

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

SILVER & BLUE

SPRING 2022

CHAMPION FOR CHANGE

Alumna Meagan Williams, a civil engineer, is helping create a blueprint for green infrastructure engineering for New Orleans.







FIRST LOOK

The battle for the golden trophy, also known as Swampball, returned to the Quad last fall.



*The Krewe of UNO
returned to campus for the
2022 Mardi Gras season.*



— T A B L E O F —

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DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS:

THE ARRIVAL OF SPRING BRINGS ME A SENSE OF RENEWAL AND HAS ME FEELING especially optimistic about what's to come for our university. The weather is warming, the gray winter skies have made way for deep blue hues soaring above Lake Pontchartrain and campus is brightening with first blooms. But my enthusiasm is not merely tied to seasonal change. We have so much to look forward to. There is tremendous interest in our institution from prospective students and their families. The University's value proposition of an accessible, high-quality education at an affordable cost has never been more relevant. First-time student applications for the fall 2022 semester have increased substantially compared to the last several years.

We have resumed many of our cherished in-person activities and traditions, including student, alumni and recruitment functions. There is unquestionably pent-up demand for this kind of valuable human interaction. I have already seen it during this semester as I attend baseball games, tennis and beach volleyball matches, student organization events and more. In fact, it is not just our campus. Our entire city is ready to celebrate in its inimitable way, as festivals return to their rightful place on the spring calendar.

These developments greatly enhance student satisfaction and engagement. Research shows that students who are involved in campus life through clubs, affinity groups and social activities are more closely connected to their university and are more likely to continue to persist toward their degree. Our goal is for every UNO student to obtain their degree. On-campus engagement is an important tool in helping us work toward that goal.

Of course, the events of the past two years have also taught us valuable lessons that we will take with us in the future. The ability for the University to deliver courses in a hybrid manner—with both face-to-face and online components—is crucial. Life is unpredictable, for universities and their students. In order to properly fulfill our mission, we must be flexible enough to meet the needs of our students and reduce the barriers between them and their degree. Sometimes a hybrid approach is the solution. I have always considered UNO to be a student-centered institution, but the pandemic further solidified that notion.

When confronted with difficult decisions, we repeatedly asked ourselves, "Will this benefit our students?" We may not always get it right, but I hope our empathy will continue to guide us.

At the conclusion of this spring semester, hundreds more Privateers will accomplish what they set out to do by earning their degree and participating in commencement. As the President of the University, few occasions bring me greater joy; it reminds me of why I dedicated my life to education. Our entire community swells with pride and admiration, as our newest alumni join a club with a lifetime membership. With a degree from the University of New Orleans, those graduates also have so much to look forward to.

UNO Proud,
John Nicklow
PRESIDENT

 @UNOPresidentJN  @unopresident

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CAMPUS SCENE

HEADLINES AND HAPPENINGS

INSIDE
FALL COMMENCEMENT
THE RETURN OF
SWAMPBALL
KREWE OF UNO
ROLLS AGAIN
JAZZ AT THE SANDBAR
THEATRE UNO PRESENTS

Treme Brass Band and members of the 9th Ward Black Hatchets perform during an Alpha Xi Delta fundraiser for Feed the Second Line, a Krewe of Red Beans initiative.



FALL COMMENCEMENT

Alumnus Jericho Brown delivered the keynote commencement address to fall undergraduates on Friday, Dec. 10. Brown, who earned an MFA in creative writing from UNO, was awarded the 2020 Pulitzer Prize in Poetry.

Brown, a professor of creative writing and director of the creative writing program at Emory University in Atlanta, urged the fall graduating class of 2021 to “be radical” and to recognize the gift that is their own unique talent to give to the world.

“To be radical is to be inclusive, to love beyond class and sexuality and region,” Brown said. “Be radical. I’m counting on you. We quite literally need you to survive.”





THE RETURN OF SWAMPBALL

Swampball, the dirtiest game on campus, returned last fall! Teams of students, alumni and local residents battled for the golden volleyball trophy and bragging rights, while raising money for student scholarships. In case you forgot, the volleyball games are played in water-filled pits! The event is sponsored by the UNO Ambassadors and is typically held each fall in the quad. However, the 2020 event was canceled due to COVID-19.





KREWE OF UNO ROLLS AGAIN

Following last year's COVID-forced hiatus, the Krewe of UNO rolled through campus in February celebrating its 2022 theme, "Back to the Beach," with plenty of Mardi Gras sass, beads, cups, coins and other trinkets.





JAZZ AT THE SANDBAR

The fall 2021 Jazz at the Sandbar concert series kicked off October 13 at the University of New Orleans with drummer Herlin Riley's tribute to Ellis Marsalis. The performances, presented each Wednesday night at The Cove on UNO's campus, features a different respected jazz artist paired with UNO jazz studies students in a live nightclub setting.

Jazz at the Sandbar was established by the late faculty member Ellis Marsalis in 1990.

THEATRE UNO PRESENTS: STUPID F%*? BIRD

In February, Theatre UNO presented "Stupid F%*? Bird," Aaron Posner's adaptation of Anton Chekhov's "The Seagull," at the Robert E. Nims Theatre on UNO's campus.

The unconventional casting illustrates the intentional direction of Maggie Tonra, a third year directing graduate, to embrace the LBGQTQI community and give more opportunities to bend gender roles on the stage.

The dark comedy was the work of interdisciplinary collaboration within the UNO School of the Arts.



NEWS & EVENTS



UNO AWARDED \$500K HUMANITIES GRANT TO CREATE MORE DIGITAL ARCHIVES

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans is the recipient of a nearly \$500,000 National Endowment for the Humanities grant that will help make historical data and stories more accessible online that are important, not only to the history of New Orleans, but also to global audiences.

“With this support, we can make available original documents from the Earl K. Long Library’s Special Collections and share narratives and stories produced by the Midlo Center and the UNO Press,” says Mary Niall Mitchell, director of the Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies and UNO history professor. “We are the only public research university in the city. We are thrilled that the NEH recognizes the importance of supporting the humanities at institutions such as ours—institutions of higher learning which exist, first and foremost, to serve the public.”

The project, “Illuminating the Unseen: Digital Projects to Commemorate Forgotten Voices in America’s Story,” includes activities led by Midlo, the Earl K. Long Library and the UNO Press with an overarching mission of racial justice and gender equality, Mitchell says.

Library faculty member Connie Phelps and UNO Press editor-in-chief Abram Himmelstein

are co-principal investigators for the grant, along with Mitchell.

The project’s title was chosen to highlight how digital projects can bring forgotten or silenced histories to light in very public ways, Mitchell says.

“This is particularly important in New Orleans, where scholars and community members always contend with a heavy dose of historical yarn spinning aimed at tourists,” Mitchell says. “Too often those stores do not reflect the lived experiences of most of the city’s residents, past and present, including indigenous communities.

“New Orleans is rich with stories that still need telling and the accessibility and reach of digital media helps us to do that.”

While digital humanities is currently a vibrant field among scholars, not every digital humanities project is designed to engage the public, Mitchell says.

“The work UNO is doing centers audiences and communities within and beyond the academy—be they citizen historians, genealogists, scholars, engaged readers, K-12 teachers and students, or even tourists visiting New Orleans,” Mitchell says.

The importance of being able to access historical documents online has been highlighted during the coronavirus pandemic when in-person research was restricted, Mitchell says.

“We saw during the pandemic that people still need to get into archives,” Mitchell says. “The more documents we can make available to researchers digitally—such as the New Orleans School Board records, which were critical to the process of school facility renaming happening over the past year—the more resilient our Special Collections will be when we encounter the kinds of challenges COVID presented.”

Readership on the New Orleans Historical website, a free digital history tour site, increased during the pandemic as people, many of whom were stuck at home, were looking online for information about the city’s history, Mitchell says.

“Journalists, too, rely on New Orleans Historical for deadline stories because of the well-researched and cited content it provides,” Mitchell says. “With NEH support, we now have new project managers to keep UNO’s digital projects up to date.

“Grants like these are essential because they help the University to serve a broad public.”

The \$498,182 grant will help fund a three-prong humanities strategy with projects developed by:

- University of New Orleans Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies, which promotes understanding of the city’s

Jenny Branch, left, and her sister Edna Branch look at pictures included in the Orleans Parish School Board Collection housed at the University of New Orleans’ Earl K. Long Library during a reception held in 2019.

history and culture, with an emphasis on civil rights. The Midlo Center supports new scholarship on New Orleans and fosters interdisciplinary collaboration and community partnerships that promote public engagement, support the cultural life of the city, and significantly advance the public humanities at UNO.

- The University of New Orleans Earl K. Long Library Special Collections coordinates with other departments and the community to acquire, provide for the use of, preserve, and publicize distinctive and unique collections in all formats, and offers expert assistance to constituents in the university and external scholarly communities. Special Collections is home to over 535 unique collections that represent the rich history and culture of New Orleans and Louisiana, including historical documents from the New Orleans public schools and the Louisiana Supreme Court.

- University of New Orleans Press is the only university press in the greater New Orleans region.

AACSB INTERNATIONAL RENEWS UNO'S BUSINESS AND ACCOUNTING ACCREDITATIONS

AACSB INTERNATIONAL has renewed the University of New Orleans' accreditation in both business and accounting.

A total of 926 institutions across 60 countries and territories have earned AACSB accreditation in business with fewer than 200 maintaining a supplemental accounting accreditation.

"AACSB accreditation is the gold standard for business education," says Pamela Kennett-Hensel, dean of the College of Business Administration. "Less than five percent of all schools offering degree programs in business at the bachelor's level or higher hold AACSB accreditation and only one percent of business schools hold supplementary accounting accreditation.

"The extension of our business and accounting accreditation speaks to the high quality and relevance of our programs and to our commitment to continuously improve our offerings. I'm extremely proud of the hard work and dedication exhibited by our College of Business Administration faculty and staff to ensure that our students receive a cutting-edge business education," says Kennett-Hensel.

Achieving accreditation is a process of rigorous internal focus, engagement with an AACSB-assigned mentor and peer-reviewed evaluation. During this multi-year path, schools focus on developing and implementing a plan to align with AACSB's accreditation standards.

These standards require ex-

cellence in areas relating to strategic management and innovation; student, faculty, and staff as active participants; learning and teaching; and academic and professional engagement.

"Every AACSB-accredited school has demonstrated a focus on excellence in all areas, including teaching, research, curricula development and student learning," says Stephanie M. Bryant, executive vice president and chief accreditation officer of AACSB. "The intense peer-review process exemplifies their commitment to quality business education."

To achieve accounting accreditation, an institution must first earn AACSB business accreditation. Then, in addition

to developing and implementing a mission-driven plan to satisfy the business accreditation quality standards, accounting accreditation requires the satisfaction of a supplemental set of standards specific to the discipline and profession of accounting.

Once accreditation is achieved, each institution participates in a five-year continuous improvement peer review to maintain high quality and extend its accreditation.



DONATION FUNDS STUDENT SUCCESS PROGRAM FOR NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC SCHOOL GRADUATES ATTENDING UNO

A \$630,000 GIFT FROM private donors who wish to remain anonymous will fund a new University of New Orleans program intended to provide holistic support to New Orleans Public School graduates. The donors plan to renew the gift on an annual basis.

The program, called Start Smart @ UNO, provides funding for a two-week summer bridge that helps students transition to college, as well as a customized fall semester, dedicated coaching and mentoring, a laptop and Wi-Fi hotspot, meals, gas money or a bus pass, and leadership

opportunities throughout their enrollment at UNO.

Eligible students must be an incoming first-year student at UNO who is Pell Grant eligible and a graduate of a New Orleans Public School. When coupled with the Privateer Pledge, which covers participating students' tuition and fees, the initiative removes barriers to a successful college experience and puts more students on a path to a college degree.

"We know that a lot of different factors go into a college student being successful: everything from study skills and mentoring

relationships to less obvious variables like adequate nutrition and reliable transportation," says UNO President John Nicklow. "Start Smart @ UNO will bundle proven support structures together to keep participating students on track so that they can earn their degree."

The goal is to ease the transition from high school to college by combining academic skills training and support services. During the summer bridge, students will get ready for college by taking math and English workshops, learning strategies for studying, note-taking and

time management, and receiving support from key faculty and staff. After participating students complete the summer bridge program, they will earn a \$1,500 stipend.

The customized fall semester consists of two eight-week sessions and provides a more focused academic experience with students taking math, English and first-year success courses with the same cohort of students, creating an environment of peer support. This will allow students to complete all general education math and English classes by the end of the fall semester.

UNO BOLLINGER SCHOOL OF NAVAL ARCHITECTURE AND MARINE ENGINEERING COLLABORATES WITH LOCAL DESIGN FIRM SCALE INNOVATIONS TO DESIGN AND ENGINEER ELECTRIC BOAT

NEARLY 80 YEARS AFTER Andrew Higgins put New Orleans on the map with his innovative Higgins boats that helped turn the tide in World War II, a new initiative has the potential to once again transform the New Orleans shipbuilding industry.

The University of New Orleans Boysie Bollinger School of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering and Scale Innovations, a New Orleans industrial design firm, are rethinking work vessels by designing and engineering an electric boat.

Electric vehicles are a growing form of transportation that

are quickly being adopted by manufacturers and consumers worldwide. Electric boats, the newest category in the EV sector, are growing rapidly in the United States with the market projected to double in the next five years.

“Maritime and related industries have been an important part of the New Orleans economy for many years,” says Matt Tarr, vice president for research and economic development at UNO. “Further developing new technologies to keep our region nationally and internationally competitive is critical for our economic growth. Electric boat

technology is one key development that can continue to support sustainable economic development around our maritime sector and stimulate job growth in the region.”

The genesis of this collaboration came in early 2020 when UNO naval architecture and marine engineering student Nigel Watkins was working as an intern with Scale Innovations in a position funded by the National Center for Advanced Manufacturing.

Watkins had previously completed a summer internship at an electric yacht company in

Europe, and he believed in the possibility that electric boats could be viable in New Orleans. This gave the Scale team a vision that electric boats could be used for surveying and conservation, rather than just recreation.

This project comes at a time with increased demand for work vessels due to a large renewable energy transition in the Gulf Coast region and rapid growth in the coastal restoration industry. Offshore wind initiatives are already at play in the New Orleans area, with wind farms beginning to develop in the next few years.



80+ UNO Alumni Selected for Inaugural List of New Orleans Business Influencers

The inaugural edition of *Biz New Orleans'* guide to influential business leaders features more than 80 University of New Orleans alumni, as well as President John Nicklow and Rebecca Conwell, president and CEO of the UNO Research and Technology Foundation and The Beach at UNO.

The 136-page magazine, *New Orleans 500*, was released in November and includes profiles and photos of “influential, involved and inspiring business leaders” who are driving the city’s economy and shaping the region’s future.

Inclusion in the magazine, according to *Biz New Orleans* magazine’s editors, is the result of staff research into every sector of the local economy to “identify executives who are innovating, creating, leading, succeeding and giving back to the community.”

New Effort to Increase Student Success for Adult Learners of Color

Seeking to identify and address barriers facing adult students of color, the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities (APLU) and Coalition of Urban Serving Universities announced a \$55,000 grant to the University of New Orleans supporting a university-community partnership aimed at leveraging the assets of Black, Latinx and Indigenous learners.

UNO will partner with REImaginElution to address systemic barriers for Black and Latinx adult learners in an urban setting, focusing on preparing faculty for success in teaching. REImaginElution is a New Orleans-based firm that specializes in diversity, equity and inclusion curriculum design and racial equity organizational assessment.

Through the UNO Adult Learner Success Summer Institute, UNO faculty will receive in-depth, expert training on equitable, inclusive teaching practices for adult learners to grow faculty understanding of the unique academic assets and challenges of Black and Latinx adult learners. Through innovative curricular and teaching approaches, UNO will create a program supporting Black and Latinx adult learner retention and graduation.

Two Healthcare Management Students Receive National Recognition

Two University of New Orleans healthcare management majors have been recognized as outstanding students by the Association of University Programs in Healthcare Administration (AUPHA).

Shelby Rae Ruiz has been awarded a \$500 scholarship for her academic excellence from Upsilon Phi Delta, the National Honor Society of AUPHA. She is a native of Gretna, Louisiana and a graduate of Patrick F. Taylor Science and Technology Academy.

According to economic data from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, marine construction is currently the fastest growing part of the Louisiana marine economy. A key component of these projects includes surveying. Projects such as the National Strategy for Mapping, Exploring, and Characterizing the United States Exclusive Economic Zone could greatly benefit from electric autonomous vehicles in the goal to fully map U.S. deep waters within the next nine years.

Scale Innovations is currently working with stakeholders to develop an electric work boat concept for coastal Louisiana. The team will then bring the concept design to the Bollinger School of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering to engineer the boat. The project is being funded by the UNO Office of Research.

“This project provides us the chance to explore the impacts of an all-electric propulsion system on the overall design of the boat,” says Brandon Taravella, professor of naval architecture and marine engineering. “It will also give us the opportunity to engage students in state-of-the-art concepts in naval architecture and marine engineering.”

In addition to improving the way we work on the water, Scale Innovations and UNO expect the project to elevate what “designed and built in New Orleans” can mean.

“This leadership of big thinking is what once put New Orleans on the world stage with the invention of the Higgins boat,” says Lyle LeBlanc, founder of Scale Innovations. “If all goes according to plan, it will be what keeps it there.”

Kiara Parker has been selected to receive the Bugbee-Falk Book Award, which comes with a set of works by respected authors in the field of healthcare management. She is a native of New Orleans and a graduate of Edna Karr High School.

UNO Press Book selected for 2022 NO Citywide Read

A University of New Orleans Press publication, “I Feel to Believe” by journalist Jarvis DeBerry is the New Orleans citywide read selection for 2022. The group One Book One New Orleans selects one book every year for its citywide reading and literacy campaign.

The group develops a curriculum around the selected title and through its partner organizations, distributes free copies of the book and the curriculum to community groups in New Orleans.

The goal is to have the community share the experience of reading the same book at the same time while providing literacy resources to adults and youngsters, according to the group.

UNO CS students selected for Naval Research Internship

Four University of New Orleans computer science graduate students have been selected for paid summer research internships by the Naval Research Enterprise Internship Program (NREIP). NREIP provides competitive research internships to college students at Department of the Navy research laboratories during the summer.

The summer 2022 NREIP recipients from UNO are Christopher Moore, Austin Schmidt, Viet Nguyen and Jared Wise. They will intern at the Center for Geospatial Sciences at the Naval Research Laboratory (NRL) at Stennis Space Center in Mississippi.

UNO Signs Partnership Agreement with the National Coalition of 100 Black Women

The University of New Orleans has entered into a formal partnership with the National Coalition of 100 Black Women - Greater New Orleans Chapter, Inc. in an effort to further strengthen both organizations by providing opportunities to students, members and employees. Members of NCBW chapters work to address common issues within their communities, families and personal lives while promoting gender and racial equality.

UNO and the NCBW-GNO will collaborate on initiatives that are directly related to their shared commitment to fostering diversity, equity and inclusion. They will engage in equity-minded programming and activities that enhance educational access and success of students in greater New Orleans, particularly Black women.

UNO COLLABORATES WITH ORLEANS JUSTICE CENTER ON JOB SKILLS PROGRAM FOR INCARCERATED PEOPLE

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans has collaborated with the Orleans Justice Center to teach important jobs preparedness skills to incarcerated people who are nearing release. It is called P.R.E.P.—Pre-Release Education Program—and program graduates earn a certificate in Professional Preparedness from UNO’s Division of Professional and Continuing Education.

They also leave with a polished resume and a laptop computer, provided by the UNO Urban Entrepreneurship and Policy Institute, said Chris Surprenant, philosophy professor and director of UNO’s Urban Entrepreneurship and Policy Institute.

“We thought that this would be a valuable service for our community and somewhere we could make a positive contribution,” Surprenant says. “The goal of the program is to provide something of value to these people—and to our city as a whole—that will put them in the best position to not have future encounters with our criminal justice system.”

The four-week, eight-session course was facilitated by UNO philosophy professors JP Messina and Jake Monaghan, and included classes on professional communication, resume writing, job interview skills, financial literacy and continuing education, each of which is aimed at facilitating re-entry into society and reducing recidivism. The hour-long sessions were held twice a week at the justice center.

There were 12 incarcerated people enrolled in the fall session, all of whom were selected by Sheriff Marlin Gusman.

“The Orleans Justice Center Re-Entry Course provides inmates with the skills and tools necessary to succeed as hard-working members of the greater New Orleans community,” Gusman says. “The Sheriff’s Office is pleased to collaborate with the University of New Orleans in rebuilding the lives of inmates who can use their newly acquired skills to positively impact their families, and contribute to the well-being of our city.”

Gregory W. Carroll, director of the justice center’s offender programs, says one group of re-entry offenders has already earned certificates from the University of

New Orleans and the Orleans Justice Center Re-Entry Course and a second cohort is underway.

“We hope this re-entry course serves as a launching pad to instill confidence, seek employment and possibly business opportunities, but also further their desires to continue their education, and become productive citizens of the Greater New Orleans area and beyond,” Carroll says.

In addition to PREP, UNO also created a for-credit, service-learning course for UNO

students that focused on issues in ethics and the criminal justice system, Surprenant says.

The students not only helped teach those incarcerated how to create email accounts, write resumes and work on speaking skills, they also led discussions with them from relevant scholarly texts in philosophy, politics, and economics that focused on criminal justice issues.

“As a final project, students write a collaborative report integrating their direct experiences with the criminal legal

UNO student Peyton Foti was part of a group of students and UNO professors to teach important jobs preparedness skills to incarcerated people at the Orleans Justice Center who are nearing release.

system and their engagement with the scholarly literature,” Surprenant says. “This experience gives students a different perspective on the justice system, while, at the same time, providing a valuable service to the people who are in our local jail and are nearing release.”



FRANK AND PAULETTE STEWART PLEDGE \$1 MILLION TO THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS

FRANK AND PAULETTE Stewart have pledged \$1 million to create an endowed scholarship fund at the University of New Orleans. In recognition of the pledge, the University has designated an area on the first floor of the Earl K. Long Library the Stewart Family Learning Commons.

The Frank B. Stewart Jr. and Paulette D. Stewart Endowed Scholarship Fund will provide financial support to eligible undergraduate and graduate students, with preference given

to students from the greater New Orleans area.

The Stewart Family Learning Commons, occupying 50,000-square-feet, are a technology-rich environment featuring computers, tablets, moveable whiteboards, collaborative workspaces and other educational tools. The commons also include the Learning Resource Center, which provides tutoring, and the Advising Center, which offers academic advising and other support to students.



UNO President John Nicklow honors donors Frank and Paulette Stewart at a dedication ceremony in the Earl K. Long Library.

VOLUNTEERS PLANT 60 SPECIES OF BIRD FRIENDLY TREES ON CAMPUS

VOLUNTEERS PLANTED 60 bird-friendly species at the University of New Orleans as part of the UNO Urban Bird Treaty grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation.

The native plant species were planted to create additional habitat and food sources for migratory birds with the help of over 70 volunteers from several New Orleans organizations.

UNO received a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to create an urban bird habitat on campus and support educational programming connected to environmental conservation. The grant will fund habitat restoration, the creation of a birding trail on campus and educational experiences for UNO TRiO Upward Bound students.



UNO'S MIDLO CENTER HOSTS INTERNATIONAL TRAVELING EXHIBIT 'CLIMATES OF INEQUALITY: STORIES OF ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE'

The Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies at the University of New Orleans hosted a multimedia exhibition in February that explored the history and future of climate and environmental justice.

"Climates of Inequality: Stories of Environmental Justice" is an international traveling exhibit and series of dialogues that opened with a public reception at New Orleans Center for Creative Arts. The exhibit was on display for more than a month.

Led by Midlo Center director and UNO history professor Mary Niall Mitchell, UNO public history students collaborated with a Rutgers University-Newark-led coalition of 500 university students, scholars and frontline communities from 22 cities to create the traveling exhibition, which launched in Newark, New Jersey, on Oct. 3, 2019.

"Climates of Inequality vividly documents how environmental and economic conditions experienced by people of color are influenced not only by the environmental injustices of living in contaminated areas, but also by climate change," says Adrienne Hollis, lead climate justice and health scientist for the Union of Concerned Scientists. "Those impacts affect vulnerable communities first and worst, and this is exacerbated by COVID-19, which has ravaged the lives of Black, Latinx and Indigenous communities. As Climates of Inequality reminds us, the underlying cause that runs through

these issues is racism, plain and simple."

Over the course of two years, communities in New Orleans and South Louisiana joined communities across the hemisphere to explore the deep historical roots of climate inequality and environmental injustice in their localities, share personal experiences and develop strategies for change.

Through virtual reality,

of Inequality, UNO public history students collaborated with activists and residents living in communities that remain 'on boil' in terms of environmental injustice," Mitchell says. "Our partners have argued that Cancer Alley, or Death Alley, includes toxic neighborhoods in New Orleans, such as Gordon Plaza, as well as fence line communities wedged between refineries upriver."

of property and displacement of neighborhoods.

University of New Orleans students created the exhibition in collaboration with a number of community partners including: Louisiana Bucket Brigade, an organization that work with neighborhoods next to petrochemical infrastructure to help residents challenge the petrochemical industry's expansion; residents of Gordon Plaza

and New Orleans People's Assembly, an organization advocating for economic, racial and environmental justice by demanding the fair and just relocation of Gordon Plaza residents, whose homes were erected on top of a toxic landfill; and historian Leon Waters, director of Hidden History Tours and chair of the Louisiana Museum of African American History.

"The students have played a tangible role in supporting residents and advocates, even as they learned from them what books simply cannot

teach," Mitchell says. "They have seen from Gordon Plaza activists and the Bucket Brigade all that it takes to stand up for your community and press for change. And they understand much more deeply than before, through residents and their personal stories, the history of structural and environmental racism."

Although the exhibit had been planned for 2020, the delay caused by COVID-19 had two significant silver linings, organizers say. First, the Midlo Center was able to involve high



University of New Orleans students created the exhibition in collaboration with a number of community partners including Louisiana Bucket Brigade, an organization that works with neighborhoods next to petrochemical infrastructure to help residents challenge the petrochemical industry's expansion.

moving audio testimony and historical imagery from each community, the exhibition explores how the climate crisis and environmental injustice is intensifying inequality—and how the experiences of the hardest-hit communities hold the key to confronting these issues and finding ways to move forward.

"To contribute to Climates

For its staging in New Orleans, the exhibition includes "Standing Up on River Road: Activism in South Louisiana," a special focus on how the petrochemical corridor along the Mississippi River from Baton Rouge to New Orleans, disproportionately affects Native and Black communities, causing high cancer rates, devaluation



school students at the New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts. The students, working with their integrated science teacher Travis Haas, created artwork and videos for projection in the gallery.

In addition, with Ryan Gray, Midlo's associate director and UNO anthropology professor, UNO students, community partners, and architectural researchers at Forensic Architecture, will contribute interactive maps related to ongoing efforts to locate and protect African American cemeteries in fence line communities.

Climates of Inequality is a project of the Humanities Action Lab, a collaboration between the University of New Orleans and 21 others, led by Rutgers University-Newark, working with community organizations and public spaces to foster new public dialogue on

contested social issues, through public humanities projects that explore the diverse local histories and current realities of shared global concerns.

Partner communities are: Amherst, MA; Bogota, Colombia; Chicago, IL; Durham, NC; Greensboro, NC; Indianapolis, IN; Mayaguez, PR; Mexico City, Mexico; Miami, FL; Milwaukee, WI; New Brunswick, NJ; New York, NY; Newark, NJ; Northridge, CA; Philadelphia, PA; Providence, RI; Riverside, CA; Saratoga Springs, NY; Tempe, AZ; Twin Cities, MN and Nassau, The Bahamas.

Liz Sevcenko, founder and director of the Humanities Action Lab, believes that the University of New Orleans exhibition "captures the especially vibrant work of so many communities and activists in and around New Orleans. UNO's list of community partners just kept

growing over time," Sevcenko says. "The fight for environmental justice demands leadership and radical revisioning from 'frontline' communities like those in south Louisiana, building on generations of knowledge, experience and connecting local knowledges across the country."

Climates of Inequality was designed by design firm MTWTF, led by creative directors Glen Cummings and Sarah Dunham, which has a strong background in built environments and working at the intersection of art, communities, and environments. The exhibition incorporates a short documentary about the creative process behind *Climates of Inequality* produced by Talking Eyes Media, a New Jersey-based media firm specializing in visual storytelling for social justice.

The Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies at UNO hosted the international traveling exhibit, "Climates of Inequality: Stories of Environmental Justice," that opened Jan. 6 at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts.

The project was made possible in part by Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the Andrew W.Mellon Foundation, Rutgers University-Newark School of Arts and Sciences, New Orleans Center for Creative Arts Foundation, and a Louisiana Culture Care Fund grant administered by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities and provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities as part of the American Rescue Plan and the NEH Sustaining the Humanities through the American Rescue Plan initiative.

ALUMNI-LED BUSINESSES AND NONPROFITS TAKE CENTER STAGE DURING UNO 25 LUNCHEON

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans celebrated the widespread influence of its alumni during a luncheon held Jan. 13 at the Ritz-Carlton, New Orleans. The UNO 25 initiative highlights 25 businesses and nonprofits owned or led by UNO alumni. The class of 2022 represents fields including engineering, health care, hospitality, manufacturing, construction, technology, finance, education and more.

Ochsner Health was honored as the first ever Outstanding Corporate Partner, recognizing an organization that has demonstrated a commitment to UNO and its mission through the opportunities it provides to current students and alumni.

"I am fond of saying that greater New Orleans doesn't really work without the University of New Orleans," Nicklow told the audience of honorees, their co-workers and families. "I hope you will leave today with an even greater appreciation for the truth of that statement."

After President Nicklow presented the honorees with their awards on stage, videos were shown with alumni describing their organizations and how UNO has contributed to their professional success.

"My time at UNO came at a real meaningful time for me. It felt like the program was tailored for me," said Edgar "Dooky" Chase IV, executive chef of Dooky Chase's Restaurant and owner of Chase Concessions, LLC. "You're looking at a person who was working a full-time job and trying to further his undergraduate education. The program at UNO was flexible

enough for me to work my job, mainly taking courses in the Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism program, which allowed me to implement real-time strategies and solutions in my industry. So I am very grateful for that."

Honorees repeatedly mentioned that their businesses rely heavily on UNO talent to staff their organizations. New Orleans engineering firm Burk-Kleinpeter, Inc. employs 22 UNO alumni with six in leadership positions. Eurofins, an analytical laboratory with a New Orleans office, has more than 30 UNO alumni. Postlethwaite & Netterville, the state's largest account firm, has nearly 40 UNO alumni. Team Gleason Foundation, the nonprofit that provides resources and support to people living with ALS, was represented at the event by five different UNO alumni.

Jared Stanton is the founder and co-owner of Pyxis, a New Orleans company that takes virtual reality videos and uses them for educational and training purposes. He earned a master's degree from UNO in 2016 but his relationship with the University did not end there.

"When I think about it, pretty much every production, every project, every mobile app that we have developed has some sort of UNO connection," Stanton said. "This includes people we have brought on to help us with degrees from the university. It also means that we have people in the company who have spouses with degrees from the University. I really view Pyxis as a big family and it's safe to say that UNO would be an extension



of that family."

Anwer Bashi, co-founder of Entronix, a data analytics and fault detection company based in Kenner, earned three degrees from UNO: a bachelor's, master's and Ph.D.

"My co-founder, Rehan Kamal, and I are both UNO graduates, and the majority of our engineers are UNO graduates," Bashi said. "So we have literally staked the success of our company on the quality of UNO's education."

Andrea Williams is the executive director of the Foundation for Science and Math Education, an organization that raises funds and support for Sci High, the New Orleans public charter school. She earned a bachelor's

degree in human performance and health promotion, and a master's in health care management from UNO.

"UNO is a huge part of who I am today," Williams said. "The life lessons and the accountability that I learned there from teachers and coaches have empowered me to continue a profession in education and to help guide youth to find what their goals are in life."

"I think it's important for the community to know how UNO prepares its students for successful careers, and many of our companies in the area are led by UNO graduates," said Jean Kass, president of Kass Brothers Construction in Westwego. "I'm proud to be a UNO graduate."

The 2022 UNO 25 honorees are:

- Advano, *New Orleans*
- Beary Cherry Tree, *Metairie*
- BDPC, LLC, *New Orleans*
- Burk-Kleinpeter, Inc., *New Orleans*
- Couvillion Group, *Belle Chasse*
- Dooky Chase's Restaurant & Chase Concessions, LLC, *New Orleans*
- Entronix, *Kenner*
- Eurofins Central Analytical Laboratories, *New Orleans*
- Giacona Corporation, *Jefferson*
- Haptch, *New Orleans*
- Helm Paint & Decorating, *New Orleans*
- Jefferson Financial Federal Credit Union, *Metairie*
- Kass Bros., Inc., *Westwego*
- Ochsner Health, *New Orleans*
- Postlethwaite & Netterville, *Metairie*
- Pyxis, LLC, *New Orleans*
- Seven-Three Distilling Co., *New Orleans*
- Southern Strategy Group, *Baton Rouge*
- Team Gleason Foundation, *New Orleans*
- The Foundation for Science & Mathematics Education, *New Orleans*
- The Great Delta Tours, *New Orleans*
- The Tobler Company, *New Orleans*
- Wallin Foodservice Resources, *Harahan*
- Wealth Solutions, LLC, *LaPlace*
- Woodward Design+Build, *New Orleans*

UNO CELEBRATES ALUMNI ACHIEVEMENT AT DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI GALA

AFTER A VIRTUAL VERSION last year, the 2021 University of New Orleans Distinguished Alumni Gala returned to the striking surroundings of the National WWII Museum on Nov. 4 to celebrate alumni achievement and the University's importance to the city and the region.

"I hope that tonight's event will continue to build shared pride and reinforce the value of our beloved university," said

UNO President John Nicklow.

The festivities included a fireside chat-style conversation moderated by alumnus Mark Romig and featuring 2021 Homer Hitt Distinguished Alumni Award recipient David Gallo, 2021 Norma Jane Sabiston Young Alumna of the Year Lacey Merrick Conway and 2020 Norma Jane Sabiston Young Alumna of the Year Sheba Turk.

Gallo, Conway and Turk

reminisced about their formative experiences at UNO, discussed their chosen professions and offered advice to new graduates entering the workforce.

2020 Homer Hitt Distinguished Alumni Award recipient Timothy Adams, a business executive and the mayor of Bowie, Maryland, was unable to attend the ceremony but sent a video message expressing his appreciation for the honor and his alma mater.

In addition to celebrating Gallo, the president and CEO of Gallo Mechanical; Conway, the president and CEO of Latter & Blum; and Turk, an anchor with WWL-TV in New Orleans, the University also recognized distinguished alumni from each of its four academic colleges and athletics.

The College of Business Administration honored Melonie Johnson, president and COO of the Borgata Hotel Casino & Spa

in Atlantic City, NJ.

The College of Engineering honored Tony Cibilich, president and owner of C&C Marine Repair in Belle Chasse, La.

The College of Liberal Arts, Education and Human Development honored B. Jeffrey Brooks, a partner with the law firm Adams & Reese.

The College of Sciences honored Sabrina Farmer, vice president for engineering site reliability at Google.

Privateer Athletics honored Robin Martin, deputy director of strategy, planning and management for the postsecondary success team at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Nicklow closed his remarks by expressing his appreciation to the alumni and friends who support the University.

"Our institution means so much to so many people. It is, I venture to say, essential," Nicklow said. "So, on behalf of our students, thank you." 🙏



The National WWII Museum's Boeing Freedom Pavilion provided a dramatic setting for the 2021 Distinguished Alumni Gala.



FACULTY FOCUS



COMPUTER SCIENCE PROFESSOR SHAIKH ARIFUZZAMAN AWARDED NEARLY \$250K NSF RESEARCH GRANT

University of New Orleans computer science professor Shaikh Arifuzzaman has been awarded a two-year, nearly \$250,000 National Science Foundation grant to design fast, scalable algorithms capable of dissecting and analyzing complex dynamic data.

The modern technological revolution is data-driven, and scientific discovery in diverse domains relies on efficient mining, learning and analysis of these complex datasets, Arifuzzaman says. However, most social and technical sectors are now experiencing exponential growth of data, too large to be processed by conventional methods. Examples of such sectors include social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, biological systems (e.g., protein

interactions), business systems and infrastructure.

Adding to that complexity is that patterns and properties, inherent of such datasets, are dynamic and evolve over time.

Arifuzzaman's research aims at designing scalable methods for revealing dynamic behaviors of a socio-technical system by developing innovative algorithmic and computing techniques. The existing work on dynamic graphs shows only limited scalability for large-scale practical datasets, Arifuzzaman says. Arifuzzaman's research will address such complexity by designing algorithms that are able to efficiently adapt to the increased demands of large-scale dynamic graph (network) data.

"Graphs are a versatile

scientific framework to represent and analyze biological, social and human-made complex systems," Arifuzzaman says. "Such complex systems are inherently dynamic. For example, social interactions and human activities are intermittent; links appear and disappear in functional brain networks."

Despite "time" playing a central role in those systems, most of the classic studies on graphs are based on the topological properties of static graphs, which are graphs that do not change over time, Arifuzzaman says.

Algorithmic methods generated from this research will be applicable in understanding dynamic properties of various real-world systems, Arifuzzaman says. For

University of New Orleans computer science professor Shaikh Arifuzzaman awarded a National Science Foundation grant to design fast algorithms to tackle complex dynamic data.

instance, locating key neurons in cortical (brain) networks, route planning for time-varying traffic in infrastructure networks or tracking information propagation in social/contact networks, he says.

Arifuzzaman will collaborate with the Performance and Algorithms Group at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory using some of the most powerful supercomputers in the world that are located at the Berkeley Lab.

UNO ECONOMICS PROFESSOR GREGORY PRICE NAMED TO LIST OF INFLUENTIAL BLACK ECONOMISTS

UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans economics professor Gregory Price has been named as one of the “40 Influential Black Economists From the Last 30 Years” by Academic Influence, a web based company that tracks higher education and provides rankings in a variety of areas.

Price, whose expertise includes applied theory/econometrics, African economic

development and stratification economics, is a former president of the National Economic Association.

Price also was one of five people selected by former New Orleans Mayor Mitch Landrieu last year to be an E Pluribus Unum Policy Scholar tasked with examining and addressing systemic racism in the U.S., particularly in the South.

According to Academic

Influence, the list of influential Black economists is composed of leaders in the field “who are paving the way for future economists. They are doing groundbreaking work in areas such as government, business, education, and public policy.”

The economists on the list were identified using the web site’s A.I.-powered algorithm, which characterized the group as highly cited and searched.



Gregory Price

PAMELA KENNETT-HENSEL NAMED NEW DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION

FOLLOWING A NATIONWIDE search, the University of New Orleans has selected Pamela Kennett-Hensel as its new dean of the College of Business Administration. Kennett-Hensel, who had served as interim dean since July 2020, has been a faculty member at the University for more than two decades. She becomes the first woman to lead the college.

“I’m very excited to continue working with Dr. Kennett-Hensel as she assumes the permanent deanship of the College of Business Administration,” says Mahyar Amouzegar, provost and senior vice president of academic affairs. “I am confident that she will elevate the stature and quality of an already outstanding college of business.”

Prior to serving as interim dean, Kennett-Hensel was the chair of the newly created Department of Management and Marketing for six years. She was previously chair of the Department of Marketing and Logistics for four years.

Kennett-Hensel is an accomplished scholar and researcher who has published in a number of top business and marketing journals. She served as president of the Marketing Management Association (MMA), a national organization of marketing educators; she is also an MMA Fellow, an honor bestowed upon one individual per year in recognition of dedication to the organization.

As a department chair, Kennett-Hensel oversaw the launch

of the Bachelor of Science in Healthcare Management and the retooling of the Bachelor of Science in Management and the Bachelor of Science in Marketing with the goal of modernizing the curriculums. Under her leadership, the department also created Marketing Week and Management Week, which bring industry leaders to campus to discuss their experiences and provide networking opportunities for students.

Kennett-Hensel also plays an instrumental role in the college’s maintenance of accreditation process through the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

The New Orleans area native earned her Ph.D. in marketing from Georgia State University.



Pamela Kennett-Hensel

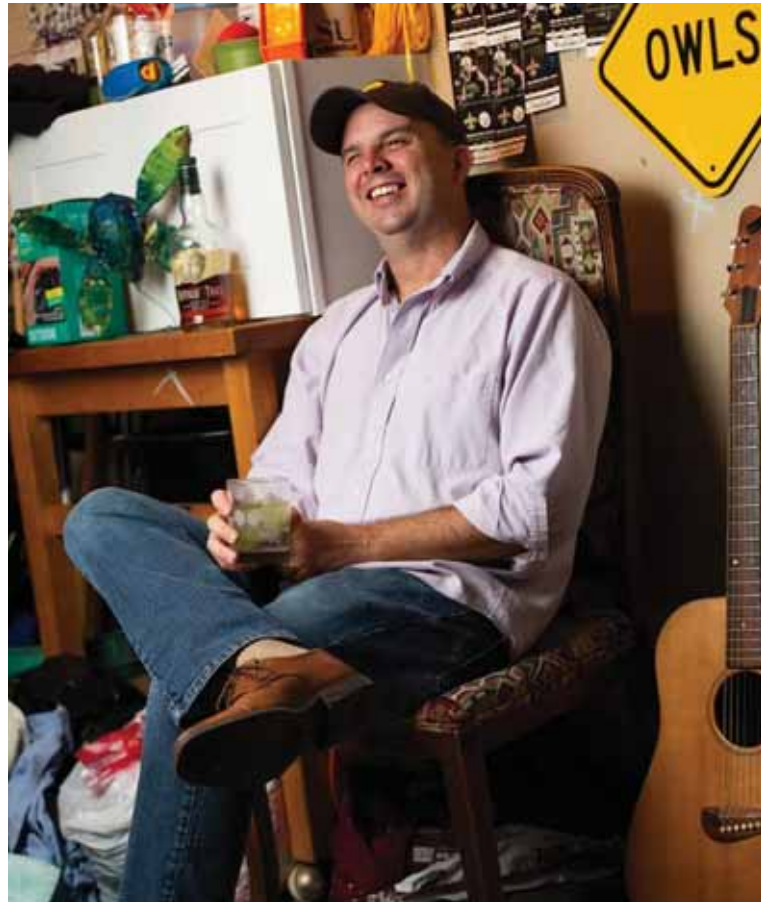
CWW DIRECTOR M.O. WALSH IS SEMIFINALIST FOR JAMES THURBER LITERARY AWARD

UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans Creative Writing Workshop director M.O. Walsh's novel, "The Big Door Prize," is a semifinalist for the Thurber Prize for American Humor, one of the highest honors for humor writing in the United States.

Walsh's novel is one of six books contending for the literary award that will be announced in April. Three finalists will be invited to attend a red-carpet awards ceremony on April 22.

A first-round committee of national judges selected the six semifinalists, and a second-round committee will select the three top finalists to appear at the award ceremony. The other semifinalists are "Deacon King Kong" by James McBride, "A Theory of Everything Else" by Laura Pederson, "New One" by Mike Birbiglia, "Nothing is Wrong and Here is Why" by Alexandra Petri, and "Why Did I Get a B?" by Shannon Reed.

"The Thurber Award for



American Humor has always been a pie in the sky dream for me, so being one of the six semi-finalists is a cool shock," Walsh says. "The fact that the award considers all genres of writing—non-fiction, fiction, poetry, etc.—makes it all the more humbling. Whether or not the book advances beyond this stage is not as important to me as knowing it made some people smile and is respected as a good piece of writing.

"When it's all said and done, laughing is probably my favorite thing to do so it feels good to pay back the favor in some way," Walsh says.

The award honors the legacy of James Thurber, a humorist, cartoonist, author, playwright and journalist known for his quirky and relatable characters and themes. His stories include famous tales such as "The Secret Life of Walter Mitty" and "The

Catbird Seat."

Past winners and finalists of the Thurber Prize include Jon Stewart, Trevor Noah, David Sedaris, Patricia Lockwood, *The Onion* and Dave Barry.

The Thurber Prize is presented each year in Thurber's hometown of Columbus, Ohio during an evening awards ceremony hosted by a top-notch humorist. The event culminates with the announcement of the winner.

Walsh's novel starts with the arrival of a strange new machine at the fictional Deerfield, La. grocery store that looks like a photo booth. However, the machine claims that it can tell a person what their utmost potential would be by analyzing their DNA.

The book is being adapted by "Schitt's Creek" producer David West Read for a 10-episode half-hour Apple TV series.





LEFT: Dinah Maygarden (center in green shirt), research associate and science education program director at UNO's Pontchartrain Institute for Environmental Science, discusses ways to create new land with students from New Harmony High School in New Orleans.

UNO'S PONTCHARTRAIN INSTITUTE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES TEACHES HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IMPORTANCE OF COASTAL RESTORATION

FOR JUST A FEW HOURS, miles of coastal Louisiana were reduced to a plastic box of sand that was subjected to the constant flow of water spouting from a bottle that represented the Mississippi River.

"We're trying to get water over to there, to make new land," New Harmony High School student Maria Gereighty says. "We're trying to get the water to flow this way because the area back here is empty ... you see it's flooding and it could be worse, like over years and years to the point where it could be covered with water."

The simulation, created by the University of New Orleans' Pontchartrain Institute for Environmental Science (PIES), was meant to illustrate how the water's flow can aid in the creation of wetlands.

Wetlands help provide a protective buffer from strong winds and storm surge; fewer wetlands could mean increased inland flooding and property damage. Louisiana's wetlands

represent about 40 percent of the wetlands of the continental United States, but about 80 percent of the losses, according to U.S. Geological Survey scientists.

The goal of the PIES' simulation was to use the flow of the "Mississippi River" to move and deposit nutrient-rich sediment along the coast to create wetlands.

However, that natural process of sedimentation does not always work as planned, Dinah Maygarden, research associate and science education program director at UNO's Pontchartrain Institute for Environmental Science, tells the group of New Harmony High School ninth-graders.

"That's kind of how the river is, it doesn't always cooperate," says Maygarden. "What can we do?"

The students were participating in UNO's coastal education program, which provides hands-on science-based learning activities to teach about

Louisiana's coastal wetlands. The program seeks to increase awareness and understanding of the issues surrounding coastal land loss and restoration by interpreting the science and providing opportunities for students to interact with the environment.

A portion of that day's lesson, which was taught under the outdoor pavilion at the Bayou Sauvage National Wildlife Refuge Ridge Trail in New Orleans East, was an engineering challenge on ways to create new land.

Maygarden used the dilemma to explain the engineering concept of dredging, digging sand from the river's bottom to deposit it elsewhere.



"They take machinery," Maygarden explains as she used her finger in the sand, "and they move sediment around."

No Bones About It: UNO and Ochsner Researchers Use 3D Printing to Advance Medical Training

UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans researchers, in collaboration with the Ochsner Medical 3D Lab, have developed new materials that effectively mimic the X-ray transparencies of bone and human tissue. Such materials are important because doctors can use them as tools for essential training in X-ray imaging and delicate surgical procedures.

Damon Smith, an assistant professor in the Department of Mechanical Engineering and the Advanced Materials Research

Institute and UNO engineering graduate students John Arnold, Cory Darling and Bradley Sciacca, have teamed with Dr. Korak Sarkar, a neurologist from the Ochsner Medical 3D Lab, to develop methods and materials for the production of the various 3D structures.

Working directly from CT scans of patient anatomy, highly detailed medical training models, such as human spines, can be formed. The goal of this research is to advance personalized health care and training

through the development of cutting-edge 3D visualization, manufacturing methods and materials.

“This multidisciplinary approach between Professor Damon Smith’s lab and Ochsner Information Services’ medical 3D lab has the potential to augment medical education, improve clinical care delivery and exemplifies the cutting-edge research being done at the intersection of additive manufacturing and healthcare within our local ecosystem,” says Dr. Sarkar.

3D visualization is critical to the training of engineers and doctors in the medical field, Smith says.

“The ability to mimic internal human structures will further methods, producing more highly skilled professionals,” Smith says. “Beyond skeletal and tissue models, the research team is working to reproduce the pliability of human skin and subdermal tissues so that doctors can better practice invasive techniques, minimizing discomfort to patients.”

The work of Smith and Sarkar, along with UNO engineering graduate student John Arnold was recently published in the *Journal of Biomedical Materials Research, Part B* titled “3D Printed Bismuth Oxide-Polylactic Acid Composites for Radio-Mimetic Computed Tomography Spine Phantoms.”

“Building on this technology, we hope to construct self-healing tissue mimics so that researchers will be able to repeatedly use models in, for example, training on executing lumbar punctures, also known as spinal taps,” Smith says.



UNO researchers (from left) Bradley Sciacca, professor Damon Smith and Cory Darling compare 3D printed spinal columns. Such models can be used in training doctors and other medical staff in X-ray imaging and delicate surgical procedures.

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**ALUMNA
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NOLA'S STORM WATERS

**BY LITTICE BACON-BLOOD
PHOTOGRAPHS BY TRACIE MORRIS SCHAEFER**

AT 16, UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS ALUMNA Meagan Williams saw first-hand the devastation that water could inflict upon a city. It was Thanksgiving Day 2005, and Williams and her family were driving around New Orleans attempting to process the wreckage wrought by Hurricane Katrina three months prior.

Williams recalls taking note of the dirt-brown water lines that ringed many of the homes and buildings and the red “Xs” and circle markings left by the military to denote searches. They stopped at an aunt’s house and got out to inspect the property.

The windows of the house were blown out and about 4-feet of mud caked up the walls, Williams says. There were dead fish inside the house.

“I just remember looking inside that house and going, ‘I didn’t know water could do that,’” Williams says. “I remember saying that over and over to myself. I had no idea that it was this powerful.”

After witnessing such a vivid manifestation of nature’s might, Williams told her mother that she wanted to be a part of helping “fix New Orleans.”

“I had no idea what that meant ... I just said I want to help,” Williams says. “As a kid I always like to put things together, Legos, you name it and I’ll put it together. So, I needed something that I could start putting pieces together.”

Williams’ desire to create solutions led her to pursue a degree in civil engineering, after initially starting an architecture program.

“I was like this is much more interesting, this is a little bit more aligned with the idea, the seed that was planted,” as a teenager, Williams says. “It felt right.”

Williams earned a degree in civil engineering in 2012 and is now the stormwater manager for the City of New Orleans.

“One of my main responsibilities is developing new projects and identifying vulnerable areas that may need additional stormwater management,” says Williams. “These floods that we’ve gotten over the past few years are shining a light on areas that really need additional help aside from our drainage and our pump systems. So, that’s my responsibility, to identify where we go and what we do in those locations once we’ve identified them.”

The stormwater manager’s post did not exist until Williams advocated for the creation of it; having established herself as a proponent and leader of green infrastructure engineering.

“It was a need that I really saw, just by observing,” says Williams, who was introduced to green infrastructure while working as a project manager for a roadway program. “As I started to learn about them and understand them, I really saw the benefit that it could provide for our city.”

Green infrastructure engineering involves installing elements that are meant to mimic what nature does naturally, Williams says. In some cases, it includes removing cement or asphalt roadways or sidewalks in favor of planting rain gardens, creating bioswales or ditches that will absorb or hold water, allowing the city’s drainage to catch up.

“We sit on soil that is clay in New Orleans, and water can’t absorb into clay, not very fast at least. So, we have some ways where we can manufacture soil to include components that will allow for infiltration, allowing the water to be soaked up,” Williams says. “While on the surface, somethings might look like



a really nice garden, it's also something that can hold water for a specific amount of time while it's raining, instead of putting that right into our drainage system."

The Pontilly Neighborhood Stormwater project is a model for such green infrastructure strategies. Williams managed the \$15 million project that is aimed at helping reduce flood risks, while also beautifying green spaces in the Gentilly Woods and Pontchartrain Park neighborhoods.

A myriad of elements installed across the two neighborhoods are designed to slow and temporarily store stormwater.

The neighborhoods suffered historically from flooding from hard rains that would overtake the streets, vehicles, and in some cases, homes.

"When I was reviewing plans for Pontilly and started hearing the stories, the purpose of it and why it came to be, I was like, 'this is incredible,'" Williams says. "I remember thinking that if these things work in harmony the way they are supposed to, this is the blue print for what we need to do ... this is the blueprint for how we move forward."

The comprehensive project took about two years to complete and combines a network of bioswales, pervious surfacing, stormwater lots, street basins, green alleyways and stormwater parks. It can now store up to 8.1 million gallons of stormwater and reduce flooding as much as 14 inches during a 10-year rain event, according to the City.

"It's just working with water where it falls," Williams says. "Instead of just a grassy lot, we excavated those and made them like miniature ponds where on a dry day you can drive through and

see plants that have bloomed. When it rains, it's going to be full of water and that's exactly what it's supposed to do. We want to see water where it falls. When you see all that water that's in the pond, that's water that's not in the streets, it's not in your car and it's not in your home."

The intricate design garnered national attention. Williams was named a CNN 2020 Champion for Change for her work with Pontilly and was honored by the alliance WaterNow as a 2021 Impact and Emerging Leader.

The accolades are appreciated, Williams says, but the best part of her job is interacting with residents and seeing projects that positively impact her community.

"Typically, we as engineers, sit at a desk, run numbers and calculations and put them on a computer," Williams says. "My job is a bit more forward facing with the residents ... It's a unique position that I'm in. I do get to have some face-to-face and make sure I'm putting a project out there that really meets that specific need for any resident or community that we go into."

Williams, who is currently pursuing a master's degree in civil engineering from UNO, says she is grateful for the engineering foundation—and connections—her undergraduate studies provided. She has worked alongside fellow UNO alumni and has kept in touch with former professors, Williams says.

"The degree I got from UNO was the foundation for everything; it sets the tone for everything else," Williams says. "The connections that have come through UNO have been exceptional, the teachers have been incredible; there's a lot of pride in saying that I went to UNO." 🌍



Alumna Meagan Williams examines the stormwater project in the Pontilly neighborhood in New Orleans. Williams, who earned a civil engineering degree from the University of New Orleans, is the stormwater manager for the City of New Orleans.

UNO Public History Students Create Education Resource Collection from Renamed Streets:

'From Robert E. Lee to Mama D'

BY LITTICE BACON-BLOOD

PHOTOGRAPH BY ESTHER CLOWNEY

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS PUBLIC history students have taken their course work to the streets, specifically the streets of New Orleans, to share the stories behind some of the City's recently renamed thoroughfares.

As part of a service learning class led by Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies director Mary Niall Mitchell, students have created a project entitled "From Robert E. Lee to Mama D," a collection of education resources related to the city's street renaming process.

Those resources include research starter kits available online at the city's public library, TikTok videos and online mystery games. The research kits encourage students to explore the lives of important but sometimes lesser-known figures in New Orleans history.

Part of the project's name refers to Dyan French Cole, a beloved community organizer and activist who died in 2017. Cole, known by many simply as "Mama D," spent decades fighting for racial equality in New Orleans. In 1975, she became the first woman to head the city's NAACP chapter.

Because women are underrepresented on street signs and other memorials in public spaces, the first starter kits focus on important women in New Orleans history nominated in the renaming process.

Mitchell, a history professor, was a member of the panel of historians working for the New Orleans City Council Street Renaming Commission. The Commission was tasked with replacing the names of confederate soldiers and white supremacists with

UNO history students Lauren Smith (left) and Kalie Dutra are helping to create educational resources using the recently renamed street signs in New Orleans. The resources include a student-generated podcast.



those of New Orleans artists, activists and innovators who made positive contributions to the city's history.

"The city of New Orleans has been in the vanguard of cities re-examining who they honor with street names and monuments. The NOCCSRC—with a shout-out to Sue Mobley and Thomas Adams, who facilitated the complicated process from start to finish—has become a model for other cities doing this work," Mitchell says. "This collaboration between the Midlo Center and the New Orleans Public Library, and the work of UNO public history students who shaped it, take the process a step further.

"Aimed at young people in particular, it demonstrates why these changes need to happen. It introduces the public to the many, many people who made New Orleans a more vibrant place, a more equitable place and a more just city," Mitchell says.

UNO students are currently working on a podcast that will be used for driving tours. Mitchell said they hope to continue to build on the initial pilot program and create more resources for the library.

"A new crop of public history students are now working on a podcast they are calling 'Streets on the Table,' following a route from UNO around City Park to Xavier and telling some of the stories of the streets along the way, past, present and future," Mitchell says. "We want residents to see that the cityscape, and how its inhabitants mark it, has changed not just in the 20th and 21st centuries, but over the long history of this place, from indigenous settlements and plantations through the Civil War, segregation and suburbanization."

The series of mini podcasts will feature information about the person for whom the street used to be named and information about the person that it is being renamed for.

Student Jordan Hammon is editing the audio for the podcast tour.

"This project is important because we want to give listeners an easy and enjoyable way to learn about these important changes to the city," Hammon says. "All the new names in the commission report are rooted in New Orleans history, and after learning about Georges, Celestin and all the other new names, they too deserve to be honored and I hope the podcast/tour gets people as excited as I am."

UNO graduate student Ariel Roy, who attended Xavier University as an undergraduate, contributed research for the podcast on the renaming of Jefferson Davis Parkway in honor of Norman C. Francis, the university's former president.

Roy said she wanted to make sure listeners understood the magnitude of renaming the street where the university is located in honor of Francis, who led the university for four decades.

"For my part, I explained that Dr. Norman C. Francis and Xavier University were interchangeable," Roy says. "In my honest opinion, the name Jefferson Davis Parkway doesn't represent New Orleans' identity nor culture. I outlined that the city and many proponents of the name change campaigned hard for Norman C. Francis Parkway to reflect the university that sits right on the street."

Public history student Emily Ratner said her research, which included a deep-dive into a U.S. Supreme Court desegregation case

involving New Orleans' City Park, reveals the purposeful disenfranchisement of the city's Black residents by White residents.

That disenfranchisement manifested itself in the names of streets, schools, parks and other institutions, Ratner says.

"That is for me the most inspiring aspect of the public education campaign surrounding the street renaming: By replacing the names of confederates, enslavers and segregationists with people who actively resisted their enslavement, with laborers, and with civil rights heroes, we New Orleanians remind ourselves, or learn for the first time, of our incredible accomplishments over generations," Ratner says. "We challenge ourselves to be more human toward one another, and to see the humanity within one another. And we locate ourselves quite literally within the living, breathing evolving history of this incredible place."

The renaming commission, formed in 2019, wrapped up its advisory work last year. Mitchell says historians on the panel thought there was a need for a stronger education outreach program to share the results to the public, particularly for K-12 students.

There were far more proposed names put before the commission than there were streets to be renamed, Mitchell says. The historians thought that sharing the histories highlighted in the deliberation process—and sharing them in an engaging way—would convey the importance of renaming to a broader public, Mitchell says.

"There are so many people who should be remembered for their contributions to New Orleans, visionaries, activists, educators,



Educational resources are collected and produced as research kits by the New Orleans Public Library to encourage students to explore the lives of important but sometimes lesser-known figures in New Orleans history.

advocates, but their stories have not been told enough," Mitchell says. "So, we have taken some of these life stories and made them accessible, with a particular focus on young people."

They collaborated with the New Orleans Public Library so that their work would be widely available and accessible to the public, Mitchell says. They also joined with NOLA4Women to help promote the students' work focused on the history of women in New Orleans.

"This project, driven mostly by UNO public history students, is a model for what service learning can do," Mitchell says. "Not only did they learn from their community partners, but also UNO students have made real contributions to the shared historical memory of their city, with new or neglected stories that are more inclusive and represent the diversity and creativity of New Orleans." 🌍

Moving **MILLIONS**

Alumnus Gene Seroka Is Executive Director of the Nation's Busiest Cargo Port

BY LITTICE BACON-BLOOD



IF YOU'VE WATCHED OR LISTENED TO A NATIONAL NEWS broadcast recently that discussed the global supply chain backlog, you have likely seen or heard University of New Orleans alumnus Gene Seroka.

As the executive director of the Port of Los Angeles, the busiest cargo shipping port in North America, combined with decades of experience in global logistics and the shipping industry, Seroka has become a high-profile face and voice in the media for explaining the bottleneck that has hampered the delivery of goods to retail stores, warehouses and millions of doorsteps.

Seroka says he doesn't mind taking on the "spokesperson" mantle for an industry that typically flies under the radar. He laughs when questioned about the number of times he's been asked some iteration of, "What's going on with the supply chain?"

"There's rarely an hour that goes by—whether it's in the grocery store, here at the office, in the gym," says Seroka, who has more than 33 years of experience in shipping, global logistics and execu-

tive management. "People are genuinely nice about it. They are like, 'Hey, we saw you on TV or we saw the 6 o'clock news, what's going on down there?' So, it's almost on Main Street now, everyday folks are talking about it."

The Port of Los Angeles, which handles the daily docking of hundreds of ships delivering millions of containers filled with goods like clothing, bicycles, cars, and computer parts, has experienced a backlog of ships waiting to dock and off load goods.

The port has been operating at record-breaking numbers for more than a year, Seroka says. The average ship that docks loads and unloads about 11,000 plus containers.

"We estimate 2021 will be about 14% more cargo than in 2018, which was our best year ever in 113 years of doing business. So 14% above our best year ever," Seroka says. "We are averaging now, for 14

Gene Seroka, who earned a bachelor's degree in marketing and an MBA from UNO, is the executive director of the Port of Los Angeles.

consecutive months, about 900,000 container units per month. That used to be one good month in our peak season.”

The docking logjam, one of the many kinks along the supply chain of getting goods to market, is a combination of American companies shipping cargo earlier in an effort to avoid new tariffs and taxes that were pending under the Trump administration and the manifestation of American consumerism during the stay-home era of the COVID-19 pandemic, Seroka says.

“So we’re just buying and buying,” says Seroka, who earned a bachelor’s degree in marketing and an MBA from UNO. “And now we’re finding from retailers and other importers that they are struggling just to keep up with our demand because we’re spending so much money on all these retail goods.”

‘YOU’RE GOING TO MEET WITH THE PRESIDENT’

Seroka’s position and expertise earned an invite to the White House in October for a meeting with President Joe Biden.

“My heart was beating a thousand beats a minute; my palms were sweaty. I was so nervous,” Seroka says, laughing as he recalled his time spent in the Roosevelt Conference room waiting to meet Biden. “He was the nicest guy in the world!”

The text requesting his presence in Washington, D.C. arrived around 6:30 a.m. on Oct. 11.

“We need you to be in Washington, tomorrow,” Seroka recalls the text saying.

There was not as much progress being made to clear the docking logjam and cargo ships continued to stack up by the dozens in the waters off the Los Angeles harbor, despite previous meetings with U. S. Department of Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg and the appointment of John Porcari as a special port envoy, Seroka says.

When he arrived in D.C., Seroka was given a rundown of meetings for the following day, a Wednesday.

“I was going to have a roundtable with Secretary Buttigieg and some big CEOs from the retailers with other importers on the Zoom,” Seroka says. “Then they told me, after that, ‘You’re going to meet with the president.’”

That is when his heart went into overdrive, Seroka recalls laughing. That Wednesday, he, along with port envoy Porcari; Willie Adams, the international president of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union; and Mario Cordero, the executive director of the Port of Long Beach, California, were ushered into the Roosevelt Room to await a face-to-face meeting with the president of the United States.

The Roosevelt conference room, which held a table that seated about 14 people, had two doors. One led to the hallway, the other to the Oval Office, Seroka says. Anytime either of the doors opened, which happened several times, they would all jump expectantly.

Once, it was a staffer delivering gifts of the official White House chocolate chip cookies that come affixed with the presidential seal. Another time, a staffer placed notebooks on the conference table.

“After about 15 minutes, the President himself walks in. He shook everybody’s hand and addressed each of us by our first name,” Seroka says. “He took his seat ... and we just started talking about the ports, how to fix things.”

It was during that visit that Biden announced his 24/7 initiative to get the ports in Los Angeles and Long Beach, which handle 40% of the nation’s cargo, operating around the clock, seven days a week in an effort to lessen delays.

Seroka also was invited into the Oval Office. Biden showed him a picture of one of his grandson’s re-enacting an iconic photograph of a young John F. Kennedy Jr. seen sitting inside the Resolute Desk during his father’s presidency.

Later, Seroka sat on the front row during the press conference as Biden discussed getting everyone along the supply chain on the same working calendar.

“What an experience,” Seroka says. “On the plane that night, I literally pinched myself. I couldn’t believe it.”

‘UNO GAVE ME THIS OPPORTUNITY’

Seroka, who grew up in Slidell, credits the degrees he earned at UNO for helping him succeed in his career.

“I got my marketing degree in ’86, my MBA in ’88 and UNO gave me this opportunity,” Seroka says. “It’s a working-class school; I paid my way through college and everything I’ve done is because of this school.”

Prior to his time at the Port of Los Angeles, Seroka worked for 26 years at the container shipping company American President Lines Limited, which began as a sales support representative in the company’s Cincinnati office in 1988.

During his tenure at the company, Seroka played an integral role in global marketing and corporate strategies and spent 11 years in Asia and the Middle East, before returning stateside in 2010 to become President-Americas for the company’s shipping line in Phoenix. He managed the company’s liner shipping business, including 1,000 employees and was responsible for all commercial, port terminal, intermodal, land transportation and labor activities



“I earned this position almost eight years ago . . . and I can unequivocally state it is because of my education and my experience on the Lakefront that gave me these opportunities,”



throughout the region.

In 2014, Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti nominated Seroka to lead the Port of Los Angeles, which includes nearly 1,000 employees, foreign and domestic stakeholders and oversight of a \$1.7 billion annual budget. Since taking the helm, the port has experienced record-breaking performances.

“I earned this position almost eight years ago . . . and I can unequivocally state it is because of my education and my experience on the Lakefront that gave me these opportunities,” Seroka says.

Seroka invokes a litany of professors he said were influential during his time at UNO.

“Dr. Jane Cromartie, in the marketing department; Dr. Olof Lundberg who taught computer science; the chair of the marketing department at the time was Dr. Milton Pressley, Dr. Jane Hartman, who taught organizational behavior, and Dr. Tom O’Connor in the marketing department.

“These folks were just unbelievable, they really were great,” Seroka says. “I bet none of these folks remember me, but I remember them.”

CHIEF LOGISTICS OFFICER AND COVID-19

In March 2020, just as the nation was starting to recognize the enormity of COVID-19, Los Angeles mayor Garcetti tapped Seroka to be the chief logistics officer for the City of Los Angeles (in addition to his port duties) and lead a team of volunteers tasked with securing personal protective equipment for first responders and healthcare workers.

The much-needed but scarce items were in such demand that some healthcare workers were turning to makeshift protective wear, Seroka recalls.

“We had a small hospital in Lakewood, just up the freeway from our port. They were sending out staff to go buy Hefty (garbage) bags because they didn’t have enough of the gowns,” Seroka says. “They would cut holes in the Hefty bags and have the nurses and doctors greet sick patients in a Hefty bag.”

“That was enough for me. We were just running everyday trying to find sources, trying to find companies to manufacture the PPE.”

Seroka and his team were able to secure contracts for the monthly delivery of the all-important N95 protective masks, gowns, gloves and other items by tapping into foreign and domestic contacts.

“This was all volunteer work, and I’m just so proud of what the

team has done,” Seroka says.

Seroka’s success has earned him a multitude of awards and recognition, including a lifetime achievement award in June from the Inland Empire Economic Partnership in recognition for decades of leadership and accomplishments in the supply chain, logistics and maritime industry. In 2020, he was named “Executive of the Year,” by *Supply Chain Dive* for his leadership throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

In December, Seroka was recognized during a gala in New Jersey as the 2021 winner of the Containerization & Intermodal Institute Connie Award, considered one of the most coveted honors in the maritime industry. The award recognizes industry leaders who have made significant contributions to containerization, world trade and the transportation field.

BE VISIBLE, BE MOBILE AND BE DURABLE

In terms of advice, Seroka said he would ask students to consider three things while plotting their careers: Be visible, be mobile and be durable.

Most industries are still relationship based and people want to know who they are working with and they want to see who they are working with, Seroka says.

“Get to know your customer, get to know your professor,” he says. “It’s still a relationship-based industry even if you’re studying at UNO or you’re out in the workforce somewhere, be visible.”

Don’t be afraid to move around the country—or out of the U.S.—if an opportunity presents itself, Seroka says.

“I got the opportunity because of my education to work overseas for more than a decade,” Seroka says. “I made lifelong friends and contacts that I feel so fortunate to have formed. I’ve learned so much from people who are different from me and hopefully they’ve learned something from me because I was different.”

On being durable, Seroka encourages the development of “thick skin.”

“There will be people either on a keyboard or around the corner; people will question you or even criticize you,” Seroka says. “Be as durable as you can because it’s a long race and it doesn’t have to be a sprint.”

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Alumna Andrea Chen is Founder and CEO of Propeller

BY LITTICE BACON-BLOOD

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS ALUMNA ANDREA CHEN left the classroom more than a decade ago, but she's still teaching via Propeller, the nonprofit company she co-founded and leads as its chief executive officer.

Chen, who earned a master's degree in education from UNO, is helping to educate entrepreneurs and giving startups a boost, particularly minority-owned businesses in the metro New Orleans area.

"Our mission is to support and grow entrepreneurs to tackle social and environmental disparities," Chen says. "We're all about building an inclusive economy. It's something that we believe is essential to the long-term sustainability of New Orleans as a city."

Founded in 2009, Propeller focuses on five key areas: food, water, health, education and community economic development. Those areas were identified as having significant inequities and also having entrepreneurial growth opportunities, Chen says.

"We believe that for us, as a city, to have a truly inclusive economy Black and brown entrepreneurs—and Black native New Orleanians entrepreneurs in particular—really need the



opportunities,” Chen says. “We’ve seen that there are a lot of barriers for Black and brown entrepreneurs to get those opportunities, so we’re very committed to issues like procurement, how contracts and business opportunities are awarded and making sure it’s done in a very equitable manner and the same with access to capital.”

Propeller’s support, which is provided at no-cost, comes in a variety of forms, such as providing access to seed money, helping brand and distribute products, and offering office space for entrepreneurs to operate, Chen says.

Chen’s company helped Chef Diva Foods founder Ericka Lassair expand from her food truck to selling her vegan étouffée sauce in grocery stores.

“She came through our accelerator (program) with an idea and we basically helped her conceptualize and get it on the shelves,” Chen says. “You can buy her product now, but when she started in the accelerator, it was just an idea.”

Another collaborative venture Propeller helped support to fruition was the opening of Split Second Fitness, an inclusive fitness center in New Orleans. Entrepreneur Mark Raymond was behind the idea to create a gym for people with physical disabilities.

Raymond, who was paralyzed after a diving accident, created the center to include research-based exercise programs, Chen says.

Having access to capital to grow and scale their business can be a major barrier starting out, Chen says.

“So that’s a big focus for us,” she says. “We run our own fund.”

The company’s \$1 million social venture fund makes loans to social entrepreneurs and entrepreneurs from less represented racial and ethnic backgrounds who are headquartered in Orleans Parish.

In 2019, Propeller bought a 10,000 square foot building at the intersection of Washington Avenue and Broad Street in New Orleans that serves as the company’s headquarters and provides co-working space for more than 50 organizations and 100 New Orleans small businesses, nonprofits and community members.

The building was damaged during Hurricane Ida last year, so Propeller has relocated temporarily to The Beach at UNO, the Uni-

versity’s research and technology park.

“We built it so that our entrepreneur community had a place to work out of,” Chen says. “It’s a very active space and we’re eager to get back to it.”

Chen was a high school English teacher in New Orleans prior to founding Propeller, which started out as a volunteer venture with a group of friends after Hurricane Katrina in 2005.

“We wanted to be a contribution to the community and just support the people who were doing great things after the storm to help the city rebuild,” Chen says. “We ran different programming, but all on a volunteer basis. We had pitch competitions; we had mentorship programs for entrepreneurs.”

Chen, who earned a business certificate from Dartmouth’s Tuck School of Business and studied social entrepreneurship while earning her undergraduate degree in philosophy from Stanford University, decided to quit her teaching job and work full-time at the nonprofit as the workload grew.

“I had also worked at startups myself, so I had a background in that area and was able to combine it all together,” Chen says.

Chen says she enjoys working with her staff and the entrepreneurs.

“It really is a pleasure and an honor to be a part of our entrepreneurs’ journey and being surrounded by that energy is cool,” Chen says. “Our alumni have accomplished incredible things and our team here at Propeller is pretty incredible. They’re the ones that execute our mission every day and they are very, very smart.”

Chen’s advice for entrepreneurs is to assess the risks and follow their hearts.

“Fear is not a bad thing; you should listen to what it’s telling you,” Chen says. “But don’t let fear stop you from following your heart.”

Andrea Chen oversees Propeller, a New Orleans organization centered on helping small startups and other nonprofits tackle social and environmental disparities





All-Time Best

Slessinger Becomes Winningest Coach in Program History

HEAD MEN'S BASKETBALL coach Mark Slessinger became the all-time winningest coach in the history of the program during the 2021-22 season. In February, with a victory against McNeese State, Slessinger won his 147th game at the helm of the Privateers, surpassing the previous mark

set by Ron Greene. He tacked on two more victories to close out the season with a 149 career wins. Slessinger was named the 12th head coach in program history in 2011. In 2017, he led the team to its first NCAA Tournament appearance in 21 years. After that season, he was named

Southland Conference Coach of the Year. Under his leadership, 15 former Privateers have gone on to play professional basketball. He has also coached nine All-Southland selections and five National Association of Basketball Coaches All-District selections.

Shooting Stars

Green, St. Hilaire Named First Team All-Southland

FIFTH-YEAR SENIOR TROY Green and graduate student Derek St. Hilaire were honored as first-team All-Southland Selections. It is the first time since joining the Southland prior to the 2013-2014 season that the Privateers have had two All-Southland selections in the same season, and the first time that they had two first-team All-Conference selections in the same season.

“We are beyond excited and proud for Troy, Derek, and their families with this prestigious recognition,” says head men’s basketball coach Mark Slessinger. “It is a testament to their hard work and commitment to not only basketball but also to their team. It has been an honor and pleasure to serve both of these student-athletes as their coach. I know that this is just the beginning for them and look forward to cheering on all of their future successes.”

Derek St. Hilaire, an Atlanta

native, was one of the most dynamic scorers in the country during the 2021-22 season, averaging 20.1 points per game, second in the Southland and 17th in the NCAA. The graduate student scored a career-high 34 points at Houston Baptist and scored at least 20 points 18 times this season, with eight games of 25 or more. St. Hilaire finished in the Top-10 in several categories in the league. He was also named First-Team All-District by the National Association of Basketball Coaches. He is the fifth Privateer to receive this honor during the Slessinger era.

Troy Green wrote his name all over the Privateer record

books this season. The fifth-year senior from St. Rose, La. has played the most games in school history, and ranks second in free throws made, second in career steals, third in points and fifth in career assists. Green averaged 16.6 points per game with eight games of 20 points or more, including a season-high 29 against Texas A&M-Corpus Christi in February.

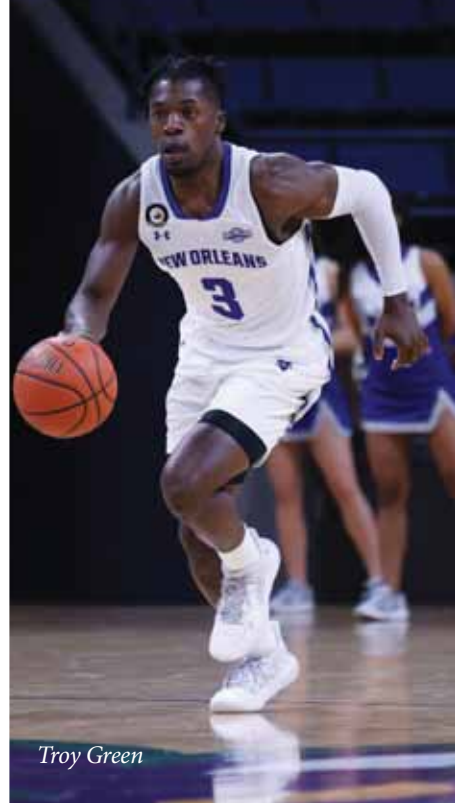
During the 2021-22 season,

Green became one of just two Privateers with at least 1,800 career points, one of just three Privateers with 1,700 career points, and one of just two with at least 500 free throws made in his career. Green finished the regular season ranked Top-10 in several Southland categories.

The Privateers ended the season with a record of 18-14 and 10-4 in the Southland Conference play.



Derek St. Hilaire



Troy Green

Mathis Earns Third-Team All-Southland, Pryor Named All-Defensive

THE NEW ORLEANS Privateers women’s basketball team had two all-conference distinctions for the 2021-22 season. Jomyra Mathis earned Third Team All-Southland honors while DeArica Pryor made the conference’s All-Defensive Team.

“It’s awesome that my colleagues recognized the impact Jo has made in her short time at UNO. I’m extremely proud of the way she battled through injuries and came back even stronger,” says head women’s basketball coach Keeshawn Davenport. “We are all elated that DeArica made the All-Defensive

team. She is a tough, consistent player who is certainly worthy of this award.”

Mathis earned Third-Team honors after finishing tied for seventh in the league in scoring at 12.7 points per game. The New Orleans native was also ranked among the leaders in the Southland in assists (2nd) and steals (T-1st) this season. A transfer from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Mathis was a force for the Privateers. She achieved a career-high in points twice during the season. The first time, she scored 19 points against Texas

A&M-CC on Feb. 10. Mathis surpassed that with a 20-point performance against McNeese nine days later. She also averaged 5.0 rebounds, 3.5 assists and 2.3 steals per game.

Pryor was a key to creating extra possessions for the Privateers. She recorded 50 steals and averaged 2.3 per game, which tied for the Southland lead. Pryor becomes the first Privateer to make the All-Defensive Team



Jomyra Mathis



DeArica Pryor

since New Orleans moved to the Southland Conference. She also averaged 11.2 points per game.

The women’s basketball team finished the season with a record of 5-18 and 3-11 in the Southland Conference. 🏀

Dr. Bobby and Lori Savoie Donate \$5 Million to the University of New Orleans College of Engineering



DR. BOBBY AND LORI SAVOIE have donated \$5 million to the University of New Orleans College of Engineering. It is the largest gift to an academic college in the history of the University. In recognition of the gift, the University has named the college the Dr. Robert A. Savoie College of Engineering.

Dr. Savoie earned a doctorate in engineering and applied science from UNO in 2009.

"I am forever grateful to

Bobby and Lori for their generosity and multifaceted support of our university," says President John Nicklow. "Bobby, as a previous Homer L. Hitt Distinguished Alumni Award winner of the University, is a role model, providing exemplary service to UNO, his city and the state. The Savoies' commitment comes at a time when affordable, high-quality education in the engineering disciplines is more important than ever for students, employers

and communities."

The Savoies' gift will endow an engineering support fund that will provide resources for a wide range of strategic initiatives within the college including scholarships for students with

UNO President John Nicklow, Dr. Bobby Savoie, Lori Savoie and Mallory Savoie celebrate the naming of the Dr. Robert A. Savoie College of Engineering.



LEFT: The UNO community celebrates the naming of the Dr. Robert A. Savoie College of Engineering at an on-campus event on Dec. 14.



financial need, cutting-edge research and facility enhancements, according to Nicklow.

“We have often heard that the University of New Orleans built the middle class of New Orleans,” Dr. Savoie says. “But this step is about the future, not the past. It’s about helping President Nicklow and the incredibly talented people at the University of New Orleans to complete the vision of making an engineering degree from UNO recognized as the outstanding degree I know it to be.”

Dr. Savoie is the President and Chief Science and Engineering Officer of Sev1Tech, a leading provider of IT modernization, cybersecurity, cloud services and engineering to

government agencies and major commercial organizations. Headquartered in the Washington, D.C. metro area, Sev1Tech supports critical missions across defense, intelligence, homeland security, space and health markets.

Dr. Savoie served as the CEO of Geocent, LLC, a Metairie-based information technology and engineering services company until its acquisition by Sev1Tech in 2021. He previously founded Integrated Resources Group in 1986 and served as CEO until it merged with Science & Engineering Associates (SEA) in 1987. He became president and then CEO of SEA and guided the company through an extraordi-

nary growth period.

While serving as CEO of progressively larger companies, Dr. Savoie continued his work as an engineer and consultant, primarily in nuclear power and defense, including NASA’s next generation Space Launch System, large government information systems and numerous economic development activities.

Dr. Savoie currently serves on the boards of the UNO Foundation and the National WWII Museum, among others, and he represents Louisiana on the Aerospace Alliance Board. He also served as a director, trustee and senior adviser for the Atlantic Council of the United States and is a former board member of the Louisiana Technology

Council, the U.S. Small Business Technology Foundation, the Boy Scouts of America, the Academy of the Sacred Heart, Isidore Newman School and Greater New Orleans, Inc.

He has been honored with NASA’s Distinguished Public Service Medal, Laureate of the Junior Achievement Hall of Fame and the Young Leadership Council Role Model Award.

The Dr. Robert A. Savoie College of Engineering offers the only civil engineering, mechanical engineering and electrical engineering programs in metro New Orleans. It also boasts the Boysie Bollinger School of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering, one of the few such schools in the nation. 🌟

CHARLES O'CONNOR, PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF CHEMISTRY AND FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF AMRI

CHARLES O'CONNOR, THE founding director of the Advanced Material Research Institute (AMRI) at the University of New Orleans and professor emeritus of chemistry, died Nov. 7, 2021. He was 73.

O'Connor, who retired in 2012 following a 33-year career at the University, was a world-renowned and respected chemist. He joined the UNO faculty in 1979 to teach and develop research programs in inorganic, solid-state and materials chemistry.

O'Connor earned an emeritus Boyd Professorship at the

University of New Orleans in recognition of his contributions to scientific research.

"His impact on the

Department of Chemistry and AMRI were extensive and still continue today," says John B. Wiley, director of AMRI and a chemistry professor, who collaborated with O'Connor on many projects

after joining UNO's faculty in 1992. "He will be sorely missed by myself and all his other friends and colleagues."

In 2019, O'Connor and his wife, Sally E. O'Connor, donated \$60,000 to help establish

an endowed professorship in chemistry.

"I spent my whole career there," O'Connor said during an interview about his donation. "I just thought I could give something back to the chemistry department and help them recruit faculty."

O'Connor also help to develop an outreach summer research program at UNO for high school students, high school teachers and underrepresented minority undergraduates, and directed an effort at UNO to help develop a doctoral program in advanced materials and nanoscience as a collaborative program between Louisiana State University, UNO and Southern University Baton Rouge.

Born and raised in Chicago, O'Connor graduated from the

University of Illinois at Chicago with a doctorate in chemistry. He was known for his sharp sense of humor, generous spirit, loyalty, and tremendous courage and resilience in persevering through health issues later in life, his friends and family says.

Survivors include his wife, Sally O'Connor, two daughters, Dr. Christine O'Connor and Emily Kashare, a sister, Margaret Tominosky, a brother, James O'Connor and four grandchildren.

In honor of his commitment to science, O'Connor's family requests that contributions in his memory be made to the Charles J. O'Connor Scholarship Fund established at the University of New Orleans College of Sciences.



Charles O'Connor

FRITZ WAGNER, FOUNDING DEAN OF COLLEGE OF URBAN AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

FRITZ WAGNER, THE founding dean of the University of New Orleans College of Urban and Public Affairs (CUPA) and credited with helping train hundreds of city planners, died Oct. 7, 2021. He was 79.

Wagner was remembered as a multi-faceted leader, friend and mentor.

"The College of Urban and Public Affairs or CUPA, became a major force in urban planning and community building throughout the metropolitan New Orleans area through the

outreach efforts of Fritz and faculty members and staff that he encouraged to get out and put their knowledge to work in the community," says Jane Brooks, a founding faculty member of CUPA. "This was through applied research, study and service on boards and commissions."

Wagner spent 26 years teaching at UNO and volunteering around the New Orleans areas on commissions and boards. His planning and policy work helped shape the region.

"He was a dynamo," says

Brooks. "He just did an amazing amount of stuff!"

Some of those accomplishments included the creation of UNO's first endowed chair via a \$1 million donation and later a \$1.3 million donation that help established what is now known as the UNO Transportation Institute, said Brooks, who worked with Wagner for 25 years.

Wagner arrived at UNO in 1974, hired as an assistant professor to teach in what was then the Urban Studies Institute. Wagner would later steer the institute into a school and later a college.

Wagner was lauded as a visionary for building a top-notch planning program from scratch, as tenacious for helping

shepherd through the development of Jean Lafitte National Historical Park and Reserve while chairman of the Delta Region Preservation Commission, and for his generous spirit in mentoring countless colleagues and students.

"One definition of leadership is the art of getting someone else to do something you want done, because they want to do it," says Anthony Mumphrey Jr. "And that's what Fritz could do, and that's why he was my leader."

Survivors include his wife, Margaret Wagner; a son, Ryan Wagner of Lake Tahoe, California; a daughter, Melanie Wagner, of Istanbul; and four grandchildren.



Fritz Wagner

ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING PROFESSOR RASHEED AZZAM, ONE OF UNO'S FIRST DISTINGUISHED PROFESSORS

RASHEED AZZAM, AN electrical engineering professor who taught for more than four decades at the University of New Orleans and was named one of

UNO's first distinguished professors, died Feb. 17, 2022. He was 76.

Azzam received his bachelor's degree in science from Cairo University and his doctorate from the University of Nebraska where he held postdoctoral and faculty positions until he joined UNO in 1979.

In 1982, he became a member of UNO's inaugural class of faculty members to be recognized with the Distinguished Professor title.

Azzam's research interests

included polarized light, ellipsometry, optical polarimetry based on reflective silicon detectors and diffraction gratings, optics of thin films and design of

optical devices for polarized light and the theory of reflection. His book, "Ellipsometry and Polarized Light," has been cited over 10,000 times and translated into several languages.

Azzam, who retired from UNO

in 2020 after teaching for 41 years, was a Fulbright Scholar and visiting professor at Université de Provence in France and professor of physics at the American University in Cairo. He served as topical editor for the Journal of the Optical Soci-

ety of America (OSA) and Applied Optics, and as member of the OSA Publications Council.

His honors include the 2005 GG Stokes Award of SPIE, International Society for Optical Engineering; 1993 Photonics Circle of Excellence Award; 1993 R and D Award; 1988 Outstanding American Inventor; and fellow of the Optical Society of America and SPIE.

While Azzam made significant advances in his field, his family says he will be most remembered by those who knew him as a man of principle, faith, generosity and humor.

He is survived by Fatema, his wife of 47 years; daughter Reem Azzam; sons Omar, Adel, Yousef, Yahya and Kareem Azzam; and grandchildren Maryam and Khadeeja Abdallah, Layla, Lemees, Zade and Hana Azzam.



Rasheed Azzam

STEVEN A. SHULL, RESEARCH PROF. EMERITUS OF POLITICAL SCIENCE

STEVEN A. SHULL, AN accomplished emeritus research professor of political science and mentor to numerous doctoral students for over 30 years at the University of New Orleans, died Nov. 4, 2021. He was 78.

Shull, who retired in 2005, specialized in public policy, the presidency and legislative behavior. He won the University-wide career achievement award for excellence in research in 1986. He served on three journal editorial boards and was Fulbright Professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the University of Innsbruck in Austria.

Shull edited a series of books for Garland Publishing Inc. on politics and policy in American institutions, and authored more than 125 publications. He was editor or co-editor of six volumes including, "Presidential Policymaking" and "The Two Presidencies." His articles appeared in numerous books and journals, including *Congress and the Presidency*, the *Journal of Politics*, and *Western Political Quarterly*.

In 2007, he was a Fulbright Senior Scholar in Oslo, Norway. He later moved to Venice, Florida where he was involved in numerous volunteer activities, including Take Stock in Children, a mentoring program.

Shull is survived by wife Janice; son Ted Shull and daughter-in-law Dayana Shull; daughter Amanda Tomkoria and son-in-law Bikas Tomkoria; and grandchildren Bradley Shull, and Mira and Maya Tomkoria. 🌻



Steven A. Shull

RANDALL LEE SCOTT, FORMER DEPARTMENT CHAIR OF SPECIAL EDUCATION AND HABILITATIVE SERVICES

RANDALL LEE SCOTT, whose academic career at the University of New Orleans spanned more than three decades, died Aug. 10, 2021. He was 69.

Scott taught in the College of Liberal Arts, Education and Human Development and was a former department chair for special education and habilitative services during his 31 years at UNO. He retired in 2012.

Scott, according to his friends and family, had an engaging personality, was a strong advocate for students, an enthusiastic conversationalist, a willing din-

ner partner, possessed a keen interest in film, television and theatre and served as a reliable "go to" source on any topic related to British royalty.

Prior to his appointment at UNO, Scott was the director of services at the Lighthouse for the Blind in New Orleans. Through his efforts, the Lighthouse hosted an exhibit on the life of Helen Keller in collaboration with the

American Foundation for the Blind.

Before moving to New Orleans, he was a faculty member at the University of Southern

Mississippi in Hattiesburg and worked at several rehabilitation facilities in Florida and Mississippi.

Scott earned graduate degrees from Peabody College for Teachers at Vanderbilt University and Auburn University.

He is survived by his sister Kathryn Ann Woods of Petal, Mississippi, several nieces and nephews and a large number of close friends.

Scott will be buried in McPherson, Kansas. A memorial service will be announced at a future date pending status of COVID-19 restrictions.

Those who wish to honor his memory with a gift are encouraged to consider a donation to the Lighthouse for the Blind, 123 State St., New Orleans, Louisiana 70118.



Randall Lee Scott

ALUM NOTES

Laurence B. Alexander (B.A., '81)

Laurence B. Alexander has been appointed by President Joe Biden as chair of the Board for International Food & Agriculture Development. The Board for International Food and Agricultural Development (BI-FAD) advises USAID on agriculture and higher education issues pertinent to food insecurity in developing countries.

Alexander is the chancellor of the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff. He earned a bachelor's degree in drama and communications from the University of New Orleans, a master's degree in journalism and communications from the University of Florida, a juris doctor from Tulane University and a Ph.D. in higher education from Florida State University.



1970s

Elizabeth Cole (B.A., '72)

Elizabeth Cole published a new book "My Way to Kindness: Children's Book about Love to Others, Empathy and Inclusion." Cole earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of New Orleans.

1980s

Johnny Townsend (B.A., '85, M.A., '88, B.S., '99)

Johnny Townsend has published a new novel, "Orgy at the STD Clinic," a work of literary fiction that addresses racism, climate change, ableism, ageism, income inequality, and the growing political divide in the U.S. The title is a metaphor for anti-maskers in the midst of a pandemic. Townsend earned a bachelor's and master's degree in English and a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of New Orleans.

John P. LeBlanc (B.S., '88)

John P. LeBlanc has been named the new chief executive officer of Metairie Bank & Trust Co. in Metairie, Louisiana. LeBlanc earned a bachelor's degree in finance from the University of New Orleans.

Michael A. Gennaro (B.S., '88)

Michael A. Gennaro has been named the new president of Metairie Bank & Trust Co. in Metairie, Louisiana. Gennaro earned a bachelor's degree in finance from the University of New Orleans.

Terry St. Germain (B.S., '88)

Terry St. Germain has been promoted to captain and assumed command of the First District for the New Orleans Police Department. St. Germain earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of New Orleans.

Eric E. Bosch (B.S., '89)

Eric E. Bosch has been named president and CEO of LaPorte CPAs & Business Advisors in Metairie, Louisiana. Bosch earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of New Orleans.

Julia Mendez Achee (B.S., '89, M.B.A., '92)

Julia Mendez Achee has been hired as senior consultant with Biddle Consulting Group. She holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's of business administration from the University of New Orleans.

1990s

Chris L. Braud (B.S., '91)

Chris L. Braud has been promoted to senior vice president/New Orleans market president at Home Bank. Braud earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of New Orleans.

Judy Green (B.A., '92)

Judy Green has been hired as the new manager for Natchez's City Sightseeing Tours and opening of new ticket booth at the visitor center in Natchez, Mississippi. Green earned a bachelor's degree in drama and communications from the University of New Orleans.

Scott McAvoy (M.B.A., '92)

Scott McAvoy has been reappointed to the Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott. McAvoy earned a master's degree in business administration from the University of New Orleans.

Clay Morris (B.A., '93)

Clay Morris has been named the new police chief for Pell City, Alabama. Morris, a former agent with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, earned a bachelor's degree in general studies from the University of New Orleans.

James Hargrove (B.S., '95)

James Hargrove has been named a partner at Wegmann Dazet, a certified public accounting firm with offices in Metairie and Covington, Louisiana. Hargrove earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of New Orleans.

Kelvin Harrison, Jr. (B.A., '95)

Kelvin Harrison is the co-star in the musical film "Cyrano," an adaptation of Cyrano de Bergerac. Harrison plays the tongue-tied young French soldier Christian de Neuvillette, who falls in love with the lovely Roxanne. The movie opened in theaters in early 2022. Harrison earned a bachelor's degree in music from the University of New Orleans.

George Herrera (M.B.A., '94)

George Herrera has been appointed executive vice president of donor services at MTF Biologics, a global nonprofit organization in Edison, New Jersey.

Herrera joined MTF Biologics in 1997 as a regional director of Donor Services and most recently served as vice president, Donor Services.

Prior to MTF Biologics, Herrera was the director of development at Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency, where he was in charge of donor development and tissue sales and marketing. He also was director of development and public relations at the National Kidney Foundation of Louisiana.

Herrera earned his MBA from the University of New Orleans.



Jill Knight Nalty (M.B.A., '93)

Jill Knight Nalty has been promoted to New Orleans market president of Argent Financial Group's flagship subsidiary, Argent Trust Company. Nalty will be responsible for directing and managing the New Orleans team.

Since 2019, Nalty has served as business development officer at Argent. Prior to joining Argent, she had more than 13 years' experience of banking experience in New Orleans with Hibernia National Bank and First Commerce Corporation.

Nalty earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from Louisiana State University and an MBA in business administration from the University of New Orleans.



2000s

David M. Boudreaux (B.S., '96)

David M. Boudreaux has been elected board chairman of the St. Tammany Chamber of Commerce. Boudreaux earned a bachelor's degree in business management from the University of New Orleans.

Chanel Christoff Davis (B.S., '96)

Chanel Christoff Davis, a partner at the sales tax consulting firm Davis Davis & Harmon, LLC in Dallas, Texas, was named by The Network Journal business magazine as one of 25 Influential Black Women in Business for 2021. Davis earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of New Orleans.

Kiki Baker Barnes (B.S., '97)

Kiki Baker Barnes was featured as one of Sports Illustrated's 100 Influential Black Women in Sports. Barnes, who played basketball at the University of New Orleans, is the athletic director at Dillard University in New Orleans. Barnes earned a bachelor's degree in general studies from UNO.

Allison A. Civello (M.S., '97)

Allison A. Civello has been promoted to senior manager at Wegmann Dazet, a certified public accounting firm with offices in Metairie and Covington, Louisiana. Civello earned a master's degree in accounting from the University of New Orleans.

Christian Dean (B.A., '98, M.Ed., '00, Ph.D., '04)

Christian Dean has published "Metaphors in Counselor Education and Supervision", now available through Routledge. Dean is a clinical faculty member in the clinical mental health counseling program at Southern New Hampshire University. He also has a private practice in Baton Rouge, Louisiana at Counseling for Growth, LLC.

Crystal Monique Guillemet (B.A., '00)

Crystal Monique Guillemet was selected as Zulu's Queen of Carnival 2022.

As queen, Guillemet reigned over The Zulu Social & Pleasure Club's Mardi Gras parade on March 1 in New Orleans. Guillemet earned a bachelor's degree in general studies from the University of New Orleans and an MBA in health administration from the University of Phoenix. She is the marketing and communication director for medicine administration at Tulane University's School of Medicine.

Desmond Crayton (M.A., '02)

Desmond Crayton has been named the new executive director of Park Place Outreach Youth Emergency Services in Chatham County, Georgia. Crayton earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from Dillard University and a master's degree in sociology from the University of New Orleans.

Megan Haggerty (B.A., '02)

Megan Haggerty is the new director of development for the Northshore Humane Society in St. Tammany Parish, Louisiana. Haggerty earned a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of New Orleans.

Richard Tullier (B.S., '02, M.S., '04)

Richard Tullier has been named a partner at Wegmann Dazet, a certified public accounting firm with offices in Metairie and Covington, Louisiana. Tullier earned a bachelor's and master's degree in accounting from the University of New Orleans.

Skylar L. Primm (B.S., '02)

Skylar L. Primm was named the Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education's 2021 Formal Environmental Educator of the Year in November. Primm, who earned a bachelor's degree in geology from the University of New Orleans and a master's degree in geology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, is a co-lead teacher at High Marq Environmental Charter School in Montello, Wisconsin.

Lucas Diaz-Medina (M.F.A., '03)

Lucas Diaz-Medina was the winner of the Vocal+Fiction Award for his story "Gone Fishing." The story was published in the inaugural Vocal anthology of short stories. Medina earned a master's degree in film from the University of New Orleans.

Will McLean (Ph.D., '03)

Will McLean has been appointed associate vice chancellor for faculty relations at Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, Arkansas. McLean earned a doctorate in political science from the University of New Orleans.

Melissa Bradberry Sims (M.S., '04)

Melissa Bradberry Sims is the hotel manager for the iconic Beverly Wilshire, a Four Seasons Hotel that opened in 1928 and served as the backdrop for the 1990 blockbuster movie "Pretty Woman" starring Julia Roberts and Richard Gere. Sims earned a master's degree in hotel, restaurant and tourism administration from the University of New Orleans. ☒

Tatiana A. Julien (B.S., '17)

Tatiana A. Julien is a pilot for the Louisiana Army National Guard and is the first Black female pilot for the Louisiana Army National Guard.

Julien enlisted in 2014 and graduated from Warrant Officer Candidate School in August 2019. She finished flight school in July 2021 and is a UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter pilot in the 1-244th Assault Helicopter Battalion in Hammond, Louisiana.

Julien earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of New Orleans.



Titiana Frausto (B.A., '04)

Judge Titiana Frausto won her first full term in office in March. Frausto, who earned a bachelor's degree in political science from the University of New Orleans, was initially appointed to the 181st District Court seat by Texas Gov. Greg Abbott in 2020.

Frausto is the first woman and first African American judge of that district.

Frausto, of Amarillo, is an attorney and shareholder at the Underwood Law Firm, P.C. She is the immediate past president of the Panhandle Family Law Association and a member of the Amarillo Area Bar Association and the Texas Association of Defense Counsel. She is president of the Amarillo Art Institute, board member of the Opportunity School, and a volunteer and mentor for Project Safe Neighborhoods.



2010s

Adel Sharkas (Ph.D., '04)

Adel Sharkas has been appointed the new governor of the Central Bank of Jordan. He earned a doctorate in financial economics from the University of New Orleans.

Stephen Williams (M.S., '06)

Stephen Williams received NASA's prestigious Space Flight Awareness Team Award for demonstrating exemplary teamwork in support of NASA's Human Spaceflight Program. Williams is the international operations and logistics lead for NASA's Cargo Mission Contract at Johnson Space Center for Leidos in Houston, Texas. Williams earned a master's degree in engineering management from the University of New Orleans.

Allyson Balara (M.Ed., '08)

Allyson Balara has been promoted to assistant director of the child and family team at Elevate Counseling Services in Easton, Massachusetts. Balara earned a master's degree in education from the University of New Orleans.

Nicole Jolley (B.S., '08)

Nicole Jolley has been promoted to assistant vice president- nonprofit and human services for Church Mutual Insurance Company. Jolley earned a bachelor's degree in finance from the University of New Orleans and a master's in business administration from Xavier University in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Marshall Carby (M.F.A., '11)

Marshall Carby has been named executive director at Flatwater Shakespeare theater in Omaha, Nebraska. Carby earned a master's degree in film and theatre from the University of New Orleans.

Natasha A. Corb (B.S., '11)

Natasha A. Corb has been named a partner in the New Orleans law firm of MG+M. Corb earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of New Orleans and her JD from the Paul M. Herbert Law Center at Louisiana State University.

Christopher L. Torres (B.A., '11)

Christopher L. Torres has been promoted to manager II at Wegmann Dazet, a certified public accounting firm with offices in Metairie and Covington, Louisiana. Torres earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of New Orleans.

Brittani Adams-Perret (B.S., '13)

Brittani Adams-Perret has opened a new restaurant in New Orleans called Barrilleaux's, with her mother and aunt. Perret earned a bachelor's degree in hotel, restaurant and tourism administration.

Lori B. Jackson (B.S., '11, M.B.A., '15)

Lori B. Jackson is the new director of the Women's Business Resource Center for the Urban League of Louisiana. Jackson earned a bachelor's degree in business management and master's in business administration from the University of New Orleans.

Jenny M. Savely (M.A., '11)

Jenny M. Savely has been hired as the new city planner for the city of Tupelo, Mississippi. She is a certified community development practitioner with a bachelor's degree from Mississippi College and a master's degree in sociology from the University of New Orleans.

Kyle M. Lawson (M.B.A., '11)

Kyle M. Lawson is an owner of Garver, an employee-owned engineering, planning, architecture and environmental services firm with offices in New Orleans. He is also the chief financial officer. Lawson earned a bachelor's degree from LSU and a master's degree in business administration from the University of New Orleans.

Samantha Renard (B.S., '12, M.S. '15)

Samantha Renard is a system's engineer with the Arkansas Valley Electric Cooperative in Little Rock and is the first woman engineer at the cooperative. Renard earned a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering and a master's degree in engineering management from the University of New Orleans.

Rouglas Odor (B.S., '12)

Rouglas Odor was named Double-A Northeast League manager of the year. He is the manager for the Akron Rubber Ducks, which is part of Cleveland's minor league. The team won the AA championship last year. Odor earned a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of New Orleans.

Eric Bettis (M.U.R.P., '14)

Eric Bettis has been awarded an Eisenhower Transportation Fellowship from the Federal Highway Administration in support of his doctoral dissertation. Bettis earned a master's degree in planning from the University of New Orleans, with an emphasis on transportation and land use policy.

Dr. Alison Rodriguez (B.S., '95)

Dr. Alison Rodriguez has been hired to lead the OB hospitalist program at Woman's Hospital in Baton Rouge. Rodriguez is a board-certified OB-GYN with more than two decades of clinical experience.

She comes to Baton Rouge from Ochsner Baptist in New Orleans, where she served on the OB hospitalist team for four years and as the team lead during her last year. Prior to that, Rodriguez worked in private practice in Texas for 14 years.

She earned a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of New Orleans and a medical degree from LSU School of Medicine in New Orleans.



Ashwin Vilku (B.S., '07, M.S., '15)

Ashwin Vilku was selected as one the Rising Stars of 2021 by Junior Achievement of Greater New Orleans. Vilku is the chef and owner of SaffronNOLA, a popular New Orleans restaurant.

Within a year of its opening, the restaurant was among 18 semifinalists nominated for the prestigious James Beard culinary award. In 2019, SaffronNOLA was the invited restaurant to cook at the Beard House, a private fundraising dining event hosted by the James Beard Foundation.

Vilku is a double alumnus who earned an undergraduate and graduate degree in business administration from the University of New Orleans.



2020s

Brandy Campbell (IDS, '15)

Brandy Campbell is starting a new job as a multimedia journalist based in Miami, Florida for FOX Weather. Campbell holds a degree in interdisciplinary studies from the University of New Orleans.

Treva Brown (Ph.D., '17)

Treva Brown is a chemist with the Naval Research Laboratory's Ocean Sciences Division at NASA's Stennis Space Center in Mississippi. Brown, who earned a doctorate in chemistry, was recently featured on the T.V. show "Finding Adventure."

Nate Frye (B.S., '17)

Nate Frye has opened "The Den of Alpha Omega" training gym in Houma, Louisiana. Frye earned a bachelor's degree in human performance and health promotion from the University of New Orleans.

Hez Randolph (B.S., '17)

Hez Randolph has been hired as minor league on-field hitting coach by Tampa Bay Rays. Randolph earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of New Orleans.

Scott Plaisance, Jr. (B.S., '18)

Scott Plaisance, Jr. recently signed with the London Lightning for the 2022 National Basketball League of Canada season. Plaisance earned a bachelor's degree in human performance and health promotion from the University of New Orleans.

Geovane Santos (M.A., '18)

Geovane Santos has released a new album with Carl LeBlanc called "Purple House." Santos earned a master's degree in music from the University of New Orleans.

James Weber (B.A., '18, M.A., '20)

James Weber is the front man for the indie pop band Keen Dreams, which has released its first album, "The Second Body." Weber earned a bachelor's and master's degree in history from the University of New Orleans.

Leah Myers, (M.F.A., '21)

Leah Myers, who earned a master's degree from the University of New Orleans Creative Writing Workshop, has sold her novel, "Thinning Blood," to the New York publishing company, W.W. Norton & Company.

Anna Laura Quinn (M.A., '21)

Anna Laura Quinn has released a new album, "Open the Door." Quinn earned a master's degree in music from the University of New Orleans.

Brandon M. Samuels (B.S., '10, M.B.A., '14)

Brandon M. Samuels was honored with the Black Engineer of the Year Award (BEYA) STEM Conference's Modern-Day Technology Leader Award for his work as electrical engineering manager at Textron Systems in New Orleans.

Each year, the BEYA STEM Conference honors the work of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics professionals in their industries. Samuels currently leads a team of engineers focused on Textron's Marine and Land Systems.

Samuels earned a bachelor's degree in engineering and an M.B.A. from the University of New Orleans.



TELL US YOUR NEWS!



DID YOU: Get married? Get a new job? Receive an award? Have a baby? Send your Alum Note to alumni@uno.edu

Love on the Lakefront

For a special Valentine's Day social media series, we asked alumni to share their "Love on the Lakefront" stories with us. They answered with humor, nostalgia, pride—and most definitely, LOVE! Here are some of the stories and pictures from our #UNOPROUD community who found love on the lakefront.



Tilden and Karen Martin Greenbaum

As told by Karen: "My husband and I met at UNO—actually LSUNO at the time—on 11/12/1965.

Tilden Greenbaum was in Theta Xi Fraternity and I, Karen Martin Greenbaum, was in Sigma Kappa Sorority. We met when the two organizations had a fraternity/sorority

exchange party and Tilden and another fraternity member picked me up at my home, as rides to the party were offered for any who were not already dating or otherwise coming with someone.

That first encounter was it for both of us—neither of us ever dated anyone else, and we married four years later after I graduated. It was a magical time in the early years of the university. The barracks buildings were still on campus, before there was even a student union, and they provided a close and intimate setting for gathering.

We celebrate 53 years of marriage this year."



Megan and Vidal Loiseau

As told by Megan: "One of my best friends set us up on a blind date after I told her I'd be attending UNO in the fall of 2015. We spent our first date as a couple riding bikes on the lakeshore. We spent our late nights all four years studying together in the engineering building and sneaking pizza into the study labs in the library lol! We worked long hours in the

restaurants of Magazine Street and indulged in all the jazz music Frenchman Street had to offer.

We now have two beautiful children and recently relocated to Salt Lake City, Utah for Vidal's job.

Without UNO and the magic of New Orleans, we would've never created the amazing life we have together. Privateers forever!

I graduated 2017 and he graduated 2019."



Neil and Brittany Chatelain

As told by Brittany: Neil Chatelain ('09) and I (Brittany Oliva-Chatelain ('09)) actually met in high school. We knew each other through friends but weren't close. We would run into each other around the library or at the Galley in the UC throughout our years there. As luck would have it, we both had the same lunch break

time every day for our last two semesters, and he had lots of money to spend on food from the Decennial scholarship. Over the course of that last year, we grew to be best friends. We both had big plans after graduation and went our separate ways. He went into the Navy and moved to Norfolk. I went to grad school for a PhD at Rice in Houston.

When we got to our respective places, we realized we loved each other and started a long distance relationship. We have since been married for over 10 years and live in Houston with our cat (Bunsen) and dog (Mouton). Without UNO, I don't know what our lives would be today! Special shout out to post Katrina UNO, y'all were clutch!"

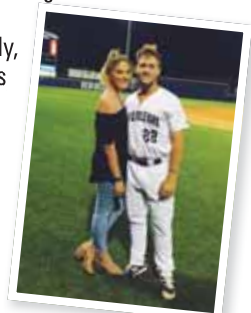


Shawn and Kailee Semple

As told by Kailee: "My name is Kailee Semple, and I recently married Shawn Semple on November 13th, 2021. We met at the University of New Orleans in 2016. I moved to New Orleans for school from Little Rock, AR., and Shawn came to UNO on a baseball scholarship from Swedesboro, New Jersey.

UNO holds such a special place in our heart because it is the thing that brought us together. We came

from opposite ends of the country to a small commuter school, and the rest is history. Sadly, we no longer live in New Orleans; Shawn was drafted by the Yankees in 2017, and I moved home after school. We have the fondest memories from our years there, and are so thankful for the opportunities UNO gave us both personally and professionally. We are so honored to be alumni of such a great school!"





Dariana Balladares and Francisco Gadea

As told by Dariana: "We were both going to the same building, the college of business, Kirshman Hall. I was going for marketing, and he was going for accounting. However, (we) never saw each other. We met through a mutual friend. We both graduated from UNO, and years later he asked me out.

Six months later he was my boyfriend. A year after he became my boyfriend, he asked me to marry him and we have been married for three years now.

Found love at UNO! We are both from

Nicaragua, and we currently live in Houston."

Steve Kinchen, Jr. and Karli Mehrstens

As told by Steve: "Karli and I met our freshman year in Math 1115, and had our first date in the UC over Subway sandwiches! We spent countless hours in the library watching movies in the midst of cramming for exams, and loved spending time outside walking around campus talking about anything!

We have been dating for almost four years now! I graduated fall of 2021, and Karli will be graduating fall of 2022! We are so grateful for UNO providing the opportunity for this love to flourish."



LaMaria Phillips and Cordell Stewart

As told by LaMaria: "My name is LaMaria Phillips and my partner is Cordell Stewart. We both graduated in Fall 2020.

Cordell and I first met in the University Center in 2017 and became good friends. I became Homecoming Queen in 2019 and I asked him to be my escort for the big game. We had such a great time together, and a week later, he asked me to be his girlfriend at the Sandbar. We've been together since."



Bertrand and Brandy Sausse

As told by Bert, who says he unintentionally asked Brandy out on a date in the fall of 1996 at a Greek life event—even though he was interested in another woman in Brandy's sorority.

"We went out on that date that Saturday to a comedy club and had an AMAZING time together. I had not planned on this but at the end of the night I kissed her goodnight. It blew me away and I didn't want to stop... EVER! So, I didn't! We've now been together for almost 26 years and married 23. And it was all because I 'accidentally' asked her out on a date standing on the library quad."



Caleigh and Patrick McKinnie

As told by Caleigh: "We only ever played couples in the shows we were in at UNO. Turns out, we had chemistry! Five years after meeting in the theatre graduate program, we got married and now we have two beautiful children and live in Virginia. We owe our whole

life to the University of New Orleans! We are #UNOproud forever."

Caleigh and Patrick McKinnie, class of 2012.



Nohelia Gonzale and Allan Vijil

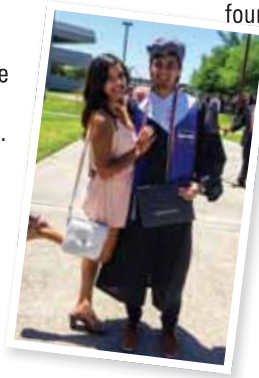
As told by Nohelia: "Allan and I met fall 2015 when we were members of the UNO Latin American Student Association. We

found that we're both

from Honduras, two goofballs, and are often

described as the male/female versions of each other. UNO holds a special place in our hearts not only because we're both alumni but also because it's the place where we share some of our best memories together.

Allan Vijil graduated spring 2017 and I graduated Fall 2017. I'm now studying again at UNO for my master's and will be graduating this Spring 2022." 🌟



THEN AND NOW



Ahoy, mate! This Is Your Captain

THE MASCOT ON THE LAKEFRONT HAS UNDERGONE some changes over the years. In this vintage photograph from the late 1970s or early 1980s, the University's mascot was styled in the mold of swashbuckling French pirate and privateer Jean Lafitte, who stamped his legacy in New Orleans as he traversed the Gulf. In 2017 the University introduced a new version of the mascot—Captain BrUNO—more privateer than pirate.

Despite the costume change, as you can see, the saber remains. Swords Up, Privateers! 🏴‍☠️



CELEBRATING 60 YEARS OF UNO GRADUATES

IN JUNE OF 1962, 116 excited seniors were awarded their diplomas to become the first graduating class of the University of New Orleans.

Six decades on, the University of New Orleans has grown, but one thing has not changed - our commitment to providing a high-quality and accessible education.

This commitment has enabled generations of hard working, determined students to achieve their dreams, transform their lives, and make a big impact on their local and global communities, through a UNO degree.

Help celebrate 60 years of UNO graduates with a gift to UNO First. UNO First is the University's annual fund which supports all aspects of the student experience by providing flexibility to respond to challenges and opportunities as they arise.

Show your Privateer Pride and put UNO First with a gift today!

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