

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

# SILVER BLUE

FALL 2017



## UNEARTHING HISTORY

STUDENTS DIG FOR CLUES  
IN DISAPPEARANCE OF WWII PILOT

FIRST  
LOOK





## DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS:

In 2017, rankings seem to be as much a part of the college landscape as final exams and all-nighters. In some ways, I think most rankings seek to answer a single question: How valuable is a particular institution when compared to others? There are, obviously, many different approaches. One distinctive approach is taken by the Brookings Institution in a report called “Ladder, Labs or Laggards? Which Public Universities Contribute Most?” In the report, Brookings cited the University of New Orleans as a national leader when it comes to providing equal access to higher education for students from all income levels. UNO was ranked third in the nation among all selective four-year public research universities for educating the highest shares of students from the lowest income households.

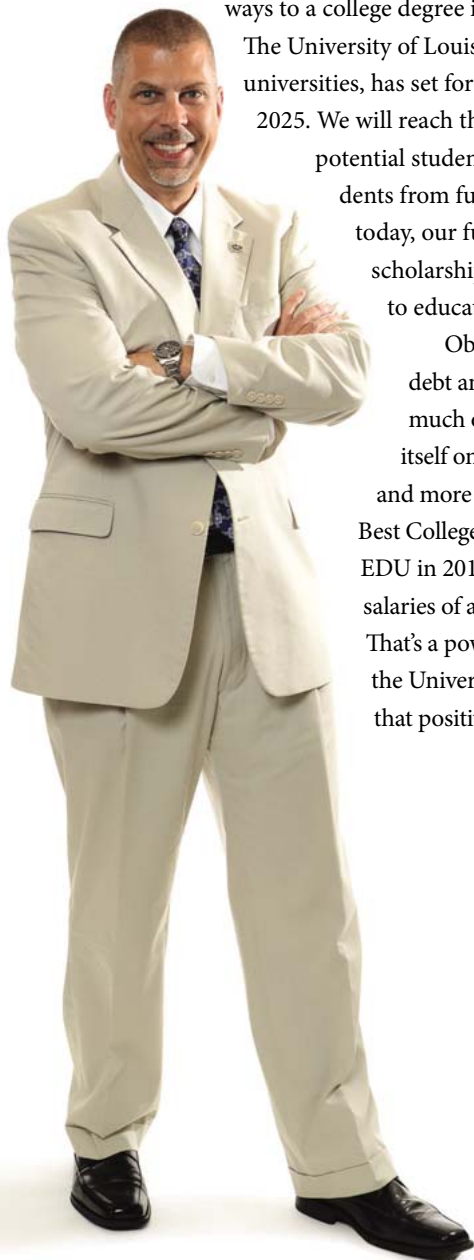
To me, among all of available rankings, this one is particularly meaningful because it shows that we are carrying out our mission of providing academic excellence and access to our local community and beyond. Higher education is the ultimate facilitator of upward economic and social mobility, and providing pathways to a college degree is so vital for the future of our state and our nation.

The University of Louisiana System, which governs UNO and eight other universities, has set forth the goal of producing 150,000 new graduates by 2025. We will reach that goal only by continuing to expand our pool of potential students. We must not let economic barriers obstruct students from fulfilling their dreams of a college degree. That is why, today, our fundraising efforts are focused primarily on student scholarships. Those private dollars will yield improved access to education for tomorrow’s leaders.

Obtaining a degree while accumulating crushing student debt and encountering dim job prospects does not feel like much of a reward. The University of New Orleans prides itself on producing graduates who are less burdened by loans and more in-demand than their peers. In fact, UNO was ranked Best College for Lowest Student Loan Debt in Louisiana by Lend-EDU in 2017. Last year, UNO grads had the highest early career salaries of any institution in the state, according to Payscale.com. That’s a powerful formula: Access + low debt + high earnings = the University of New Orleans. It all adds up to an institution that positively transforms lives and communities!

Sincerely,

**John Nicklow**  
*PRESIDENT*



 @UNOPresidentJN  @unopresident

# SILVER & BLUE

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## MOVING IN PRIVATEER STYLE

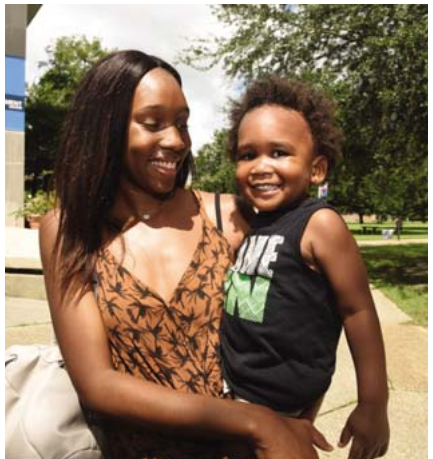
Faculty, staff and students gave new students a hand during move-in day Aug. 12 at the newly refurbished Pontchartrain Hall, unloading trunks, hoisting TVs, carrying microwaves and maneuvering boxes. The common spaces in the residence hall got a summer face-lift that included new flooring and furniture.





## FIRST DAY BRINGS ENROLLMENT INCREASES

*Fifteen percent increases in enrollment of new freshmen and new graduate students this fall led to the best year-to-year percentage change in total enrollment at the University of New Orleans in eight years. The fall 2017 semester also represents the largest percentage increase in total undergraduate students at the University in eight years.*





## LEADERS SET TONE IN FORMAL CONVOCATION

The University of New Orleans Class of 2021 on Aug. 15 launched the 2017-18 school year with a formal convocation, dinner and games at the UNO Lakefront Arena—the same venue where they will eventually receive their degrees. President John Nicklow, right, congratulated the new students on taking “a leap toward enrichment, toward serious intellectual growth and toward being an educated contributor to the future of our nation and our fragile world.” “Make no mistake,” he said, “our expectations of you are high.” Faculty donned their academic regalia for the occasion. Students took their seats wearing blue New Orleans Privateers T-shirts. The freshman class includes students from 27 states, 32 Louisiana parishes and 16 countries.







## CELEBRATING THE WORLD OF ENGINEERING

In a beloved pre-commencement tradition, the University of New Orleans College of Engineering awarded its May 2017 graduates railroad engineer caps symbolizing their entry into their new profession. TOP LEFT: Graduating magna cum laude with a degree in civil engineering, Emma Hensley happily accepts her new cap. ABOVE: Kim Jovanovich, assistant dean of the College of Engineering, right, caps electrical engineering major Keith Stevens. LEFT: Electrical engineering major Damian Perrin sports a T-shirt that explains it all.



## DAZZLING START TO FALL

As part of the Week of Welcome, the Student Government Association sponsored Fall Concert at the Amphitheatre on Aug. 15, bringing together a line-up of live local bands, dinner and ice cream outdoors and a fireworks finale.



## HOSTING HISTORY DURING THE SOLAR ECLIPSE

Hundreds of people converged on the University of New Orleans Aug. 21 to turn their eyes skyward and witness the rare passage of the moon between the earth and the sun. Students, teachers, parents, academics, alumni, faculty, staff and visitors from all over the city took a pause from their daily activities as they gathered outside Earl K. Long Library with special eclipse glasses and homemade eclipse viewers fashioned from cardboard. UNO astrophysicist Greg Seab and UNO mathematician Joel Webb each delivered brief lectures to a crowd of people gathered in the breezeway outside of the library. Indoors, visitors stopped in to view NASA's livestream of the eclipse, grab some of the free solar eclipse glasses that were available and take selfies with an assortment of planetary and heavenly props.





## CELEBRATING 10,000 IN INNSBRUCK

About 400 students, educators and dignitaries gathered in Innsbruck, Austria, this summer to celebrate the opening of the 42nd UNO-Innsbruck International Summer School. It marked the enrollment of its 10,000th student, a milestone for a program that draws participants from several U.S. universities and the University of Innsbruck. UNO student Raquel Riviere, center, was awarded a scholarship by Innsbruck Mayor Christine Oppitz-Plörer, left. Also pictured are University of New Orleans President John Nicklow and UNO-Innsbruck Program Director Irene Ziegler.

## LIVE AT THE SANDBAR

Grammy Award-winning harmonica player Howard Levy, right, joins the University of New Orleans jazz studies students during Jazz at the Sandbar on April 19. Now in its 28th year, the acclaimed series brings together UNO music students with respected jazz artists to perform together each Wednesday night for eight weeks during the fall and spring semesters.



# NEWS & EVENTS

## UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS RESEARCH & TECHNOLOGY PARK GENERATES \$472M ECONOMIC IMPACT

THE UNIVERSITY OF New Orleans Research and Technology Park generated an economic impact of \$472.1 million in the eight-parish metro area in 2016, according to a recent analysis. During that time, the UNO Research and Technology Foundation and its 34 tenant companies and organizations directly employed 1,678 people and generated nearly half a billion dollars in total direct, indirect and induced economic output.

In 2016, the University of New Orleans announced that the University's annual economic impact was \$470.5 million as measured during the 2014-15 fiscal year. Taken together, the combined impact of the University of New Orleans and the UNO Research and Technology Park on the region is \$942.6 million and supports more than 11,000 jobs.

"A combined economic impact of nearly a billion dollars is a resounding statement about our importance," says University of New Orleans President John Nicklow. "It demonstrates, perhaps even more than we thought, that the University of New Orleans and its Research and Technology Park are major

economic drivers of the region, which elevate the quality of life in the greater New Orleans area."

The primary location of the UNO Research and Technology Park is 30 acres of land adjacent to the University along the shore of Lake Pontchartrain and encompasses 600,000 square feet of office and lab space. A satellite facility is located on the west bank of the Mississippi River in Avondale.

The park tenants include a mix of private companies, government agencies and nonprofit organizations concentrated in six key clusters of research and economic activity: IT and cybersecurity, naval architecture and marine engineering, logistics and lab testing, banking, nonprofits and government, and coastal protection and wildlife management.

Managed by the UNO Research and Technology Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the research park was established to increase the economic vitality of the University of New Orleans and surrounding academic institutions and to strengthen the economy of New Orleans and Louisiana. To mark the research park's 20th anniversary, the



UNO Research and Technology Foundation commissioned TEconomy Partners to perform analyses to quantify the park's economic impact and profile its key functional impacts.

*The University of New Orleans Research and Technology Park is located on 30 acres adjacent to the University.*

### Highlights of the UNO Research and Technology Park Study:

- In 2016, the UNO Research and Technology Park directly employed 1,678 people with total operating expenditures of \$235 million.
- When the research park's secondary and tertiary impacts are factored in, the park generated \$472.1 million in total economic output, supported 3,529 jobs with \$241.2 million in compensation and generated \$15.6 million in state and local tax revenue across eight parishes.
- The average salary for an employee in the research park is \$72,637.
- By collecting data on 27 of 34 tenants, it was revealed that tenant companies and organizations employ 235 UNO alumni, representing 14% of total full-time park employment.
- The report also highlights examples of key linkages between research park tenants and the University. For example, tenants gain access to UNO students and graduates with specialized skills, faculty expertise and equipment for research collaborations.
- TEconomy Partners LLC is a global leader in research, analysis and strategy for innovation-based economic development. Past clients include the Brookhaven National Laboratory, the Mayo Clinic, Georgia Tech and the State of Washington Department of Commerce.

## MASTER'S IN TEACHING PROGRAM RANKS AMONG TOP 30 NATIONALLY

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans Master of Arts in Teaching program has been ranked among the top 30 of its kind in the country. Top Master's in Education, publisher of an online guide for prospective graduate students seeking to teach at the elementary school level, places the UNO program between Stanford University and the University of Chicago in its nationwide rankings for 2017.

The organization provides an independent and comprehensive guide to earning a master's degree in education through objective rankings and critical reviews of

degree programs and colleges of education. Criteria used for determining rankings included the school's reputation, National Council for Teacher Quality evaluations, student-to-faculty ratio, tuition and mid-career salary. Data used in determining rankings came from the National Center for Educational Statistics, the National Council for Teacher Quality, *U.S. News & World Report* and school websites.

*The University of New Orleans master's program in teaching is one of the nation's best, according to an independent report.*



## BROOKINGS REPORT: UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS RANKS THIRD IN NATION FOR PROVIDING EQUAL ACCESS

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans is a national leader when it comes to providing equal access to higher education for students from all income levels, according to a recent report by the Brookings Institution.

UNO ranked third in the nation among all selective, four-year, public research universities for educating the highest share of students from the lowest income households, according to the report titled "Ladder, Labs or Laggards? Which Public Universities Contribute the Most?"

At UNO, 16.6 percent of students come from families with income levels in the lowest 20 percent. That's more than double the national average, according to the research Brookings provided

based on data from 342 public universities. UNO trails only the University of Texas at El Paso and New Mexico State University when it comes to the proportion of its student body that comes from the most economically disadvantaged homes.

Brookings, a nonprofit public policy organization based in Washington, D.C., argues in the report that public higher education is taxpayer supported on the premise provides public benefits and "high private returns on postsecondary investments." Its analysis excludes data from narrower mission-oriented universities such as historically black colleges and universities.

As the only Carnegie-ranked public research institution in New Orleans, the University of



New Orleans strives to deliver rigorous programs and unique opportunities to all students—and to translate those programs to individual growth and professional success. UNO has made *U.S. News & World Report's* least debt list for six years,

which highlights the 20 national universities where students graduate with the lowest average debt. In 2016, UNO alumni were recognized by *Payscale.com* as having the highest average early career salaries out of all Louisiana university graduates.

## TWO TOP STUDENTS NAMED RECIPIENTS OF WOMEN IN COMPUTER SCIENCE SCHOLARSHIP

TWO UNDERGRADUATE students have been named recipients of the 2017-18 UNO Scholarship for Women in Computer Science, an annual scholarship created by alumna and Google engineer Sabrina Farmer.

Banan Ibrahim, a junior from New Orleans, and Thanh Nguyen, a senior from Vietnam, are both honors level students in the Department of Computer Science who have become campus leaders in their field, advocating for and promoting women in the technology field.

Nguyen says she's grateful for the scholarship and is especially excited about the year-long

mentorship component that Farmer offers scholarship recipients. "The mentorship is an amazing opportunity to talk to someone who not only made it through the industry, but excels in it," she says.

Farmer, who graduated from UNO in 1995 with a degree in computer science, says her time at the University provided a critical foundation for her successful career. Farmer is a director of engineering for the Site Reliability Team at Google, which is responsible for Google Apps, product infrastructure, YouTube and search. Two years after receiving her bachelor's degree from UNO, Farmer

began working in Silicon Valley, where she has been an active advocate for women in technology.

"I've accomplished more than I could have even hoped for and my time with the students allows me to share my experiences and strategies for them to have the same or more success," Farmer says.

The award is administered through the UNO Women's Center, which actively seeks to serve and support the women of UNO, working with the community to offer scholarships, book awards, and workshops to women students based on academics and financial need.



Banan Ibrahim



Thanh Nguyen

## THE PRINCETON REVIEW NAMES UNO AMONG 'BEST' COLLEGES

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans is one of the nation's best institutions for undergraduate education, according to The Princeton Review.

UNO is featured in the new 2018 edition of its college guide, "The Best 382 Colleges." Only about 15 percent of America's 2,500 four-year colleges, plus two colleges outside the U.S., are profiled in the book. Published since 1992, the popular guide has detailed profiles with ratings scores in eight categories.

In addition to surveying administrators at several hundred four-year colleges, Princeton Review also collected

information from 137,000 college students for its guides. An 80-question survey asks students to rate their schools on several topics and report on their campus experiences.

Editor-in-chief Robert Franek says UNO was chosen because "it offers outstanding academics."

In its profile on UNO, The Princeton Review reports that students say the University is "a diverse environment that makes it a welcoming place to be," where professors "really connect with students" with "lots of opportunities to develop our personality, leadership skills and career skills."



*In the latest edition of The Princeton Review's "The Best 382 Colleges," the University of New Orleans was cited by students as being a "diverse" and "welcoming" environment where students connect with professors.*

## OCHSNER INTERNSHIP GIVES PRE-MED STUDENTS HANDS-ON OPPORTUNITIES

MINA HIBINO WAS A freshman when she first started working on cancer research in a chemistry lab at the University of New Orleans. The junior chemistry major has been building her research experience ever since and talks about synthesizing nanoparticles made out of the human serum albumin with the focused enthusiasm of someone who has discovered something she loves.

Hibino was one of five UNO undergraduates chosen for a new summer research internship at Ochsner Medical Center. Through the six-week program, pre-medical students are engaged in work that seeks to understand more about liver cancer recurrence, to improve care for babies and children with pulmonary health concerns and to help develop successful cancer therapies that will perform in a patient who has developed drug resistance.

Assigned to work in Ochsner's Transplant Research

Lab, Hibino spent her days isolating cancer stem cells from a line of malignant liver cells and culturing them in conditions that mimic metastasis, or cancer growth from a primary to a secondary site. Her goal was to try to identify, prior to transplantation, liver cancer patients who are at high risk of experiencing cancer recurrence after a transplant.

"I learned a ton about the liver, cell lines and cultures, antibodies, proteins, general terminology, procedures for assays and experiments," Hibino says.

Dr. Kevin Conrad, medical director of community affairs and health policy at Ochsner and a UNO alumnus (M.B.A., '97), says the kind of experience Hibino had is key for any undergraduate aspiring to go to medical school. He was instrumental in working with UNO's College of Sciences to create the program. He says he's found that UNO's pre-medical students to

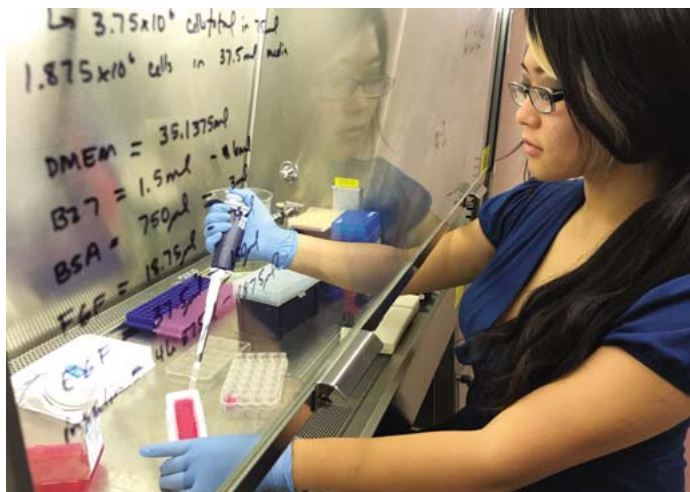


PHOTO COURTESY OCHSNER

be highly motivated learners who don't shy from challenge.

"These are the kinds of students we want to have as employees one day," says Conrad.

The other UNO students who were selected were Dayana Frazer, Neeha Mathew, Krystin LeCompte and Simon Nilsen Haugland. Steve Johnson, dean of the College of Sciences, says he hopes to expand the program, which comes with a \$2,500 stipend and is open to rising sophomores, juniors and seniors studying biology or else who are on a pre-medical track.

*Junior chemistry major Mina Hibino was one of five University of New Orleans students selected for Ochsner's new summer internship program for UNO students who plan to go to medical school.*

Students are paired with physicians or Ph.D.s for one-on-one mentoring. They attend lectures, shadow doctors and have access to other professional development activities. At the end of the program, participants are expected to make a presentation and publish an abstract.

## RESEARCHERS RECOGNIZED FOR SUCCESS OF MICROWAVE TECHNIQUE IN PREPARING LAYERED NANOMATERIALS

THE MICROWAVE OVEN revolutionized the way we prepare food in America. Now, researchers at the University of New Orleans have shown that microwaves can be used to speed up the preparation of layered nanomaterials, reducing the time required from two to three days to one to two hours.

John Wiley, the director of UNO's Advanced Materials Research Institute, supervises a research group currently at work on a project funded by the

National Science Foundation to explore the behavior of nanosheets, thin material used to improve efficiencies in electronics. As part of that work, his team must prepare a material called perovskite—a process that typically takes two to three days.

Sara Akbarian-Tefaghi, who works with Wiley, wondered if the microwave used in the chemistry lab to speed other processes could have an application for the nanosheet project.

"When I started this

research back in 2013, we did not have high hopes," says Akbarian-Tefaghi (Ph.D., '16). "But it worked perfectly—it was exceptionally fast with comparable quality."

The team published a paper about the success of the microwave technique in the academic journal *ChemNanoMat*, garnering attention from *ChemViews* magazine, published by an organization of 16 chemical societies.



Sara Akbarian-Tefaghi

## THEATRE UNO PRODUCTION EARNS EIGHT NATIONAL AWARDS

THEATRE UNO'S production of "The Aliens," a drama centered around a high school dropout and a college dropout loitering behind a Vermont coffee shop, received eight national awards at the 49th annual Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival.

"The Aliens," which was part of Theatre UNO's 2016-17 season, garnered the highest level of national recognition in five categories, including outstanding production of a play and outstanding ensemble. Graduate student

Kristin Shoffner received an outstanding director award, actor Cooper Bucha received an outstanding performance award and guest artist Asher Griffin received an award for outstanding achievement in sound design.

The festival also recognized faculty members Kevin Griffith for distinguished scenic design, Anthony French for distinguished costume design and Diane K. Baas for distinguished achievement in lighting design. Other members of the production included undergraduate Jowhara



Thompson as stage manager and cast members Austin Krieger, an undergraduate, and Ryan Decker, a graduate student. Festival organizers awarded Shoffner and Bucha an all-expenses paid trip to Washington, D.C. to represent UNO at the festival in April.

David Hoover, chair of the UNO Department of Film and Theatre, says the department was "honored and thrilled" to be recognized by the field's preeminent organization: "I

*Organizers of the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival awarded director Kristin Shoffner and actor Cooper Bucha, left, with an all-expenses paid trip to Washington, D.C. to represent UNO at the festival.*

couldn't be more proud of our students and everyone involved in this production of "The Aliens." "The Aliens" was written by Annie Baker and won the 2010 Obie Award for best new American play.

## BEYOND LIFEGUARDING: WHEN YOUR SUMMER JOB IS WORKING IN A UNO RESEARCH LAB

AMARIS LEWIS KNOWS she wants to pursue a career in the sciences after she graduates from high school. Until this summer, however, she wasn't sure whether laboratory research was for her. As one of 10 participants in the Advanced Materials Research Institute (AMRI) Summer Program at the University of New Orleans, Lewis had the chance to find out.

Funded by the National Science Foundation, the Academy of Applied Sciences and the Louisiana Board of Regents through the U.S. Department of Energy's Experimental Program to Stimulate Competitive Research, the program partners undergraduates and high school students with UNO faculty sponsors who help them conduct

research in chemistry, physics, biology, psychology, mechanical engineering and materials science.

"I loved it," says Lewis, a junior at Lusher Charter School. Lewis' work, titled "Auto-regulation of the Ume6 Transcription Factor and its Regulation of Cat8," entailed studying the behavior of yeast cells to gather information that could be useful in genetic engineering. An aspiring biochemist, she says the experience gave her hands-on insight into the realities of life in a lab, especially what it's like to conduct the same experiments over and over looking for different results. "Just being around the graduate students and seeing how they attack everything with precision every day is amazing," Lewis says.

*Amaris Lewis, a senior at Lusher Charter School in New Orleans, shares her findings from a summer spent working in the University of New Orleans' Advanced Materials Research Institute labs.*



John Wiley, director of AMRI and the President's Research Professor of Chemistry at UNO, says the program seeks participants who are clearly motivated. Each year, the University receives eight to 10 times more applicants than the program can admit. "The impact on the students is pretty life-changing," he says. "For many of these students, this is a first job, a first research opportunity."

The high school program

started in 2002 and brings five local high school students to work in UNO research labs for eight weeks, receiving a stipend of \$2,000. The program for undergraduates, formally known as Research Experiences for Undergraduates, began a year later in 2003. This year, it enlisted four undergraduate students to work in the labs for nine weeks, receiving \$5,000 stipends plus allowances for on-campus housing and transportation, when needed.



## SUMMERS ARE FOR LEARNING, TOO

UNO hosts several summer outreach programs targeted to youth and educators

TEN-YEAR-OLD LOUIS DILLON peered through a telescope pointed at the fiery orb 92.96 million miles away.

"I see it!" he yelled, a grin spreading across his face as the sun shone red through the telescope's filter. Nearby, his fellow campers in the University of New Orleans' inaugural NASA Astro Camp fiddled with light blue index cards fashioned into what their instructors called eclipse viewers.

The scene was just one in the weeklong camp July 24-28, a campus pilot for students in grades five through seven that included lessons on the

solar system, moon phases, the physics of flight and more.

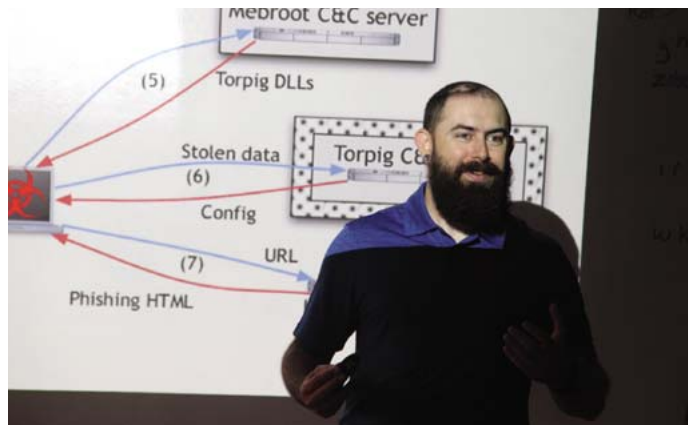
Each summer, UNO hosts and co-hosts a number of educational programs targeted to youth and educators both locally and nationally.

This year, in addition the NASA Astro Camp, UNO hosted a five-day Coding Camp for middle schoolers, delivered a two-week GenCyber training for high school teachers who want to teach cybersecurity, and collaborated with the National WWII Museum to deliver a week-long Real World Science program for teachers interested in teaching science within the framework of history.



### NASA Astro Camp at UNO

The 17 campers who attended NASA Astro Camp made ice cream using liquid nitrogen, created seed balls, visited a portable planetarium supplied by NASA, built rockets that they launched with air and others that they launched with water, built sugar crystals, designed parachutes, and viewed the sun and more. Ivan Gill, associate professor of curriculum and instruction at UNO, says the NASA-created camp offers rich lessons that do a great job marrying fun with scientific education.



### GenCyber

Joshua Barone, a University of New Orleans alumnus and senior developer at Black Bag Technologies, delivers a lecture on cyberattacks during GenCyber, a two-week intensive training for high school teachers from across the country. Millissa Lirette, who teaches at rural Central Lafourche High School, was one of the 18 teachers participating in the program. Her students, she says, think about their career options in terms of just a few categories: "Oil field. Ship yard. Medical field. Retail. Education. And that's about it." But after participating in GenCyber, she hopes to equip her students with knowledge and skills that can open up possibilities in one of the most in-demand employment fields today: cybersecurity. Held July 10-21, GenCyber is in its fourth year and is funded by the National Security Agency and the National Science Foundation. Participating teachers receive extensive training free of charge, a \$500 stipend and a Chromebook.

### Real World Science

Carol Patrick is always looking for ways to bring science to life for her 37 or so fifth-graders in Vancouver, Wash. So when a colleague told her about Real World Science, a weeklong summer seminar for math and science teachers that explores key STEM concepts using real world examples from WWII, she didn't hesitate to apply. Patrick and 26 other educators from 18 states converged on New Orleans for year three of Real World Science from July 23-28. Participants spent four days at The National WWII Museum and two at UNO, exploring history-based lessons on everything from buoyancy (How do ships float?) to aeronautical science (How do planes fly?). Here, Patrick stirs ice cream she made using liquid nitrogen. Supported by the Northrop Grumman Foundation, the program provides teachers with room and board, a travel stipend and seminar materials.

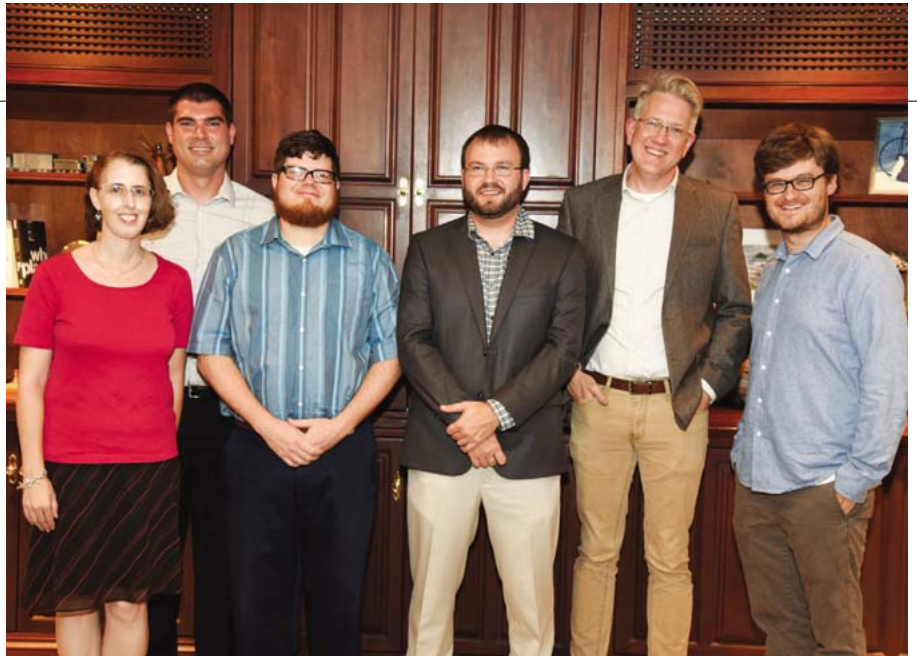


### Coding Camp

How do you take a child's excitement over video games and translate it into meaningful mathematics instruction? The University of New Orleans Department of Computer Science did just that during an exciting summer partnership with the local nonprofit Core Element. Thirty-two students in grades six through nine participated in the June 26-30 Coding Camp, during which they learned to create video games through hands-on activities designed to teach the fundamentals of computer programming and software design.



# FACULTY FOCUS



## NEW FACULTY MEMBERS BRING INNOVATIVE, PROBLEM-SOLVING RESEARCH TO CAMPUS

A POPULAR IMAGE OF A video gamer involves one or two people staring at a screen with nothing but the noise of the game or the occasional burst of human emotion interrupting the silence. But for Ben Samuel, new assistant professor of computer science at the University of New Orleans, video games are far from that semi-lonely pursuit. They are instead a vibrant avenue to involve human interaction and engage the theatrical.

“There’s a lot of valuable, powerful interdisciplinary work that needs to happen across the divide between science and art,” says Samuel, one of six new faculty members to join UNO this fall. “Video games, in particular, are an inherently artistic medium.”

Samuel’s reflections on the art-science connection are not simply academic. In many ways, he embodies the merger. He’s a card-carrying member of the Screen Actors Guild who has also created award-winning games that challenge traditional

definitions of what a video game should be. His acting in the 2012 Hulu mockumentary “Battleground” prompted *The New York Times* to call him “the best reason so far to watch” the comedic ensemble show. One of his gaming co-creations, “Bad News,” combines improvisational theatre and computer simulation, a project that has won multiple awards, including the prestigious IndieCade 2016 Audience Choice award.



Ben Samuel

Samuel has loved gaming since he was three and had his stage debut at eight in a school play. In graduate school at University of California, Santa Cruz, he learned he could combine both in one discipline, thanks to the exciting work of UC Santa Cruz professor Michael Mateas, who was preaching the gospel of arts-integrated computer science through a course on interactive storytelling.

“It changed my life,” Samuel says. “Never before had I even encountered the opportunity to combine these two passions in

my life in just this way. It made me completely reevaluate my computer science background and inspired me to think about all these new ways that I could apply it.”

Samuel went on to get a master’s and Ph.D. in computer science at UC Santa Cruz, finishing his graduate work last year. He says he was attracted to UNO and New Orleans because of its vibrant arts and burgeoning game development communities. He hopes to integrate his life into the local improvisational theatre scene as well as connect with other gaming enthusiasts while becoming the kind of mentor that he has benefitted from himself.

As part of UNO’s Department of Computer Science, Samuel joins Stephen Ware, assistant professor of computer science, whose work in the area of game development at UNO launched the Narrative Intelligence Lab and has resulted in a number of awards. Samuel said he’s excited about the opportunities to build on that foundation. Samuel sees UNO’s computer science department as a place, “where games are

*ABOVE: New faculty gathered at President John Nicklow’s home for a reception welcoming them to the University of New Orleans. They are, from left, Tracey Knaus, assistant professor of psychology; David Podgorski, assistant professor of chemistry; Matthew Scalco, assistant professor of psychology; Christopher Belser, assistant professor of educational leadership, counseling and foundations; Christopher Harshaw, assistant professor of psychology; and Ben Samuel, assistant professor of computer science.*

viewed as this very valuable, very exciting application of computer science that is not only this amazing lens through which to learn computer science skills, but also a lens of self-expression, of interactivity, and of art.”

Also new to UNO’s faculty are Tracey Knaus, Matthew Scalco and Christopher Harshaw, assistant professors in the Department of Psychology; David Podgorski, assistant professor in the Department of Chemistry; and Christopher Belser, assistant professor in the Department

of Educational Leadership, Counseling and Foundations. All bring with them innovative research that seeks to solve real-world problems that are affecting communities and lives.

**BELSER:  
TAKING A CLOSER LOOK AT  
STEM STUDENT SUCCESS**

Christopher Belser joins UNO from the University of Central Florida in Orlando, where he recently received his doctorate in counselor education and supervision.

Belser's dissertation looked at one of the most confounding topics in American education today: What factors data say can predict whether students who pursue studies in so-called "STEM fields"—science technology, engineering and mathematics—remain in those fields through throughout their college careers?

He is a former school counselor at Woodlawn Middle School and Kenilworth Science and Technology Charter Middle School, both in Baton Rouge, who went on to pursue his Ph.D. at UCF. He worked as a lead graduate research and teaching associate in UCF's COMPASS program, a National Science Foundation funded project focused on recruiting and retaining students in STEM fields.

Belser's research interests also include career development across one's lifespan, professional school counseling, and child and adolescent counseling. Besides his doctorate, he holds an M.Ed. in school counseling and a B.A. in English: Secondary Education, both from LSU.

**HARSHAW:  
EXPLORING DEEP  
CONNECTIONS BETWEEN  
MIND AND BODY**

Christopher Harshaw is trying to piece together one of the

greatest puzzles in psychology: Why do certain psychological disorders co-occur with certain bodily dysfunction?

For example, he says, why does depression so often involve disturbed sleep and eating? Why do schizophrenics frequently suffer from unquenchable thirst? Why do people with autism spectrum disorders often have gastrointestinal issues and problems regulating their body temperatures?

"My research aims to address these sorts of questions from a developmental psychobiological-system standpoint," he says.

Harshaw joins UNO from Indiana University, Bloomington. He researches the role bodily signals play in normal cognition and in psychopathy. His current focus includes work involving autism spectrum disorders.

Harshaw said he found UNO's Department of Psychology's focus on biopsychology and developmental psychology to offer a good fit for his work. A former psychology and philosophy double-major, Harshaw holds two bachelor's degrees and a doctorate from Florida International University, a public research university in Miami, and said he was excited to work at a similarly diverse public university in New Orleans.

**KNAUS:  
GIVING VOICE TO  
CHILDREN WITH AUTISM**

Tracey Knaus strives to help children with autism communicate more easily.

Knaus, who comes to UNO from LSU Health Sciences Center's Brain & Behavior Program, researches neurodevelopmental disorders, the relationship between brain anatomy, function and behavior, and language and communication functions. Using neuroimaging, she seeks

to examine the brain anatomy, activity and functions in typically developing children as well as those with autism spectrum disorder.

"With these studies," she says, "my main focus has been on language abilities and development in the hopes of better understanding the neural mechanisms of language and communication, allowing for the development of more targeted interventions of children with autism disorder with language deficits."

Knaus holds a doctorate in neuroscience from Tulane University and a Bachelor of Science in neuroscience from Texas Christian University. Her work in the area of autism research goes back more than 13 years and includes working with families of autistic children at The Autism Center at Children's Hospital New Orleans.

**PODGORSKI:  
CREATING MORE PRECISE  
WATER QUALITY ANALYSIS**

David Podgorski isn't satisfied with the current state of water testing analysis.

A Louisiana Sea Grant Discovery, Integration and Application Fellow who comes to UNO from a research faculty position at Florida State University's Magnetic Field Laboratory, Podgorski's research is focused on improving the means by which scientists and regulatory agencies monitor and detect contaminants in water resources.

"Pollutants that enter the environment immediately begin to transform through biological and photochemical processes," he says. "Standard methods of analysis utilized by federal and state regulatory agencies are unable to detect these transformation products. The result is that heavily contaminated sites are deemed

to be uncontaminated."

Through Podgorski's work, he seeks to improve understanding of the toxicity, transformation and movement of these compounds in the environment so that policy makers and regulatory agencies can make informed decisions regarding drinking water supplies and ecosystems.

Podgorski holds a bachelor's degree in chemistry from Gardner-Webb University in Boiling Springs, NC, where in 2013 he was named "Young Alumnus of the Year," and a Ph.D. in analytical chemistry from Florida State University.

**SCALCO:  
FINDING THE 'HOW' AND  
'WHY' BEHIND ADOLESCENT  
SUBSTANCE ABUSE**

A New Orleans native and UNO alumnus, Matthew Scalco returns to campus 11 years after studying philosophy here. He brings with him three degrees—a bachelor's in psychology from University of Texas at Austin and an M.A. and Ph.D. in psychology from State University of New York at Buffalo.

Scalco's central research interest relates to substance use disorders, including how and why they develop in people from late childhood through adulthood, what factors contribute to increases in substance use, and the origin of adolescent substance use.

In addition to his programmatic research, he has collaborated with other researchers as a statistical and methodological consultant on work examining personality disorders, severe mental illness, trauma and substance abuse in college students, social withdrawal and emotional eating among adolescents.

"As a pragmatist philosophically," he says, "I strive to make research questions relevant to the real world."

## UNO SCIENTIST HELPS DIG FOR CLUES TO UNDERWATER LANDSLIDES

UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans associate professor Ioannis Georgiou spent a week pulling the late shift in the middle of the Gulf of Mexico this summer. From midnight to noon each day, the director of the Coastal and Environmental Hydrodynamics and Sediment Transport Laboratory at UNO oversaw the collection of giant samples of the seabed near the mouth of the Mississippi River.

The goal was to understand more about what causes landslides under water. These so-called submarine landslides can be caused by large waves produced during hurricanes. But research indicates they can also

be triggered by winter storms, cold fronts and possibly river floods—phenomena that scientists understand less.

Georgiou teaches within the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences in the College of Sciences and is also director of the Pontchartrain Institute for Environmental Sciences. For the last three years, he has been working with scientists from LSU and San Diego State University to better understand how the makeup of the seafloor contributes to these landslides—events that have the power to destroy Gulf infrastructure such as oil wells and pipelines, which can lead to environmental disaster.



SAMUEL BENTLEY PHOTOGRAPH

*Ioannis Georgiou, far left, speaks to a team member during an all-night shift aboard the R/V Point Sur in the Gulf of Mexico near the mouth of the Mississippi River.*

The scientists partnered with the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management, which provided grant funding, to undertake mapping the seabed in parts of the Gulf where landslides are frequently known to occur.

They spent a week in June aboard the 135-foot R/V Point Sur, using various coring methods (multi-cores and piston cores) as well as a giant pipe and an 8-meter “needle” known as a cone penetrometer to collect samples from the ocean floor and to gather data on the seafloor’s firmness and squishiness.

The penetrometer has sensors on it that measure how fast it

takes for the needle to decelerate, giving scientists information about the nature of the seabed and how deep landslides could be triggered. Georgiou is co-principal investigator on the work along with Kevin Xu from LSU and Jillian Maloney from San Diego State. Samuel Bentley, who is also director of the LSU Coastal Studies Institute, is the lead scientist on the project.

## SURPRENANT DELVES INTO U.S. INCARCERATION ISSUES AS NEWLY NAMED GALSWORTHY FELLOW

CHRIS W. SURPRENANT, associate professor of philosophy at the University of New Orleans, has been awarded a Galsworthy Fellowship from the Center for the Study of Human Flourishing at King’s College in New York City.

Surprenant, who founded and directs the Alexis de Tocqueville Project on Law, Liberty and Morality, is one of eight fellows selected for the 2017-18 and 2018-19 academic years.

Named in honor of John Galsworthy (1867-1933), an English lawyer and playwright who was at the forefront of England’s criminal justice reform movement, the fellowship program seeks to “bolster the



Chris W. Surprenant

number of academics who are researching, writing, teaching and speaking publicly on any aspect of mass incarceration, over-criminalization and criminal justice reform from multiple academic disciplines.”

In addition to participation in seminars at the King’s College, fellows receive funding to develop courses on criminal justice for their home institutions and to produce original scholarly or popular writings on the issue.

The U.S. leads the world in per capita incarceration, and Louisiana incarcerates more people, on a per capita basis, than any other state.

“Addressing our broken criminal justice system strikes

me as the most important practical ethical issue in the country today,” Surprenant says, “and academic philosophers can and should play a central role in this public discussion of this topic.”

Surprenant founded the Alexis de Tocqueville Project in 2011 to create a forum for examining enduring questions in Western moral and political thought and consider how answers to these questions affect social and political life. During 2017-18, the Tocqueville Project’s programming focuses on criminal justice reform, including alternatives to incarceration, the nature of just and unjust punishment and the link between policing and freedom.

The project’s initiatives have included public lectures, panel discussions, debates, a seminar

series in philosophy and political economy, courses for university and high school students, conferences and fellowships for graduate and undergraduate students.

Surprenant recently edited “Rethinking Punishment in the Era of Mass Incarceration,” published by Routledge July. His current manuscript project argues that meaningful criminal justice reform must focus on three areas: reducing over-criminalization, reforming the existing profit incentives currently connected to justice and punishment, and reducing the use of incarceration as a punishment for bad behavior by replacing it with punishments that effectively accomplish the penal goals while reducing the collateral damage experienced by non-offenders.

## UNO SHARES IN \$325K NEH GRANT TO DIGITIZE FUGITIVE SLAVE ADS

MORE THAN 80 MILLION people were enslaved in the United States through the end of the Civil War, but still little is known about them. Now, the National Endowment for the Humanities has awarded nearly \$325,000 to Freedom on the Move, a project that aims to digitize 100,000 fugitive slave advertisements that were published in American newspapers through the end of the Civil War in an effort to expand common understanding about these people's lives.



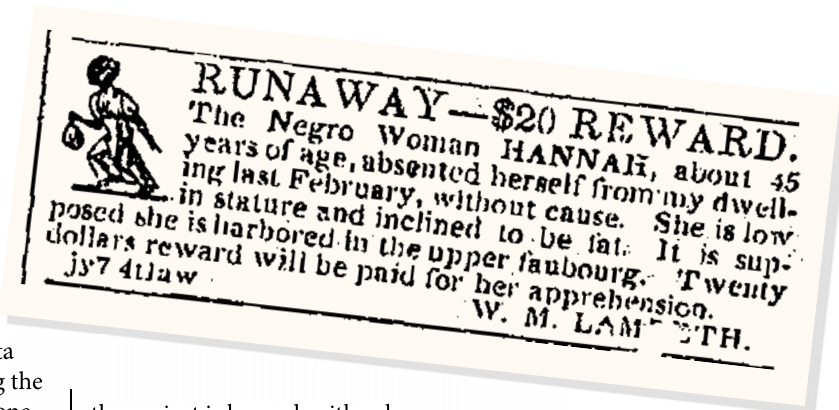
Mary Niall Mitchell

Mary Niall Mitchell, the University of New Orleans Ethel & Herman L. Midlo Chair in New Orleans Studies and the Joseph Tregle Professor in Early American History, is one of three historians leading Freedom on the Move, along with Joshua Rothman of the University of Alabama and

Edward E. Baptist of Cornell University. The effort seeks to create the single richest source of data possible for understanding the lives of enslaved people—one that the historians want to make accessible to all who seek

it, especially educators.

As part of her role in the project, Mitchell is holding workshops for educators and museum professionals. She will observe test audiences of museum visitors, teachers and students as they use the site to determine how to strengthen the online project. She will also help create sample lesson plans and other documents for teachers, students, museum educators and others who seek to use the Freedom on the Move project as part of classroom or museum teaching tool. The NEH award was made to Cornell, where



the project is housed, with sub-awards going to the University of Alabama and UNO.

“Our team is thrilled to have secured the substantial support of the NEH for the next phase of Freedom on the Move,” Mitchell says. “The response to this project from scholars, teachers and the general public has been terrific. Now, with these new resources allowing for greater development of the technical side, we will be able to create a public-ready site that much sooner.”

There are more than 100,000 estimated runaway ads that survive from the colonial or pre-Civil War United States. Freedom on the Move was launched, according to its website, with the idea that each of these ads “sketches the

contours of an individual life, a personality, a story. Taken collectively, the ads constitute a detailed, concentrated and incredibly rare source of information about a population that is notably absent from most official historical records of the time.” The project includes a crowdsourcing component that enables members of the public to take part in creating the database.

Freedom on the Move is just one of the many projects Mitchell, in her role as a scholar and co-director of the Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies, is involved in that seek to promote understanding of New Orleans history, politics, culture and public policy issues, especially civil rights.

## CAROLYN HEMBREE WINS GRANT FOR SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO HUMANITIES

THE LOUISIANA BOARD of Regents announced that Carolyn Hembree, assistant professor of English at the University of New Orleans, is the recipient of \$35,015 from its Awards to Louisiana Artists and Scholars program. The award will fund the completion of her new book of poetry entitled “O Pony of South Derbigny O Leaping Yellow.”

The ATLAS program supports creative and scholarly activities undertaken by faculty

in arts, humanities and social sciences disciplines with potential to have a broad impact at the regional or national levels. Grant reviewers from other states who participated in this process lauded Hembree's previous efforts and extolled the value of her proposed work.

Comments from grant reviewers noted that Hembree's project will add to the “little existing work in the area of female subjectivity in ‘disaster

poetry” and offer “a timely addition to our understanding of the gendered consequences of disasters” through its themes of female relationships and experiences, as well as domestic violence in post-disaster circumstances. Reviewers further noted the steady growth in Hembree's career, her numerous awards and residencies and her experience as editor of “The Sonora Review,” a highly respected publication in the field.



Carolyn Hembree

## KULP AND NELSON AWARDED GRANTS AIMED AT SUSTAINING LOUISIANA'S COAST

TWO UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans-led research projects received a total of nearly \$650,000 through the first round of Louisiana's RESTORE Act Center of Excellence grant process. Funding for the research program comes from fines and penalties in the wake of the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

Mark Kulp, associate professor of earth and environmental sciences, will lead a research project that received a \$349,000 grant to map faults in the Mississippi River delta. The research group under the direction of Marla Nelson, associate professor of planning and urban studies, will get \$295,000 to

design an effective and equitable relocation policy for people in Terrebonne Parish. The funded projects directly relate to the implementation of Louisiana's Coastal Master Plan.

Kulp's research project will use shallow, high-resolution and deep seismic data and sediment coring to evaluate faults in the Mississippi River Delta Plain. Researchers will study northern Terrebonne-Timbalier Bay; Bayou Lafourche, near Golden Meadow; and the Lake Pontchartrain and Lake Borgne areas of the Deltaic Plain to better understand the vertical motion of land surfaces. The research is unique in that scientists will use seismic

data donated by the hydrocarbon industry to map fault trends. Kulp is joined on the project by Nancye Dawers of Tulane University, Rui Zhang of University of Louisiana at Lafayette, David Culpepper of the Culpepper Group, John Lopez of the Lake Pontchartrain Basin Foundation and Kevin Yeager of the University of Kentucky.

Nelson's project will evaluate populations in Terrebonne Parish to identify the opportunities and challenges in designing a relocation policy that retains traditional communities while reducing risk. The team plans to collect data by interviewing residents about their concerns



Mark Kulp



Marla Nelson

and priorities regarding the role of government in helping them relocate, should they decide to move. Nelson's collaborators are Traci Birch of the LSU Coastal Sustainability Studio, Anna Brand with UNO's Department of Planning and Urban Studies, Renia Ehrenfeucht of the University of New Mexico and Tara Lambeth with UNO's Center for Hazards Assessment, Response and Technology.

## INDUSTRY PEERS RECOGNIZE TWO UNO TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE LEADERS

TWO REPRESENTATIVES from the University of New Orleans Transportation Institute won awards from the greater New Orleans chapter of the Women in Transportation Seminar. Associate director Carol Short was named member of the year, and research associate Tara Tolford won an award for transportation innovation.

Short's Member of the Year Award honors a chapter member who has promoted the reputation of WTS within the transportation community. In addition to serving as associate director of UNOTI, Short is and co-author and administrator of UNO's Master of Science in Transportation degree program.

She has extensive experience in the maritime industry and serves as the institute's liaison to that community.

Short is also an advocate for transportation education and workforce development, working throughout Louisiana on federally funded work-based learning programs for middle and high school students. She is a founding host of the National Evacuation Conference and serves on the Louisiana Center for Women in Government and Business advisory board.

The Innovative Transportation Solutions Award salutes a project that improves the quality of life for users and the community. The project for which

Tolford won the award involves a statewide count of active pedestrian and bicycle transportation activity.

Collection of such data will drive statewide implementation of so-called "complete streets," which are roadways designed to safely accommodate all types of users—pedestrians, bicyclists, motorists and mass transit users. Tolford has already implemented a pilot project in partnership with the New Orleans Regional Planning Commission allowing her to validate the concepts proposed for statewide implementation.

Tolford received a master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from UNO with a dual



Carol Short



Tara Tolford

specialization in transportation planning and land use. She is responsible for leading all bicycle and pedestrian-related programs and research activities at UNO Transportation Institute. Tolford is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners, serves on the Louisiana DOTD Complete Streets Advisory Council and chairs the New Orleans City Council Pedestrian and Bicycle Safety Advisory Committee.

## MATTEI BECOMES FIRST WOMAN TO RECEIVE TOP RECOGNITION FROM NATIONAL CIVIL ENGINEERING HONOR SOCIETY

UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans civil engineering professor Norma Jean Mattei is the first woman selected as a national honor member of Chi Epsilon, an honor society for civil engineering students and professionals.

Of more than 114,000 Chi Epsilon members nationwide, Mattei is the 64th to have been elevated to national honor member status. When she received the honor on Oct. 9 during the 2017 American Society of Civil Engineers national convention in New Orleans, she became

the 10th living national honor member of Chi Epsilon. Mattei is the organization's past-president.

Mattei is serving a nine-year term as one of three civilian engineers on the Mississippi River Commission. In that role, she advises Congress and the executive branch on matters related to the Mississippi River watershed, from its headwaters in Minnesota to the Louisiana delta.

She has served the state of



Norma Jean Mattei

Louisiana as a member of its licensing board for professional engineers and land surveyors and currently sits on the nominating committee for the Southeast Louisiana Flood Protection Authority.

She held multiple positions within the National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying and is now an emeritus member, and she has been active in the American Society for Engineering Education as well on the

boards of several STEM-related educational organizations.

Mattei holds bachelor's and doctoral degrees from Tulane University and spent several years in the private sector as a design and project engineer. She came to the University of New Orleans in 1995 and has served as civil engineering department chair and interim dean of the College of Engineering. She serves as advisor to the UNO student chapter of the Society of Women Engineers and the LA Epsilon Chapter of Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society.

## DAMON SMITH AWARDED \$150,000 TOWARD IMPROVING FUNCTIONALITY OF 3-D PRINTED PRODUCTS

THE LOUISIANA BOARD OF Regents awarded more than \$150,000 to a University of New Orleans faculty member to research ways to improve and expand the use of 3-D printed products.

Damon Smith, assistant professor of mechanical engineering, is using the funding to explore additives for the raw material used in the most widely adopted form of 3-D printing. The ultimate goal is to improve mechanical and optical properties of these products which would result in wider range of applications for their use.

The process of 3-D printing generally involves the arrangement of successive layers of material that form a solid object according to specifications contained in a digital file. Not all 3-D print technology relies on the same material but one technique has emerged as the most popular among businesses, universities and home consumers. Fused filament fabrication

uses thermoplastic filaments as feedstock for layer-by-layer assembly of parts and products.

While this 3-D printing platform is popular because of its wide availability and low cost, its drawbacks include limitations on the applications for use of the products it generates. For example, objects created by the fused filament fabrication technique aren't strong enough for many load bearing uses and don't have the necessary optical properties required for applications with electronic devices and systems that detect and control light.

Smith's advanced materials research will focus on the development of nanoparticle additives that will enhance the function of products generated by the fused filament fabrication technique. The goal is to find additives to the thermoplastic raw material currently used in the process that are compatible with the existing technology and multiply the applications for the resulting



Damon Smith

products.

Smith's grant comes from the Louisiana Board of Regents Support Fund through a program aimed at strengthening the research competitiveness of Louisiana's public and private universities.

Grants are awarded to researchers showing strong potential to become nationally competitive for research funding

from federal granting agencies. Funded projects must make fundamental contributions in eligible scientific and engineering disciplines rather than seek to apply existing knowledge. Eligible disciplines included biology, chemistry, computer and information sciences, earth and environmental sciences, engineering and health and medical sciences.

# FACES of the Determined

Eurofins internship pushes student scientists to excel

BY REBECCA CATALANELLO ■ PHOTOGRAPHS BY TRACIE MORRIS SCHAEFER



LAUREN HEFLIN STANDS IN THE LABORATORY, HER gloved hands measuring fluids into tiny beakers.

She is an A student majoring in biological sciences at the University of New Orleans. She is one of three students chosen for a competitive year-long internship at Eurofins, a global bioanalytical company with operations at the UNO Research and Technology Park, adjacent to campus. That's where, on this day, she was getting training on how to test food for certain allergens.

But if you had asked Heflin six years ago where she would see herself today, never would she have described this scene—or, for that matter, the one that awaits her when she finishes her workday and heads home to her husband and four children.

“I never wanted to go to college,” she says. “I never pictured myself having a real job.”

Heflin graduated from Riverdale High School in Jefferson, La.

in 2003 and knew from the start that she wanted to be a hair dresser. Things didn't go as planned. She accumulated debt as she paid for her cosmetology training. She started bartending to pay off the debt. Nine years later, at 27, Heflin was still working in a bar when a coworker who happened to be enrolled at UNO insisted there was more for Heflin's life, marched into the bar office and started filling out an application to UNO for her friend.

“I got in,” Heflin says. “And I was so excited.”

Before classes started, Heflin and her husband learned she was pregnant with her first child. Even with a due date at the end of finals week in the fall of 2012, Heflin stayed the course. She earned all Bs that first semester, took off the next semester to be with her newborn, then re-enrolled at UNO in the fall of 2013.

That's when she took her first biology course.





*LEFT: Senior biology major Lauren Heflin was one of three University of New Orleans students selected for a year-long internship at Eurofins Scientific located at the UNO Research and Technology Park. A mother of four, Heflin says her life has been transformed by her experience at UNO. ABOVE: Eurofins intern Elliot Alexander, left, a senior chemistry major, trains with UNO alumna Cammi Larossee, who was hired by Eurofins in the middle of her own internship there.*

### **'I NEED TO BE IN BIOLOGY'**

Heflin's biology instructor was Lura Williamson. Williamson's class was so engaging, Heflin fell in love with the subject matter and was rewarded with her first A.

"I said, 'You know what? I need to be in biology,'" Heflin remembers. Jerry Howard, associate professor in the Department of Biological Sciences, encouraged Heflin to pursue the new major.

Now 32, Heflin has carried a 4.0 almost every semester since—and she has done so while her family has expanded.

She had her second child in 2015 in addition to being stepmother to two more children, ages nine and 12. She took one semester off after having each baby and has held a number of part-time jobs to cover expenses. But when Heflin was awarded a scholarship to work in Department of Biological Sciences Chair Wendy Schluchter's lab, Heflin got her first taste of what it was like to

work in one's field of study.

Impressed by Heflin's smarts and dedication, Schluchter in the spring encouraged Heflin to apply for the Eurofins internship. Heflin got the interview and she says Schluchter's best advice for her student was to be herself.

Heflin was chosen for the paid internship along with two senior chemistry majors with equally impressive stories.

### **EUROFINS AND UNO: A RELATIONSHIP THAT PAYS**


Jonathan Long, a senior from Greenville, S.C., transferred to UNO after experiences at three other universities. And Elliot Alexander, a resident assistant who grew up in Jefferson Parish, discovered his love of chemistry while at Riverdale High School thanks to a teacher who quickly identified Alexander's proficiency and encouraged him to enroll in a honors chemistry course.

Established in 2015, the Eurofins internship was formed shortly after the company moved its offices to the UNO Research and Technology Park. The scholarships are funded by Eurofins Scientific; Michael Russell, the former CEO of Eurofins; and the UNO College of Sciences.

In addition to giving students in biology and chemistry paid employment—full-time in the summer and part-time during the school year—the internship comes with a \$1,500 tuition scholarship.

This year, a fourth UNO student, biology major Melva Holland, was so impressive to the Eurofins leaders when they interviewed her this year that they offered her the \$1,500 scholarship even though her personal obligations prohibited her from being able to participate in the internship.

The students who participate in the full program are assigned to work in one of the two sides of the Eurofins operation in New Orleans: either Eurofins Central Analytical Laboratories, which provides analysis and food safety consulting for its clients; or Eurofins GeneScan, which provides molecular biological analyses in seeds, grain, food and feed, specifically in biotech crops.

GeneScan's work helps detect food allergens and DNA tests such as those for fish authenticity. Heflin is currently working on the 



*LEFT: Eurofins intern Jonathan Long, a senior chemistry major, said he loves the opportunity this internship has given him to apply the scientific concepts he's learned.*

GeneScan side while Alexander and Long are working in the Central Analytical Laboratories.

John Reuther, president and lab director at Eurofins Central Analytical Laboratories, and Frank Spiegelhalter, president of Eurofins GeneScan, say they look for students who demonstrate a passion for science, a strong base of knowledge and a demonstrated work ethic. The laboratories get about 300 samples that need testing every day, so the day is a busy one.

"I'm looking for bright, creative, fast learners," says Reuther, himself a UNO alumnus who graduated with a chemistry degree in 1976. He says Eurofins has good luck with its UNO student interns.

### **BRIGHT, CREATIVE LEARNERS**

Cammi Larossee was in the middle of her internship with Eurofins last school year when Reuther decided to hire her full-time upon her graduation in the fall of 2016. She came to UNO with a plan to eventually go to medical school, but said she became so excited about introductory chemistry classes she took under instructors Skip Gallagher and Sean Hickey that she decided to change majors.

After years of supporting her college career by working 30 to 40 hours a week, including bartending at a ballclub, babysitting and landscaping, Larossee was excited to find employment doing the science she loves while also clearly seeing the societal benefits of that work.

"People really don't know what companies are putting on their food," Larossee says. "So, I thought this was a fantastic market to help people to make sure they're getting what they should be getting."

Since being hired full-time, Larossee has already been promoted to analyst. This summer, she helped train Elliot Alexander during his own internship. She watched and advised him as he performed required exercises to learn how to properly measure, calibrate and test the samples in compliance with safety standards. It wasn't the first time they'd met, though. Larossee was Alexander's teaching assistant in his organic chemistry course at UNO.

Larossee says the key to success in an internship like this is to be cautious and conscientious, follow best practices with testing proce-

dures, stay on top of your work and keep a positive attitude.

Long arrives at Eurofins in the mornings, calibrates the scales in the lab, records temperatures when needed and makes the rounds to find out who he can help—what samples need prepping, what dishes need washing.

Prior to working at Eurofins, he had a job at the University of New Orleans Earl K. Long Library. "I've really enjoyed being able to apply what I've learned," says Long, who expects to graduate in December. "Everybody here

has made me feel really welcome and helped me along the way."

Alexander says he was thrilled to learn he'd gotten the Eurofins internship—not only because of the professional experience it provides but also because he feels it is a tremendous testimony to his younger siblings about what is possible for those who seek education as a means of advancement.

When he gets his degree, he says, he will be the first in his family to get a diploma from a four-year college.

"I always knew that in college, I had to do something that would be a big thing that would show my younger family members that you do go to college for something," Alexander says. "If you try and you push yourself, you're going to be a part of something good."

### **DEDICATED STUDENTS IMPRESS FACULTY**

Wendy Schluchter, the biological sciences chair who encouraged Heflin to apply for the Eurofins internship, says she's constantly impressed by how much UNO students bring to their studies. She loves to help pair students with opportunities like this that may broaden their experiences and their ideas of what they see for themselves professionally.

"I have such an appreciation for our students," Schluchter says. "It's one of the reasons why I took this job over some of the others. I really felt like I could make a difference here. This was not somewhere where people come to have everything handed to them."

For Heflin's part, she says she fell in love with biology without knowing exactly where it would take her. She says she's not exactly sure where her career path will lead, but she is lapping up everything this Eurofins internship has to offer with the hope that it will lead to full-time employment after she graduates in May.

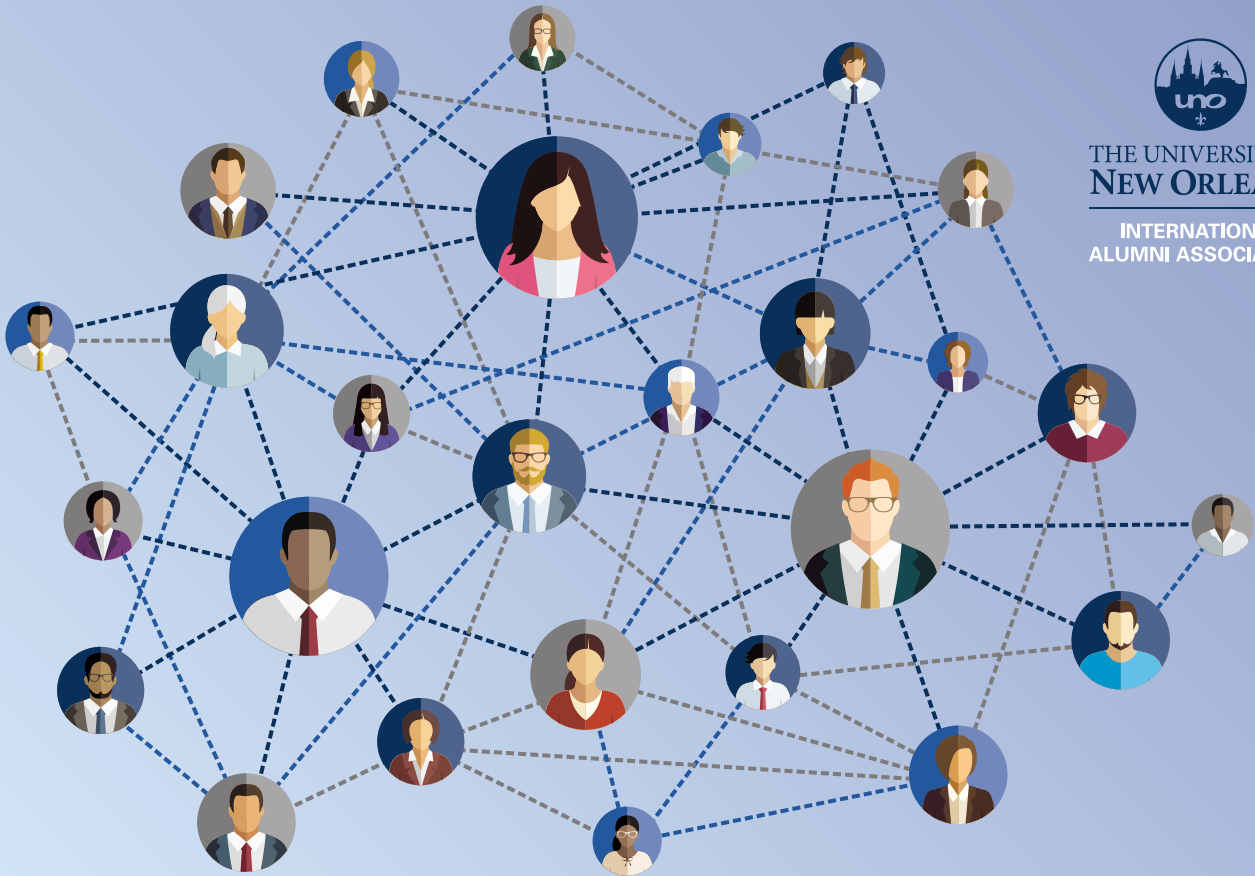
"I am very, very excited and satisfied here," she says. Even the parts of the job that some might find tedious, she says, she loves. She is especially pleased to be able to demonstrate to her children and stepchildren what hard work and dedication can do. She credits UNO's supportive professors and resources with helping her make more of her life than she once envisioned.

She has discovered that she is a scientist.



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*D. Ryan Gray, standing, assistant professor of anthropology, gives direction to students at the dig site in Hohenthurn, Austria  
INSET: An example of a P-51D, the type of plane flown by missing airman Capt. Lawrence Dickson.*





# DIG



# LIFETIME



Faculty and students spend summer searching for the remains of a missing American World War II pilot

BY ADAM NORRIS  
PHOTOS BY ROY WOO/DPA



*LEFT: UNO graduate student Ralston Cole, left, and University of Innsbruck student Philipp Hermeter sift through dirt excavated from the dig site.  
BOTTOM: UNO undergraduate student Lyndsey Nuebel examines the objects in her sifting screen.  
FACING PAGE: Members of the dig team display the National League of Families POW/MIA flag at the dig site in Hohenthurn, Austria.*

THROUGH THE WINDOW OF THEIR VAN, THE PICTURESQUE scenery swept past. Wildflowers dotted lush meadows. Pines and spruce trees towered overhead. A 12th century church stood as a monument to man's history in this place, where the Austrian Alps offer a breathtaking backdrop all their own.

Yet for all the beauty around them, there was something else on the minds of these 12 University of New Orleans students as they took this 30-minute drive to a field outside of Hohenthurn, Austria, five days a week for five weeks.

It was the plane crash of Capt. Lawrence Dickson, a Tuskegee Airman who'd been missing for more than seven decades. This was near where Dickson was last sighted Dec. 23, 1944, while flying a reconnaissance mission during World War II.

As the students stepped off the van in the quiet of a wooded area, they knew their task: to carefully dig up this earth, sorting through dirt and time to try to find evidence of one man's life and possible death. Theirs was an educational and historical mission made possible through a collaboration among the University of New Orleans, the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA), The National WWII Museum, Austrian authorities and the University of Innsbruck.

"We truly didn't know what we'd find," says Titus Firmin, a graduate history student at UNO.

Before the first metal detector ever chirped at this well-shaded spot near the Italian border, it took months to coordinate the project.

"The DPAA has a team of historians that researches MIA cases," says D. Ryan Gray, assistant professor of anthropology and the lead archae-

ologist on the project. "They also have local researchers go and do on-the-ground interviews to see if they can find out any leads on a particular loss. In this case, there had recently been a forest road cut through near the possible site, with aircraft wreckage reported nearby. They were then able to identify eyewitnesses to help pinpoint the location."

The DPAA had recently begun working with universities in its search to account for missing service members around the globe, and the University of New Orleans seemed a logical partner on this project. Gray, whose specialty is urban archaeology, had led summer field schools before, and UNO has a well-established relationship with both the city of Innsbruck, Austria and the University of Innsbruck. This year, the two institutions marked the 42nd anniversary of the UNO-Innsbruck International Summer School. UNO's Division of International Education played a crucial role in ensuring that the student archaeologists received course credit as well as arranging accommodations in the town of Villach, a three-hour drive from Innsbruck, but just 30 minutes from the dig site.



After sweeping the area with metal detectors, the team—which included two students from the University of Innsbruck, as well as Tom Czekanski, a senior curator with The National WWII Museum—began the painstaking process of creating a grid and digging in 10 centimeter increments.

There are thousands of plane crash sites throughout Central Europe but, according to Gray, fewer than 50 Tuskegee Airmen remain missing in action. During World War II, the African-American pilots who made up the 332nd Fighter Group and had trained at the Tuskegee Institute in Alabama became known as the Tuskegee Airmen.

“I think all of us were very motivated to get this done for the family, for the DPAA, for ourselves,” says Drew Kinchen, a senior anthropology major. “We were all really emotionally invested in it.”

For seven hours a day, the team dug, sifted, photographed and took detailed notes of everything that it found. Two urban studies doctoral students, Helen Bouzon and Brittany Waggener, served as the crew chiefs.

This was 80-year-old Ralston Cole’s 10th trip to Austria. A graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy who served in the Air Force during the Vietnam War, Cole had traveled the world as the owner of his own diesel engine distribution company in Harvey, La. After selling his company, the lifelong history buff enrolled in the graduate history program at UNO. He gets emotional when he talks about the dig.

“It was wonderful,” Cole says. “Every day was different. A lot of days were just hard work. We had a couple of days that were so outstanding, it was indescribable.”

Visitors routinely stopped by the dig site. Representatives from the DPAA. Embassy officials. Austrian news crews. Local residents. Hermann Kandutsch, an Austrian who visited nearly every day, had a close connection to the project. His mother was an eyewitness to the crash in 1944 and he foraged around the site as a boy, collecting whatever he could find with his brother. Decades later, he and his wife refueled the excavation team with a truckload of baked goods and coffee.

“This was a very important event for this village,” Kinchen says.

“It’s a very small community and this was obviously a very bad time for them, with the war. And I think this had been sitting with them for a very long time and they were looking for some resolution, and they felt that it was right that this man be found and brought home.”

The town of Hohenthurn even threw an Austrian barbeque for its visitors at the local firehouse.

As the project progressed, the team found a variety of aircraft wreckage, much of it consistent with an American P-51, allowing them to gain insights into what happened at the site in 1944 and in the years since. Some evidence recovered from the site will be transported back to the DPAA’s lab in the U.S., while some of the wreckage is undergoing further assessment by Harald Stadler from the Institute for Archaeology at the University of Innsbruck. Ultimately, it will be up to the DPAA’s lab and archaeologists to assess the dig’s results.

“As a historian, I’m used to sitting in my room, reading books and learning about the lives of other people,” says Firmin, who is also a member of the Louisiana National Guard. “But the closest I get to come to history is like going on a trip to Savannah or Charleston and going to Fort Sumter. Or going to The World War II Museum. My contact with history is very limited. But to actually be able to be hands-on and touch a piece of history was unreal.”

After Firmin completes his master’s degree, he wants to pursue a doctorate, with the ultimate goal of teaching. Kinchen is interested in the fields of forensic anthropology and bio-archaeology. Both say their ambitions were further cemented by their summer spent digging and discovering in the Alps.

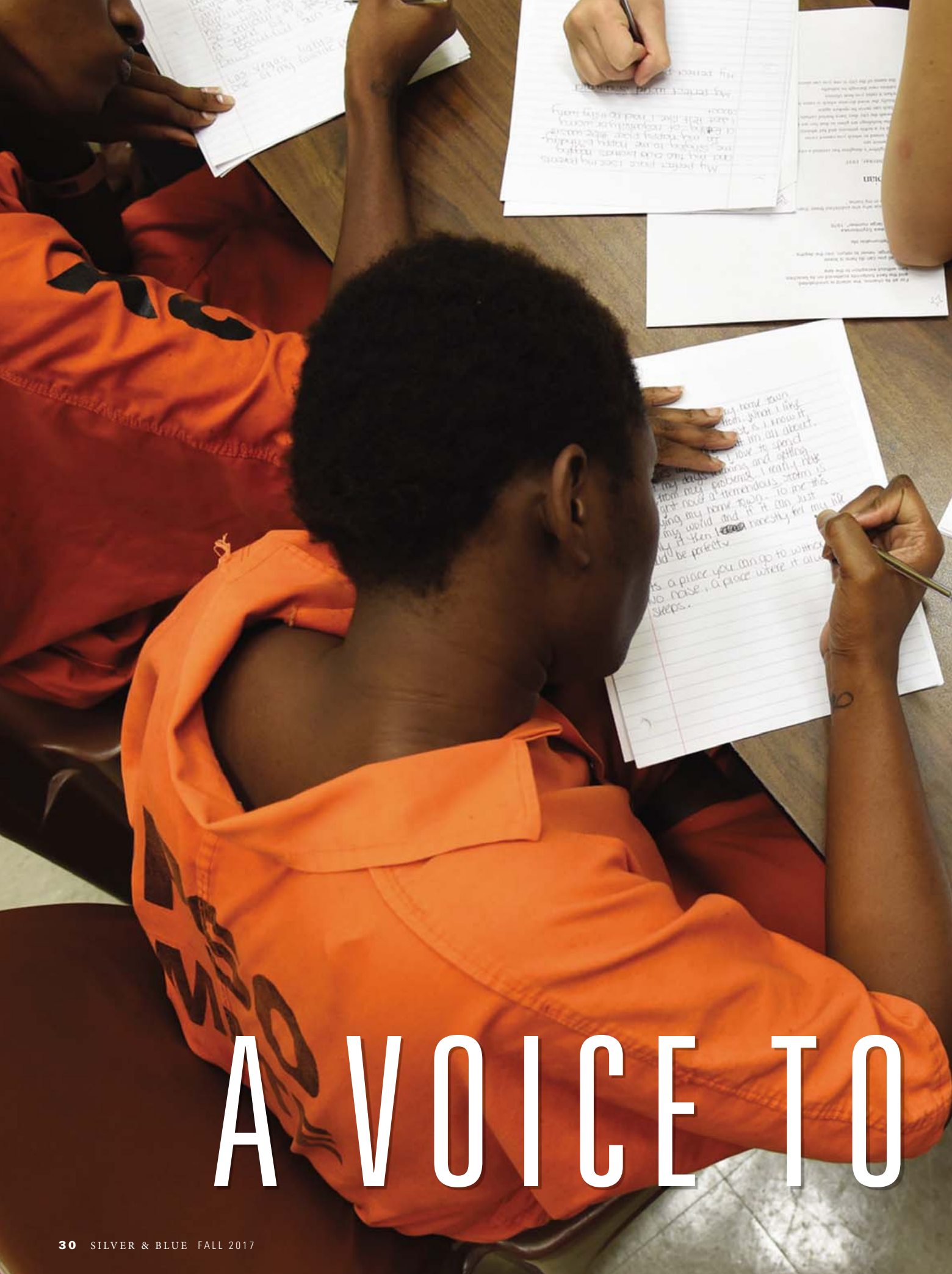
“It was a life-changing, once-in-a-lifetime event,” Kinchen says.

Gray is in the process of completing a detailed search and recovery report for the DPAA. Once analyses are complete, the DPAA will determine if it can positively identify the remains of a long-lost American serviceman.

Even as the members of the excavation team await the news, they are already appreciative of the rare opportunity to come face-to-face with history.

“I would have to rank this as one of the great experiences of my life,” Cole says. 🍪





My perfect home is a big house with a big yard. I know it's not in all areas, but I love it. I love it because I love my dad's car and getting out now a tremendous amount of my home. I love my world and if it can just be perfect, I can be perfect.

It's a place you can go to without noise, a place where it always sleeps.

# A VOICE TO



Women incarcerated at the Orleans Justice Center jail read together and write together during a class led by University of New Orleans professors, graduate students and alumni.

Faculty, students and alumni give female inmates a creative outlet in New Orleans' jail.

BY REBECCA CATALANELLO  
PHOTOGRAPHS BY TRACIE MORRIS SCHAEFER



# THE UNHEARD

# It's Monday night,

so Elizabeth Steeby is standing on a moving body scan machine in the lobby of New Orleans' jail.

The University of New Orleans associate professor of English stares ahead, her hands resting near her thighs, until an olive-jacketed sheriff's deputy staring at a computer screen waves her off.

"Please empty your pockets," the deputy tells Steeby's companion, Phinnie Zahareas, a writer and graduate of UNO's Master of Fine Arts program in fiction writing.

The pair are part of a volunteer corps of creative writing teachers who make weekly treks to the Orleans Justice Center, where they offer female inmates a chance to leave their cells for an hour to read and talk about writing and channel their experiences and memories into words on paper.

The volunteers go to the locker they share to deposit their personal belongings, grab the stash of pricey prison pens—stubby ball point pens that are designed to be non-lethal—and move escorted by a guard through the halls and locking doors of the jail to a room on the third floor that is marked "Group Therapy." Inside, they wait for women in orange and maroon jumpsuits to walk through the door.

"It's been the sunshine in my life here," says Angela, a 39-year-old New Orleans woman who has been incarcerated at the facility for

more than a year. She has been participating in the classes since she first heard about them and has become a regular. She says the classes have given her hope and helped her find herself again.

In this room, the women laugh and smile. They read aloud and cry. Some nights, they speak and read quietly, seriously. Other nights, they chatter and snicker like school girls.

When Angela was 12 years old, she wrote her first poem in an English class. She wrote throughout high school, performed at poetry open mics and envisioned a life after high school graduation that revolved around the written and spoken word. But dreams get obscured. For many, it's just the momentum of life that takes over. For her, she says, it was babies and spousal abuse, a painful past and an uncertain path forward.

When she was booked into jail on felony charges, Angela says, she slept for a week. "The second week I realized, 'I need a pen and some paper.'"

*Freedom is creating something rare*, she wrote one night in the creative writing class.

*Freedom is breathing and smelling fresh air*



STEEBY AND RANDY Bates, professor of English, joined forces in 2015 to create a service learning course, English 6398, that immerses UNO graduate students in writings related to issues of incarceration. The mission is to pair the students with instructors or more experienced volunteers to go together into the jail to teach



inmates on a rotating basis.

Over 16 weeks of their own coursework, the graduate students read, discuss and write in response to fiction and non-fiction works that deal with criminalization, incarceration, race, gender, sexual orientation and prison pedagogy.

Before they are permitted into the jail, they undergo the facility's background screenings, watch a prison rape prevention training video and wait to receive approval to be volunteers. They keep weekly journals of their experiences, provide constructive feedback to inmates on their writing, submit lesson plans for their jail classes and help transcribe and print a collection of the inmates' work in a magazine collection.


Steeby says she and Bates felt it was important that the students walk into the jail with clear context about the place where they would be working and the people they would be teaching.

"Everyone in this city has a relationship with the city jail in some way or another," Steeby says. "My commitment was that we would do readings and have conversations from the very beginning so that we have an understanding of the larger landscape of incarceration and criminalization in—not only New Orleans—but also Louisiana, the South, the nation and internationally."

Louisiana has the highest per capita incarceration rate in the United States—816 per 100,000 people—and the number of people behind bars has doubled in two decades. The Orleans Parish jail has been under a federal consent decree since 2013, when a federal judge mandated sweeping operational changes designed to reduce unsafe conditions, in-jail violence and inmate deaths.

Patrice Jones, an M.A. English student taking the class this fall, is awaiting her first volunteer rotation at the jail. She says she wanted to take the course as soon as she heard Steeby mention it. Jones' grandmother and mother were both jailed multiple times during civil rights protests years ago and her niece is currently jailed in another state. She is eager to bring her teaching to the Perdido Street jail, but says the coursework so far has enhanced her understanding. "I think I've become more knowledgeable and aware of the magnitude of the problem," she says.

While women make up only about 9 percent of those incarcerated at the Orleans Justice Center numbering about 100 to 150 per day, they also have far fewer programs to serve them.

Gregory Carroll, director of programs for Orleans Parish Sheriff's Office and himself a UNO alumnus, says that besides religious programming, group therapy and a high school equivalency class, UNO's volunteers are bringing in the only other opportunities available to female inmates. In addition to the established creative writing program, UNO alumni and faculty have plans to bring the women classes in yoga, improvisational performance and graphic arts. 

*FACING PAGE: Elizabeth Steeby, associate professor of English, goes through a metal detector before entering the jail to teach creative writing. THIS PAGE: The UNO-led writing course is one of the few programs offered to female inmates at the jail.*



“The females have always been thought of second,” says Carroll (B.S., ’84). “Part of my goal is to change that.”



WHEN THE LADIES from Block E enter the room marked “Group Therapy,” they are smiling and talking with one another.

Seven show up this night. Most appear to be in their 20s. They take their seats in brown plastic chairs situated around a few mismatched tables that Steeby and Zahareas shoved together minutes prior. A large window shielded by metal bars looks out on the lights of downtown New Orleans.

Steeby welcomes the women. She asks them to close their eyes, to put both feet on the floor.

“I want you to think about your most perfect place on earth,” she says.

The room gets quiet. Moments pass. A guard sits at the door looking on. A ripple of giggles takes over. Steeby smiles. Zahareas smiles.

Within minutes, the women are open-eyed, hunched over papers, scribbling with stubby pens on loose leaf about their favorite places.

On the page, one woman is sitting on a rock with an ocean view, wind blowing, her child and fiancé nearby.

One is under a starry sky with her two dogs, “out in the open,” she writes, traveling “to places where people don’t lie.”

One is at home with her little brother, “watching movies or baking.” *A place where censored voices are heard, a place where kids can just be kids and baking sweets is free.*

Angela isn’t in the class this night. She is in her cell. Her block,

Block F, just across the hall, is on lockdown.



SHE TUCKS ALL of her writings into a folder she keeps in her cell. Each piece is catalogued on a single sheet of paper according to number and title. “Healing Appears.” “Welcome 2 Jail.” “Domestic Abuse.” “Haiku #1.” She has written more than 190 poems since she was booked into jail. And she pores over the comments the UNO graduate students make in the margins.

“Nice strong images,” reads one. “Maybe make this question stronger by repetition,” reads another.

The class has reignited Angela’s ambition to go to college, to study English, to continue reading and writing, she says. She’s making a book-bag out of torn up T-shirts knotted together so that when she’s released she has a way to carry out the donated books she’s received from the volunteers.

Bates says he once brought in a mock-up of *Unheard Voices: Prose & Poems by Writers in the Orleans Justice Center*, which would be the program’s first collection of the women’s writings. On the spot, Angela thumbed through the pages, rearranging the order of the works into its final form.

Angela, he says, insisted it open with the invitational sounding poem, “Come, Come, Whoever You Are,” by a woman named Chantle.

She also wanted the magazine to end with an untitled poem by a woman named Terrie. It’s a poem that describes the thoughts of a 7-year-old upon hearing the sounds of her abuser’s footsteps coming down the hall. It ends with words that echo the magazine’s title.

*If I could just be loud. If I had a voice that wasn’t unheard.* 🍷



LEFT: In this room, the women laugh and smile. They read aloud and cry. “It’s been the sunshine in my life here,” says one.



# Unstoppable Julie Stokes

## Louisiana Lawmaker Honored as Homer L. Hitt 2017 Distinguished Alumna

BY REBECCA CATALANELLO

JULIE SKINNER STOKES IS ON A PHONE CALL. OUTSIDE her ninth-story office window, cars hurry back and forth along Causeway Boulevard. “Yes,” she says to the caller. “Well, thank you.”

A giant pink wreath hangs on the door of her new office.

She hangs up, smiles and shakes her head. “It was mine to win,” she says, summarizing what the person on the other end of the phone told her.

Since getting a Stage 2 breast cancer diagnosis in July, the Louisiana representative from Kenner surrendered her campaign for state Treasurer—which she was favored to win—took a planned family vacation to Utah, cut her hair into a tidy bob, started once-a-week chemotherapy treatments, moved her business offices into a new building, formed a bipartisan caucus of 28 fellow legislators to discuss state tax reform, signed on to take her 13-year-old to and from school every day, and finally met with a contractor on a lingering leakage issue in the master bathroom of her family home.

“I figured eventually I was going to be taking a shower and the whole shower was going to end up on the car and the garage underneath,” she says.

It’s not the first time Stokes, 47, has found herself moving near full-speed amid crisis. In 1991, she was holding down an accounting internship in pursuit of a career as a certified public accountant, organizing rush for her Alpha Xi Delta sorority ☞

and preparing for her senior year at the University of New Orleans when her father suffered a heart attack while fishing on Father's Day.

Edward Thomas Skinner, 46, had been an otherwise healthy construction engineer who had operated heavy equipment on the Superdome. When he became ill, he had been part of the team laying the new Interstate-310 west of New Orleans. The heart attack thrust Skinner into a coma for two-and-a-half-months before he died. Six days prior, Stokes' maternal grandfather died suddenly as well.

The losses were stunning for Stokes, especially for "an only child of an only child," as she puts it. Wading through her grief and that of her grandmother and mother, with whom Stokes lived, she remembers plodding forward at first as if by remote control. Hours after her father's death, Stokes, who was about to be the first in her family to complete a college degree, arrived at one of the closing events of rush, where she stood arm-in-arm with her sorority sisters in a circle, swaying as they sang a closing song.

It was an emotional beginning to her last year of college, an image that would stay with her for the rest of her life as a symbol of the community and family she found at UNO. "It was a sense of belonging that I had never had," she says. "We called each other sisters."

Stokes, who has been named UNO's 2017 Homer L. Hitt Distinguished Alumna by the UNO International Alumni Association, finished her otherwise difficult senior year like she finishes everything—in stride.

She served her senior year as president of Alpha Xi Delta and graduated in 1992 with an accounting degree and four job offers. She spent 10 months at the firm of KPMG before joining Ernst & Young, where she said she regained her footing personally and professionally, launching a career immersed in numbers and obsessed with researching and fixing systems that need work.

*BELOW LEFT: Louisiana Rep. Julie Stokes, R-Kenner, says fractured rhetoric is keeping Louisiana from solving its budgetary problems. BELOW RIGHT: Former New Orleans Saints player and ALS patient Steve Gleason, far right, championed a bill that Stokes sponsored to broaden patient access to assistive technology. The bill was signed into law in June.*

Engaging, detail-oriented and mission-driven, Stokes approaches her life and work with equal attention to specifics as to end-goals.

Elected in 2013 to represent District 79 in the Louisiana House of Representatives, the Republican lawmaker has taken stances that sometimes counter the party line.

Raised by a mother whose

meticulous money management was a way of life, Stokes says she inherited her mother's sensible frugality and her father's "renegade" tendencies. As chair of the Sales Tax Streamlining & Modernization Commission, she has spent hundreds of hours poring over the state's budget and tax laws and is one of the few Republicans to say publicly that she believes the state's budgetary crisis is also tied to revenue shortages, not exclusively wasteful spending.

"I've got spreadsheet after spreadsheet after spreadsheet," Stokes says, referring to her own detailed analysis of the state's budget and tax systems. Her work has earned her honors such as being named one of State Tax Notes' Tax Legislators of the Year. She serves on the executive committee of the National Conference of State Legislators and is on a first-name basis with analysts at the Tax Foundation, the nation's leading independent tax policy research center.

She believes that the work of repairing Louisiana's budget relies on reaching bipartisan consensus to halt what she finds to be the damaging rhetoric of politics and find a reasoned middle ground. "We are no longer talking about adequately funding a government and trying to find the most competitive way to do that," she says. "Now, the fight is over half of the legislature telling the people that we're endangering the future of Louisiana's children and the other half telling them we're flush with cash and wasting their money."

On the same day her Treasurer's campaign sent out a press release saying she was withdrawing from the race due to cancer, Stokes and Rep. Malinda White, a Democrat from Bogalusa, began formulating plans to assemble a bipartisan caucus to try to discuss how to communicate a reasonable, fact-based bipartisan message of reform.

Stokes has spoken in favor of taking a more moderate stance on equal pay for women than the state's Republicans have traditionally favored. She voted in support of a 17-cent increase in the gas tax as a way, she says, to help ensure the future of the Louisiana economy by adequately maintaining and enhancing Louisiana's crumbling roads and bridges. And, in 2016, she made national headlines when she spoke on the floor of the House of Representatives, reprimanding her male colleagues for behavior that she described as "utterly disrespectful and disgusting," after a fellow Republican filed a joke amendment on a bill that would have set maximum age and weight limits for exotic dancers.

Laughter erupted and some lawmakers responded by laying dollar bills on the podium. Stokes jotted a few words down and took the floor. "Looking out over this body," she said then, "I've never been so repulsed to be a part of it. It has got to stop."



Stokes grew up in Airline Park and lives with husband, Larry, and their children, Brandon, 15, and Taylor, 13, in Chateau Estates.

Before taking public office, Stokes says, she felt somehow spared the workplace chauvinism that she heard other women speaking out against. But she said that her experience in Baton Rouge as one of 17 women in the state legislature has awakened her to the realities about the ability of women to succeed in a male-dominated workplace. In the week that led up to the exotic dancer bill, Stokes says, the CPA had twice been told jokingly by male colleagues that a woman's place is barefoot and pregnant, not involved in a state's finances.

In 2016, the Girl Scouts of America named Stokes one of four "Women of Distinction" for eastern Louisiana. *New Orleans CityBusiness* has twice named her a "Woman of the Year." And she was selected this year to participate in *Governing Magazine's* 24-member Women in Government Leadership Program.

Stokes learned about her cancer prognosis on July 1. She was at Sake Café in her neighborhood of Chateau Estates for Friday dinner, a standing weekly date with her with her husband of nearly 20 years, Larry Stokes (B.A., '77, Ph.D., '89) and their two children, Brandon, 15, and Taylor, 13. The week had been flush with back-to-back campaign events. She was visiting with someone at another table when Brandon brought her the phone and told her she might want to take it.

It was Dr. Ralph Corsetti, her friend and an oncological surgeon at Ochsner. It had been seven weeks since Stokes first noticed a lump while showering. Even after her aide scheduled an appointment for her to get it checked out, she actively compartmentalized the prospect of it becoming anything to worry about. "I would take it out, I wrap it up and I push it to the wall and decide, 'I'm going to keep going until I'm sure that I cannot.'"

Stokes moved to a table outside to listen to what Corsetti had to say. She jotted down notes as her husband looked over her shoulder.

When she hung up, the two of them walked back to the table. All around the restaurant, there were people she knows—neighbors and people she'd represented for four years. She could not risk breaking down here.

"We're just going to eat," she told her family. "We're going to get through this. We're going to be fine."

At home, she says, she and her children, husband and mother talked and comforted one another. Any thoughts she had about continuing the campaign were extinguished over the next few days as she met with her oncologist and talked with her staff about the realities of five months of chemo.

The first few months of treatment, she says, have been kind. Shortly after the news, her friends, family, colleagues and constituents surprised her to by taking to social media on qualifying day to pose in pink with the hashtag "#FightLightJulie." She's enjoying



"Never fixing these problems doesn't work for me. I've got a 15-year-old and a 13-year-old who I would like to think would possibly have a future in this place."

spending time with her family and goes into the office at Stokes & Associates on most days.

Tuesdays are for chemo. She's noticed she's exhausted by Friday, though.

"Like normal people," inserts David Zoller, her district aide in Kenner.

She hears the hard part comes in the final treatment stages.

Stokes has tried to be at peace with not running for Treasurer, but she says it's something she's still processing. A practicing Christian, she talks about learning to "give back this dream" and trust that the right path will emerge. She looks at her children and says she feels compelled to do work that could make the state a stronger place for them—a place with attractive jobs, competitive wages, educational opportunities that will make them want to raise their children here, too.

"Never fixing these problems doesn't work for me," she says. "I've got a 15-year-old and a 13-year-old who I would like to think would possibly have a future in this place."

She's made public appearances, like moderating a livestreamed panel on women and politics at LSU and meeting with the Committee of 100 Louisiana, an alliance of business and educational leaders concerned with furthering the state's economic prospects.

Being honored by UNO, she says, has been humbling. Stokes will be formally celebrated Nov. 2 during a 7 p.m. gala at The National WWII Museum that will raise money for student scholarships—like the one that made it possible for Stokes herself to attend the University.

"I continue to be grateful for the experience and education I received from the University of New Orleans," she says. "I can safely say that I would not be who I am today without my time at UNO." 🐾

# Bringing New Orleans History to Life

Historians and Journalists Work Hand-in-Hand to Create WWNO's Award-Winning 'TriPod'

MERGE HISTORY, PUBLIC RADIO AND A 300-YEAR-OLD CITY with a million hidden stories and here's what you get: "TriPod: New Orleans at 300," an award-winning radio show and podcast that brings local history to listeners every week.

TriPod won a New Orleans Press Club award for best radio show this summer. It has also taken home two regional Edward R. Murrow Awards. A recent episode has also been picked up by BackStory, a popular history podcast.

Since it started airing on WWNO 89.9 FM in October 2015, the weekly TriPod segment hosted by producer Laine Kaplan-Levenson has, in the span of 12- to 15-minute mini-documentaries, lifted the veil on dozens of forgotten stories and, on occasion, sought to bust local myths that drive some historians bonkers.

With organizational support from the University of New Orleans' Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies and financial backing from the Historic New Orleans Collection, the show marks an unusual collaboration between journalists and historians. The resulting stories are the product of a rigorous and highly unusual editing process that both the academics and Kaplan-Levenson say took some time to grow comfortable with.

Mary Niall Mitchell, a UNO historian who already has numerous titles—co-director at Midlo Center, Ethel and Herman L. Midlo Endowed Chair and the Joseph Tregle Professor of Early American History—took on yet another role after WWNO General Manager Paul Maassen approached her and leaders from the Historic New Orleans Collection in 2015 about the idea of producing a radio show drawing on the city's storied history in commemoration of New Orleans' 300th birthday.



Mary Niall Mitchell

As chair and senior editor for the TriPod Editorial Board,

Mitchell leads an eight-member panel of historians, archivists and researchers who serve on the board. The team helps generate story ideas, share information on expert sources and even provide detailed line editing on Kaplan-Levenson's scripts. Supporting the project is an even larger team of advisers—36 historians, archivists, researchers and curators from across the country who also give of their time, expertise and resources.

Kaplan-Levenson says that she works most closely with Mitchell and Jessica Dorman, director of public relations for the Historic New Orleans Collection, who holds a doctorate in American history from Harvard University. Kaplan-Levenson calls the pair the "guardian angels of TriPod," because they make themselves available to her round-the-clock. "They're the people who, when it's not a desig-

*Laine Kaplan-Levenson conducts an interview in Jacmel, Haiti, for an upcoming episode of "TriPod: New Orleans at 300."*



ANDRE PAULTRE PHOTOGRAPH



nated time for anyone to be doing anything for the show, I can email and they are there for me.”

Mitchell, who before getting her Ph.D. in history from New York University also received a master’s degree in journalism there, says it’s been refreshing to work on quick-turnaround pieces that are steeped in history but are written for a wider audience. But both Mitchell and Kaplan-Levenson say it’s taken some time for the academics to become more comfortable with the more general language that journalists use to make stories more translatable for listeners.

“I think we’ve all learned how to do that better,” Mitchell says. “We’ve learned from Laine what engages listeners. And at the same time I think she’s gotten more comfortable with accommodating the questions that scholars bring to the story, while still speaking to a broad audience.”

As a narrator, Kaplan-Levenson’s style is far more casual than anything that would ever be found in an academic journal. In a recent piece about Oscar James Dunn, the first black lieutenant governor of Louisiana from 1868-1871, who was incredibly popular during his time despite being born a slave, Kaplan-Levenson sums up his untimely death by what some people believe may be poisoning by calling him “dude.”

“So,” she says to the listener, “mystery number one: dude dies unexpectedly.”

But the story works. The Oscar Dunn tale gives listeners a delightfully new take on a forgotten figure in history who might have been remembered if ever the state had followed through on its plans to erect a monument in his honor. It’s one of Mitchell’s favorite shows along with an episode from the first season on a global shrimp drying business founded in New Orleans by Chinese immigrants.

“I think what I like about both of them is they offer a fresh take

on history and get people to see the city they live in a little differently,” Mitchell said.

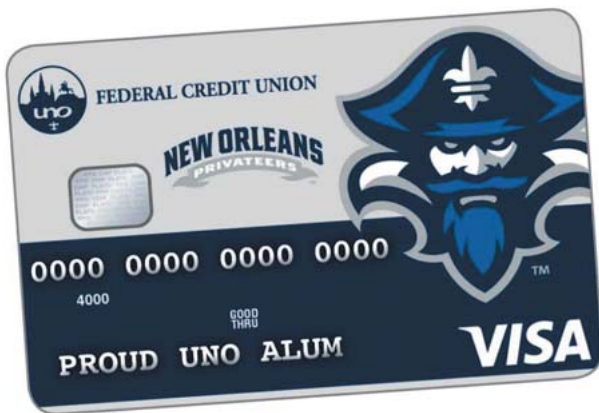
Kaplan-Levenson, who holds a degree in American studies from Brandeis University, says her aim is always to draw the story into the personal by finding interview subjects whose lives were in some way impacted by the event on which she is reporting. When the tale is 200 or 300 years old, that’s not always possible. But with a little digging and the help of the TriPod team, it happens.

In the case of the Dunn story, that modern-day link was UNO alumnus Brian Keith Mitchell, a descendant of Dunn’s, who wrote his doctoral dissertation on Dunn while studying history at UNO with Mitchell as one of the members of his Ph.D. committee.

Kaplan-Levenson says it’s not easy seeing your scripts torn apart by eight or more people. After the editorial board is finished with its review, she submits her script revisions to yet another editor for radio. But she credits the show’s success to that collaboration.

“I think it took me understanding that everything the committee was saying was for my benefit and for me to basically not get in trouble and that they had my back,” Kaplan-Levenson says. “And it took the committee trusting that even though I sounded like I was skateboarding down the street eating a slice of pizza, I was really serious about my job. Once we all really got on the same page in terms of trusting each other, that’s when we really started to thrive because the styles and the sensibilities could really flourish.”

TriPod kicked off its third season in October with hourlong special on Haiti and the perspective of Haitians on the nation’s connections with New Orleans. The show airs Thursdays during “Morning Edition” at 8:30 a.m. on 89.9 FM, repeats on Mondays during “All Things Considered,” and is available anytime on WWNO.org and as a podcast on iTunes. 📻



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## *In the Footsteps of Greatness*

*Slessinger Honored with Eddie Robinson Award* BY RO BROWN

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS HEAD BASKETBALL COACH Mark Slessinger has been selected to receive the 2017 Eddie Robinson Award from the Allstate Sugar Bowl Greater New Orleans Sports Hall of Fame.

The award is presented annually to an athlete, coach, team or athletic administrator in Louisiana who demonstrates the qualities most associated with Grambling State University's legendary football coach, Eddie Robinson: outstanding achievement in athletics,

academics, sportsmanship and citizenship by maximizing the use of limited resources.

During the 2016-17 season, Slessinger led the Privateers to the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament for the first time more than two decades. Picked ninth in the preseason Southland Conference Poll, Slessinger guided the Privateers to a 20-12 overall record and a 13-5 conference mark in winning the conference regular season crown. New Orleans won the conference tournament title with a



thrilling 68-65 victory over Texas A & M-Corpus Christi and an automatic bid to “March Madness”, the school’s first bid since 1996.

Slessinger was voted coach of the year by the Southland Conference, Louisiana Sports Writers Association and the Louisiana Association of Basketball Coaches.

He says the Eddie Robinson honor was especially meaningful.

When Slessinger was in college at Aurora University in Illinois, his pastor, a Grambling graduate, used to talk about the legendary Robinson. As head coach for Grambling for 55 seasons, Robinson was the first football coach in National Collegiate Athletic Association history to win 400 games. He is also remembered for his devoted mentorship to his players, many of whom went on to play professionally.

“To be mentioned in the same fraction of breath with

Eddie Robinson is a great honor not just to myself but to our staff, student-athletes and my family,” Slessinger says. “It means the world to us.”

Slessinger, who spent 11 years as an assistant at Northwestern State, continues to tell anyone who will listen that he has the best job in college basketball in the greatest city in the world. Under his leadership, the basketball team has been very active with Special Olympics. The Privateers host a number of clinics throughout the year for special olympians in Louisiana. The coach also recognizes some of these athletes at each home game as “Sless’ Stars.”

An Indiana native, Slessinger and his players traveled to Holden, La., after the state was hit by flooding in August of 2016. Knowing the area needed able bodies to help families recover from the disaster, “Coach Sless” led his team as they helped clean seven properties in the Hammond and

Baton Rouge areas. When New Orleans East was struck by a tornado in February of 2017, the Privateers were on the job again helping with the cleanup.

“It’s important to teach ‘service learning’ to young people,” Slessinger says. “They have to understand that if you want someone to be involved with what you are doing you need to be involved with what they are doing. I’m sure it’s the type of lessons Coach Robinson taught.”

In August, UNO and Slessinger agreed to a new contract that will keep Slessinger on the Privateers bench through the 2023-2024 season.

New Orleans Director of Athletics Derek Morel says Slessinger’s commitment is evident.

“In his six seasons as our head coach, Mark has consistently demonstrated positive leadership, unwavering resolve and a genuine love for UNO and the city of New Orleans,” Morel says. “We thank him for his service and look forward too many great years ahead.”

The Privateers will open the 2017-2018 season in New York City versus St. John’s on Friday, Nov. 10. The full schedule is available at UNOPrivateers.com.

*FACING PAGE: Mark Slessinger, head coach for the New Orleans Privateers men’s basketball team, in 2016-17 led the team to the NCAA Men’s Basketball Tournament for the first time in more than two decades. LEFT: Slessinger poses with a young athlete during a Special Olympics clinic.*



## Privateers Take Costa Rica and Panama for Service, Practice, Fun

COMBINE HOOPS, coconuts, Special Olympics, beaches and zip lining and you might get something close to what the Privateers men's basketball team experienced over nine days during the team's first foreign tour.

The reigning Southland Conference champs traveled to Costa Rica and Panama Aug. 7-15 as part of a goodwill tour, practicing for and playing four games in between sightseeing, hosting Special Olympics basketball clinics, volunteering at a local orphanage and taking in local culture.

Coach Mark Slessinger says he believes it is the first time the team had ever traveled abroad to play. It was a chance for players to get extra practice, play excellent teams—including

Panama's National Team—and extend their volunteer efforts to organizations and people outside the United States.

At home, the team had already invested more than 500 hours in a year in service to Special Olympics of Louisiana, Son of a Saint, Habitat for Humanity and Second Harvest Food Bank while also aiding victims of natural disasters. "Our students understand the obligation to serve others and appreciate the life values earned from a selfless attitude," Slessinger says. "While basketball and life experiences were a large part of our trip, our ministry is to share our talents and values with others."

The team raised and saved money for the trip, including more than \$2,000 given through an online crowdsourcing effort. 🙌



*TOP: Senior forward Michael Zeno lifts a Special Olympics athlete up to dunk during a clinic the team held in San Jose, Costa Rica. LEFT: The team prepares for a zip lining tour through the rainforest in Los Suenos, Costa Rica. Views from the zip line included the coastline of the Pacific Ocean. INSET: Senior guard Jorge Rosa takes his turn at zip lining.*



# Hire UNO Talent

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Even if you aren't looking to hire UNO talent, there are other ways to contribute to the long-term success of current UNO students. Join the UNO International Alumni Association to learn more about networking events and these signature annual events. Sign up for free at [unoalumni.com](http://unoalumni.com) and for event dates and times.



The Legacy Society donors who have chosen to include the University of New Orleans in an estate gift to ensure that their gift will create a lasting legacy for future generations.

The University of New Orleans is honored to recognize the following members of the Legacy Society and to thank all of you for your support and commitment to the future of the University of New Orleans.

Ann Nunn	Dr. Joan P. Gipe, Professor Emeritus
Anonymous	Dr. Richard Edgar Zwez
Anonymous	Eileen Burke
Anonymous, '68	Henry Bernstein
Anonymous, '69	Herman "Hernie" Woessner
Anonymous, '75	J. Stephen Hank
Anonymous, '80	James D. and Rita C. Coleman
Anonymous, '85 & '94	James D. Jacques
Anonymous, '87	John S. Batson
Anthony E. Centanni & Annette Johnson Centanni	Laura Peebles & Ellen Fingerman
Barbara J. Sallettes	Leo T. Surla, Jr.
Bonita L. Dupre, '94	Marc W. Losh
Christopher S. Maurer	Margaret B. Soniat, '67
Debbie Mabile Settoon, P.E.	Margot C LaPointe, PhD and Roger Zauel
	Ms. Francine Foreman
	Skip Miller

If you have included the University of New Orleans in your estate plans, and are not listed above, please call Eric Balukonis in the Planned Giving office at 504.280.6159



## A Heart for New Orleans' University

### Bob Merrick and Latter & Blum's Support to University Tops \$2M

WHEN REAL ESTATE executive, philanthropist and New Orleans native Bob Merrick thinks about the city he loves, the city where he has built the Gulf South's largest full-service real estate brokerage firm, he sees one university at its center: the University of New Orleans.

That's why Merrick, chairman and CEO of Latter & Blum, Inc., and his company are responsible for more than \$2 million in charitable donations to the city's only publicly funded research institution over the years. In July, Merrick announced his latest gift of \$300,000 for student scholarships.

Merrick's donation enabled the University to exceed its \$1 million fundraising goal in an initiative that University of New Orleans President John Nicklow first announced last November. In so doing, Merrick challenged other donors to give another \$500,000 for student scholarships, a goal that has since been achieved and replaced with a new goal of \$2 million.

"The University of New Orleans is educating the population of the city of New Orleans," Merrick says. "UNO is near and dear to my heart. It fills a huge gap in this city in raising people from their bootstraps."

Merrick's support for UNO goes back many years although he is not a graduate of the institution. He has chaired the UNO business school advisory board and the UNO Foundation board of directors. He endowed the Merrick chair



*Bob Merrick, center, chairman and CEO of Latter & Blum, Inc., this summer announced a gift of \$300,000 to fund student scholarships at the University of New Orleans. His donation enabled the University to exceed its \$1 million fundraising goal in an initiative that President John Nicklow, right, first announced last November. Merrick and Bill Chauvin (B.S., '74), left, co-chaired the fundraising initiative.*

in real estate and helped create the Max Derbes II Professorship in real estate. He has given substantially to support student scholarships and graduate programs in coastal sciences and engineering. In addition, Latter & Blum, Inc., has been the title sponsor for the popular annual Dr. Ivan Miestchovich Economic Outlook and Real Estate Forecast Seminar.

In 2014, UNO recognized Merrick's contributions by awarding him an honorary doctorate. This fall, the University is dedicating and name the patio adjacent to the recently improved water feature near Earl K. Long Library in honor of Merrick and Latter & Blum. Jeff Bush, director of development for UNO, said Merrick's extensive contributions to the University serve as

leadership by example.

President John Nicklow says Merrick has shown unparalleled commitment to UNO and its students.

"His devotion to the institution and his belief in our mission are unwavering," Nicklow says. "His generosity will ensure that we continue to provide access to academic excellence. We are so thankful that he is one of our most visible and loyal advocates."

Bill Chauvin (B.S., '74), a UNO alumnus who co-chaired Nicklow's \$1 million scholarship effort along with Merrick, says that the University has a long history of providing a means of educational and economic advancement for its students.

"The rising cost of higher education impacts those who can least afford it," says Chauvin,

himself a first-generation college graduate. "This effort helps defray that. It will ensure that we can continue with our mission to bring students to this university who will advance, graduate and become really successful citizens of our city."

Jeff Bush, director of development for UNO, says Merrick's extensive contributions to the University serve as "leadership by example."

"We are very pleased with the far-reaching support we have received for this effort," Bush says. "The local business community and our alumni family are both stepping up in a very big way to show their devotion for UNO and their interest in our students." 🍷

To learn more about giving to the University of New Orleans, go to [give.uno.edu](http://give.uno.edu).

# ALUM NOTES

## **Terry Andrus (B.S., '74)**

Terry Andrus has retired after 33 years as president and chief executive officer of East Alabama Medical Center in Opelika, Ala. During his tenure there, the hospital was twice named one of *Fortune Magazine's* "100 Best Companies to Work For." Prior to joining EAMC, Andrus was assistant administrator at Lake Charles Memorial Hospital in Lake Charles, La., and an assistant administrator at Southeast Alabama Medical Center in Dothan, Ala. He holds a bachelor's degree in medical technology from the University of New Orleans and a master's degree from Georgia State University in Atlanta, Ga.

## **Miriam L. Mace (M.A., '75)**

Miriam "Mimi" Mace, a retired professor of theatre arts, volunteers with the Redwood Empire Quilters Guild in Eureka, Calif., where she was recently recognized as the guild's featured quilter. Mace's work helping to organize the Heart of Redwoods Quilt Show was featured in a recent article by the *Eureka Times-Standard*, which called her the "energizer bunny" behind the show. Mace oversees efforts by the guild to make 200 quilts a year to donate to community organizations that serve veterans, children and dialysis patients. Mace retired from Humboldt State University, where she was a professor of theatre arts for 28 years. She holds a bachelor's degree in theater arts and a master's in costume design from Humboldt as well as a master's degree in costume design from the University of New Orleans.

## **Pamela A. Meister (B.A., '76)**

Pam Meister has been named director of Western Carolina

University's Mountain Heritage Center, where she has worked since 2010. Previously, she has held leadership positions at the Atlanta History Center, the Upcountry History Museum, the Charlotte Museum of History and the Southeastern Museums Conference. Meister is the recipient of American Association of Museum's 2003 Excellence in Peer Review Service Award and in 2014 won the Southeastern Museums Conference 2014 James R. Short Award for lifetime achievement. She holds a master's degree in arts management from the University of Georgia and a bachelor's degree in theater with a minor in history from the University of New Orleans.

## **Dorothy L. Tarver (B.A., '77)**

Dorothy Tarver has been named to the board of the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce. Tarver is a trial attorney at Taggart Morton. She has litigated many insurance defense cases in state and federal courts. Tarver is a member of the New Orleans Bar Association, Louisiana State Bar Association, Federal Bar Association, Defense Research Institute, Internal Association of Defense Counsel and Louisiana Association of Defense Counsel and American Immigration Lawyers Association.

## **José Juan S. Bautista (M.A., '78)**

José Juan Bautista has been named to the board of the Catholic Foundation of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Bautista is the JP Morgan Chase Endowed Professor of Economic Solutions to Business Problems in the Division of Business at Xavier University of Louisiana, where he has been on faculty since 1978.

## **Elizabeth F. Delyria (B.A., '78)**

Elizabeth Delyria is a ceramic artist and teacher based in Katy, Texas. Her work, which draws inspiration from nature, was recently featured on Martha Stewart's "Up Close and Personal" blog. She has received honors for her work and teaching. She holds a bachelor's degree in art from the University of New Orleans and a master's in art education from the University of Houston.

## **Jack C. Jensen, Jr. (B.S., '78)**

Jack Jensen Jr. has been named to the board of the Catholic Foundation of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Jensen is founder and CEO of Transportation Consultants, Inc., also called TCI Trucking, a trucking and warehousing services company based in New Orleans since 1983.

## **Mark C. Romig (B.S., '78)**

Mark Romig is on the Board of Directors for the Legacy Donor Foundation, which is dedicated to raising public awareness about organ, eye and tissue donation in Louisiana. Romig is president and CEO of the New Orleans Marketing Tourism Corporation. He was honored with the University of New Orleans Homer L. Hitt Distinguished Alumnus Award in 2016.

## **Eileen Kenny (B.A., '79)**

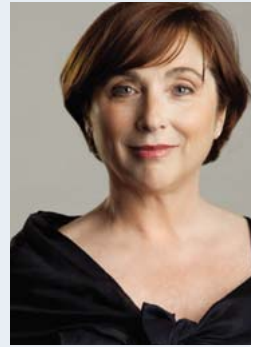
Eileen Kenny is a supervisor at U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, in addition to serving as a writer and editor for U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, Office of Communications in Washington, D.C.

## **Judith P. Martinez (B.S., '79)**

Judith "Judy" Martinez has joined law firm of Simon, Peragine, Smith, & Redfern as Of Counsel. She was previously employed there from 1982 to

## **Susan A. Taylor (B.A., '83)**

*Susan Taylor has been named to the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau 2017 board of directors. Since 2010, Taylor has been the Montine McDaniel Freeman Director of the New Orleans Museum of Art. She is the past-president of the Association of Art Museum Directors and former director of the Princeton University Art Museum and the Davis Museum and Cultural Center at Wellesley College. She holds a bachelor's degree in education from the University of New Orleans and, since joining NOMA, has emphasized educational programs to serve schools from pre-K to 12th grade.*



2003, when she joined Northrop Grumman, serving as assistant general counsel for litigation before becoming vice president and chief compliance officer in 2011. Martinez retired from Northrop Grumman in 2015 and was named a fellow at the Advanced Leadership Initiative at Harvard, where she spent a year in residence. She is past-chair of the American Bar Association Standing Committee on the Federal Judiciary and has held a number of leadership roles throughout her career, including helping to establish the New Orleans Pro Bono Project in 1986. She has received numerous awards, including the Louisiana State Bar Association President's Award and the 2012 Camille Gravel Public Service Award.

## **Ronald H. Dawson Jr. (B.S., '81)**

Ronald Dawson has been named to the board of the Catholic Foundation of the Archdiocese of New Orleans. Dawson is a partner in the accounting firm Ericksen Krentel, which he joined in 1981. He is a member of Greater New Orleans, Inc., and serves as treasurer for the Associated Builders and Contractors Bayou Chapter as well as the Clifford F. Spanier Foundation. He is a member of the American

Institute of Certified Public Accountants, the Government Finance Officers Association, and the New Orleans Chapter of the Society of Certified Public Accountants.

## **Thomas E. Kranz (B.S., '81)**

Thomas Kranz has been named interim superintendent for Richmond Public Schools in Virginia, where he was previously chief operating officer. Kranz is a certified public accountant and also holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of New Orleans. He previously served as the chief financial officer at Hamilton County Schools in Chattanooga, Tenn., and as the chief of educational support services at Okaloosa County Schools in Fort Walton Beach, Fla. Kranz's experience also includes over 20 years in finance and operations.

## **Elizabeth A. Rodriguez (B.A., '81)**

Elizabeth "Libby" Rodriguez has joined Gardner Realtors as a real estate agent. She is a retired educator with 33 years as a teacher and school administrator.

## **Ellen P. Beyer (M.B.A., '84)**

Ellen Beyer was named Nurse Educator of the Year by the Louisiana Nurses Foundation.



Beyer is an instructor of clinical nursing at LSU Health Sciences Center School of Nursing. She is a certified Clinical Nurse Specialist in public and community health by the American Nurses Credentialing Center and is an American Heart Association basic life support instructor. She previously served as the coordinator of the Greater New Orleans Immunization Network and the Louisiana Immunization Network for Kids Statewide. She holds several degrees, including a Doctor of Nursing Practice from University of Massachusetts Amherst College of Nursing.

**Gary T. Marlborough (B.A., '84)**

Gary Marlborough has been named a St. Tammany Parish Principal of the Year for 2017-18. Marlborough has led Chahta-Ima Elementary in Lacombe, La., since 2012. He previously served as assistant principal at Magnolia Trace Elementary. He has a bachelor's degree in political science from the University

of New Orleans and a master's degree from Southeastern Louisiana University.

**James F. Koterski (B.A., '85)**

U.S. Army Col. James "Nick" Koterski is retiring from the U.S. Department of Defense after 22 years. His most recent post was as medical countermeasures director in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health Affairs. Koterski is a veterinarian and microbiologist who joined the military after receiving a degree in a bachelor's degree in biological sciences from the University of New Orleans. He also holds a doctorate of veterinarian medicine from LSU and a doctorate in microbiology from Rutgers University.

**Daniel Lund III (B.A., '85)**

Daniel Lund III has been named partner in the New Orleans law office of Phelps Dunbar. Specializing in construction law, Lund has received many honors, including *New Orleans Magazine's* "Top Lawyer" designation and Best Lawyers'

"Best Lawyers in America" designations for construction law and construction law litigation. He holds a bachelor's degree from University of New Orleans, a Master of Theological Studies from Duke University and a juris doctorate from Tulane University.

**Timothy J. Adams (M.B.A., '86)**

Timothy Adams received an honorary degree from Bowie State University in Maryland. Adams is president and CEO of Systems Application & Technologies, Inc. and former chair of the Bowie State University Foundation. His Maryland-based company has received numerous honors, including being named one of the Top 100 Privately Held Companies in the U.S. by the *Washington Business Journal*, one of the Top 500 Diversity-Owned and Privately-held Businesses in the U.S. by DiversityBusiness.com. He has been recognized as one of the Top 100 African-American Leaders in America by the United States Black Chamber of Commerce. Adams actively volunteers his time on issues affecting people with disabilities as well as veterans, minorities and small businesses.

**James L. DeBellevue (M.F.A., '87)**

James "Lucky" DeBellevue, a visual artist residing in Copenhagen, Denmark, recently represented New York's Kai Matsumiya contemporary art exhibition space at Code Art Fair 2017. DeBellevue has presented solo exhibitions at various galleries and museums including: Björkholmen Gallery, Stockholm; Cheekwood Museum of Art, Nashville; Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago; The Whitney Museum of American Art at Philip Morris, New York. He is originally from Crowley, La.

**Thomas J. Gennaro (B.S., '87, M.B.A., '89)**

Tom Gennaro, senior executive director of the eastbank regional market for Peoples Health, was named to the Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission in January. Gennaro has been with Peoples

**Kaweeda G. Adams (B.A., '87)**

*Kaweeda Adams has been named superintendent for the 9,700-student Albany City School District in New York. A native of Shreveport, La., Adams is a 28-year educator who spent most of her career in the Clark County School District in Nevada. She holds a degree in English education from the University of New Orleans as well as a master's in from the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She is currently pursuing a doctorate.*



Health since 2010. A 2014 graduate of the Leadership Jefferson program, Gennaro holds a bachelor's degree in finance and a master's degree in business administration, both from the University of New Orleans.

**Eric A. Schouest (B.S., '87)**

Eric Schouest, vice president of marketing south for Cleco Power, has been named chair-elect at the St. Tammany Economic Development Foundation.

**Newell D. Normand (B.S., '88)**

Newell Normand has retired from his position as sheriff of Jefferson Parish, capping a 37-year career with the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office. Normand can now be heard hosting a daily, four-hour talk show on WWL Radio, a time slot once held by Garland Robinette. Normand was elected to a third term as sheriff in 2015. He is a former administrative aide for then-Orleans Parish Criminal Sheriff Charles Foti and worked as a lobbyist for the Louisiana Sheriff's Association. He joined the Jefferson Parish Sheriff's Office working under Harry Lee. Normand rose to chief financial officer and chief criminal deputy before being named interim sheriff in 2007 and was overwhelmingly elected to the seat following Lee's death.

**Michael L. Porter, Sr. (B.A., '89)**

Michael Porter, Sr., is back at the University of Missouri, where was named assistant basketball coach. Porter helped coach women's basketball there from 2010-16 but left for Seattle for a brief time to coach at the University of Washington. Porter has also worked for Athletes in Action, a Christian organization that seeks to minister to athletes. He holds a bachelor's degree in English from the University of New Orleans, where he played basketball for the Privateers. He is father of eight children, including Michael Porter, Jr., a freshman forward at Mizzou who is predicted to be the No. 1 overall pick in the 2018 NBA draft.

**Gwendolyn J. Brown (B.A., '90)**

Gwendolyn Brown, who goes professionally by the name "Gwen J.," is the author of "Never Give Up: A Guide to Being Resilient," a newly self-published book that draws on her experiences following Hurricane Katrina. She is an educator, motivational speaker, freelance writer and certified personal trainer residing in the Charlotte, NC, area. Brown holds a bachelor's degree in drama and communications from the University of New Orleans as well as a Master of Teaching degree from Xavier University of Louisiana. ➔

**Elizabeth A. Utterback (B.A., '83)**

*Elizabeth "Beth" Arroyo Utterback was recently named general manager at WWOZ 90.7 FM radio. She joined the station from her position as executive director, vice president and chief operating officer at WYES-TV, New Orleans' PBS station.*



*Utterback has 35 years of experience working in public broadcasting and served as executive producer of several nationally distributed programs as well as local history documentaries and nationally broadcast cooking shows. Utterback graduated from the University of New Orleans summa cum laude with a degree in drama and communications. She has received the Chancellor's Medallion, Dean's Award and an award for Outstanding Drama and Communications Alumni.*

**Drew M. Heaphy (M.B.A., '90)**

Drew Heaphy has been promoted to executive director of the St. Bernard Port, Harbor and Terminal District after nearly two decades as a top port administrator. A resident of Arabi and a certified public accountant, Heaphy started at the port in 1999 as director of administration and has 23 years of experience in public administration and financial management. Prior to joining the port, Heaphy served as chief administrative officer for St. Bernard Parish government. He is a recipient of the American Association of Port Authorities Professional Port Management Certification. Heaphy also serves as treasurer for the St. Bernard Economic Development Foundation.

**Brian J. Rotolo (B.S., '90)**

Brian Rotolo has been named managing partner of Ernst & Young LLP's Louisiana practice. A certified public accountant, Rotolo has more than 25 years in the accounting industry focused in the energy, construction, consumer products and financial services industries. He is a member of the American Institute of CPAs and the Louisiana Society of CPAs. He holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of New Orleans.

**Marcus Eriksen (B.S., '92)**

Marcus Eriksen, the co-founder and director of research for the 5 Gyres Institute in Los Angeles, has published "Junk Raft: An Ocean Voyage and a Rising Tide of Activism to Fight Plastic Pollution." The 2017 book chronicles the oceanic voyage he and members of the 5 Gyres team took aboard a raft made of plastic trash in an effort to raise awareness and understanding of the magnitude of plastic pollution. A New Orleans native, Eriksen also authored "My River Home: A Journey from the Gulf War to the Gulf of Mexico," the story of a five-month journey down the length of the Mississippi River. He holds a bachelor's degree in earth science from the University of New Orleans and a Ph.D. from the University of Southern California. Erickson delivered UNO's commencement address in 2013.

**Anthony J. Rosenbohm (B.S., '93)**

Anthony "A.J." Rosenbohm has joined *The Advocate* newspaper as vice president of production. Rosenbohm spent four decades at *The Times-Picayune* in various production positions, most recently as vice president and production director. He played a key role in restarting the newspaper's print editions after the staff was forced from the city during Hurricane Katrina. After *The Times-Picayune* moved its printing operations to Mobile, Ala., Rosenbohm moved to Oklahoma to become production director of the *Tulsa World*.

**Keith M. Merritt (B.S., '94)**

Keith Merritt represents the Louisiana Bankers Association on the Jefferson Parish Economic Development Commission Board. Merritt is a senior vice president in business banking at Iberia Bank. He is a member of the Jefferson Chamber of Commerce, Elmwood Business Association, and St. Catherine of Siena Men's Club. He teaches financial literacy to youth through Junior Achievement. He is a member of Leadership Jefferson Class of 2017.

**Steve L. Molnar (M.U.R.P., '94)**

Steve Molnar is a project manager for Entergy New Orleans, Inc. He is a member of the Industrial Asset Management Council, the Southern Economic Development Council, the Louisiana Industrial Development Economic Association, the Regional Loan Corporation, the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce and the World Trade Center of New Orleans.

**Bonnie C. Boyd (B.A., '96)**

Bonnie Boyd has been named to the New Orleans Convention and Visitors Bureau 2017 Board of Directors. Boyd is president and CEO of BBC Destination Management Company, an event management company that seeks to provide its clients with an insider view of New Orleans.

**Shannon A. Burke (M.S., '99)**

Shannon Burke has joined the research department of the American Planning Association as the Hazards Planning Center manager. She has more than 20 years of experience as a hazard

mitigation consultant, FEMA specialist, and local government planner for several jurisdictions in Louisiana, including the City of New Orleans Mayor's Office. She has a master's degree from the University of New Orleans College of Urban and Public Affairs and a bachelor's from LSU. She is a board member of the National Hazards Mitigation Association.

**Nicole D. Suhre (B.A., '99)**

Nicole Suhre recently completed the Executive Director Fundamentals Program through Greater New Orleans Foundation. Suhre was promoted to executive director of St. Tammany Hospital Foundation last year after 10 years working with the organization. She holds a bachelor's degree in communication from the University of New Orleans and the Certified Fund Raising Executive credential. She is past president of the Greater Northshore Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals and has served on the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation Board in New Orleans as well as on the Patient and Family Advisory Board for Tulane University and Hospital's Cystic Fibrosis Care Center. Suhre has received a number of honors including being named a YMCA Hero and a Northshore Visionary.

**Richard A. Martinez (M.U.R.P., '00)**

Richard Martinez has been named senior program officer for the Greater New Orleans Foundation. Martinez has more than 12 years of experience working in the nonprofit sector, including 11 years at the Multi-Service Center for the Homeless in New Orleans. From 2005 to 2007, Martinez taught urban studies at the University of New Orleans, where he is currently a doctoral candidate in that field. He holds a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering technology from the City University of New York and a master's degree in urban and regional planning from the University of New Orleans. Originally from Honduras, Martinez calls New Orleans home.

**Charlotte M. Parent (M.S., '00)**

Charlotte Parent is vice president of community affairs and

**Rebecca M. Perret (B.A., '92)**

*Dr. Rebecca Perret has received the Dr. Murrel H. Kaplan Compassionate Physician Award, which recognizes a Touro Infirmiry medical staff member who demonstrates compassion, empathy, respect for the patient as a whole person and genuine care for the patient's welfare. An OB/GYN, Perret been on staff at Touro for 15 years. She holds a bachelor's degree from the University of New Orleans and a doctorate of medicine from LSU. She began her OB/GYN practice in 2002 when she joined Touro and Crescent City Physicians and has delivered thousands of babies since. Perret is a board certified fellow with the American College of OB/GYN and a diplomat with the American Board of Obstetrics and Gynecology.*



network navigation for LCMC Health. She has been named to the board for the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce. Parent worked nine years at the City of New Orleans Department of Health before leaving her role as director of health last year.

**Jeffrey M. Ehlinger (B.S., '01)**

Jeffrey Ehlinger, Jr., senior vice president at First Bank & Trust, has been named a "Ones to Watch: Finance" by *New Orleans CityBusiness*. Ehlinger joined the bank in 2012. He possesses 17 years of experience in the banking industry and has served on numerous nonprofit boards of directors.

**Deborah D. Keller (M.S., '01)**

Deborah Keller has been named chair of the St. Bernard Economic Development Foundation Board. She is a civil engineer with more than 40 years of experience, which includes serving as chief engineer at the Port of New Orleans and before forming her own engineering firm, Deborah D. Keller and Partners in Chalmette. Keller is the first woman to be appointed as chair of SBEDF. She is also a member of the Nunez Community College Foundation Board and the University of New

Orleans College of Engineering Dean's Advisory Board.

**Gerald A. Zulli (B.A., '02)**

Gerald "Jerry" Zulli has been named assistant baseball coach for the University of Alabama. The 15-year coaching veteran has spent time as an assistant in the SEC, Conference USA and Sun Belt while running the offense and recruiting for his respective teams since 2004. He joined Alabama after a year at Louisiana Tech in Ruston. Before that, he coached at University of Missouri and University of South Alabama and was recruiting coordinator for Middle Georgia College. Zulli holds a bachelor's degree in sports management from UNO in 2002, where he played for the Privateers.

**Sean K. Warner (M.P.A., '03)**

Sean Warner has been named vice chair for the St. Bernard Economic Development Foundation. Mr. Warner has served on the St. Bernard Parish School Board since 2011. He is a market manager and commercial lender at Gulf Coast Bank and Trust in Chalmette. He is a member of the Rotary Club, serves on board of directors of the St. Bernard Parish Chamber of Commerce, and is also the vice chair of the

St. Bernard Economic Development Foundation.

**Nicole Eiden (M.F.A., '04)**

Nicole Eiden is a poet, filmmaker and co-owner of Windowsill Pies in New Orleans. Her debut collection of poetry, *I Am One of You*, was recently published by Mississippi Sound Publishing and includes the poem "Mortgage," which was honored with a third-place award in the Women's National Book Association 2016 Writing Contest. *New Orleans Magazine* called Eiden a "person to watch" last year along with her partner at Windowsill Pies, which was the 2016 winner of The Junior League of New Orleans Women Entrepreneur Fellowship Award.

**Angelle M. Gelvin (B.S., '04)**

Dr. Angelle Gelvin has joined Crescent City Physicians and Touro Infirmary as a member of the general surgery medical staff. Gelvin is board certified by the American Board of Surgery and perform an array of surgical procedures, with a special interest in minimally invasive techniques. She is a member of the American College of Surgeons and Isidore Cohn, Jr.-James D. Rives Surgical Society, and previously practiced at Crescent City Physicians New Orleans

East location.

**Damon A. Smith (B.S., '03, M.S., '05)**

Damon Smith has been awarded a grant of \$150,000 from the Louisiana Board of Regents to conduct research related to 3D printing materials. Smith is an assistant professor of mechanical engineering at the University of New Orleans. He holds bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of New Orleans and a Ph.D. in materials science from the University of Texas at Austin. (Read more page 21.)

**Devin J. Wakeman (M.B.A., '07)**

Devin Wakeman has been named treasurer to the board of directors for the Legacy Donor Foundation. Legacy raises awareness about organ, eye and tissue donation in Louisiana. Wakeman is a partner at Waters, Parkerson & Co. law firm, which he joined in 2007. Prior to that, he was a corporate lender at Whitney National Bank and an analyst at Marsh, Inc.

**Amanda C. Walker (M.A., '07)**

Amanda Walker recently completed the Executive Director Fundamentals Program through the Greater New Orleans Foundation. Walker is executive director of Save Our Cemeteries, a nonprofit dedicated to

preserving, promoting and protecting New Orleans' historic cemeteries. She has worked there since 2007.

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

Erin Shaw has been named office manager and marketing coordinator for F.H. Myers Construction Corp., where she has been employed since 2007. Shaw holds a bachelor's degree in marketing from the University of New Orleans.

**Lisa N. Williams (B.S., '07)**

Lisa Williams, a chief financial officer for the Society of Louisiana CPAs, has attained Certified Association Executive designation from the Society of Louisiana Certified Public Accountants. The accreditation is the highest professional credential in the industry. Williams resides in Des Allemands, La.

**Matthew G. Erskin (B.S., '08)**

Matthew Erskin has been promoted to director of commercial accounts for Travelers Insurance, where he has worked for seven years. Prior to joining Travelers, he held positions at D.Y. Martin, Inc., and Ochsner Clinic Foundation.

**Peter L. Cho (Ph.D., '09)**

Peter L. Cho has been named executive dean of Delgado Community College West Bank Campus. A professional musician, has also served as department chair of the arts and humanities division and was head of the Delgado Music Department. He is on the executive board of the American Federation of Musicians, Local 174-496, and is the vice chair for the Algiers Development Corporation. He is a voting member for the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, which presents the GRAMMY awards, and is an ordained elder in the Presbyterian USA Church. He is also on faculty at the Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong Summer Jazz Camp.

**David B. Johnson (B.S., '09)**

David Johnson has been named editor of museum publications for the New Orleans Museum of Art. Johnson holds a bachelor's degree in marketing from the University of New

**RaeNell Houston (Ph.D., '09)**

*RaeNell Houston has been named superintendent of Catholic schools for the Archdiocese of New Orleans, making her the first African-American to hold the job. In her new role, Houston leads schools in eight parishes with more than 3,500 students. Houston is a former teacher who*



*served as an associate superintendent of Catholic schools for the Archdiocese for nearly five years. Prior to that, she taught at Holy Cross College and Southeastern Louisiana University, as well as in public elementary and middle schools in Boothville, Shreveport and Baton Rouge. She holds a Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction from the University of New Orleans and two master's degrees, one in business administration from Southern New Hampshire University and another in curriculum and instruction from LSU.*

Orleans.

**Fernanda Previgliano (B.S., '09)**

Fernanda Previgliano of the Hyatt Regency New Orleans was selected as the New Orleans Chamber's 2016 Ambassador of the Year for her work with the Chamber's Ambassador Committee. Previgliano holds a master's degree in hospitality management from the University of New Orleans. She joined the Hyatt shortly after operations manager and went on to assume the role of director of stewarding until she joined the sales team in 2014.

**Richard A. Valenti (B.S., '07, M.B.A., '10)**

Richard Valenti has been named vice president of operations for Crestline Coach Ltd., an ambulance and specialty vehicle manufacturer based in Canada. He joined the company after more than 30 years in New Orleans with Textron Marine & Land Systems, where he held positions overseeing manufacturing and supply chain, business development, aftermarket product support and program management.

**William E. Addison (B.A., '11)**

William "Will" Addison is directing his first feature-length film, "Easy Does It" with a collective of filmmakers he met while at the University of New Orleans. The independent production, which was recently featured in *The Advocate*, co-stars actress Linda Hamilton, whose credits include two "Terminator" movies with Arnold Schwarzenegger and the TV series "Beauty and the Beast." The film is a coproduction of Worklight Pictures and EFI Productions.

**Bruno Doria (B.A., '11)**

Bruno Doria is the cinematographer and co-executive producer for his first feature-length film, "Easy Does It" with a collective of filmmakers he met while at the University of New Orleans. The independent production, recently featured in *The Advocate*, co-stars actress Linda Hamilton, whose credits include two "Terminator" movies with Arnold Schwarzenegger and the TV series "Beauty and the Beast." The film is a coproduction of Worklight Pictures and EFI Productions. ☐

**Susan Kliebert (B.S., '01)**

*Susan Kliebert received the Certified Forensic Accountant designation. Kliebert is an audit manager at Kushner LaGraize, a full-service accounting and consulting firm in Metairie, La. A certified public accountant, Kliebert has served public and non-public clients as well as nonprofits. She provides litigation and support services for civil and marital disputes. She has delivered lectures at Louisiana State University, Southeastern Louisiana University, Beta Alpha Psi Accounting Organization and Idea Village.*



**Jeannette G. Haynie (M.A., '11)**

U.S. Marine Corps Reserves Lt. Col. Jeannette Haynie is a senior fellow at Women in International Security, an organization that seeks to advance the leadership of women in the field of international peace and security. In addition to being assigned to the Headquarters Marine Corps Strategic Initiatives Group, Haynie is a candidate for a Ph.D. in international relations at George Washington University. She has served multiple overseas deployments and is an AH-1W Cobra attack helicopter pilot. She holds a master's degree in political science from the University of New Orleans and writes regular blog posts for the United States Naval Institute. Her research interests include gender inequality as it relates to international security.

**James B. Matheny (B.A., '11)**

James "Ben" Matheny is actor, producer and co-writer on his first feature-length film, "Easy Does It" with a collective of filmmakers he met while at the University of New Orleans. The independent production, which was recently featured in *The Advocate*, co-stars actress

Linda Hamilton, whose credits include two "Terminator" movies with Arnold Schwarzenegger and the TV series "Beauty and the Beast." The film is a coproduction of Worklight Pictures and EFI Productions. He is also a writer/director and producer for Elysian Fields Independent. Matheny's prior acting credits include roles on "American Horror Story," "Scream Queens," "The Astronaut Wives Club," "Zoo," and a host of New Orleans independent films.

**Tracey T. Schiro (B.S., '96, M.B.A., '11)**

Tracey Schiro, senior vice president and chief human resources office at Ochsner Health System, was named among "Ones to Watch: Healthcare" by *New Orleans CityBusiness*. Prior to joining Ochsner in 2007, she worked for Coca-Cola Enterprises for 10 years.

**Sheba S. Turk (B.A., '11)**

Sheba Turk was named a "New Orleans Style Maker of 2017" by *Gambit*. Turk is a co-anchor on WWL-TV's Eyewitness Morning News and a native of New Orleans' Gentilly neighborhood. She holds a bachelor's degree in English from the University of New Orleans,

where she enrolled as a transfer student on a scholarship from the Soledad O'Brien Starfish Foundation. Turk joined WWL-TV a few months after graduating from UNO.

**Carrie Beth Lasley (Ph.D., '12)**

Carrie Beth Lasley is a research associate at the Center for Urban Studies at Wayne State University in Detroit, where she is the data manager for Healthy Homes research. She also contributes to projects in urban safety, survey research, and urban mapping. Prior to joining the center in 2013, she worked on natural and environmental policy issues at the University of New Orleans Center for Hazards

**Angel Saunders (B.A., '12)**

Angel Saunders works for iHeartMedia as an on-air radio personality for KVDU-FM 104.1. She began interning for Clear Channel New Orleans while in college and has since worked on air at WQUE-FM 93.3 and as an operations technician at WDSU-TV. Saunders holds a bachelor's degree in film, theatre and communications arts.

**Kathryn Langley (B.S., '13)**

Kathryn "Katy" Langley assumed the position of Lower Neuse Riverkeeper last year at Sound Rivers, a nonprofit organization that guards the health of the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico river basins in the area of New Bern, NC. Prior to that, Langley worked as an environmental science technician for Kleinschmidt Associates in Lexington, SC. She holds a degree in earth and environmental sciences from University of New Orleans.

**Kristen J. Stachowiak (B.S., '08, M.B.A., '13)**

Kristen Stachowiak has joined Palmisano Contractors as human resources manager. She brings more than eight years of experience as a HR professional. She has held positions at ADP, HRI Properties and Amcor.

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

Emily Colston has joined DiLorenzo Realty Group LLC in New Jersey as a sales agent. A South Jersey native, she holds a bachelor's degree in Urban

**Ethan K. Ellestad (M.U.R.P., '12)**

*Ethan Ellestad, executive director of the Music and Culture Coalition of New Orleans since*

*2014, recently completed the Executive Director Fundamentals Program through the Greater New Orleans Foundation. Ellestad has been involved in community work for two decades, from serving as*



*a coach and youth mentor to developing after-school programs and supervising adjudicated youth. He served three years in the Peace Corps, where he developed and ran a community center in Jamaica. After getting his master's degree from the University of New Orleans, Ellestad joined the staff of the Foundation For Louisiana, as a member of the Neighborhood Organizing and Planning Fund, where he worked until the end of 2013.*

Planning and Economic Development from the University of New Orleans. Colston is married to former Saints wide receiver Marques Colston.

**Matthew A. Fabacher (B.S., '14)**

Matt Fabacher has been promoted to tax senior at Kushner LaGraize, a full-service accounting and consulting firm in Metairie, La. A certified public accountant, Fabacher has been with the firm since 2012.

**Lyndsey Guitreau (B.A., '14)**

Lyndsey Guitreau is working as producer and production coordinator on her first feature-length film, "Easy Does It" with a collective of filmmakers she met while at the University of New Orleans. The independent production, which was recently featured in *The Advocate*, co-stars actress Linda Hamilton, whose credits include two "Terminator" movies with Arnold Schwarzenegger and the TV series "Beauty and the Beast." The film is a coproduction of Worklight Pictures and EFI Productions.

**Andres V. Antunez (B.S., '15)**

Andres Antunez is the associate digital campaign manager at Peter Mayer, where he has

worked since January. Prior to that, Antunez was an account associate at Search Influence.

**Regina S. Scully (M.F.A., '15)**

The paintings of Regina Scully, a New Orleans artist, were featured in a solo exhibition at the New Orleans Museum of Art that ran from April 6 to Oct. 15. Titled "Inner Journeys," the exhibition displayed Scully's paintings alongside Japanese landscape paintings works from the museum's permanent collection. Originally from Norfolk, Va., Scully holds a bachelor's degree in painting from Rhode Island School of Design and a master's in painting from the University of New Orleans.

**Susan R. Foret (M.S., '16)**

Susan Foret has joined East Jefferson General Hospital as vice president of its Oncology Service Line. She is a National Oncology Certified Nurse with more than 25 years of experience in the healthcare industry, most recently serving as director of cancer services at Ochsner Health System. She holds a master's degree in healthcare administration from the University of New Orleans in addition to a bachelor's in nursing from William Carey College. 🐾

**Andrew Mire (B.S., '14)**

*Andrew "Drew" Mire has been promoted to chief executive officer of Computrols, a company headquartered in Gretna that designs control systems for buildings. Mire started at the company in 2008 as an electrical helper and was quickly promoted to positions of more responsibility while working toward completing his degree in business management from the University of New Orleans. He was named vice president of operations after graduation and was promoted to CEO in February.*



## PAUL M. CHIRLIAN, FORMER ENGINEERING PROFESSOR AND DEPARTMENT CHAIR

PAUL M. CHIRLIAN, A retired University of New Orleans faculty member who served the campus as a professor, department chair and associate dean, died on July 12, at 87 in Tinton Falls, NJ.

Chirlian joined UNO in 1993 as a professor and chair of the Department of Engineering. He came to New Orleans after beginning his career in New York, where he attended New York University. It was there that he received his undergraduate degree in 1950, a master's in electrical engineering in 1952, and a Sc.D. degree in 1956.

Chirlian was an instructor

for a short time at NYU, where he received many awards, including Fellow of the Institute of



Paul M. Chirlian

Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), the Henry Morton Great Teacher Award, and membership in Sigma Xi, Eta Kappa Nu and Tau Beta Pi.

He was soon appointed professor in the electrical engineering department at Stevens Institute of Technology, in Hoboken, NJ. He had a distinguished career at Stevens, becoming well-known in his field largely due to his prolific research, authoring 28 scholarly books and over 70 research publications. Many of his books have

been translated into multiple languages.

Chirlian served as UNO's chair of electrical engineering for eight years before he was promoted to associate dean for Research and Graduate Programs in the College of Engineering in 2001. While at UNO, Chirlian continued doing research and teaching courses in electronics and signal processing.

He was greatly involved in the approval process of the Ph.D. program in Engineering and Applied Science, a joint program between the UNO Colleges of Science and Engineering.

In recognition of his extraordinary accomplishments, Chirlian was awarded the title of Don

E. Wilson Chevron Professor of Electrical Engineering and the UNO National Alumni Association Career Award for Excellence in Research. He was named professor emeritus in 2003, but continued to serve the University as associate dean and professor emeritus gratis until 2013.

Chirlian, who in 2013 moved from Slidell, La., to Tinton Falls, is survived by his wife, Barbara, a son Peter and his wife, Sandra Lionetti, a daughter, Lisa and her husband, Jerome Linden and his three granddaughters, Elizabeth, Abigail, and Julia Linden-Chirlian. Services for Dr. Chirlian were held at the Bloomfield-Cooper Jewish Chapels in Ocean, NJ, on July 16.

## LONGTIME PROFESSOR OF HISTORY WILLIAM 'BILL' SAVAGE

WILLIAM "BILL" SAVAGE, JR., a longtime professor of history at the University of New Orleans, died July 12 at the age of 89. His colleagues remember him as a stalwart member of the first generation of scholars to come to the University following its founding in 1958.

Savage completed his doctorate at the University of Chicago in 1962. His thesis on Jean Jaurès chronicled the history of French socialism during the inter-war period. During his research, he spent a great deal of time in Paris, where he served as a fellow of the French government.

S. William Halperin, the University of Chicago professor who served as Savage's thesis advisor, lauded the "outstanding caliber" of Savage's dissertation work and described the Oklahoma

native as "one of the four or five best students" he had trained in his long career at the university.



William "Bill" Savage, Jr.

Joining the faculty of what was then Louisiana State University at New Orleans in 1964, Savage was promoted to full professor in 1978. Throughout his career, he was a devoted teacher of 19th and 20th century European and French history.

Günter Bischof, research professor and the Marshall Plan Professor of History at the UNO, remembers being a student in Savage's graduate seminar on World War I in 1980. Bischof describes his former professor as an "outstanding and engaging instructor with a keen sense of the enormous sacrifices European societies made in the bloody four-year contest."

Beyond the classroom, Savage won wide recognition as a vital member of the university community, serving as a key voice on the University Senate and as assistant dean of the College of Liberal Arts, as well as faculty adviser to the paralegal program. He was an adviser to the Lambda Chi Alpha fraternity, and maintained relationships with many in the UNO community after his retirement. Savage served as a central figure in early efforts to organize an athletics program on the UNO campus, and was a champion of efforts to establish UNO's educational outreach efforts through what was then called Metropolitan College.

A longtime union organizer and supporter, he served for several years as the president of the Louisiana Federation of Teachers, the state body grouping all teachers' unions in Louisiana. Particularly important to Savage

was his continued participation in the UNO-Innsbruck International Summer School program in Innsbruck, Austria. Savage was a strong and early advocate of the program, serving as faculty director multiple times from the 1980s forward. The connections he and his family maintained with the city and with faculty, staff and Austrian students continued up until his passing.

Savage "officially" retired from the UNO in December of 1994 after 30 years at the University, his personnel record shows. But he didn't stay away long. By the fall of 1995, he was back on campus serving in various appointments until 2009. Following his retirement, Savage was named professor emeritus. He was preceded in death by his wife, Doris, and is survived by his daughter, Kate Savage, her family, and son, Matt Savage.

- James Mokhiber

# 'So much sky here.'

BY RANDY BATES

I'M WRITING IN MUCH belated response to UNO student Thanh Nguyen's column "An Appreciation of Campus Beauty," which appeared in *The Driftwood* on Feb. 3, 2016. I agree with Mr. Nguyen that our campus "has a kind of serenity that is very lovely." I appreciated his descriptions from the fourth floor of Ponchartrain Hall of parts of New Orleans' nocturnal cityscape "humming softly with the sound of rain" and of views of the lake he shared with friends. He also enabled me to share the stilled contemplation exacted by sunsets' "brilliant reddish light" streaming into the upper windows of Kirschman Hall. Like Mr. Nguyen, I think the many beauties of our lacustrine campus are often overlooked or taken for granted. To the beauties that he observed and experienced, I would like to add some I've discovered on my own.

The small stand of dense woods neighboring the Fine Arts Building always lifts my spirit with its pines, several kinds of small oak, sweet gum,

lacebark elm, red mulberry, southern catalpa, a cypress or two, and others. So does the extended family of crows (committed to each other and among the most intelligent of animals) that in previous generations has inhabited these woods possibly for longer than the university has been here. Someone in campus planning is to be congratulated for leaving this tiny, wild forest intact.

Likewise and in close proximity, views from the balconies on the lake side of the Liberal Arts Building are a special pleasure, not only for their perspective on the lake stretching away beyond sight but also for the experience of looking across and into the crowns of massive magnolias and complementary mimosas, which have a vast lawn almost to themselves. On a recent breezeless evening I stood on the balcony during a break in a writing workshop and breathed the palpable hush between where I was and the carpet-like expanse surrounding the trees below.

The athletic field nearby has been the site of some of my summers' most beautiful natural moments. On humid, bat- and nighthawk-teeming evenings when I've played soccer with my pre-teen-aged son, the sky's deepening goldish rose repeatedly has drawn my gaze upward past the high soaring gulls, all about, and into the sky's mild, infinite margins. We see so much sky here.

A feeling of such spaciousness and calm accompanies walks I occasionally take across campus as breaks from effort in classrooms and my office. I'm glad for the recent restoration of our beautiful lagoon, still one of my favorite campus places, although I miss the turtles and minnows that once thrived there. I'm glad too for more of the sky's beauty in the broad vistas above the long, coverless walkways and the outdoors sitting and study areas that enhance our campus.

A differently heartening kind of beauty often appears in open-air scenes near the Library

and the University Center. These scenes are populated by UNO's diverse students, so many of them possessing the maturity to go earnestly about mid-day activities such as bake sales and to be publicly passionate about organizing for progressive causes.

These elements and many more make the unpretentious beauty of our campus well suited to serve the enlargement of mind that philosophical educators have long believed to be the primary purpose of a university. May we value and preserve this beauty as the precious, threatened source of inspiration that it is. ➔

*Randy Bates is a professor of English at the University of New Orleans, which he joined in 1999. He is the author of "RINGS: On the Life and Family of a Southern Fighter." He has received numerous awards for his writing and work, including the 2014-15 UNO Alumni Award for Excellence in Teaching.*

Have a UNO reflection you'd like to submit for consideration in Final Take? Email [unomagazine@uno.edu](mailto:unomagazine@uno.edu).

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