the beach and at Sea World that would influence the course of her life: dolphins. She grew up in land-locked Springfield, Ill., but her passion for marine biology never waned.

When the time came for Martin to choose a college, there was no question about what she wanted to study. At the same time, there was no one in her inner circle of family and friends who could offer guidance on how best to pursue the discipline.

After researching degree programs online and submitting a few applications, she was accepted to Texas A&M at Galveston and awarded a partial scholarship. As far as she was concerned, the decision was made. She was excited about going to Texas.

Around that time, she received a college acceptance letter from the University of New Orleans. But the letter wasn’t intended for

Martin. She hadn’t applied to UNO. The letter was addressed to another applicant but it was mailed to the Martins.

Martin’s father, Mark, had taken a keen interest in her college search and was aware of the incorrectly addressed letter. He contacted the University of New Orleans to let the admissions office know that the intended recipient was not at the Springfield, Ill. address.

It was early 2006, just six months after Hurricane Katrina. National media outlets were still reporting on the city’s long recovery, so the Martins knew things were not yet back to normal in New Orleans.

When he reached the UNO admissions office by phone, Mark Martin explained the story of the letter. A sharp recruiter took the opportunity to let him know that the University of New Orleans offered a biology degree program, and that the hurricane had precipitated a steep drop in enrollment. As a result, the University was making generous scholarship packages available to recruit students back. She encouraged Martin to have Morgan apply to UNO.

But Morgan wasn’t really interested. She had visited New Orleans once before and enjoyed it, but she was set on the marine biology program in Texas.

Morgan describes her family as middle class. Having completed college himself, Mark Martin understood the advantages of starting a career without student loan debt. As an 18-year-old, Morgan’s priorities were different. Set on the degree program in Texas, Morgan submitted an application to attend UNO strictly to placate her father. She even filled out the Free Application





for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), as the recruiter suggested, just to see what kinds of federal assistance might be available.

Finally, a second acceptance letter from UNO arrived at the Martins' home. This one was addressed to Morgan Martin and offered a full ride—tuition, room and board, books and more—for four years of study. And with it, came the opportunity to avoid any student loans at all.

In April 2006, Morgan and her father visited New Orleans and the UNO campus.

"Dad wanted to make sure nothing was still underwater," Morgan says.

Her dad had instructed her to set up a meeting with someone in the biology department, so she arranged a meeting with earth and environmental sciences professor Martin O'Connell. He is also director of the Nekton Research Laboratory at UNO's Pontchartrain Institute for Environmental Sciences. The lab specializes in the study of the variety and abundance of fish species and responses of aquatic communities to natural and man-made disturbances.


As O'Connell described opportunities for undergraduate students to work on research projects in his lab, Morgan began to think that maybe going to college in New Orleans wouldn't be so bad after all.

Morgan's degree from the University of New Orleans is a bachelor's in biological sciences. With hindsight, she says she is grateful to have the broad foundation provided by the degree program rather than the specialized marine biology degree she was initially wanted to pursue.

The foundation of the biology degree program has served her well in a very competitive discipline, Morgan says, while some of her colleagues who acquired a marine specialty early on have had greater difficulty finding viable work opportunities in the field.

## DEEP DIVE INTO MARINE MAMMALS

For the next step in her education, she took her biology degree to the University of San Diego where she enrolled in a graduate program in marine science. Two things happened in San Diego that would help shape the rest of her academic career. First, she landed a master's research project based at the regional offices of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration focusing on the diet of California sea lions. There is only one way to know what sea lions have eaten. She examined their waste. It was not glamorous work. With a foot in the door in the field of marine mammals, she began to focus on dolphin and whale research instead.

Just as she was finishing up her master's degree in San Diego, 



*Biologist Morgan Martin is researching the communication signals of Heaviside's dolphins in Namibia as she pursues her doctorate at the University of Pretoria in South Africa.*



Martin became acquainted with some dolphin and whale researchers from South Africa who were looking for an eager doctoral student. Tess Gridley and Simon H. Elwen are the directors of the Namibian Dolphin Project, a research and conservation effort headquartered on the southern coast of Africa with facilities in Namibia and Cape Town, South Africa.

That fateful meeting led Martin to choose to pursue her doctoral studies at the University of Pretoria in South Africa, where Gridley and Elwen could serve as her chief supervisors. Additionally, she pivoted her research focus to marine mammal acoustics, a subfield in marine biology with a robust focus in academia.

Beyond the opportunity to keep working with Gridley and Elwen, studying on the southern tip of the African continent presented Martin with a chance to explore the Heaviside's dolphins and contribute to the small body of work on a species known to exist only on that coast.

In addition to using sound for communication, dolphins and many other animals use sound to find things in their environment—like prey—in a process called echolocation. The sound of a human voice is made by the larynx, but dolphins produce sounds using their foreheads. Pressure in the sinus cavity creates a beam of energy, like an electrical pulse, that bounces off underwater objects and sends information in the form of an echo

to the dolphin about the object's location.

In the dark water, producing these pulses is thought to be the only way these creatures communicate, hunt and navigate. According to Martin, the prevailing idea prior to her study had been that Heaviside's dolphins were effective at avoiding detection by producing pulses at a frequency so high that it is inaudible to their chief predator: killer whales.

Dolphins can emit pulses, or “clicks” as researchers call them, at over 500 per second.

Martin's recordings, however, seemed to indicate that the Heaviside's were using both high-frequency sounds that would be inaudible to predators as well as a riskier lower-frequency sound that could be detected.

Martin and her research team questioned why one species of dolphin would switch to signals that were more likely to be heard by predators when they could stick to a safer, higher frequency sound to better avoid detection. Gridley, a bottlenose dolphin acoustic specialist, and Elwen, a general whale and dolphin researcher, advised Martin to seek out the expertise of some pioneers in dolphin echolocation, expertise that was located in Denmark. Frants Jensen, a bioacoustics expert at Aarhus Institute of Advanced Studies, is a co-author of the study. He explains that the answer has to do with how sound travels underwater.



“The lower frequency and broadband nature of these communication signals means that they are less directional and travel further underwater, so they are much more effective for social communication,” Jensen says.

“So far, this seems to be the only dolphin species that selectively increases communication range by changing the way they produce sounds,” Martin says. The team’s initial paper on the research, “Heaviside’s dolphins relax acoustic crypsis to increase communication range,” was published in the July 18 issue of *Proceedings of the Royal Society of London B*.

Martin and her colleagues had a chance to observe what they think the findings of this study illustrate. Shortly after seeing Heaviside’s dolphins socializing in a group, the research team saw a pair of killer whales attack and kill one of the dolphins. Perhaps it was the lower frequency communication within the dolphin group that alerted the killer whales to their presence.

While this study presents important findings about how

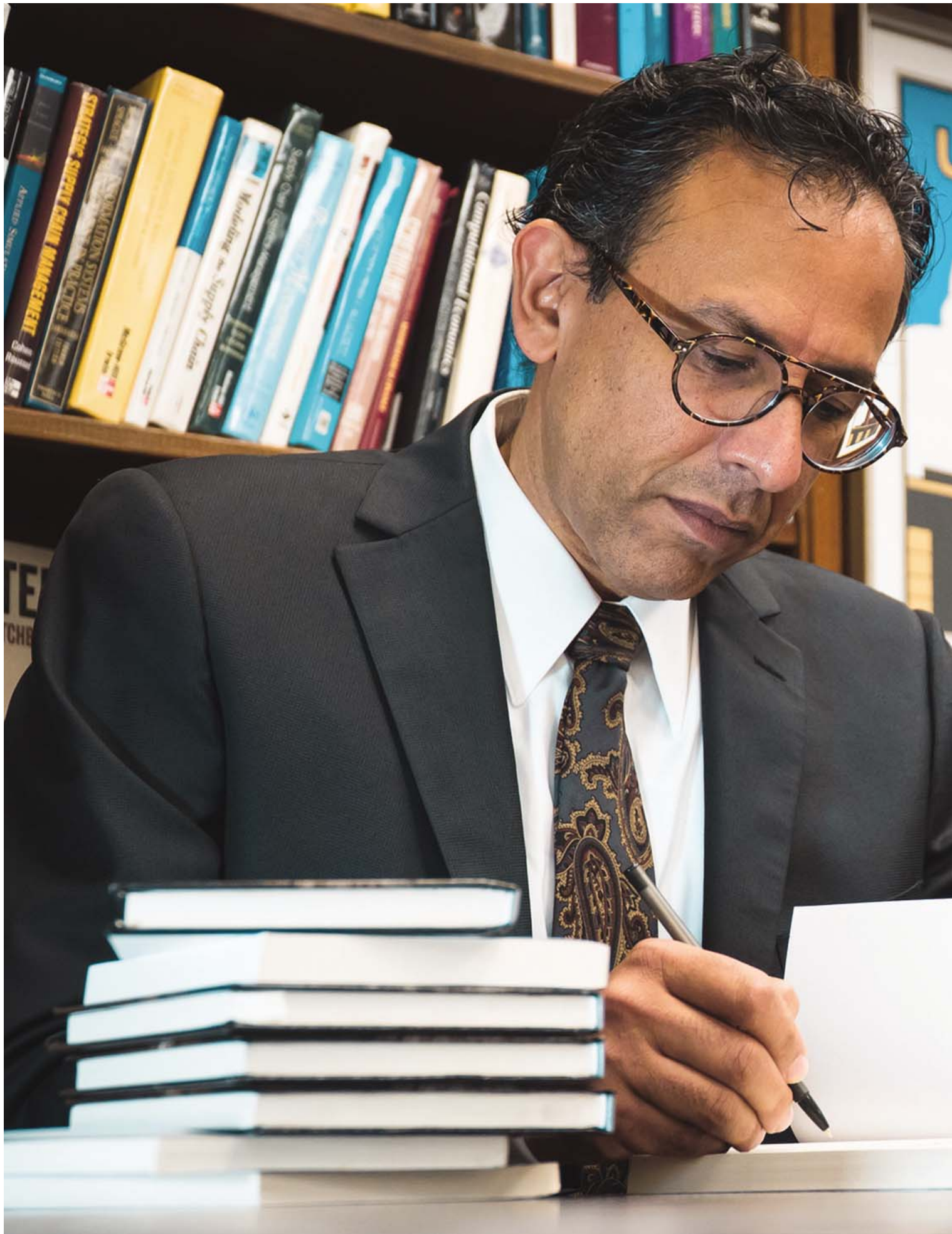
*ABOVE: Heaviside’s are the smallest dolphins on Earth and little is known about them. Morgan Martin’s study presents important findings, but she says there is still much to learn. BELOW: The Tropic of Capricorn or the Southern Tropic is one of the five major circles of latitude that divide the Earth into different parts. Namibia is one of only 10 countries the Tropic of Capricorn passes through.*

Heaviside’s dolphins use a dual-sound strategy for foraging and communication, Martin emphasizes that there is still much to learn about what their signals mean.

“These dolphins communicate by emitting bursts of very rapid clicks at highly varying repetition rates,” she says. “We don’t yet know what information they can encode when they produce these sounds, but we are trying to find out.”

Her next paper will link specific sounds produced underwater with surface behaviors to gain a better understanding of the function of different social signals used by Heaviside’s dolphins. 🐬







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# A PROVOST'S PASSION

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BY REBECCA CATALANELLO


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MAHYAR AMOUZEGAR HAS BEEN WRITING FICTION for most of his life. But until five years ago, few outside of his closest family members knew.

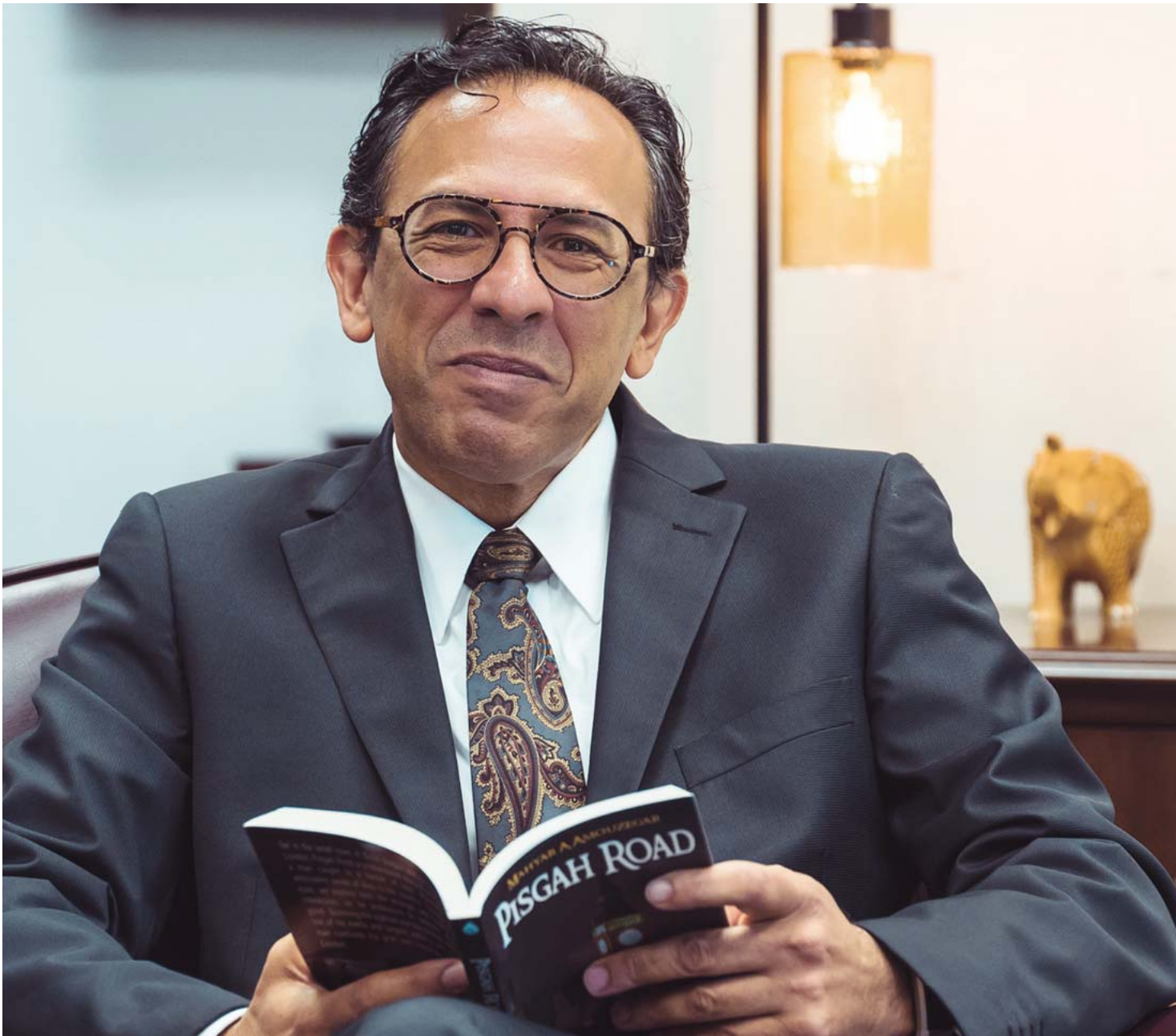
Instead, he spent the better part of 30 years building a career around math and engineering. He studied applied mathematics and electrical engineering through undergraduate and graduate school, obtained a doctorate in operations research from the University of California, Los Angeles, and created an impressive resume as an academic, researcher and senior policy analyst for RAND Corp.

He's been a university dean and department chair, published more than 60 scholarly articles and, in 2017, joined the University of New Orleans as provost and senior vice president for academic affairs.

Yet nearly every day since he was about 13 years old, Amouzegar has spent part of his day quietly constructing imaginary worlds with words on paper and screen, a daily devotion to the art of the story that he says sprouted from his early love of reading.

“To me, coming home and writing fiction was just 

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a way to get away from that math and policy,” he says. “It was just a private conversation between me and my characters.”

And by private, he means private. Over 20 years of marriage, Amouzegar’s wife, Maria Montero, expressed support for her husband’s writing. But it still took Amouzegar about 10 years to work up the courage to share the actual work with her.

All that changed two years ago, when Amouzegar published the first of two novels through the small publishing house Fountain Blue Publishing. In “A Dark Sunny Afternoon” (2016) and, “Pisgah Road” (2017), Amouzegar brings readers inside the lives of two men, each struggling to come to terms with their past amid present love and drama.

One colleague’s persistence led him to change his mind about sharing his work.

Sharon Hilles—then-dean of liberal arts at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, where they both worked—had

heard about Amouzegar’s private writing. So, she asked to see it. And asked and asked and asked. Amouzegar finally complied.

The manuscript Hilles sent back was life-changing for Amouzegar. Hilles had written all over his pages, expressing disdain for one character, surprise with another, and, in the process, gave the formerly secret author a level of feedback that he didn’t know he wanted until he had it.

“It impacted her and she wanted to talk to me about the characters,” Amouzegar says. “Now, I wanted to be read. I wanted to be a better writer.”

Amouzegar is from Iran, the sixth of seven children born to a bookkeeper father and a homemaker mother. Neither of his parents had college degrees, but his father was a book-lover who worked for about 10 years at a publishing house and managed to keep the home stocked with literature.

“He would come home every night with a book,” Amouzegar



says. “It was really nice.”

In 1977, at age 13, Amouzegar traveled to the United States with his 11-year-old brother. The pair were sent to live in California with their older sisters, both accountants in their 20s. As he remembers it, his parents were expected to follow soon after, but revolution was brewing in Iran and travel became difficult. The couple did not join their children for another five or six years, leaving Amouzegar to navigate teenage life in America without his parents nearby.

That’s when Amouzegar’s writing habit picked up speed. Every day, he would come home from school and write. The stories, he said, were just for him. He paid no attention to character development or structure. He just wrote.

He drew on his love of old movies, especially screwball comedies of the 1940s like “It Happened One Night” and “His Girl Friday” and others in the film noir genre like “Double Indemnity”

and “D.O.A.” He read and re-read “The Godfather” and found himself inspired by drama, suspense and the subtleties of human interaction.

In time, he grew to love Ernest Hemingway and Graham Greene, to write to the music of operas like “Aida,” after which he named one of two daughters. Writing, which he occasionally describes as his “first love,” always felt like a natural extension of himself, but not enough to quash the inner voice that told him this was never good enough to be shared.

Outwardly, Amouzegar exhibited an aptitude for math. It seemed more acceptable career fodder for a young man raised in a middle-class Iranian home.

“I can imagine that if my parents were here and I would have grown up here, I would have gone on to study history or writing or political science and I would have done social sciences or liberal arts,” he says. “But coming from the Old World, the expectation is that you’re going to be a doctor or engineer.”

In his pursuit of a master’s degree in engineering, Amouzegar discovered the world of operations research, an area of study that enabled him to tackle complex policy problems with the aim of arriving at workable solutions. It’s a field that marries abstract problem-solving with the skill of a mathematician.

And while Amouzegar has done a lot of professional writing as part of his work, he still looks forward to the time he gets to spend at home thinking imaginatively about what his character will do next. He writes, he says, one sentence and one day at a time. Today, much of that writing takes place on the balcony of the Marigny home that he shares with Montero.

Being provost—a position that requires oversight of the University’s faculty and academic programs—seems to allow him to call on all the muscles he has learned to exercise in a career as a mathematician and engineer and as an extracurricular creative writer.

“I think being creative, it allows you to think holistically about problems,” Amouzegar says. “It allows me not to think so algorithmically. I am very much aware of human nature and I think it helps with this job ... I think it un-constrains your imagination.”

Amouzegar says he is continually juggling multiple stories and is currently seeking a new publisher for his next book. 📖

# *MYSTERY SOLVED*



*REMAINS OF MISSING TUSKEGEE AIRMAN IDENTIFIED*

*BY ADAM NORRIS*



FOR MORE THAN 70 YEARS, U.S. ARMY AIR FORCE CAPTAIN Lawrence E. Dickson was listed as missing in action during World War II. But in July, the mystery surrounding Dickson's death was finally solved, giving his family the answers they had sought for decades. A group of University of New Orleans students and their professor played a crucial role in the first recovery of a Tuskegee Airman since the end of World War II.

In December 23, 1944, Dickson was a 24-year-old member of the 332nd Fighter Group, what would later become known as the Tuskegee Airmen, the first black military aviators to serve in the U.S. armed forces. He was on an aerial reconnaissance mission to Czechoslovakia when his P-51D aircraft—with its distinctive red tail—experienced engine trouble and on his way back to base in Ramitelli, Italy, his plane crashed along the border of Italy and Austria. Dickson's remains were not recovered and, from that point on, he was declared missing in action.

A break in the case came nearly seven decades later from historians who research MIA cases for the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA). Investigators determined that a mountainous area outside the Austrian border town of Hohenthurn was the most promising location of the crash site. An Austrian man, whose mother witnessed the crash of a P-51, told investigators that as a child he played around the wreckage of a plane.

With the location identified, the DPAA began discussions about collaborating with The National WWII Museum in New Orleans and the University of New Orleans on the excavation. With its longstanding UNO-Innsbruck International Summer School, its deep ties to the museum and a track record of summer field schools

run by UNO archaeologist D. Ryan Gray, the University was an ideal partner on the project.


During the summer of 2017, 12 UNO students—under the direction of Gray—spent three weeks creating an archaeological grid and digging in 10-centimeter increments. The team also included two students from the University of Innsbruck and Tom Czekanski, a senior curator with The National WWII Museum. For at least seven hours a day, the team dug, sifted, photographed and took detailed notes of everything that it found. The students unearthed plane wreckage, personal items and bone fragments.

"I think all of us were very motivated to get this done for the family, for the DPAA, for ourselves," says Drew Kinchen, who graduated with a degree in anthropology. "We were all really emotionally invested in it."

In one of the most exhilarating moments of the dig, UNO graduate student Titus Firmin discovered a gold ring that belonged to the downed pilot.

"We had a good idea that we were in the right place from the research that the DPAA had already done," Gray says. "But the day that we found the ring, inscribed with a heart and the initials of Capt. Dickson and his wife, there was not a dry eye on site. That we could come that far and find something so deeply personal from someone who had given their life in World War II, was just overwhelming."

On July 27, 2018, the DPAA notified Dickson's daughter Marla Andrews that the remains from the dig site had been positively identified as Capt. Lawrence E. Dickson. Dickson is the first pilot identified of the 27 members of the Tuskegee Airmen who were declared missing.

Dickson's name is recorded on the Tablets of the Missing at the Florence American Cemetery, an American Battle Monuments Commission Site in Impruneta, Italy, along with the other MIAs from World War II. Now that he has been accounted for, a rosette will be placed next to his name. 

*FACING PAGE: Capt. Lawrence E. Dickson BELOW: Former UNO student Drew Kinchen uses a sifting screen to identify objects found outside Hohenthurn, Austria in 2017.*



LANGSTON WILLIAMS DIDN'T START OFF WITH A PLAN to make a social commentary as his master's thesis film at the University of New Orleans. But the summer after Williams finished writing the screenplay for a horror short, a 37-year-old named Alton Sterling was shot by police officers in Baton Rouge.

Williams discovered then that he had an entirely different screenplay in him – one about race, police brutality and the media. “The story almost wrote itself,” says Williams (M.F.A., '17).

Now, Williams' 25-minute short film, “Stay Woke,” is racking up honors on the film festival circuit and, most impressively, was invited to be screened at the Cannes Film Festival's Short Film Corner on May 17, a first for a student film made through UNO's Department of Film & Theatre program.

“It's a huge deal for me,” says Williams, 29, who received his master's degree in film in December 2017 and has spent the months since crisscrossing the country, picking up awards and visiting festivals in Los Angeles, Atlanta and Las Vegas. The last time Williams had a film he thought might be festival worthy, he submitted it to 70 festivals and received only six admissions.

Williams' road to filmmaking hasn't always been the smoothest. He says the first two films he produced in graduate school at UNO were “so bad” (his words) that some counseled him to reconsider the degree program. Williams says he took the criticism, but he parlayed it into something great.

It was the kind of growth that faculty love to see.

Laszlo Fulop, associate professor of film, was Williams' thesis committee leader. He says Williams showed maturity, dedication and commitment to his development as a filmmaker over his three and a half years in the program: “He took all those comments very seriously and he said, ‘OK, let me see how I can change.’”

In “Stay Woke,” Williams uses an ensemble cast to explore police brutality through the lives of three characters – a young black man, a white police officer and a black politician – whose experiences leading up to the moment of tragedy reveal a more nuanced reality than Williams says he often sees depicted in the media. Despite the heft of the subject matter, the film also includes moments of humor.

“The layers of complexity in this film are amazing,” Fulop says. “I really would compare it to Spike Lee's ‘Do the Right Thing’—but what is the right thing to do? People are both good and bad.”

Williams says his interest in what he calls “the gray” area of race relations likely stems from his personal experience. He grew up in Gulfport, Miss., where, until the third grade, he attended a school where he was the only African-American student in a sea of white. Though he had many friends in the early grades, he says he started to feel increasingly isolated as he approached the sixth grade.

In middle school he and his mother moved to Zachary, La.,

where he enrolled in a school where the race dynamics were the polar opposite.

“I didn't fit in,” Williams says. “I had been so used to being around other kinds of people.”

By the time he was in high school, Williams says he had an ability to see the world from multiple perspectives—an asset for anyone in the business of storytelling.

Williams holds a bachelor's degree in mass communications from Southern University. It was there, he says, where he became inspired by Spike Lee after the legendary film director made a visit to the campus. While at UNO, Williams was selected for the prestigious “NCIS: New Orleans” internship made possible through a collaboration with the locally-filmed TV show and the university.

Williams says his first love has always been horror films. When the “Stay Woke” festival tour is over, he plans, among other things, to return to his home in Metairie, La., and work on making his original thesis screenplay – that horror flick that he tossed after the events of the summer of 2016 – into a feature-length film.

“Stay Woke” has been

accepted into 27 festivals and been honored with seven awards: Award of Excellence in the Drama Category at the Southern Shorts Awards; Award of Excellence in the Short Film Category at the Depth of Field International Film Festival; Award of Excellence in the Student Short Film Category in the Best Shorts Competition; Best Student Director at the Jim Thorpe Independent Film Festival; Best Narrative Short Film at the Los Angeles Film and Script Festival; and Best of Show and Best Student Film at Upike Film & Media Arts Festival.

It was also named a semi-finalist at Los Angeles CineFest and Hollywood Screenings Film Festival and a finalist in the Upike Film Festival and the Student World Awards.

The film screened at Cannes on May 17, and Williams was there.

Locals also had a chance to see “Stay Woke” on May 13 during the UNO Film Festival at the University of New Orleans.





# The Poet Monet

MFA student Shaina Monet wins prestigious Iowa Review award

BY REBECCA CATALANELLO

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS ALUMNA AND MASTER'S candidate Shaina Monet has been named the winner of The Iowa Review Award in poetry, one of the most prestigious awards of its kind.

Monet, 28, holds bachelor's degrees in English and French from the University of New Orleans and she expects to receive her MFA in poetry from the University's Creative Writing Workshop this fall.

The Iowa Review Award annually recognizes unpublished poems by a single author. Monet receives \$1,500 and, as part of the prize, her three winning poems, titled "In Hamburg with The Negro Avenged," "On Menzel's Atelierwand," and "In Madrid with Picasso's Guernica," will be published in the forthcoming issue of *The Iowa Review*.

Elizabeth Willis, professor of poetry at the Iowa Creative Writing Workshop and judge for the Iowa Review Award, says that Monet's poems "bring the reader to specific occasions of 19th and 20th Century artmaking with contemporary insight into what these works reveal both by what they show and by what they occlude."

"Rather than explaining, summarizing, or translating other works of art," Willis wrote, "these poems are with them, in layered representations of the ways art accompanies us, the shape of its afterlife, its blindness and insights, and its formidable power to transport, narrow, or expand the viewer's field of vision."

Monet is a New Orleans native, a graduate of Salmen High School, winner of the Vassar Miller Poetry Award and poetry editor at *Bayou Magazine*, the University of New Orleans' literary magazine. Monet's poetry has appeared in *Crazyhorse*, *Sundog Lit*, and *Unlikely Stories*, and she has poems forthcoming in *Yemassee Journal*.

As her master's thesis, she is at work on her first book of poetry, which will explore the lives of her ancestors, people whose lives

she has learned about through census records, historical records, archival research and, of course, family storytellers.

Monet, whose New Orleans family roots extend to before the city's founding, says that she has been writing as long as she can remember. She once even got in trouble with a high school teacher for working on a novel in class, a supposed trespass that the then-Salmen High principal Byron Williams disregarded as absurd, much to Monet's delight and appreciation.

Monet's poetry has become a vehicle for her to explore her long-held interests in history, philosophy and words. As in the poem, "Madame Marguerite Joséphine Jean-Louis Pierry (f.w.c.)," her work blends imagination and nonfiction with intentional artistry that manages to resurrect the lives of the long deceased within the context of modern understanding and empathy.

Monet's contemporary influences include Aracelis Girmay and Tonya Foster. She also credits Stacy Allbritton, who taught her French and English at Salmen, as well as University of New Orleans English faculty — including Carolyn Hembree, John Gery, Elizabeth Steeby, Randy Bates, Dan Doll, Barbara Fitzpatrick, Nancy Easterlin, and Leslie White — whose classes and teaching styles have helped shape the formative parts of her academic and literary education.

Hembree, assistant professor of English and accomplished poet who was recently named the recipient of the University of New Orleans Alumni Association Excellence in Teaching Award, has been an especially important mentor, Monet says.

"She teaches you to know what you're doing, to have a why," says Monet.

Hembree has also provided a relentless voice of encouragement within the context of the criticism-heavy culture of Creative Writing Workshop. "Submit. Submit a lot," Monet says, summarizing Hembree's advice. "I never really thought anything was good enough to send. She has always believed in me." 🍷

# Meet New Dean of Students Carolyn Golz

*Golz Wants Student Affairs  
to Be 'Hub' of Resources  
for Students, Campus Engagement*

BY LITTICE BACON-BLOOD



CAROLYN GOLZ, THE NEW ASSOCIATE VICE PRESIDENT for student affairs and dean of students at the University of New Orleans, has experienced university life from several angles: as a student, dorm leader and campus administrator. It was working as a resident assistant at the University of Alaska Fairbanks that helped steer Golz's career path to student affairs.

That RA experience, in which she interacted with peers and got to know hall and campus directors who she has remained in touch with, helped to shape and formulate her vision for student affairs, Golz says. She wants all students to experience the type of positive campus life that kept her engaged and informed.

"My goal is to make this office a hub for students," Golz says. "If you don't know where else to go, you come here. We will break down barriers; we will get the answers you need.

"We are here to serve students, that's why we have jobs. Students are not an interruption or a disruption, they are our job."

Her focus for her first 90 days is getting to know students and inviting them to get to know her and the rest of the staff, says Golz, who spent her early school life in Alaska and later California while her father was in the military.

She, like many University of New Orleans students, is a first-generation college student.

As she walks the campus and attends events, Golz says she wants students to know that she and her staff are accessible.

"Letting them know that I'm not some scary person with a title, that I'm a real human being, and I really want to get to know them and I want them to get to know me and my staff," she says.

Along the getting-to-know-her avenue: Golz is married and has two dogs, Hazel and Forest. She loves coffee, and has perfected what she calls, "The Look." (Parents—and wise children—are familiar with similar countenances.)

It is a no-words-needed look of reproach developed as an RA while assigned to an all-male floor during her undergraduate days at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

"You can say a lot with that look!" Golz says with a laugh.

Golz, who arrived on campus in mid-July, has 15 years of experience in student affairs, in areas that include residence life, orientation, leadership development and student conduct. She holds a doctorate in organizational leadership. Her dissertation, "The Impact of Student Engagement on Alumni Giving," explored

the relationship between student engagement and alumni giving.

"I view part of my job as creating alumni. Students now, alumni tomorrow," Golz says. "If you don't have a good student experience, then you're not going to want to give back to the institution either financially or with time later. But, if you enjoy the place you feel a sense of loyalty to the place, you feel that you got something really important and transformational out of a place, you're more likely to support it for other students in the future."

Golz spent the previous four years at the University of California Santa Cruz, serving as the chief student affairs officer for two of its colleges. Prior to Santa Cruz, Golz was an area coordinator at the University of Illinois at Chicago, which, like the University of New Orleans, is a public metropolitan-serving institution, she says.

The University of New Orleans appealed to Golz because its mission fit with her philosophy of helping students and she liked the urban location.

"I was looking to be a dean of students, looking for the opportunity to really make a difference for students across the campus," she says. "I wanted that urban experience again, and it was really important for me to land in a place that was really focused on serving students, so the mission of the institution was attractive the location, the position, all of that."

So, what exactly is Golz's job? Sure, she oversees all of student affairs, such as student conduct, counseling and health services, student involvement and leadership. However, what is the end game?

"My job really is student engagement and the student experience outside the classroom," Golz says. "So making sure that students enjoy their time here, get connected on campus, feel a sense of belonging and are able to access the resources they need to be successful."

Golz says she is working on the engagement game plan—trying to find a strategy that entices students to stay on campus between and after classes.

"So you've got to build the momentum," Golz says. "Build the program for a few students, and then scale it up as more students start to engage, so it means providing opportunities for leadership development, providing social opportunities, creating spaces where students can just be between classes so they are not just hanging out in their cars."

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THE UNIVERSITY *of*  
**NEW ORLEANS**



# LAKEFRONT ARENA

GM Marco Perez  
has had a front row  
seat for 30 years.

BY TAMAR GREGORIAN

LIONEL RICHIE WAS NEWLY SOLO AND TRULY CAPTIVATING, while the Pointer Sisters had the crowd on fire and jumping for their love during the first concert at the newly opened UNO Lakefront Arena. In that crowd stood Marco Perez, the future general manager of the Lakefront Arena.

This, however, was 1983 and Perez was a political science student at the University of New Orleans contemplating a legal career while working security.

“I had applied to be an usher, but they didn’t have any usher spots left, so I applied to be a security guard,” Perez says. “I was positioned next to the soundboard and right there, everything changed. I was mesmerized, excited and loved watching the patrons enjoy themselves. The next night, I actually attended the concert

as a patron. It was the only ticket I ever bought for an event at the Lakefront Arena.”

That is because over the course of three decades Perez has worked his way from a special events staffer to general manager, a post he has held since 1997.

Nov. 1, 2018 marked the 35th anniversary of the arena’s opening, and for 30 of those years Perez has literally had a front row seat to some of New Orleans most memorable events—and visitors. They include the 1987 visit by Pope John Paul II in which he celebrated an outdoor mass on the arena’s grounds.

By then Perez was the events coordinator and in charge of orchestrating the logistics of the Pope’s visit. That job also included planning where the cardinals and bishops would assemble and

# URNS 35



where the helicopters would be stationed, Perez recalled. They planned for more than 300,000 people, he says.

“Planning the Pope’s visit was amazing and one of the highlights of my career,” says Perez, who holds a bachelor’s degree in political science from the University. “I remember the day of the event. It was so hot and in typical New Orleans fashion, it started to rain. But, just as the pope-mobile arrived onto the arena grounds, the skies cleared and the sun came out ... if you were there you’d understand just how powerful that was.”

Throughout its 35 years in business, the Lakefront Arena has not only generated significant revenue for the University, but it also has been ranked consistently among ☒

the top venues nationwide. The arena's relationship with promoters, agents and artists, due largely to Perez, has forged the University's reputation nationally and internationally.

Since opening its doors in 1983 with Lionel Richie and The Pointer Sisters, the Lakefront Arena has been a major destination in New Orleans for live entertainment—bringing in nearly 20 million patrons for world-class concerts, family and comedy shows, commencement ceremonies, athletic events and thousands of other events.

“There are so many features that make the Lakefront Arena such a great venue,” Perez says, ticking off a list.

**Intimate Size:** Since the Lakefront Arena was primarily designed for Privateer basketball, every seat is close to the action.

**Acoustics:** The size of the venue also makes the acoustics the very best in the city, Perez says. No other venue in the city has the same sound experience.

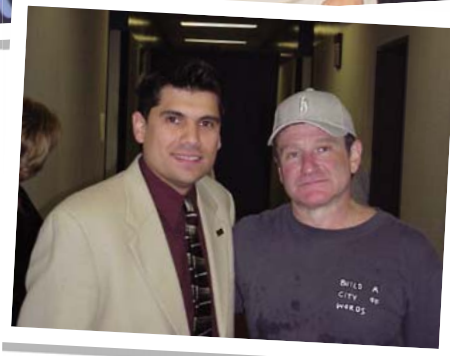
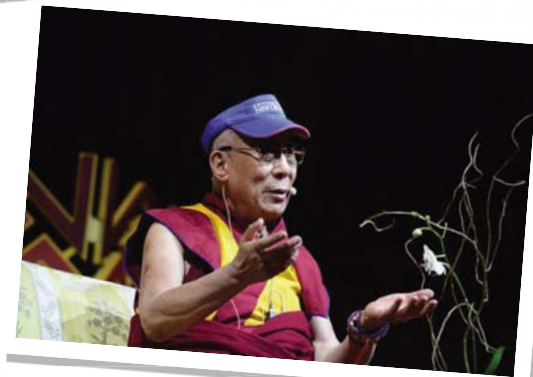
**Patron Experience:** The staff is truly hands on with every aspect of customer service. Many of the event staff members have been with the arena for 15, 20, 25 years and they take tremendous pride in the venue. The staff makes it their job to make the patrons feel as at home as they do, according to Perez.

**Location, Location, Location!** The arena is far from the hustle and bustle of the city center. You don't have to compete with traffic and the picturesque drive along the Lakefront makes the perfect backdrop for the venue—its namesake!

**Parking:** The arena has ample onsite parking that is convenient and affordable. You don't have to walk very far from the parking lot to the venue.

**On the Menu:** The arena works with our promoters to provide specialty cocktails

*The arena has hosted many memorable events since its opening, including an outdoor mass celebrated by Pope John Paul II who visited in 1987. The 14th Dalai Lama is photographed sporting a University of New Orleans hat during a visit in 2013 and arena general manager Marco Perez is pictured with the Blue Man Group and the late comedian/actor Robin Williams during engagements at the arena.*



at concerts and events. Late last year, it was the first to serve Privateer Pale Ale, a partnership between UNO and Wayward Owl Brewing Co.

In partnership with promoters such as AEG, Beaver Productions, FELD Entertainment, Live Nation, V Star Entertainment Group, North American Entertainment, Maximillian Page and the World Boxing Super Series, the Lakefront Arena entertains both young

and old and has welcomed the likes of His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama, Bill Clinton, John Kerry, Robin Williams, Jeff Dunham, Josh Groban, Carrie Underwood, Lady Gaga, Motley Crew, The Black Keys, Madonna, Red Hot Chili Peppers, Nicki Minaj, The Cure, Drake, Whitney Houston, Arcade Fire, James Taylor, Jason Mraz, Wiz Khalifa, and Sting with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

Home to Privateer Athletics, the Lakefront Arena has also hosted thousands of athletic events and tournaments, such as the Sun Belt Conference and other NCAA events. The Lakefront Arena's Aquatic Center welcomes 90,000 visitors annually. The Aquatic Center's Olympic-size pool provides a training ground for several high school and club swim teams and hosts state and national swim competitions.

Along with experiencing the highs that come with working in the entertainment business, Perez has also experienced one of the lowest points in the Arena's history—Hurricane Katrina.

The Lakefront arena sustained significant damage in August 2005. Just days after the storm, Perez began leading the recovery efforts for the building, while rebuilding his own home that was destroyed in the flood.

After receiving \$25 million for repairs and renovations from FEMA, and being closed for three years, the arena reopened its doors to the public on May 2, 2008. The Lakefront Arena went from a construction zone with a vast portion of the surrounding

grounds serving as a makeshift neighborhood of 1,000 FEMA trailers to reemerging as an entertainment hub for the New Orleans community.

“We reopened our doors ... with a Disney On Ice production of High School Musical—The Ice Tour,” Perez says. “I'll never forget that day.”



## PROFILE

# Montana Pinell



**Age:** 23

**Hometown:** Metairie, La.

**Major/degree program:** Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism Administration

**Career goal – what do you want to do after graduation?** I plan on directing my career toward the travel friendlier option of my degree, hotel operations. After graduating in the spring, I plan to return to Europe for the summer and starting on my master's degree in the fall.

**Where did you go and when?** Austria and Italy with UNO-Innsbruck International Summer School 2018 program. My two favorite places that I went to; Vienna and Rome. Although I highly recommend that you take at least two weekends to really get lost in Innsbruck where every day is a new adventure. This small town has plenty of hidden treasures scattered through it. The New Orleans festival was the perfect touch of NOLA toward the middle of the semester.

**Why did you go?** I went to Innsbruck because I wanted to challenge myself and expand my comfort zone. I went to Vienna to immerse myself in an antique city framed with breathtaking art.

**What did you study while you were there?** Psychology and

anthropology

**Most memorable experience?** Finding the lakes that are in the mountains. The best part about the lakes is that they were only twenty minutes away from the dorms, so it was possible for you to go right after class any day of the week. My most valuable experience was creating my own international family with the other students.

**Where do you want to go next?** EVERYWHERE! Most importantly back to Europe. I have been bitten by the travel bug. I want to tour the states and learn more about my motherland, but I am eager to experience more cultures over the pond.

**Advice to others considering study abroad?** I would personally recommend to anyone that is considering studying abroad to absolutely do it! It is the safest way to challenge yourself and expand your comfort zone. Studying abroad was the best scariest decision I have ever made in my entire life. It is a great opportunity to go on an enriching perspective-altering journey. I think that everyone should study abroad while they're in college, it does something unexplainable to your soul. Studying abroad single handedly gave me the opportunity to get lost on an adventure where I was finding myself. 🍷



ATHLETICS

# Legendary

*Ervin Johnson Inducted into  
Greater New Orleans Sports  
Hall of Fame* BY ED CASSIERE

TWELVE YEARS AFTER THE conclusion of his long NBA tenure—and 25 years after he capped a legendary career at the University of New Orleans—Ervin Johnson still stands tall.

Johnson was one of four standout local sports figures inducted into the Allstate Sugar Bowl's Greater New Orleans Sports Hall of Fame on August 4 at the Mercedes-Benz Superdome. Johnson was joined in the 2018 Hall of Fame class by Tom Benson, A.J. Duhe and John Fourcade.

Each year's Hall of Fame class is selected by the Greater New Orleans Sports Awards Committee, a group of current and former media members who annually recognize a variety of award-winners, including the Hall of Fame, the Corbett Awards and the Eddie Robinson Award. The group also selects the Greater New Orleans Amateur Athlete of the Month each month.

Anyone familiar with Johnson would not be surprised at his generous givebacks. He organized a girls AAU program, EJ Hoops, and helps with the coaching. And as a member of the Denver Nuggets Community Ambassadors, he has shared his spoken autobiography with youth—10,000 to 15,000 a year, Johnson estimates—and brought smiles to residents of assisted-living facilities.

"I really enjoy telling my story," Johnson says.

What an amazing tale he can tell. Johnson quit his team in the 10th grade at Block High School in Jonesville, La., about 45 miles northeast of Alexandria in tiny Catahoula Parish, and grew eight inches after graduation to 6-feet-11. He worked in a Baton Rouge supermarket for two and a half years before enrolling at UNO in January 1989.

He offered his services to Tim Floyd, then in his first

season as the Privateers head coach, on the final night of the early signing period in November 1988 after hearing of UNO's need for depth and height. Floyd, whose first UNO team had no starter taller than 6-5, instantly awarded Johnson a scholarship and redshirted him.

Johnson survived that initiation, plus a threat from Floyd to ship him to a junior college—"At that point we just didn't think Ervin was ready to play at the D-I level," the coach said—before blossoming into one of the city's greatest college players.

By the time he finished his Privateer career in 1993, Johnson had started for three conference-championship teams, played in two NCAA tournaments and set UNO records for career rebounds (1,287), field-goal percentage (.591), blocked shots (294), games started (116) and minutes played (3,694). His 1,608 points ranked second in UNO history. He was Sun Belt Conference Player of the Year as a senior center on a team that was 18-0 in conference, 26-4 overall and No. 17 in the final Associated Press poll. Though his ranking on UNO's career scoring charts has changed, this fact hasn't: He's UNO's only first-round NBA draft choice.

"I was blessed to get a scholarship," Johnson says. "I was a bad player when I got to UNO, but people there believed in me."

So did the NBA. The Seattle SuperSonics drafted Johnson, and he played there for three seasons. He spent a year in Denver and averaged 7.1 points, 11.1 rebounds and 2.8 blocks while starting all 82 regular-season games, but he was traded for three players the following year to the Milwaukee Bucks, where he spent seven of his final nine seasons. He also played for the Minnesota Timberwolves. Johnson started more than half

of his 845 NBA games with career averages of 4.1 points, 6.1 rebounds and 20.1 minutes per game.

"I thought I was prepared and mature," Johnson says of his ability to build a lengthy NBA résumé. "I believed in hard work, and I was willing to do anything to help the team. I had great coaches on every team, and I had good teammates. I had a desire to play, and I was always willing to put in the time. I'm sure I surprised a lot of people. I beat the odds. I just took it one contract at a time."

When Johnson shares his life's journey, he offers eight points. "One, education," he said. "Two, keep a positive attitude. Three, believe in yourself. Four, make good decisions. Five, set goals for yourself. Six, respect yourself and others. Seven, never quit or give up. Eight, build positive habits."

Recently a young girl asked Johnson if she would be famous. "I told her she can do whatever she wants," he says. "I said she could do it if she works hard and stays focused. What kids need is the confidence that they can do it. I try to encourage. There was a time when I needed that encouragement, and I got it."

One of Johnson's greatest confidence-builders at the University of New Orleans was his progress in the weight room. "I couldn't even bench-press 135 pounds when I got there," he says. "When I got to UNO I was one of the weakest. But I left as one of the strongest. Spent a lot of time there lifting with (teammates) Darren Laiche and Fred Hill. It was a smelly old facility, but it wasn't about the facility—it was about working hard and grinding it out."

The induction is Johnson's second in six years. He was a member of the 2013 Louisiana Sports Hall of Fame class. In addition, UNO retired his No.



40 jersey on December 29, 1997.

The Greater New Orleans Sports Awards Committee began in 1957 when James Collins spearheaded a group of sports journalists to form a sports awards committee to immortalize local sports history. For 13 years, the committee honored local athletes each month. In 1970, the Sugar Bowl stepped in to sponsor and revitalize the committee, leading to the creation of the Greater New Orleans Sports Hall of Fame in 1971, honoring 10 legends from the Crescent City in its first induction class. While adding the responsibility of selecting Hall of Famers, the committee has continued to recognize the top amateur athlete in the Greater New Orleans area each month—the honors enter their 62nd year in 2018. To be eligible, an athlete must be a native of the greater New Orleans area or must compete for a team in the metropolitan region.

Ed Cassiere was UNO sports information director from 1987-2000. He is a member of the Greater New Orleans Sports Award Committee and the assistant athletics director for communications at Xavier University of Louisiana.

*FACING PAGE: Ervin Johnson started for three conference-championship teams, played in two NCAA tournaments and set UNO records for career rebounds (1,287), field-goal percentage (.591), blocked shots (294), games started (116) and minutes played (3,694). His 1,608 points ranked second in UNO history. ABOVE: Ervin Johnson's induction to the Greater New Orleans Sports Hall of Fame on Aug. 4.*



## Olympic Pedigree

### *Johnson named new track and field and cross country coach*

BRIAN JOHNSON, AN Olympian and a four-time national champion in the long jump, has been named head track and field and cross country coach at the University of New Orleans.

A graduate of Southern University in Baton Rouge, Johnson was a member of the 2008 United States Olympic Track and Field Team in Beijing, China.

“We are excited to welcome Brian Johnson to our Privateer Athletics family,” says director of athletics Derek Morel. “His head coaching experience, individual competition success and his

familiarity with recruiting in our area will translate to a vibrant tenure as our head men’s and women’s track and field/cross country coach.”

The Iowa, La. native comes to the Lakefront from Alcorn State where he served in the same capacity at the Lorman, Miss. school for nearly three years.

“I’m excited to have the opportunity as head coach at the University of New Orleans,” Johnson says. “Thank you to Derek Morel and (Associate AD for Student-Athlete Enrichment/Senior Woman Administrator) Kirsten Elleby for their

leadership and for trusting me to take on this role.”

As a student-athlete, Johnson became only the third Southern athlete to win an indoor national NCAA title when he won the long jump crown in 2003. From 2004 to 2010, he served as assistant track and field coach at his alma mater while competing as one of the world’s best long jumpers.

Johnson leaped to the U. S. Indoor long jump title in 2005 and followed up with the outdoor and indoor crowns in 2005 and 2006. In 2008, he finished second at the Olympic Trials in Eugene, Ore., quali-

*Johnson (far left) was a member of the 2008 U.S. Olympic Team*

fying for the team.

From 2010 to 2014, Johnson served as head track and field coach at Southern in Baton Rouge. After one year as an assistant coach and recruiting coordinator at the University of Georgia, he became the head coach at Alcorn State in 2015.

“I look forward to hitting the ground running, building winning teams in the classroom and on the track,” Johnson says. “I can’t wait to start leading this great program.”

Hire Privateer talent with a



Handshake is the name of the University's new online platform for connecting current students to employment and internship opportunities.

Use the Handshake portal to post notices about full- and part-time job openings and internships, and current UNO students across all class levels and disciplines can search through them and apply.

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ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

## Opening New Worlds

*Alumnus Emile Geisenheimer donates \$100,000 to establish a scholarship for high-achieving, first-generation business students* BY REBECCA CATALANELLO

EMILE GEISENHEIMER WAS 36 when, armed with two college degrees, he became the youngest person in the history of Philips Electronic Instruments to be named president and CEO.

You might never guess, then, that before he was a high-achieving corporate executive, Geisenheimer was also a high school dropout.

A New Orleans native, Geisenheimer left school at 15 for full-time construction work. His mother was single-parenting five children. Money was tight.

“I just needed to help,”

Geisenheimer says.

He swapped his Fortier High School textbooks for hammers, saws and nails, sharpened his carpentry skills and eventually started his own carpentry-subcontracting firm. At 19, he joined the U.S. Air Force amid escalating conflict in Vietnam. It was there that he discovered the power of a college education: In the world of enlisted personnel and officers, it was the officers, those with college degrees, who held the power and the benefits.

“It was like getting hit in the head,” Geisenheimer says. “I figured out I needed to get a college education.”

Despite the lack of a high school diploma, Geisenheimer’s active military service gave him access to college classes. While stationed in North Carolina, he began accumulating credits at East Carolina University before being stationed in Southeast

Asia. Turns out, he did pretty well.

When he returned to civilian life, he took his record from East Carolina and enrolled at the University of New Orleans.

“It changed my life,” he says.

Geisenheimer funded his education thanks to the G.I. Bill, scholarships and a paid work-

study position as a statistics tutor for fellow students. He received mentorship from John Altazan, founding dean of the College of Business Administration; took classes with historian Stephen Ambrose; and found great coaching from Richard Labarge,

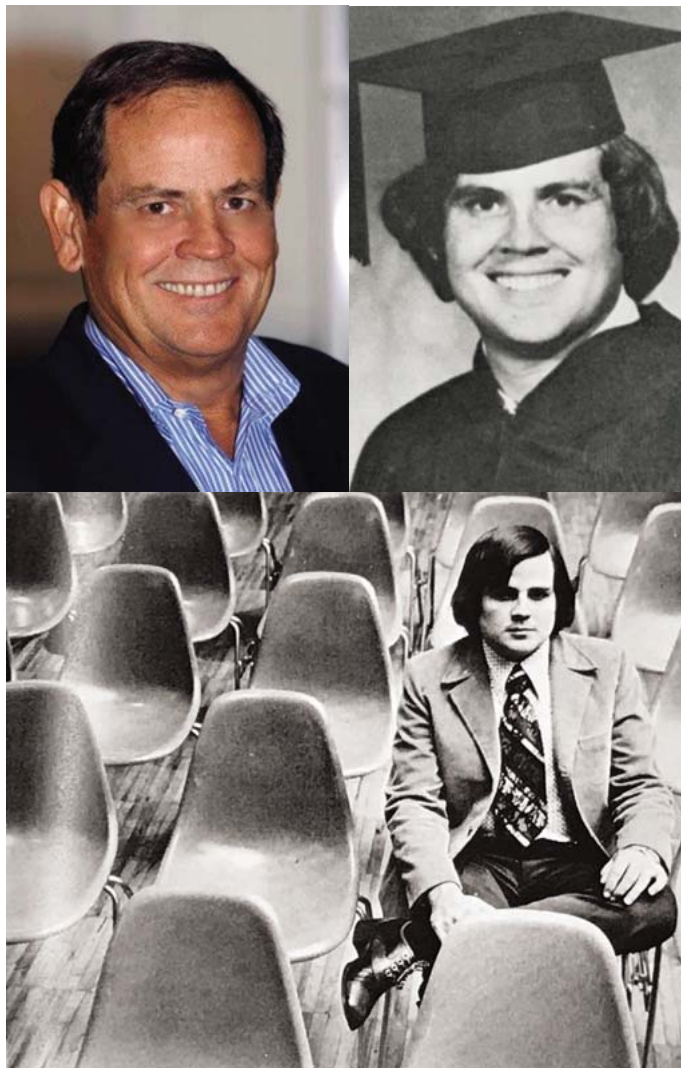
former professor and chair of economics at the University, who encouraged Geisenheimer to apply to graduate school at the University of Pennsylvania, Harvard and Stanford.

“It just opened up a whole new world of what was possible professionally,” Geisenheimer says.

Geisenheimer graduated cum laude in 1973 with a degree in finance from the University of New Orleans. He went on to The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania, where he received a full scholarship and an MBA, an experience that he says led him to take a job in New York, a city where, before going to college, he never even considered living.

Geisenheimer’s career took off.

He is credited with developing and implementing strategy leading to the rapid growth of Philips Medical Systems, Inc., then a major subsidiary of North American Philips Corp., then a New York Stock Exchange-listed public company. After being named CEO of Philips Electronic Instruments, Inc. he went on to become president and CEO of Spectranetics Corp., a NASDAQ-listed public company, where he led a turnaround at a critical point in the company’s history—and from which he retired in 2010. He was the founder of Madison Investment Partners, Inc., and managing partner of a series of private equity funds. He has





served on numerous boards of directors of both public and private companies.

Today, he splits his time between Miami Beach, Fla., and Madison, Conn. His work has taken him across the globe, introducing him to experiences he never imagined prior to going to college.

“I certainly have achieved a lot as a result of my education,” he says, “and it has changed my whole perspective on the world.”

With those experiences in mind, Geisenheimer has donated \$100,000 to the University of New Orleans for the creation of two full, two-year scholarships for high achieving, first-generation students majoring in accounting, finance, marketing or business administration.

To be considered, students must be entering their junior year with a cumulative grade

point average of 3.5 or higher. In its first year, the scholarship will be open to one junior, who will retain the scholarship into their senior year, if they maintain good academic standing. In its second year, the scholarship will be awarded to a second eligible student who is also entering their junior year.

Students who are veterans of the armed services will be given priority. Students must also receive the recommendation of a faculty adviser. Geisenheimer says he feels such mentorship is a key ingredient to student success.

“When you have someone you respect who is telling you that you can do it,” he says, “and what they say you can do exceeds what you might thought was possible for yourself, that is invaluable.”

Geisenheimer, now 70, says he felt the time was right to

establish a pathway for more high-achieving University of New Orleans students who, like him, may not have the built-in resources to both fund college and excel in college.

“I know that it’s a struggle for kids—particularly those who are first-time college students who have excelled—to maintain that excellence because of financial pressures,” he says.

“I know more than once I was tempted to take a semester off or take a third job and let the grades suffer in the process. “I’ve seen a lot of people contribute to building buildings and getting their names on them,” he says. “I’m not interested in that. I’m interested in encouraging academic excellence on the part of kids who have got the ability and I want to relieve them of the distraction so they can focus on excellence.”

*FACING PAGE: Emile Geisenheimer seen during his University of New Orleans student days and in more recent years, wants to help ease the financial pressure on intrepid business majors through the creation of a scholarship.*

*ABOVE: Kirschman Hall, home to the University’s College of Business Administration.*

# ALUM NOTES

## **Ralph Cox, (B.S. '70)**

Ralph Cox received the Society of Louisiana CPAs Lifetime Membership Award to recognize his extensive record of achievement to benefit the future of CPAs throughout Louisiana. Cox is a retired managing partner from Bourgeois Bennett in Metairie. He holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of New Orleans.

## **Stuart C. Gilman (B.A., '70)**

Stuart Gilman received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the American Society for Public Administration in March. The award is given for a "career dedicated to advancing ethics and integrity in public administration." A native of Metairie, Gilman is a senior partner at Global Integrity Group. He lives

in Manassas, Va. He has taught at the University of Richmond, St. Louis University and the Federal Executive Institute, served as senior official at the U.S. Office of Government Ethics, president for The Ethics Resource Center and director of the United Nations Global Programme Against Corruption.

## **Charles H. Ponstein (B.S. '71)**

Charles Ponstein has been appointed by Gov. John Bel Edwards to the Port of New Orleans Board of Commissioners as the St. Bernard Parish representative. Port Commissioners also serve as directors of the New Orleans Public Belt Railroad Board. The term is for five years. Ponstein holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of New Orleans.

## **Deborah M. Broussard (B.S., '73)**

Deborah Broussard, assistant principal for academics at Brother Martin High School, was recognized for 20 years of service to the school during its 27th annual Brother More Schaefer Recognition Ceremony and Luncheon. Broussard has received numerous awards over the course of her education career, including being selected for Stanford University's Outstanding Educator Award in 2017.

## **Karl D. Pfefferle (B.A., '75)**

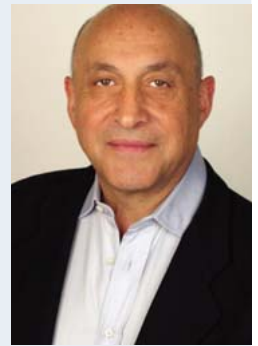
Karl Pfefferle has joined Ryan Gootee General Contractors, LLC, of Metairie, as assistant project manager. He is currently pursuing his Master of Business Administration at the University of New Orleans.

## **Alfred E. (Ted) Stacey IV, (M.S., '75)**

Alfred (Ted) Stacey IV was elected to a two-year term as a member at-large of the Society of Louisiana CPAs. He also

## **Lutfollah "Lute" Maleki (M.S. '72, Ph.D., '75)**

*Lutfollah "Lute" Maleki is a senior distinguished engineer at Cruise Automation and a leading researcher and expert in LIDAR, the sensor technology that is driving the automotive industry's development of autonomous vehicles.*



*Maleki worked at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory for nearly 30 years and it was in that capacity that he was the first to research LIDAR.*

*LIDAR is similar to radar but it uses laser light instead of radio frequency enabling the vehicle's system to better distinguish trees from shadows.*

*General Motors bought Maleki's Pasadena-based start-up company, Strobe, in the fall of 2017.*

*Cruise, GM's self-driving car startup, will now source its LIDAR laser sensors from Strobe. In 2013, Maleki was president and CEO of OEwaves when he was awarded the C.B. Sawyer Memorial Award by IEEE at its International Frequency Control Symposium. It is given in recognition of entrepreneurship or leadership in the frequency control community; or outstanding contributions in the development, production or characterization of resonator materials or structures.*

*Maleki holds a master's and doctorate from the University of New Orleans.*

## **Michael L. Schrider (B.S., '89)**

*Mike Schrider has been named chief operation officer of Ucore Rare Metals, Inc. He is a professional engineer with more than 27 years of experience in manufacturing, engineering and managing complex industrial projects.*



*He was instrumental in overseeing operations and management of the company's Alaska Ship and Drydock facility, an \$80 million project. He joined Ucore in 2015 and was named vice president of operations in 2016. He holds a bachelor's degree in naval architecture and marine engineering from the University of New Orleans.*



received LCPA's Lifetime Membership Award to recognize his extensive record of achievement to benefit the future of CPAs throughout Louisiana. Stacey is a retired partner from Bourgeois Bennett, L.L.C., a CPA and consulting firm in Metairie. He holds a master's degree in accounting from the University of New Orleans and is an adjunct professor of accounting at the University.

**Thomas Warner (Ph.D., '75)**

Thomas Warner recently retired after two decades as chancellor of Nunez Community College in Chalmette, La. He was honored in January at the Nunez Community College Foundation chancellors' reception and annual gala for his work helping to reopen the school following Hurricane Katrina. Over six decades, Warner served as a teacher, coach, assistant principal, assistant school superintendent, professor, col-

lege dean and state legislator before becoming the community college leader.

**Edward J. Branley (B.A., '80)**

Edward Branley is the author of five books on the history of New Orleans. He is a graduate of Brother Martin High School and holds a bachelor's degree in secondary education from the University of New Orleans. Branley writes, teaches, and does speaking engagements on local history to groups in and around New Orleans. His urban fantasy novel, "Hidden Talents," is available online and in bookstores.

**Shuhyue Yang (M.B.A., '81)**

Shuh Yang has been named chief financial officer for the City of East Orange, N.J., where she has been employed since 2005. Yang holds a bachelor's degree in law from National Taiwan University and an MBA from the University of New Orleans. She holds certifications as a public

accountant, county finance officer, tax collector, municipal finance officer and registered public purchasing official.

**Fernando O. Rivera (B.S., '83, MBA '88)**

Fernando Rivera, director Southeast Louisiana Veterans Health Care System, was presented the American Veterans Silver Helmet Award for Civil Service. He was honored for his VA leadership and helping to rebuild the New Orleans Medical Center. He has more than 30 years of service to veterans with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Rivera earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering and a master of business administration from the University of New Orleans.

**Peter J. Valiente (B.S., '84)**

Peter Valiente is a science instructor at Brother Martin High School, where he was recently recognized for 20 years of service.

**David A. Mekarski (M.U.R.P., '85)**

David Mekarski has been appointed town manager for Purcellville, Va., He was one of 29 people who applied for the position and one of three finalists interviewed by the town council. Mekarski holds a bachelor's degree in political science from the State University of New York, a master's degree in urban and regional planning from the University of New Orleans, and a master's in public administration from Oakland University in Michigan.

**Ann Wade (B.S., '81, M.B.A., '85)**

Ann Wade, who earned bachelor's and master's degrees in business from the University of New Orleans, has worked as a business office manager for the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency.

Wade also is a former University of New Orleans alumni association chapter president for the Washington, D.C. chapter.

**Thomas J. Gennaro (B.S., '87)**

Thomas Gennaro has been promoted to vice president of financial analysis at Peoples Health.

**Judy Perry Martinez (B.S., '79)**

*Judy Perry Martinez is the president-elect of the American Bar Association. She will succeed the current president in August 2019.*



*Martinez has held previous leadership roles in the ABA including a 2011 appointment as chair of the ABA Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary which evaluates all perspective nominees to the federal bench, the ABA lead representative to the U.N. and as a member of the ABA Board of Governors and its executive committee.*

*Martinez worked with other Louisiana bar leaders to establish the New Orleans Pro Bono Project, and served as its first chair in the early 1980's.*

*She was named The Outstanding Young Lawyer in the State of Louisiana in 1990 and in April 2002, the Louisiana Bar Foundation's 2001 Distinguished Attorney. In August 2012, the Federal Bar Association, New Orleans chapter, presented her with its Camille Gravel Public Service Award.*

*She spent 21 years as a commercial litigator at the New Orleans law firm of Simon, Peragine, Smith & Redfearn where she is currently of counsel.*

*Martinez holds a bachelor's degree in marketing from the University of New Orleans and a juris doctorate from Tulane University Law School.*

**Samuel J. Guzzo (B.A., '87)**

S.J. Guzzo has been named managing director for debt capital markets sales and strategies at the brokerage firm of Duncan-Williams, Inc. He oversees the company's sales force offices in Memphis; New York; Tampa; Boulder; Cleveland; Atlanta; Philadelphia; Charlotte, Doniphan, Mo.; and Jackson, Miss., and the firm's Fixed Income Strategies Group. A native of New Orleans, he holds a B.A. in finance from the University of New Orleans and an MBA from New York University's Stern School of Business. He is a certified public accountant.



**Brenda C. Leslie (B.S., '89)**

*Brenda Leslie has been hired as controller by the Office of Catholic Schools for the Archdiocese of Atlanta. She will help oversee finances for three of the archdioceses' schools incorporated as Catholic Education North Georgia, Inc. Leslie is a native of New Orleans and holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of New Orleans. She started her accounting career with the New Orleans accounting firm KPMG and has worked in other positions in finance and accounting management roles. Prior to becoming controller for the Archdiocese of Atlanta, Leslie was director of finance and human resources for Camp Twin Lakes, Inc., an organization that sponsors and help to organize camps for children with special needs.*



*Leslie and her husband, John, have two children, Alexandra and Graham.*

**Angie Gates (B.A., '92)**

*Angie Gates is executive producer of "The 202," an entertainment talk show that was recently awarded a regional EMMY for its episode, "Bell Biv DeVoe." Gates received the award at the 60th Emmy Awards Gala presented by the National Capital Chesapeake Bay Chapter of The National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences held June 23, 2018. Gates directs the Washington D.C. Office of Cable Television, Film, Music and Entertainment. She holds a bachelor's degree in drama and communication from the University of New Orleans.*

**Mary A. Picou (M.A., '88)**

Mary Picou is a science instructor at Brother Martin High School, where she was recently recognized for 40 years of service.

**John Schulte (B.S. '88)**

John Schulte has been named vice president of quality improvement for Argentum. In that role he will support the continued development of the association's quality initiative, which includes a multi-phase strategy for creating awareness and education, developing standards, guidelines certification and credentialing for senior living professionals. Schulte holds a bachelor's degree in business management from the University of New Orleans.

**Carmen M. Waring (B.A., '89)**

Carmen Waring is a real estate agent with Latter & Blum, where she has been working since 2016. She is one of the top producers in her office and is within the top five percent of all producing real estate agents in the New Orleans market, according to the company. She re-

sides in Old Metairie and is one of the founding members of the Old Metairie Garden Club, where she serves as president. She is a past member of the New Orleans Association of Health Underwriters. Born in Cuba, Waring came to New Orleans with her mother and sister at age five.

**Roberto E. Diaz del Valle (B.S., '93)**

Roberto Diaz del Valle has started a concierge service company in New Orleans called A&B Errand Services. He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of New Orleans.

**Perry Wiley (B.S., '93)**

Perry Wiley has been named JW Marriott's vice president of food and beverage at Hawthorne Grill in Las Vegas, and will oversee resort culinary programs. He holds a bachelor's degree in business management from the University of New Orleans and began his culinary career at Commander's Palace alongside celebrity chef Emeril Lagasse.

**Patrick J. Gros (B.S., '94)**

Patrick Gros is president of

Patrick J. Gros, CPA accounting firm in Covington, La. Before founding the firm with his wife, Kimberly, in 2001, he was with Arthur Andersen, where he performed financial audits and technology consulting services. He is a wine collector and an automobile enthusiast.

**Felicia K. Donnelly (M.U.R.P., '95)**

Felicia Donnelly has been named the first assistant city manager for the City of Oldsmar, Fla. She comes to the position having served as the city's leisure services director, where her responsibilities included supervising the Sunshine State BMX Cup, the Oldsmar Disc Golf Course and renovations to the Oldsmar Sports Complex. Prior to joining Oldsmar, she was with the parks and recreation department in Clearwater, Fla.

**James G. Hargrove (B.S., '95)**

James Hargrove has been named senior manager in the tax department of Wegmann Dazet & Company.

**Gary Dressler (B.S., '96)**

Gary Dressler will serve the second year of a current two-year term as a member at-large of the Society of Louisiana CPAs. Dressler is an associate director with Postlethwaite & Netterville's Tax Services Group in Metairie. He received his bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of New Orleans.

**Christopher D. Biehl (B.A., '95, M.A., '98)**

Christopher Biehl was the recipient of the Excellence in Instruction, Formation, and Witness Award from Brother Martin High School where he teaches math and serves as the head basketball coach. Over his 26-year teaching career, Biehl has served as men's basketball assistant coach at the University of New Orleans as well as held teaching and coaching positions at Metairie Park Country Day School, Pope John Paul II High School, Isidore Newman School, Archbishop Hannan High School, Hancock County High School, and De La Salle High School. He and his wife, Lauren, reside in Metairie and have four children.

**Christina Reed (B.S., '98)**

Christina Reed has been named marketing director at Altus Global Trade Solutions. She has over 20 years of business-to-business marketing leadership, sales and operations experience at telecommunications firms CenturyLink, Qwest Communications, Intermedia and CapRock Communications. She has developed joint marketing campaigns with globally recognized technology firms such as Nokia, HPE, Cisco and Juniper.

**Brian A. Riedlinger (Ph.D., '98)**

Brian Riedlinger has retired after 48 years in education during which time he's been a teacher, principal, founding CEO of the Algiers Charter Schools Association, and CEO of the School Leadership Center, where he helped to train hundreds of school principals.

Riedlinger, who was named state Principal of the Year in 2000, earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's degree in administration from Louisiana State University and a doctorate in education from the University of New Orleans.

**Aline C. Riemenschneider (B.S., '99)**

Aline Riemenschneider is vice president of marketing for UniFocus. She comes to the position from Willow St. Agency in Dallas, where she served as vice president of account management. She holds more than 20 years of marketing and advertising experience including at USFI Advertising and Sullivan Perkins, both located in Dallas, and Innovative Advertising in New Orleans.

**Habibur Rahman (MBA '00)**

Habibur Rahman has been promoted to the position of additional managing director of Prime Bank. Prior to his promotion he was previously deputy managing director at the bank. Rahman has 33 years of experience in the banking industry with a special focus on foreign correspondent banking relationship.

**Tamika Green (M.Ed '01)**

Tamika Green was named Principal of the Year by the St.

Charles Parish Public School System for 2018-19. She has been the principal at Albert Cammon Middle School in St. Rose, La. for nine years. Previously, Green was the principal at R. J. Vial Elementary. Green holds a bachelor's degree in elementary education from Xavier University and a master's degree in Educational Leadership from the University of New Orleans. She was honored at the district's Principal of the Year Spotlight Soirée. Green will represent St. Charles Parish in the state competition.

**Julie P. Tomlinson (B.A., '02)**

Julie Tomlinson is in real estate sales serving the North Shore and metro New Orleans. Prior to her real estate career, she was an occupational therapist. Tomlinson is a member of the Women's Council of Realtors, New Orleans Metropolitan Association of Realtors and is involved in many Mandeville children's sports teams and programs.

**Richard J. Tullier (M.S., '04)**

Richard Tullier has been promoted to senior manager in the tax department at Wegmann Dazet & Company.

**John "Bryan" Ehricht (M.S., '04)**

John "Bryan" Ehricht, of Hammond, was elected to a two-year term as a member at-large of the Society of Louisiana Certified Public Accountants. Ehricht is an associate director with James, Lambert, Riggs and Associates, Inc. in Hammond, where he focuses on tax. He has a master's degree in tax accounting from the University of New Orleans.

**Kathy Rodriguez (B.A., '04)**

Kathy Rodriguez, an artist and faculty member in the University of New Orleans Fine Arts Department, had one of her creations selected by a distinguished jury of New Orleans visual artists for exhibition as part of the "Thirty New Orleans Artists" showing. The exhibit highlights the many contributions of contemporary visual artists during New Orleans' Tricentennial.

**Thomas R. Laine (M.S., '05)**

Thomas Laine has been promoted to senior manager in the audit and accounting department of Wegmann Dazet & Company.

**Shannon E. Boudreaux (B.S., '06)**

Shannon Boudreaux has been named regional director of operations at Schonberg Care.

**Mark D. Parker (B.S., '06)**

Mark Parker has been named vice president, Corporate Taxation for Tidewater Inc. He earned his bachelor's in accounting from McNeese State University and his master's in tax accounting from the University of New Orleans.

**Erin M. Shaw (B.S., '07)**

Erin Shaw has been promoted to director of marketing and administration at FH Myers Construction Corp.

**Brandy Trepagnier (B.S., '07)**

Brandy Trepagnier, director of events and catering at Link Restaurant Group, was featured in ViaNolaVie's Women of the Crescent City series that highlights women who are contributing a unique voice and leadership in New Orleans.

**Adam Schwartz (M.F.A., '08)**

Adam Schwartz is managing producer, director and co-star of the viral comedy sketch video internet series "So True, Y'all," by It's a Southern Thing that parodies some of the quirks specific to life in the South.

**Marc Uddo (B.A., '09)**

Marc Uddo, along with his parents, Basile and Ann Uddo, awarded the Joseph Patrick Uddo Scholarship in Screenwriting for the 2017-2018 school year to Daniel R. Green. This scholarship, established in 2012, honors the memory of his brother, filmmaker Joseph Uddo. Mark Uddo holds a bachelor's degree in music from the University of New Orleans.

**David Schexnaydre (M.Ed., '10, Ph.D. '16)**

David Schexnaydre has been named principal of Harry Hurst Middle School in Destrehan, La. He was previously an assistant principal at Destrehan High School. Schexnaydre holds a

bachelor's degree from Louisiana State University, a master's and doctorate degree from the University of New Orleans.

**Marshe' A. Griffin (B.S., '12)**

Marshe' Griffin is an account executive at iHeartmedia and is in her fourth season as a Saintsations cheerleader for the New Orleans Saints. She represented the New Orleans Saints in Canada for NFL PLAY 60 and was featured as "Cheerleader of the Week" for *Sports Illustrated*. She volunteers as a mentor and raises money for back to school programs.

**Emily S. Colston (B.S., '14)**

Emily Colston, along with her husband, former New Orleans Saints wide receiver Marques Colston, have partnered with Main Squeeze Juice Co., to open the company's flagship smoothie store in New Orleans.

**Denise L. Patrick (M.F.A., '15)**

Denise Lewis Patrick is a freelance writer, editor, instructor and literary consultant who has authored books of poetry, short stories, picture and board books for children, non-fiction biographies, middle grade novels and a young adult novel. Patrick has written narratives for the National Underground Railroad

Freedom Center exhibition, published a review in *The New York Times* and has written sections for Fodor's Travel Guides to New York City. She has also worked as an editor for Scholastic, Inc. After penning two stories for the American Girl Doll series, Patrick was lauded by the African American Academy of Arts and Letters for Children's Book of the Year, was a runner-up for the Lamplighter Award by the National Christian School Association and had two books listed as Best Books for the Teenager by the New York Public Library. She has served on the advisory board for the Books for Kids Foundation.

**Kathleen A. Bailey (M.F.A., '15)**

Kate Bailey is a playwright originally from Baton Rouge, La. She is the founder of Jolly Pig Project and a founding member of Generate INK. She received her bachelor's degree in theatre performance from Louisiana State University and her MFA in playwriting from the University of New Orleans. She also studied playwriting at Chicago Dramatists in Chicago and has participated in short play festivals in New Orleans and Chicago, where she also studied writing at Chicago Dramatists. She lives in Los Angeles, Calif. 🍷

**Kodi Oiler (B.S., '09)**

*Kodi (Matthew) Oiler, was recently hired as a senior software engineer by the media company, Hulu, in Santa Monica, Calif.*



*Oiler works with a small team of software engineers to maintain the Hulu platform. He previously worked at Oracle in Denver, Colo., where he also held various positions with other IT firms. Oiler's first position after graduation from the University of New Orleans was with Lockheed Martin. Oiler is the son of University of New Orleans professor emeritus Susan Howell.*

## BIOLOGIST AND RETIRED ADMINISTRATOR BOB CASHNER

RETIRED UNIVERSITY OF New Orleans administrator Robert Charles Cashner died on July 1. He was 75.

Known as “Bob” to most, Cashner was a well-known and respected biologist, faculty member and administrator at the University of New Orleans, where his career spanned 35 years. He was known for his humor as well as his intellect.

In addition to teaching and mentoring hundreds of students at UNO, he also was chair of the Department of Biological Sciences, dean of the Graduate School, and vice chancellor of Research & Sponsored Programs until his retirement in 2008.



Robert Charles Cashner

Cashner was born in Flint, Mich., but moved to Conroe, Texas, with his family when he

was a senior in high school. He received his bachelor’s degree from Lyon College (now called Arkansas College), his master’s degree from the University of Arkansas, and his Ph.D. from Tulane University.

It was while he was at Tulane that he fell in love with New Orleans and fellow biologist Frances Lucy Miller, making the former his home and the latter his wife.

Cashner contributed many important scientific papers about North American and Australian

freshwater fishes. He authored or co-authored over 60 papers, and described multiple species of fishes, including sport fishes such as Rock Bass, as well as less-well-known fishes such as minnows, darters, and top minnows. In addition to discovering new species, Cashner also worked on fish ecology and spent many years surveying fishes throughout Louisiana, Oklahoma, and even as far afield as Australia.

Cashner was active in the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists and served as president; he was also a permanent member of the Board of Governors and received the Robert Johnson Award for recognition of service to the society.

He is preceded in death by

his wife, Frances M. Cashner and his parents, Keath and Charlotte Cashner. He is survived by three daughters: Christi Cashner Ali; Mollie Cashner Woltmann and her husband Stefan; and Emily Q. Laan and her husband, Remy. He also leaves behind five grandchildren: Kallista, Nico, Sedge, Miles, and Townes, his brother Jeff Cashner, sister Debbie Krueger, and many deeply loved nieces and nephews, and his third wife, Kay Sweeney-Cashner.

Donations in Cashner’s honor can be made to the Cashner Student Assistant Fund, which will support students attending the annual meeting of the American Society of Ichthyologists and Herpetologists.

## JAZZ PIONEER CHARLES BLANCQ III

CHARLES CLEMENT BLANCQ III, A devoted jazz musician, historian and professor who taught at the University of New Orleans for 38 years, died May 7 in New Orleans. He was 77.

Blancq joined the University of New Orleans in 1970 and, according to professor Steve Masakowski, became the first faculty member to teach jazz in the Department of Music, setting the stage for the establishment of the University’s renowned jazz program.

“On the surface, it would seem that a young person in New Orleans would have endless opportunities to play jazz,” he was quoted as saying at the time. “But the irony is that as soon as a young jazzman acquires enough

skill to play the music, he is immediately confronted by the need to conform to a more traditional and commercial jazz which has always been identified with the culture of this community.”



Charles Clement Blancq III

A native of New Orleans, Blancq hoped to see appreciation for New Orleans music evolve beyond the Dixieland jazz that had become commercially popular, especially for tourists.

“At that point, Charlie was the coordinator of jazz studies and did all of the ‘behind the scenes’ things that were necessary to make the program a success,” Masakowski said.

Blancq and University of New Orleans jazz studies professor emeritus Ellis Marsalis created the on-campus performance

space known today as The Sandbar. Blancq also hosted a jazz cable TV show featuring interviews and performances from the newly established Jazz at the Sandbar series and became a frequent radio host on WWNO, Masakowski said. Blancq could be heard hosting a weekly classical radio show called “Interlude” that aired on Sunday mornings.

Blancq, who studied percussion and drum set as a child, was known as an outstanding musician, educator and writer. He held a doctorate from Tulane University and a master’s degree from North Texas State University, now called University of North Texas. In 1983, he authored a biography of famed saxophonist Sonny Rollins entitled “Sonny Rollins: The Journey of a Jazzman,” a work that one academic reviewer said was “important for its overdue

musicological treatment of this jazz stylist’s work (providing) a well-reasoned manual to aid in charting the currents merging in Rollins’ music, particularly his improvisations.”

In 2003, Blancq was named the Koch Endowed Professor, which he held until his retirement from the University in 2009. Today, a scholarship in his name helps jazz students attend the University of New Orleans.

Blancq is survived by his wife, Vendula Vlasakova, and sons Matthew and Kevin Blancq, along with Kevin’s wife, Karen; also, Betty Murtes Blancq, who is Kevin’s mother, grandchildren Charlotte and Nathaniel Blancq and his sister, Jaqueline Bruneau. Family and friends celebrated his life on May 12 at Greenwood Funeral Home in New Orleans.

## LONGTIME ACCOUNTING PROFESSOR JOSEPH RAZEK

JOSEPH ROBERT RAZEK, who taught accounting at the University of New Orleans for more than 25 years, died on April 17 in Georgetown, Texas. He was 78.

Razek joined the University of New Orleans in 1977 as an associate professor and was promoted to professor seven years later. Originally from Lansdowne, Pennsylvania, he received his bachelor's degree from Ohio Wesleyan University, an MBA



Joseph Robert Razek

from University of Michigan and a doctorate from the University of Illinois. Razek also served in the U.S. Air Force.

Philip Harmelink, chair of the Department of Accounting, recalled Razek as "a very dedicated accounting teacher and faculty member."

While at the University, Razek taught undergraduate and graduate level courses and in the MBA and executive MBA programs. An expert in government

tal and not-for-profit accounting, Razek authored many papers and co-authored multiple editions of an introductory textbook on that subject with colleague Gordon Hosch, also a University of New Orleans professor emeritus.

Razek retired in 2003 and was named professor emeritus. He moved to Georgetown, Texas, where he was active in his church and community. He was passionate about University of Michigan athletics, trains, accounting and his family.

He is preceded in death by his wife of 53 years, Cordelia Lindsey

Razek, and daughter and son-in-law Eleanor Razek Gaboardi and Michael Gaboardi, and sister Eileen Hawlk. He is survived by daughter, Erica R. Doris and spouse Bruce of Hartsdale, New York; daughter, Margaret R. Zimmerman and spouse Terry of Pflugerville, Texas; and grandchildren, Ryan R. Zimmerman, Jamie Zimmerman, Joshua Zimmerman, and Dexter J. Doris.

His family celebrated his life with a memorial service on April 22. They ask that donations be made in his memory to any animal charity.

## PONCHO DE LEON WAS ESSENTIAL TO INSTITUTE'S SUCCESS

PONCHO DE LEON WAS A lot of things to a lot of people. He was a chemist, a father, a grandfather and a friend. He was a permanent deacon in the Roman Catholic Church, where he baptized hundreds of babies.

In addition, for the last 21 years at the University of New Orleans, De Leon was often the first person most anyone encountered at the Advanced Materials Research Institute, the multi-disciplinary institute where researchers, students and visiting scientists collaborate on projects dealing with materials science and nanotechnology.

De Leon, assistant director for AMRI since 1998, died unexpectedly on July 6, while spending time with his grandchildren. He was 71.

De Leon first joined the University in 1976 as a research associate and adjunct professor in the Center for Bio Organic Studies. He leaves behind family members, friends and colleagues who

say he will be remembered for his combination of professionalism, kindness and expertise.



Poncho De Leon

"He really made a big difference," said Charles O'Connor, professor emeritus who helped found AMRI. O'Connor first met De Leon in 1997 during an interview for a position as AMRI's program manager. He said he

knew from that first meeting that De Leon would be someone he could count on to make the institute a success.

"I thought he was going to be a catch and he was," O'Connor said.

Ildefonso "Poncho" Ramos De Leon was born in the high desert town of Marathon, Texas, his son Alec De Leon said. The middle child in a Spanish-speaking family with five kids, Poncho De Leon was an academic star in his town. He was class valedictorian at Marathon High School, earning a full scholarship to Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas, where he studied chem-

istry and math, according to his personnel records.

De Leon enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps during Vietnam War. Following his service in the Marines, he returned to Marathon, where he landed a job in a food co-op and met Margaret Fennelly, whom he married in 1970. He pursued graduate studies in chemistry at Texas A&M before being hired in New Orleans, where he relocated with his young family that grew to include three children.

"He thought he would be here six months," Alec De Leon said.

De Leon's area of expertise was known as mass spectrometry. He co-authored 23 scientific papers, his son said.

John Wiley, director of AMRI, said that De Leon has long been essential to the institute's operation and saw his role as a guardian of sorts, managing finances, coordinating visiting scholars and student participants in the various projects, including the summer research programs. He was thoughtful, even-

tempered and kind. He managed grants, compiled quarterly and annual reports, and had become the go-to resource during times when recall of institutional memory was required.

"It's going to leave a really big hole," Wiley said.

In 1983, De Leon was ordained as a permanent deacon and took great joy in serving parishioners at St. Maria Goretti Parish during baptisms, weddings, funerals and more "He was probably one of the sweetest gentlest people," Alec De Leon said of his father.

He is proceeded in death by his wife, Margaret Fennelly. Besides Alec, who resides in New Orleans, De Leon leaves behind a daughter, Marisa Reyes, and her husband Vigneer Reyes, of Metairie; and a son, Esteban De Leon, and his wife, Ann Beck, of Bellingham, Wash., and four grandchildren, Vigneer Jr., Cristian, Marilu and Marigny.

A funeral service, followed by Mass, was held July 27, at St. Maria Goretti Catholic Church in New Orleans.

# THEN AND NOW



## The Scenic Lakefront

FOR YEARS STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY of New Orleans have enjoyed the tranquil beauty that is to be found along the shores of Lake Pontchartrain, which is located mere steps from the University's campus. Whether it is sitting on the seawall steps, relaxing under a tree or simply strolling along the decorative, palm tree lined sidewalks, the scenic Lakefront continues to offer a welcome respite for students.

SAVE THE DATE!

*Saturday, May 11, 2019*



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