

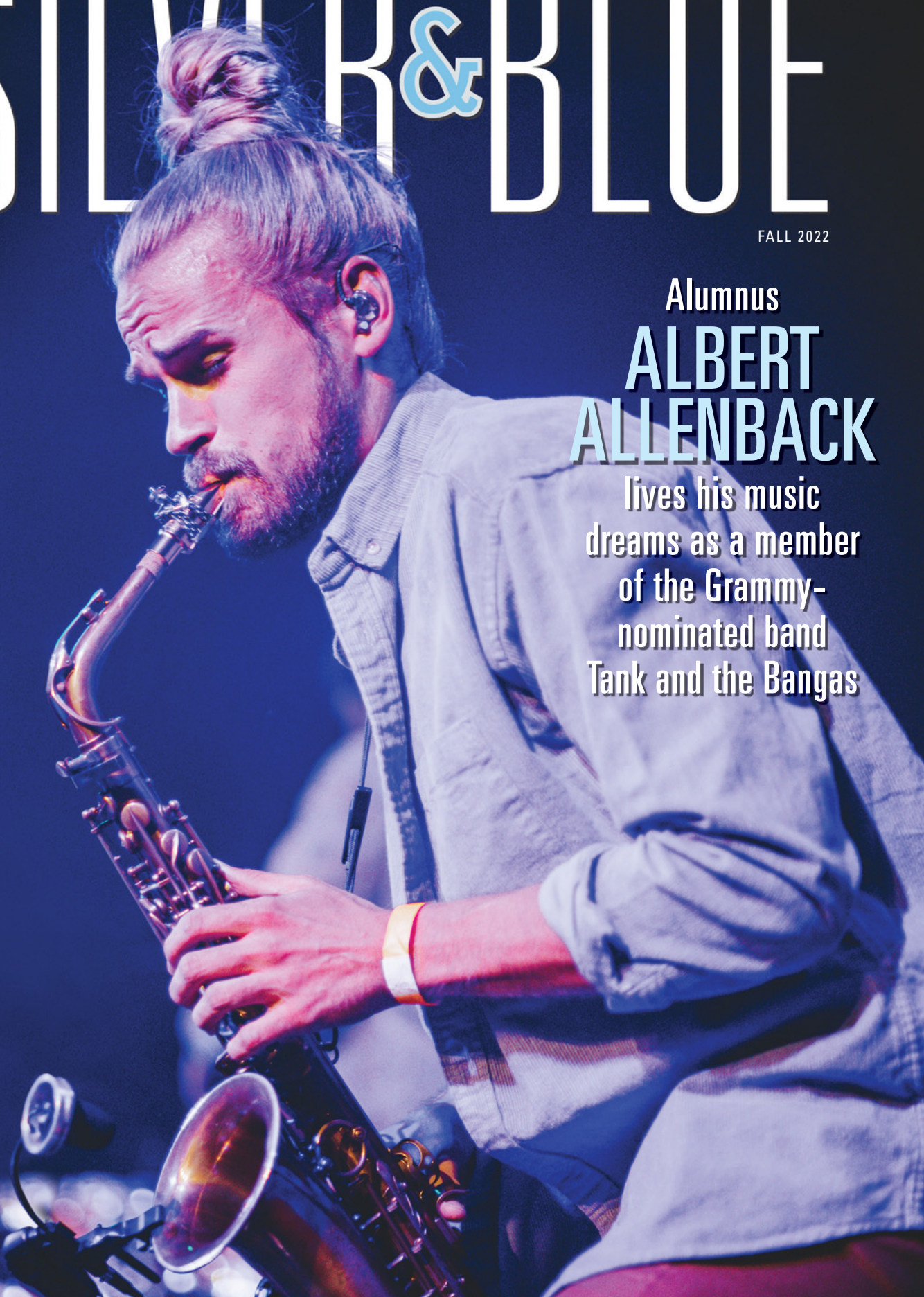
A PUBLICATION FOR ALUMNI, STUDENTS AND FRIENDS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS

SILVER & BLUE

FALL 2022

Alumnus
**ALBERT
ALLENBACK**

lives his music
dreams as a member
of the Grammy-
nominated band
Tank and the Bangas





THE UNIVERSITY of NEW ORLEANS
SUCZAO



FIRST LOOK

Crawfish, music and fun were all on the table as UNO celebrated in April the 35th year of SUCbAUF on the Lakefront!







UNO team members Emily Gallo and Elizabeth Williams join Austrian researcher Reinhard Samitz and Alpine rescue guide Heinz Lechler at a screening station in the mountains of southern Austria.

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DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS:

MORE THAN SIX DECADES AGO, THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS WAS FOUNDED from a manifest need and with a clear mission: provide accessible and high-quality public education to the population of greater New Orleans. Through the years, the University has evolved and innovated to continue to serve our city, as well as students from around the state, the nation and the globe. To say that our region would be diminished without the presence of the University of New Orleans would be a colossal understatement. A UNO degree doesn't just prepare students for their professions. In many cases, it alters the trajectory of their lives. It puts them on a new path to stability and prosperity. It elevates their families. It can even transform entire communities. That is why the University is so vitally important.

We now have an opportunity to expand our mission by serving even more students and delivering an even better student experience. This fall we announced the public phase of the University's first-ever comprehensive fundraising campaign. Entitled "Next is Now," this \$50 million campaign will accelerate transformative change in four priority areas: investing in students, building for the future, creating bold academic programs and cultivating our knowledge. A significant portion of our efforts are focused around the first priority through student scholarships. I firmly believe that talent is distributed evenly throughout our communities, but opportunity is not. Our goal is to make a UNO education accessible to more Privateers by reducing financial barriers and supporting students throughout their academic journey.

Fortunately, we have already seen just how much our alumni and friends value our institution. Due to their generosity, we have made significant progress toward our campaign goal. For university presidents, fundraising can be one of the most challenging facets of the job. I spend a lot of

my time on it. But as the President of the University of New Orleans, it never feels like a chore. I thoroughly enjoy connecting with our alumni and partners, and our value proposition is unambiguous and overwhelmingly persuasive. I never have to convince our graduates that UNO is a worthwhile investment. They know that it is. They have experienced it.

This campaign will help our university reach its full potential. I am energized by the prospect of that. I hope you are, too. My request of our supporters is simple: if you or a loved one has benefitted from a University of New Orleans education, please consider paying it forward. I will, of course, be extremely grateful. But more importantly, you will help our current and future students realize their dreams. I can hardly think of a more noble act.

UNO Proud,
John Nicklow
PRESIDENT

 @UNOPresidentJN  @unopresident

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THE UNIVERSITY of NEW ORLEANS

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CAMPUS SCENE

HEADLINES AND HAPPENINGS

*INSIDE
SPRING
COMMENCEMENT*

SUCBAUF

EARTH DAY 2022

PUPPIES AND PIZZA

*NEW STUDENT
MOVE-IN*

*TRADING LAB
OPENS*

SPRING COMMENCEMENT

CBS News award-winning journalist and University of New Orleans alumna Michelle Miller delivered the keynote commencement address to spring undergraduates in May. Miller, who earned a master's degree in urban studies from UNO, previously worked at WWL-TV, the local CBS affiliate in New Orleans. She's a co-host of "CBS Saturday Morning."

Miller's commencement address reflected the persistence, hopes and optimism that many graduates expressed as they waited to march across the stage. She also encouraged them to work hard and dream big.

"Don't be afraid to fail," Miller said. "Success is not a straight line."





SUCbAUF

The soulful sound of music and shouts of laughter entwined with the scent of crawfish, corn and potatoes in late April as the University of New Orleans and the Student Activities Council (SAC) hosted its 35th annual SUCbAUF, a free crawfish boil for students.

SUCbAUF (pronounced suck-off), which also included a 40-foot alligator slide, a rideable shark, an inflatable obstacle course and mechanical surf board, was held in the University Center's parking lot and marked the return of the in-person event.



EARTH DAY 2022

UNO celebrated Earth Day under the breezeway of the Earl K. Long Library on April 22 with events that included a birding tour led by the “Birding at UNO” group. Many other organizations, such as the UNO Garden Club, the Native Plant Initiative, and Bayou Sauvage, set up informational booths.





PUPPIES AND PIZZA

On National Puppy Day in March, a few furry friends visited campus for an adorable de-stressing activity courtesy of Student Affairs and Jefferson Protection & Animal Welfare Services (JPAWS). Oh, and there was free pizza!



NEW STUDENT MOVE-IN

One of the coolest traditions of the year—New Student Move-In! The UNO Move-In Krewe, made up of University of New Orleans administrators, faculty, staff and returning students, helped freshmen and new transfer students move into Pontchartrain Hall.



Kali & Sushila Mukherjee Trading Lab



THE KALI AND SUSHILA MUKHERJEE TRADING LAB OPENS AT UNO

University of New Orleans President John Nicklow (left) and finance professor Tarun Mukherjee (right) cut the ribbon during a ceremony for the opening of the Kali and Sushila Mukherjee Trading Lab that honors his parents. Mukherjee donated \$50,000 for the creation of a student-managed investment fund that also bears their names, as well as \$50,000 for the lab.

The lab, located in Kirschman Hall that is home to the College of Business Administration, is designed to give students real-world experience in portfolio management. 🌐



NEWS & EVENTS

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS GETS \$1.2 MILLION NSF GRANT TO CREATE CENTER FOR EQUITY AND DIVERSITY IN ENGINEERING

The University of New Orleans has received a \$1.2 million National Science Foundation grant to create a Center for Equity and Diversity in Engineering. The new center will foster the educational and professional development of a diverse engineering talent pool at the only

public metropolitan research university in the state.

“The United States has declined in global prominence in the areas of science and engineering, in part due to the existence of barriers that prevent access to and success in post-secondary STEM

education,” says UNO President John Nicklow, a professor of civil engineering and the principal investigator on the grant. “For students from historically underrepresented groups, those barriers can often be insurmountable. This center will work to provide pathways

for those students to address the need for a more diverse and inclusive engineering workforce in the region.”

The Center for Equity and Diversity in Engineering within UNO’s Dr. Robert A. Savoie College of Engineering will target four specific goals:

- Improve the diversity of UNO’s engineering enrollment to better reflect the metro area’s demographics;

- increase the first-year retention rate among historically underrepresented engineering students;
- improve the graduation rate of

historically underrepresented engineering students; and

- increase the percentage of engineering graduates who are women.

The center will serve all engineering students and faculty but will give special focus to improving recruitment, retention, and degree completion of women and engineers from historically underrepresented racial and ethnic groups.

In order to achieve the center’s goals, the University will recruit a diverse engineering student body and faculty, implement effective and equitable academic support programs, and establish an engineering learning community that builds a culture of confidence, belonging and pride.

The University of New Orleans is well-positioned to undertake this initiative. The Dr. Robert A. Savoie College of Engineering offers the only civil, electrical and mechanical engineering programs in metro New Orleans, and the Boysie Bollinger School of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering is one of the few such programs in the nation.



The Center for Equity and Diversity in Engineering will be housed within UNO’s Dr. Robert A. Savoie College of Engineering.



BIENVILLE HALL DEMOLITION MAKES WAY FOR KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADUATE SCHOOL EDUCATION ON UNO'S CAMPUS

BIENVILLE HALL, AN 8-STORY residence hall on Leon C. Simon Drive that housed thousands of University of New Orleans students for nearly four decades, was demolished

in August. A new Hynes-UNO K-8 Charter School is planned for that location.

Built in 1969 and damaged by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, students had not occupied

Bienville Hall since 2007, the year they were moved into the newly constructed Pontchartrain Halls.

Once Hynes is built, kindergarten through gradu-

ate school public education will be available on a single campus, encompassing Benjamin Franklin High School and the University of New Orleans.

UNO STUDENT STARTUP COMPETITION OFFERS \$10K IN PRIZES AND MENTORSHIPS

STARTUP UNO, THE University of New Orleans' first-ever student startup competition, will offer \$10,000 in prizes. The contest is organized by The Beach at UNO, the University's 30-acre research and technology park located adjacent to campus.

StartupUNO is a pitch competition open to all current UNO students with an idea for a new product, service or business and is designed to provide feedback and mentorship to accepted student teams to help move their idea to the market.

As part of the competition, student teams will meet one-on-one with the innovation team at The Beach at UNO to gain valuable feedback on their ideas and receive mentorship on how to pitch to investors. Additionally, seminars on building a startup and presenting to investors will be provided for the selected participants.

StartupUNO will culminate with a live pitch competition in November when students will receive guidance from investors and industry professionals who

will serve as judges and award teams \$10,000 in prizes.

"We are excited to launch StartupUNO and create a new tradition of celebrating UNO student entrepreneurs," says Shafin Khan, vice president of external affairs and innovation at The Beach at UNO. "Entrepreneurs can dream up new products and services from all backgrounds, so we're looking forward to showcasing students from across UNO's campus."



The University of New Orleans' student startup competition is organized by The Beach at UNO.



TOP: The University of New Orleans is among seven universities that recently completed the Keep Louisiana Beautiful certification program. As part of Earth Day in April, a birding tour was held on campus. ABOVE, LEFT: Keep UNO Beautiful and the UNO Office of Research funded a student art project that transformed an otherwise nondescript set of utility doors into a vibrant and poignant art installation drawing attention to local birds affected by climate change. Kathy Rodriguez, assistant professor of fine arts at UNO, offered to incorporate the mural as a class project in her Painting II course.

UNO IS A MEMBER OF KEEP LA. BEAUTIFUL INAUGURAL CLASS OF UNIVERSITY AFFILIATES

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans is a member of the Keep Louisiana Beautiful inaugural class of university affiliates that recently completed the organization's certification program for student environmental stewardship.

Keep Louisiana Beautiful (KLB) is a nonprofit focused on community improvement through litter prevention, environmental education and beautification.

"Partnering with Keep Louisiana Beautiful in the inaugural university affiliate program has provided UNO with a network of sister institutions who can share resources. We can work together to engage our students in environmental stewardship and sustainability practices,"

says Carol Lunn, assistant vice president for research and economic development.

"The certification process introduced us to the impressive library of tools and programs offered by Keep Louisiana Beautiful. In one year, they walked us through a litter audit, waste audit and hosting a Love the Boot Challenge."

UNO has environmentally-focused research centers and professors who teach students about green infrastructure and other environmentally sustainable practices, Lunn says.

"Those best practices should be showcased in our operating and maintenance practices," Lunn says. "UNO's campus can serve as a living lab for teaching and research opportunities that provide

experiential learning opportunities for our students. Making our campus more environmentally sustainable makes good business sense when projects focus on operations and maintenance to reduce cost, beautify the campus and improve health."

The KLB university affiliate program, engaging college students in environmental stewardship and sustainability practices, is now the largest and most successful program of its kind in the U.S., according to KLB officials.

California has the only other collegiate program, with two universities participating.

"We couldn't be more impressed with our first class of university affiliates," says Cabell Mouton, affiliate and grant

director for KLB. "Our goal was to onboard three universities our first year, and the fact that we have seven speaks to the energy and dedication universities are directing toward sustainability, waste reduction, and litter prevention."

Other members of the first graduating class include Grambling State University, LSU, Nicholls State University, Tulane University, University of Louisiana at Lafayette and Xavier University.

"Working with the team at Keep Louisiana Beautiful and learning about all the progress for environmental stewardship across Louisiana has been an uplifting experience," Lunn says. "I look forward to an exciting second year!"

GDIT OPENS NEW OFFICE AT THE BEACH AT UNO

GENERAL DYNAMICS Information Technology (GDIT), a business unit of General Dynamics, opened its new office at The Beach at the University of New Orleans. A ribbon-cutting event was held in June to celebrate the opening.

The facility will initially support 50 new jobs with additional positions expected as operations expand in the region. GDIT will also use the new space to collaborate with university partners and develop cutting edge IT solutions for the U.S. Navy.

Currently, GDIT is partnering with the U.S. Navy on the Navy Enterprise Service Desk, a four-year, \$136 million indefinite delivery, indefinite quantity contract to modernize and consolidate existing IT help desks. The program, which is co-located in New Orleans and Bossier City, Louisiana, leverages the latest in artificial intelligence, machine learning, predictive analytics, and natural language processing to ensure daily, 24-hour continuous operations for thousands of Navy personnel globally.

"New Orleans has served as the strategic hub for the naval community for more than 50 years," says Brian Sheridan, GDIT's senior vice president for defense. "We see a great opportunity to continue our support for the Navy's mission and grow

our footprint and impact in the region. Our investment in the community will also strengthen our partnership with the University of New Orleans to drive innovation."

GDIT is committed to educating, training and developing the New Orleans technology workforce. The company has formed partnerships with local companies, small businesses and academic institutions, including the University of New Orleans, to cultivate the IT innovators of tomorrow and build a talent pipeline through internship opportunities and mentorship programs.

"GDIT has been a leading innovator in technology and IT for many years, and we are excited about their regional expansion to The Beach at UNO," says UNO President John Nicklow. "UNO is committed to supporting GDIT with a robust workforce pipeline of our talented students to staff the company's current expansion, as well as its future growth."

The new office, GDIT's fifth location in Louisiana, allows the company to deepen its roots in the state. With an existing flagship location in Bossier City, Louisiana, the company is supporting some of the nation's most critical mission needs in cloud, cyber, artificial intelligence, application development and service desk operations.

Officials cut the ribbon on GDIT's new office at The Beach at UNO, which will bring 50 new local jobs.



news in brief



Catherine Russell

British Researcher Awarded Fulbright Scholarship to Study at UNO

Catherine Russell, a British geologist who earned a doctorate in fluvial sedimentology, has been awarded a Fulbright Scholarship by the US-UK Fulbright Commission to broaden her studies at the University of New Orleans.

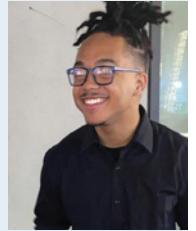
Russell, who has lectured in sedimentology and Earth surface processes, is interested in human impacts on rivers and their landscapes, including plastic pollution. She will work with Robert Mahon, a geologist and assistant professor of earth and environmental sciences at UNO. Russell also will give several guest lectures in the earth and environmental sciences department, as well as in civil engineering, said Mark Kulp, earth and environmental sciences professor and department chair.

UNO Students Selected For UL System's Scholar Leadership Program

University of New Orleans students Brandon Everett and Brandon "Blue" Irvin Jr. have been selected for the University of Louisiana System's Reginald F. Lewis



Brandon Everett



Brandon "Blue" Irvin Jr.

Scholars program. Each year, 18 rising sophomores are chosen based on academic merit, financial need and demonstrated leadership skills.

The three-year program, created in 2021, is designed to enhance the collegiate experience of Black male students enrolled in the UL System's nine universities. The students are provided educational programs, mentoring opportunities and co-curricular experiences, including a chance to study abroad during their junior year in college.

Doctoral Student Awarded Environmental Research Internship

As South Louisiana and other coastal regions geared up for the 2022 hurricane season, University of New Orleans student Md Mohiuddin Sakib spent the summer researching ways to combat the environmental impact of such storms.

Sakib, a doctoral student in earth and environmental sciences, was awarded a 10-week paid internship at the Water Institute of the Gulf within the Coastal and Deltaic Systems Modeling Department.

Sakib's research focuses on numerical process-based models. Numerical modeling enables researchers to simulate large-scale experiments that would be too costly or impossible to perform on a real coastal area.



Md Mohiuddin Sakib

UNO's eSports Teams Place First in State Tournament

The University of New Orleans eSports team earned first-place in three events during the Spring 2022 State Intramural Tournament and Conference held at Northwestern State University in April.

Four UNO teams competed in the eSports discipline at the state tournament, which also included competitions for soccer, slow-pitch softball and basketball.

UNO launched its eSports program in October with the opening of a new on-campus eSports Café that features an array of PC, PlayStation 5 and Xbox Series X consoles. The Café is located in the Recreation & Fitness Center and serves as a hub for both recreational and competitive gamers.

AMRI SUMMER OUTREACH PROGRAM CULMINATES WITH SHARED RESEARCH

RESEARCHERS AT THE University of New Orleans shared their labs and research acumen with undergraduate and high school students this summer as part of UNO's Advanced Materials Research Institute outreach program.

The Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) is a 10-week summer program that allowed students to work in research laboratories in the departments of chemistry, physics, biology and mechanical engineering, says John Wiley, professor of chemistry and director of UNO's AMRI, a multidisciplinary materials institute that combines the interests of academic, government and industrial scientists.

The program, made possible via a \$404,800 grant from the National Science Foundation, culminated with students discussing their research that was

displayed on posters along the walls of the science building.

"What we're trying to do is give students an opportunity to do research in a real, active scientific lab," Wiley says. "They are not doing experiments that people have done a thousand times; this is new, ongoing research."

The 12 students – five college students and seven students from New Orleans high schools – were matched with their interest areas, Wiley says.

For high school students, the experience is designed to introduce them to research and possible career paths, Wiley says.

"The big impact is that it allows a student to come in and really see if this is what they want to do," he says. "It allows them to tune in or have that early insight for a career."

For undergraduate students,



the program's aim is to expose them to creating a professional resume, networking in the science community and applying to graduate school.

"We had scientists come in from government labs, from private companies and over a casual lunch, just to share their life experiences," Wiley says. "They talked about their companies and how they got to where they are. That helps with career decisions."

UNO student Gustavs Tobiss, a rising senior majoring in math and physics, says the program has given him another perspective on research and career paths.

Tobiss' project "Self folding micro-origami Using Ti/Ni thin films" applies the folding elements of origami in the construction of tiny metal films.

University of New Orleans student Avery Landeche discusses a summer research project that analyzed sea surface heights in the Gulf of Mexico.

The film could be shape to create more complex structures for uses such as delivering medicine in the body, Tobiss says.

"I found out a lot about what the process of research is like. I never thought about materials science or working in a lab," Tobiss says. "I think this is really cool now. Before I was more of a math person and now being in a lab is something I'm thinking of and working with machines. Having these big, million dollar machines you learn how to operate, it's something I can actually do instead of just reading about."

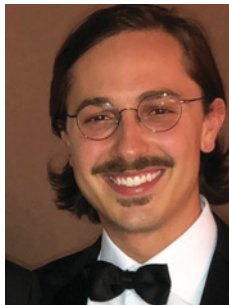
UNO STUDENT WALLACE 'SCOUT' SERPAS NAMED A 2022 FULBRIGHT STUDENT

UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans graduate student Wallace "Scout" Serpas has received a 2022 Fulbright U.S. Student Program award from the U.S. State Department and the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board.

Recipients of Fulbright awards are selected in an open, merit-based competition that considers leadership potential, academic, professional achievement and a record of service. The Fulbright Program is the U.S. government's flagship interna-

tional educational exchange program. Serpas, a student in the master's program in Romance Languages, will serve as an English teaching assistant in Colombia for the 2022-2023 academic year.

"I'm beyond excited to head to Colombia and represent the United States while teaching English as a second language,"



Wallace "Scout" Serpas

says Serpas, who is a Spanish teacher at Jesuit High School in New Orleans. "Teaching has truly opened some unique doors for me, and I hope to take advantage of this Fulbright opportunity by promoting positive language and cultural exchanges.

"I'd like to thank my professors at UNO for supporting me

throughout my MA program and providing me with the knowledge and skills I'll use in Colombia." Since 1946, the Fulbright Program has provided more than 400,000 participants from over 160 countries the opportunity to study, teach and conduct research, exchange ideas and contribute to finding solutions to shared international concerns. Fulbright alumni include 61 Nobel Prize laureates, 89 Pulitzer Prize recipients and 40 who have served as a head of state or government.

LIZETTE CHEVALIER APPOINTED DEAN OF ENGINEERING

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans has appointed Lizette Chevalier as the new dean of the Dr. Robert A. Savoie College of Engineering, following a national search. Chevalier, who has more than 25 years of experience as a faculty member, department chair, researcher and administrator, most recently served as associate provost for academic programs at Southern Illinois University.

“I am delighted to have Dr. Chevalier join the University,” says Mahyar Amouzegar, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs. “She has developed student success programs that have increased retention and enrollment while expanding access. She brings wide-ranging leadership experience in workforce development, research, industry

partnerships, and faculty support and recruitment.”

Throughout her career, Chevalier has assumed roles with progressively greater responsibility. As associate provost for academic affairs at Southern Illinois, she provided the long-term vision and management of the office charged with assuring quality academic programming. Prior to that position, she also served as acting co-provost and vice chancellor for academic affairs and associate dean for engineering education and outreach. For six years, she was chair of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Southern Illinois.

Chevalier’s interdisciplinary research is focused on watershed science and policy, environmental engineering

technology, and advances in technology-enhanced engineering education. She has garnered over \$6 million in research and education grants.

Chevalier holds a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering from Wayne State, and a master’s degree and doctorate in civil and environmental engineering, both from Michigan State. She is designated as a diplomate of the American Academy of Water Resources Engineers, which is the highest level of advanced post-license certification offered in the water resources engineering profession. She is also a fellow of the American

Society of Civil Engineers, a prestigious honor held by just 3% of ASCE members. She

previously served as commissioner and is currently a member of the executive committee for the Engineering Accreditation Commission of ABET.

The Dr. Robert A. Savoie College of Engineering offers the only

civil, electrical and mechanical engineering programs in the greater New Orleans area. Additionally, the Boysie Bollinger School of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering is the only such program in the state and one of the few in the nation.



Lizette Chevalier

SAMUEL GLADDEN APPOINTED DEAN OF THE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS, EDUCATION AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

FOLLOWING A NATIONAL search, the University of New Orleans has appointed Samuel Gladden as the new dean of the College of Liberal Arts, Education and Human Development. Gladden, who has nearly 25 years of experience as a faculty member and administrator, most recently served as associate dean of the College of Human Sciences and Humanities at the University of Houston-Clear Lake.

“I am excited to welcome Dr. Samuel Gladden to the University of New Orleans,” says Mahyar Amouzegar, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs.

“His expertise and depth of experience managing a similarly complex college are going to be invaluable as he leads the College of Liberal Arts, Education and Human Development. I look forward to working with Dr. Gladden in developing new programs for student success, faculty and staff development, and much more.”

Gladden has teaching and administrative experience in multiple states serving diverse populations, and he has led successful change management at the department, college and campus levels. He has a track record of foster-

ing internal collaboration, transparency and improved communication. In addition to serving as associate dean, he was also interim dean of the College of Human Sciences and Humanities at the University of Houston-Clear Lake, where he held the rank of professor of literature.

Prior to that, Gladden had a number of leadership roles at the University of Northern Iowa including coordinator of graduate studies

in the Department of English Language and Literature, associate head of the Department of Languages and Literatures,

acting head of the Department of Modern Languages, and special assistant to the dean of the College of Humanities, Arts and Sciences.

Gladden holds a bachelor’s degree in English from the University of Texas and

master’s and doctoral degrees in English, both from Texas A&M.



Samuel Gladden

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS LAUNCHES LOUISIANA WIND ENERGY HUB

WITH THE GOAL OF accelerating the growth of the state's wind energy innovation ecosystem, supporting emerging companies, spurring the development of novel technologies and supplying trained professionals to the rapidly expanding renewable energy sector, the University of New Orleans, in partnership with the UNO Research & Technology Foundation, has announced the launch of the Louisiana Wind Energy Hub at UNO.

The hub will be located at The Beach at UNO, the University's research and technology park.

"I am very excited to be at the forefront in creating programming and an entrepreneurial environment to support the growth of wind energy in Louisiana and the Gulf of Mexico," UNO President John Nicklow says. "The demand for training, talent development, research and business development will grow over the next few years, and the University and The Beach at UNO are perfectly positioned to support

and serve that industry."

Louisiana's 2022 climate action plan includes a goal of 5 gigawatts of offshore wind power generation by 2035, citing the availability of wind power as a potential energy resource from the Gulf of Mexico and the state's advantage as a strong offshore energy-producing state. The plan says the goal requires strategic collaboration across Louisiana state agencies and the federal government, transmission planning agencies, energy regulators, utilities and the private sector to help advance the development of offshore wind power generation.

The hub will create an atmosphere of collaboration and innovation, leveraging regional and international industry partners.

"RWE applauds the University of New Orleans and its partners for the creation of the Louisiana Wind Energy Hub at UNO. (It) places UNO at the forefront of the next energy revolution for the State of Louisiana and the nation," says Sam Eaton, executive vice president

of offshore wind development, RWE Renewables Americas. "On the heels of the historic Louisiana Climate Action Plan, which includes a goal of 5GW of offshore wind, UNO's investment in the Louisiana Wind Energy Hub will accelerate the state's leadership in clean energy and offshore wind, built upon a deep legacy in ocean energy."

RWE is one of the world's leading companies in offshore wind, active in all stages of the industry from project conception and development to construction, as well as operation and maintenance. The company's expertise has resulted in 18 wind farms in operation.

"This excellent initiative from the University of New Orleans has the potential to positively impact the transition of workforce to the emerging opportunity of offshore wind. Gulf Wind Technology values this contribution, and it aligns well with our own work on technology development," says James Martin, CEO of Gulf Wind Technology, an Avondale,

Louisiana-based company dedicated to improving the economic performance of operational wind farms and innovating in the field of rotors.

Some of the key activities that will take place at the Louisiana Wind Energy Hub at UNO, as well as other developments related to wind energy at UNO, include:

- Startup incubation support and services. The hub will provide business planning, regulatory guidance, grant development and fundraising support for startups in the wind energy field.

- Wind innovation programming. The hub will hold seminars, roundtables and networking events to connect stakeholders in the field and accelerate the offshore wind ecosystem.

- Seed technology commercialization grants. The hub will fund research at UNO to accelerate the development of translatable technologies and new intellectual property in the field of wind energy.

- UNO Wind Scholars Program. The hub will award scholarships to select UNO engineering students who take coursework relevant to offshore wind energy. The scholars will also get hands-on training through internships with an offshore wind engineering firm or developer.

- Offshore wind certificates. UNO's Professional and Continuing Education (PaCE) division is offering certificates



The Louisiana Wind Energy Hub will be housed at The Beach at UNO, the University's Research & Technology Park.

related to the offshore wind industry. Learners can now enroll in courses in Data Analytics, with real-world offshore wind energy data, and Offshore Wind Economics for Complete Beginners.

“The Louisiana Wind Energy Hub at UNO is the prime example of what can be developed through our invaluable partnership with the University and the private sector,” says Rebecca Conwell, president and CEO of the UNO Research and Technology Foundation. “We are thrilled to create an environment for students and entrepreneurs to become the leaders of offshore wind energy in Louisiana.”

Building and operating the infrastructure of the offshore wind energy sector will be worth \$109 billion to businesses in their supply chain over the next 10 years, according to a report from the Special Initiative on Offshore Wind, a group affiliated with the University of Delaware.

“Every movement needs a home,” says Michael Hecht, president and CEO of Greater New Orleans, Inc. “With the establishment of the Louisiana Wind Energy Hub at UNO, the University of New Orleans is planting a flag in the steady breeze of progress, and declaring itself an important headquarters for the rapidly growing offshore wind movement in Louisiana.”

To learn more about the Louisiana Wind Energy Hub at UNO, visit www.lawindhub.com. Professionals who are interested in collaborating with the hub may email info@lawindhub.com or call The Beach at UNO at (504) 280-2800.

CBS NEWS JOURNALIST MICHELLE MILLER TO RECEIVE 2022 UNO HOMER HITT DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI AWARD

CBS NEWS JOURNALIST Michelle Miller will receive the 2022 University of New Orleans Homer L. Hitt Distinguished Alumni Award. Additionally, Lauren Gibbs, owner and CEO of Gibbs Construction, has been named the 2022 Norma Jane Sabiston Distinguished Young Alumna of the Year.

Both will be celebrated at a gala at the National WWII Museum on Nov. 9.

“Michelle personifies the Privateer spirit of determination,” says President John Nicklow. “She works tirelessly to inform audiences about some of the most important and pressing issues in an effort to improve the world around us. She is a wonderful representative of our university.”

Miller is a co-host of “CBS Saturday Morning.” Her work regularly appears on “CBS Mornings,” “CBS Sunday Morning” and the CBS Evening News. She also files reports for “48 Hours” and anchors Discovery’s “48 Hours on ID” and “Hard Evidence.”

Since joining CBS News in 2004, Miller has reported on stories of national and international importance. From presidential elections to the climate crisis, her area of coverage is wide-ranging, but her reporting around social justice has been particularly groundbreaking.

Miller has earned several prestigious journalism awards including an Emmy for her series of reports on the National Guard’s Youth Challenge Academy, an Edward R. Murrow Award for her coverage



of a day care center stand-off in New Orleans, and she was part of the Alfred I. duPont – Columbia Award winning team for coverage the Newtown, Conn., school shooting. In 2019, Miller won a Gracie award for her reporting on the hidden world of sex trafficking in “48 Hours’: Live to Tell: Trafficked.”

Miller previously worked at WWL-TV, the CBS affiliate in New Orleans. She earned a bachelor’s degree in journalism from Howard University and a master’s degree in urban studies from the University of New Orleans.

Miller will be the 39th honoree to receive the Homer L. Hitt Distinguished Alumni Award. The honoree is selected by a committee of former award recipients.

Lauren Gibbs is the second-generation owner of Gibbs Construction, a leading commercial, industrial and institutional general contractor founded by her father in 1976. Based in New Orleans, it serves Louisiana and the Gulf Coast.

Lauren Gibbs took the helm in 2019 after serving in a variety of roles in the company

CBS News journalist Michelle Miller (above, left) will receive the 2022 Homer Hitt Distinguished Alumni Award and Lauren Gibbs (above, right) will receive the 2022 Norma Jane Sabiston Distinguished Young Alumna Award.

including estimator, project coordinator, project engineer, project manager, executive in charge and vice president. She holds a bachelor’s degree in civil engineering and a master’s degree in engineering/construction management, both from Vanderbilt University, and an MBA from the University of New Orleans.

“Like so many of our graduates, Lauren has used her degree from UNO to gain a deeper understanding of her discipline and give her an edge in her industry,” Nicklow says. “I am also so grateful that she continues to work with our engineering and construction management programs to help ensure that our students receive a state-of-the-art education. Our graduates are leaders across the globe, and Lauren is a great example of that.”

UNO AWARDED \$800K GRANT FOR VIRTUAL TECH LAB AND PROGRAM

THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans has received an \$800,000 grant to help fill what industry leaders say is a critical employee shortage and need for additional infrastructure to support extended reality (XR) business development and education.

The grant is sponsored by Louisiana State University via The National Center for Advanced Manufacturing (NCAM) partnership between NASA, the State of Louisiana, LSU, and UNO.

The NCAM research and production center, located at the NASA Michoud Assembly Facility in New Orleans, focuses on applying advanced manufacturing technologies for use in aerospace and related industries.

Virtual reality, augmented reality and artificial intelligence are prominent growth areas that will infiltrate numerous economic sectors, says Matt Tarr, vice president for research and economic development at UNO. However, businesses in metro New Orleans lack the necessary tools to support rapid development of XR technologies, products and business practices, he said.

UNO's part of the project has two components aimed at addressing the deficiency: a virtual reality maker's space that they are calling *BeyondReality@UNO* and a training program called *BeyondLearners@UNO*, Tarr says.

"A maker space is where a business or other people can go to use tools that they don't have on their own. They can go to a maker space where they can get access to those tools," says Tarr,



who is the principal investigator for the grant. "We are replicating that concept, but with virtual reality tools."

Those tools will include a lab equipped with computers, virtual reality hardware, software programs and VR compatible headsets.

That facility is tentatively slated to be housed at the Lindy Boggs International Convention Center at The Beach at UNO, the University's research and technology park.

"We're going to be putting in some virtual reality hardware and expertise to allow community use, whether it's small businesses or middle schools or high schools or clubs," Tarr says. "All those kinds of groups will have access to those facilities. That addresses the workforce needs because it provides opportunities for training young people."

The second component, *BeyondLearners*, is more directly focused on the workforce issue

and will create virtual reality activities for students in middle school through college, Tarr says.

Tarr said the program team includes UNO faculty members with expertise in digital arts, computer science, chemistry, virtual reality and artificial intelligence. The team also includes an outreach coordinator responsible for connecting with local school districts.

"It is very much a multi-disciplinary endeavor," Tarr says.

The *BeyondLearners* Program will culminate in a summer camp next year, he says.

"We are basically giving them an entrance into these workforce skills, but the idea is not to tell them, 'If you want to be a game developer or if you want to do virtual reality for making movies, you have to learn X, Y and Z,'" Tarr says. "We're not going to tell them 'Oh, go learn this math and go learn this physics.' Instead, it's

UNO computer science student Lisa Gilmore-Montero, a member of UNO's International Game Developer's Association, demonstrates the use of virtual reality (VR) equipment.

going to be project based."

The goal is for students to discover the expertise they need while working on their chosen project, Tarr says.

"They will realize that 'If I want to create this project, then I need some skills in this area.' Then they will have an opportunity to learn those skills while working on their project," Tarr says.

Tarr says the University will recruit students from schools that don't typically offer such technical career pathways.

"So, it's a two-fold objective: Give students an opportunity to succeed and provide businesses with workers with the skillsets that are needed to drive our future economy."

UNO ROBOTIC EEL CAMP TEACHES ENGINEERING CONCEPTS TO MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS from St. Charles Borromeo School in Destrehan, La. spent four days in June delving into engineering topics and creating projects to demonstrate those concepts as part of the University of New Orleans robotic eel camp.

"We're just trying to expose as many young people as possible to these concepts in engineering," UNO engineering professor Brandon Taravella says. "Some of the concepts they may not be familiar with and we just try to show them some of the equipment we use and just some of the things we do."

The "PrivatEEL STEM" camp, led by UNO's Boysie Bolinger School of Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering, was funded by the Louisiana Board of Regents and held June 13-16.

The students spent the week performing various STEM activities, such as building water bottle rockets, constructing and testing the strength of straw towers and printing 3-D balloon powered cars, Taravella says.

"We've been doing various things from 3-D modeling to robot design, robot building, computer programming," Taravella says. "Just learning various concepts in naval architecture, civil engineering, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering."

The students were joined by three St. Charles Borromeo teachers. Taravella says the educators could use the camp experience to supplement activities in their classrooms and with the school's STEM Club.

"The idea is that they are



kind of learning some of the things we do here and maybe that helps them explain things a little bit better in their classroom," Taravella says. "As well as learn a few new things for their lab experiences back in their classroom."

The students also toured UNO's engineering labs and, as a culminating project, created their own robotic eel.

Taravella is the recipient of several grants for his research into hydrodynamic propulsion that led to the creation of the robotic eel for use as an underwater drone, to search for mines and in data collection.

The camp culminated with students testing their own robotic eels in the University's Recreation & Fitness Center pool. 🐡



Students test out their robotic eels at the University of New Orleans recreation center's pool. The robots were created as part of a four-day robotic "PrivatEEL STEM" camp funded by the Louisiana Board of Regents.

FACULTY FOCUS



UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS TRANSPORTATION INSTITUTE WILL HELP IMPLEMENT STATEWIDE RECREATIONAL TRAILS PLAN

TWO YEARS AGO, THE University of New Orleans Transportation Institute created a statewide plan to guide the Louisiana Recreational Trails Program (LRTP) on ways to encourage trail use. Now the institute has been awarded a grant to help implement that plan.

The state trails plan, created in 2020 by UNOTI, provides a variety of goals intended to guide the actions of the LRTP, its advisory committee, and all agencies and organizations involved in the planning, development, construction, operation,

maintenance and programming of current and future Louisiana trails, says UNO Transportation Institute researcher Tara Tolford.

The new two-year, nearly \$60,000 grant from the Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism will be used to help move that plan to fruition, Tolford says.

UNOTI will help gather additional research, data, and outreach needed to inventory, describe and map Louisiana trails across the state, Tolford says.

The next phase also will identify designated local trails

liaisons for all 64 parishes in the state, and in coordination with the Department of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, develop and publish an interactive online statewide trails map that will be integrated with the state's Land and Water Conservation Fund program for outdoor recreation sites.

The trails program is a national initiative that help states provide and maintain recreational trails and trails-related facilities. The trails include motorized and non-motorized recreational uses, such as hiking,

According to Michael W. Domingue, FHWA Recreational Trails Administrator for Louisiana – and a UNO alumnus—both the Tammany Trace, (top), and Mississippi River Trail on Levee are some of the best known trails in the state.

running, horseback riding and ATV riding.

Louisiana has received \$1.5 million from the federal government annually since 2009 to support its recreational trails program.

TRANSPORTATION PROFESSOR GUANG TIAN RESEARCHES BEST WAY TO HELP MANAGE TRAFFIC

UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans transportation professor Guang Tian has been awarded a grant to study traffic patterns and determine the best model for predicting how many miles motorists travel in a given area and time frame.

Tian's research, which will be conducted over the next year, is funded by the Louisiana Transportation Research Center. It seeks to provide transportation engineers, planners and policymakers with the right model of predicting vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in order to manage traffic and congestion, plan future investments, control emissions and address other issues, Tian says.

Vehicle miles traveled is a transportation planning

tool that's used to measure the amount of travel for all vehicles in a geographic region over a designated time and is used to evaluate the performance of transportation systems.

"In the last couple of decades, there has been a paradigm shift of transportation performance measurement from how fast vehicles move to how well people's travel needs are met," Tian says. "And from speed to mobility, accessibility, sustainability and livability, and from level of service to VMT."

VMT is the key indicator of the transportation system and marks both the positive (economic growth, personal mobility) and negative externalities (congestion, crash,

emissions) of automobile use, Tian said.

"VMT or VMT per capita has been used by federal, regional and local agencies to evaluate the performance of their transportation systems," Tian says.

Tian will use a household travel survey database that includes more than 1 million trips generated by 100,000 households across 36 metro areas in the U.S. to model and predict VMT.

His research will also evaluate and compare the prediction performance of statistical models versus machine learning

models to determine which is the right model for predicting vehicle miles traveled.

"The prediction performance of machine learning on VMT has not been tested and systematically evaluated by a large multi-regional database and compared against traditional statistical models," Tian says. "This proposed research aims to explore

the application of machine learning in predicting VMT and to compare its prediction power with traditional statistical methods by using a large database."



Guang Tian

COMPUTER SCIENCE PROFESSOR JAMES WAGNER AWARDED RESEARCH GRANT TO COMBAT INTERNAL DATA SECURITY THREATS

UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans computer science professor James Wagner has been awarded a three-year, \$158,000 Louisiana Board of Regents research grant to help detect internal threats on secure database systems.

Wagner, whose primary research interest is in cybersecurity related to the prevention and detection of data tampering, will design a framework that relies on digital forensics to detect malicious activities performed by insiders—or attackers who gained similar privileges—for database systems.

Security mechanisms are

designed to keep attackers from gaining access to systems or specific data. However, there remains a threat from administrators within an organization who have the ability to bypass or disable security mechanisms, Wagner says. Those could include disgruntled employees leaking data or individuals accepting bribes in exchange for proprietary information.

"It is essentially impossible to secure your system against someone who has the keys to the kingdom, so to speak," says Wagner.

Wagner's research will detect such activity by connecting low-

level system information collected through digital forensics using provenance graphs. This will ultimately allow system activity to be reverse engineered using memory snapshots.

Even if an individual can bypass all of the security mechanisms and logging, they cannot hide how their activity is processed in memory, Wagner says. The research aims to collect these memory artifacts to rebuild a trusted log of system activities.

Wagner will demonstrate this framework for relational database systems, including Post-

greSQL, MySQL, Oracle, IBM DB2 and Microsoft SQL Server. Future work will generalize these methods to all systems.

Wagner also will explore additional applications for this work, such as detailing data exfiltration following an attack, profiling system performance, and evaluating reproducible environments.



James Wagner

AFRICAN AMERICAN LITERATURE PROFESSOR JACINTA SAFFOLD EXPLORES CULTURAL INTERSECTION OF HIP-HOP AND LITERATURE

UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans African American literature professor Jacinta Saffold came of age reading Omar Tyree and Sister Soulja alongside the perhaps more familiar literary icons of Zora Neal Hurston, Toni Morrison, Henry David Thoreau and John Milton.

And while some may not view Tyree and Soulja in the same “elevated” literary vein, it is the kind of conversation Saffold hopes to spark with her book tentatively titled *Books & Beats: The Cultural Kinship of Street Lit and Hip Hop*.

Saffold has received a nearly \$50,000 research grant from the Louisiana Board of Regents to advance her book project, which includes not only the manuscript, but plans for a video interview series with Black storytellers.

A portion of that research also includes Saffold’s “The Essence Book Project,” a digital archive that explores Essence Magazine’s bestsellers’ list for fiction published monthly from 1994 to 2010.

The bestsellers’ list was based on sales data collected from independently owned Black bookstores across the United States, making it one of the most economically accurate archival sources for contemporary African American literature, Saffold says.

As an avid reader, a high school teacher once found Saffold reading Sister Soulja’s book *The Coldest Winter Ever*, and decreed that it was not “complicated” or “elevated” enough for Saffold.



University of New Orleans African American literature professor Jacinta Saffold has received a Louisiana Board of Regents research grant for her book *Books & Beats: The Cultural Kinship of Street Lit and Hip Hop*.

“The examples of the books that she gave as more elevated, none of them included authors that looked like me, stories that were similar to mine and for a really long time I didn’t have the language around why that bothered me,” Saffold says. “I felt that *The Coldest Winter Ever* was—and I still do—a very complex story. It is the way that we decide to read it.”

That’s one of the purposes of *Books and Beats*, Saffold says.

“To be able to have intellectual conversations and debates around the points that they bring up and the kind of issues that the characters faced,” Saffold says.

While Saffold doesn’t think her teacher meant any harm by questioning her reading choice, the encounter did help to steer Saffold’s career path.

“I do thank her for presenting this very complicated question that really propelled me to

go get a Ph.D. to be a researcher in African American literature,” Saffold says. “To be able to say, ‘How do we unpack these kinds of complications and to be able to understand that stories written by Zora Neal Hurston are just as valuable as those written by Sister Soulja, Toni Morrison and anyone in between?’”

Saffold continues. “And, to figure out ways to provide the kind of scholarly and academic infrastructure around these different kinds of books so that African Americans who come behind are able to pick them up and be able to really engage with them in ways that students are able to engage with Shakespeare, with Milton, with Thoreau, with all of the amazing authors who had really important things to say.”

Saffold was recently appointed to the executive advisory board of Hermann-Grima and Gallier Historic Houses,

which are located in New Orleans’ French Quarter. The historic houses, built in 1831 and 1861, respectively, are now museums and offer tours that include insight into the lives of the enslaved Africans who toiled on those urban grounds.

Saffold has conducted video interviews with several Essence Book List best-selling authors and wants to host an event at the historic houses, possibly during the Essence Festival of Culture in New Orleans.

“I view it as some kind of restorative justice to be able to bring in people who are telling stories about African Americans in print to a space where their ancestors were not able to do so,” Saffold says. “It was strictly forbidden for them to know how to read and write and language was something that was expressly used to be able to keep enslaved Africans, enslaved.”



UNO BIOLOGIST T. ERIN COX STUDIES LIFE UNDERWATER

UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans biologist T. Erin Cox's research expertise is in coastal benthic organisms, which are the animals and plants that live on the sea floor. Her laboratory group is interested in how these organisms respond to climate change and other environmental factors that can affect life on land.

"I study organisms that live on the sea floor, things like barnacles or crabs or sea grasses or algae," Cox says. "We look at how they interact with each other and the environment, and how their interactions can cascade to affect things that humans get out of the ecosystems."

Cox recently collaborated with the Dauphin Island Sea Lab

to explore and collect samples from artificial reefs off the coast of Alabama.

That research focuses on how human-made structures shape the ecology of the northern Gulf of Mexico, and the effects of global environmental change on seagrass bed and artificial reef ecosystems.

Seagrass beds are an important natural resource in the northern Gulf of Mexico, according to Cox. They indirectly support commercial fishing landings, protect shorelines from storm surge and land loss, and capture carbon to buffer climate change, she says.

"Things like seagrass beds help to stabilize sediment and slow wave action, and that

prevents land erosion and we have a lot of land loss," Cox says. "Then things on the reef are food for a lot of fishes that we like to harvest. So, our research is really focusing on managing those ecosystems and protecting those ecosystems and how we can do that."

Artificial reefs are human-made structures often placed in the ocean to increase fishing opportunities and promote sea life. In the northern Gulf of Mexico, the seafloor is mostly composed of soft sediments. Therefore, artificial surfaces create habitat for invertebrates, such as barnacles, crabs, anemones and algae, that otherwise may not be there, Cox says.

"Our research questions

UNO biologist T. Erin Cox and members of her lab take water and sediment samples from artificial reefs off the coast of Alabama.

focus on describing primary production on and surrounding reefs and the link to fish production," Cox says. "Invertebrates are important for trophic transfer of this energy to fishes. Thus, we are also keenly interested in their physiology-ecology under ocean warming and acidification.

"Because reefs could be stepping-stones for species range expansions into warming waters, we also seek to describe the role of reefs in the maintenance and spread of nuisance and vulnerable species."

UNO PROFESSOR EXPLORES CONNECTION BETWEEN 'SOCIAL HYPERTHERMIA' AND AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER

AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER is a neurodevelopmental disability that affects how a person learns, interacts and communicates. The disorder can also involve a wide range of symptoms, including difficulty regulating body temperature.

Links between the temperature deficits and social-cognitive impairment are poorly understood, University of New Orleans psychology professor Christopher Harshaw says.

The elevation of core body temperature that typically accompanies social interaction—known as social hyperthermia—and temperature regulation by the hormone oxytocin have promise as mechanisms that may bridge that explanatory gap, according to Harshaw.

Harshaw has been awarded a three-year, \$144,400 grant from the Louisiana Board of Regents to explore the nature of social hyperthermia using two mouse models. One set of mice have both social and thermoregulatory deficits and the other has deficits in social behavior, Harshaw says.

The research is entitled "Oxytocin, Social Hyperthermia, and Mouse Models of Autism Spectrum Disorder."

"Since we know that there

are temperature regulation deficits in some cases of autism, it is possible that this research might ultimately help understand what's going on in autism," Harshaw says. "Especially if that person has difficulty regulating body temperature or is hyper-

will study their temperature responses and behavior during social interaction. In a previous study conducted by Harshaw, researchers found that oxytocin had both pro-social and anti-social effects.

"Part of the reason they can't

standing of the hyperthermic response, which may ultimately lead to a scientific understanding both of 'warm and fuzzy' feelings and the 'dark side' of social behavior."

Researchers know social interaction results in an automatic elevation of core body temperatures in humans and animals. However, scientists don't know the reason for that temperature change, Harshaw says.

"I think most people in physiology and neuroscience would assume that it's just a stress response," Harshaw says. "We are looking to see if that's true or if it is a more special response that's specific to social behavior."

In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, Harshaw's research will also eventually explore whether social hyperthermia could be part of the body's immune response.

Research has shown that prior to eating, animals also generate a fever to increase their body's temperature. Food, like social interaction, is a common source of pathogens, Harshaw says.

"It makes sense that (fever) would be a similar defense against pathogens you might acquire socially. I mean, COVID has gotten people to where they can start to think about these hypotheses a little bit more easily," Harshaw says.



sensitive to temperature, it could be that there's a mechanism that is affecting both social behavior and temperature regulation and, in some cases, it might actually be oxytocin."

Mice will be given injections that either leave active or inactivate their receptors for the hormones oxytocin and vasopressin, then researchers

University of New Orleans psychology professor Christopher Harshaw has been awarded a three-year grant to research the nature of social hyperthermia using mouse models of ASD.

just give oxytocin to people and expect good things to happen is that it does increase certain pro-social behaviors especially towards familiar people but it's also

known to jack up some aggressive behavior against unfamiliar individuals," Harshaw says. "That's some of what we found in our last study ... in this study we hope to gain a better under-



UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS FACULTY AND STUDENTS EXCAVATE CRASH SITE IN AUSTRIA

UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans anthropology professor Ryan Gray led a team of UNO students and staff this summer on the excavation of a World War II bomber crash site in the mountains of southern Austria. The field investigations combine traditional archaeological

methods with state-of-the-art investigative techniques.

The team partnered with the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency (DPAA) in its mission to make the fullest possible accounting of American personnel still considered missing in action.

TOP: UNO and Innsbruck team members conduct excavations using a network of safety ropes and ropes for transporting buckets of soil down slope to screening stations.

BOTTOM LEFT: Team member Alex Leigh puts on climbing gear to prepare for archaeological excavations on a steep slope. BOTTOM RIGHT: UNO team member Melanie Walker searches for evidence at a WWII aircraft crash site in the mountains in southern Austria.

UNO FINANCE PROFESSOR M. KABIR HASSAN NAMED U.S. FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR

UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans finance professor M. Kabir Hassan has been selected as a U.S. Fulbright Scholar for 2022-23. Hassan will use his award to study small and medium-sized businesses in Saudi Arabia.

“My goal is to design a framework that utilizes alternative sources of Judeo-Christian-Islamic modes of financing for small and medium enterprises, also known as SMEs,” Hassan says.

“This Senior Fulbright Fellowship allows me to take the next major step to derive policy implications in Saudi Arabia, a country with Islamic roots that is rapidly modernizing. This is a big honor for me and it will elevate my research through cooperation that is of value to both the United States and Saudi Arabia in ethical and responsible finance.”

Fulbright Scholar awards are prestigious and competitive fellowships that provide unique

opportunities for scholars to teach and conduct research abroad. Fulbright scholars also play a critical role in U.S. public diplomacy, establishing long-term relationships between people and nations.

Hassan’s Fulbright research will provide policy recommendations by exploring the current development of SME finance in Saudi Arabia and examining the role of Islamic financial mechanisms to overcome financial barriers for SMEs.



M. Kabir Hassan

EARTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE PROFESSOR MARK KULP’S RESEARCH AIDS LOUISIANA’S COASTAL RESTORATION PLAN

LOUISIANA IS IN THE midst of a land loss crisis that has claimed nearly 1,900 square miles of land since the 1930s, and scientists say, without action, Louisiana could lose up to another 4,120 square miles over the next 50 years.

Louisiana’s Coastal Master Plan calls for approximately 5 to 11 billion cubic meters of sediment to offset projected future land losses.

University of New Orleans earth and environmental science professor Mark Kulp is helping search for suitable sediment to counteract the projected losses.

“Five to 11 billion cubic meters is a lot of sediment and Louisiana needs it to help maintain critical land in areas where coastal erosion is rampant,” Kulp says. “Also, specific types of sediment have to be used for specific types of restoration projects. You really need to know where the sediment is and its composition, so you don’t have any engineer-

ing mistakes and put the wrong sediment in the wrong place and then it becomes a wasted resource.”

Kulp, whose research emphasis is on the sedimentary framework of the Mississippi River delta system and evolution of the Louisiana coastal plain in response to changes in sediment supply, sea-level rise and subsidence, has been awarded a \$118,697 grant from The Water Institute of the Gulf to contribute to a state sediment database.

The sediment database is

part of the Louisiana Sediment Management Plan created to help reach goals included in the state’s master plan to combat coastal erosion.

“Because the type of sediment that is needed is so valuable to this effort, the state has developed this program, along with the development of a detailed sediment base to identify the types and distribution of sediment for use in future restoration projects,” Kulp says.

The Water Institute of the Gulf is working with the Loui-

siana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA) to survey areas of the coast, collect sediment data, catalogue and archive this information into a consistent database.

UNO is providing services to the Water Institute that include collection of sediment cores, analysis of the cores, grain size analysis and geological interpretation as part of a team that includes The Water Institute, CPRA, LSU and the Baton Rouge-based company APTIM Inc., Kulp says.

UNO’s involvement will not only include contributing to a final report and database, but there will be involvement in the project of UNO undergraduate and graduate students, Kulp says. 🌍

Coastal Louisiana faces one of the highest land loss rates in the world. University of New Orleans earth and environmental science professor Mark Kulp’s research will help combat that loss.





The UNO Alumni Association congratulates our 2022 class of distinguished alumni, to be honored on November 9 at the Homer L. Hitt Distinguished Alumni Gala!

The Homer L. Hitt Distinguished Alumni Award Gala honors University of New Orleans alumni who have distinguished themselves in their field to reflect honor upon UNO, who provide service to their communities and the University, who are recognized for outstanding accomplishments and are a credit to the University of New Orleans.



HOMER L. HITT DISTINGUISHED ALUMNA OF THE YEAR

Michelle M. Miller, '97
Master of Science in Urban Studies
Journalist and Co-Host of "CBS
Saturday Morning", CBS News



NORMA JANE SABISTON
YOUNG ALUMNA OF THE YEAR

Lauren R. Gibbs, '14
Master of Business Administration
Chief Executive Officer, Gibbs
Construction

COLLEGE AND ATHLETICS HONOREES

College of Business Administration

Michael M. Achary, '82 & '00
Senior Executive Vice President & Chief
Financial Officer, Hancock Whitney Bank

*College of Liberal Arts, Education
and Human Development*

Nancy S. Degán, '79
Partner/Shareholder, Baker Donelson

Dr. Robert A. Savoie College of Engineering

Dalton Boutte, '77
President, Western GeCo

College of Sciences

Darryl Willis, '93
Corporate Vice President, Microsoft Energy
& Resources Industry

Privateer Athletics

Stuart Weidie, '87
President & Chief Executive Officer,
Blossman Gas

You make us #UNOPROUD!





“SWING HARD”

Alumnus Albert Allenback is living his music dreams as a member of the Grammy-nominated band Tank and the Bangas

BY LITTICE BACON-BLOOD

UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS ALUMNUS
Albert Allenback’s journey to becoming a member in one of the nation’s hottest bands—and a Grammy nominated act to boot—began with a flyer and a plea.

Allenback was a sophomore at UNO when he spied a flyer in the Performance Arts Center advertising for musicians at a local church. A jazz studies major who has been playing the saxophone since sixth-grade, Allenback contacted the church.

“I was in the mode where I was taking any opportunity, any gig, anything I could,” Allenback says. “So, I went and played at this church ... that’s

how I met Norm.”

Norman Spence, keyboardist for Tank and the Bangas, was the piano player at the same church. When the soulful, spoken-word funk band needed a flutist for a song, Allenback offered to play.

“Norm brought me in and we did a show at (Tipitina’s). It did well. I had fun, people responded to it,” Allenback says. “I remember afterwards, I took the manager of the band, Tavia Osbey, by the shoulders and said, ‘Please, take me with you!’ I was serious!”

Allenback was enthralled by the band’s creative energy, the intensity and intimacy of the live

performances and the audience engagement. Therefore, he set out to make himself useful.

"I just started being as involved as much as I could, writing music unsolicited, just doing extra stuff and just immersing myself into the things that these folks had going on," Allenback recalls. "Then, before I knew it, I was one of the core band members."

TANK AND THE BANGAS

Allenback, a saxophone and flute player, joined the band in 2014, two years after it was formed by lead singer and poet Tarriona "Tank" Ball. The group has performed to sell-out crowds at major shows and festivals around the country and abroad, including Coachella, Bonnaroo and Jazz à Vienne in France. They are also a staple at Jazz Fest in New Orleans.

The band was the unanimous judge's choice out of more than 6,000 entries for NPR's "Tiny Desk Contest" in 2017. The competition requires artists to perform and submit an original work. The winner is invited to NPR's newsroom in Washington, D.C. where

"It's everything from Stan Getz to Stevie Wonder to Earth, Wind and Fire to George Michael to Dexter Gordon to like Burt Bacarat," Allenback says. "It's just all over ... and he would have those playing in the car, so I got this breadth of musical sampling because he is such an appreciator. He would blast classical music on Sunday mornings to wake us up and then make us waffles or whatever. It was awesome!"

When Allenback was 11, his dad, a former drummer in a high school band, took him to a Kirk Whalum concert. He remembers Whalum walking through the crowd and serenading women with his soprano saxophone.

"I was like, 'Wow, I want to do that,'" Allenback says. "I went to school the next day and told my band director. I was telling him all about the concert and he was like, 'You can do that.'"

"I just got this thing in my head, this goal ... I want to play saxophone on stage. It just has been a guiding principle."

Allenback was awarded the Ellis Marsalis scholarship to attend UNO and credits the jazz studies program for helping prepare him



they literally perform a concert at and around the desk of NPR producer Bob Boilen.

"Tiny Desk just catapulted us and we were really, really, really in demand," Allenback says. "And the beautiful thing about that is that video ... is on a YouTube channel and people find that thing all the time and discover us all over again. It not only jumped-started everything; it keeps bringing people into the fold. It's really great."

The group released their first major label album, "Green Balloon" in 2019 and was nominated in the Best New Artist category for the 2020 Grammy Awards, a list that also included Billie Eilish and Lizzo. The band released a follow-up album that's garnering attention and praise for its unique artistic blend of music and social consciousness.

"I always hoped that it would turn out this way," says Allenback, who recalled telling a friend during a jazz combo rehearsal at UNO that the band was destined for fame.

LIVING A DREAM

Allenback grew up in Montgomery, Alabama, listening to his dad's eclectic music collection. The collection started with cassette tapes and evolved into CDs that over the years grew into multiple volumes of "Al's Favs," Allenback says with a laugh.

to become a professional musician.

"I got to see first-hand the best, most artistic musicians in the world, and that's what the jazz studies department was populated with," says Allenback, who earned a bachelor's degree in music in 2016.

"It certainly prepared me to do what I'm doing now because I have a great foundation for how to play improvised music and a lot of my job is improvising," he says. "I think that one of the most beneficial things was playing in combos at UNO where you have to navigate the music together with people that might be friends or might be associates. A frequent professional obligation is to learn how to make the best music with people you don't know very well."

Allenback says he is grateful to UNO for providing a program that also gave him a chance to perform live with professional musicians while he was a student via Jazz at the Sandbar. Established by the late faculty member Ellis Marsalis in 1990, the program pairs seasoned professional musicians with UNO jazz students in front of

Allenback joined Tank and the Bangas in 2014, two years after it was formed by lead singer and poet Tarriona "Tank" Ball. The group has performed to sell-out crowds at major shows and festivals around the country and abroad, including Coachella, Bonnaroo and Jazz à Vienne in France.

a live audience on campus at the Sandbar.

“I got to play with these people, not because I earned it or because I was on the gig and got called,” Allenback says. “It was just because I went to (UNO). Here’s a chance to get your feet wet. I will never forget that.”

Allenback, who also produces, has created a hip-hop duo called SaxKixAve with New Orleans entertainer Alfred Banks. The two performed earlier this year at the French Quarter Festival.

“That name is a terrible pun, but it’s representative of me and my musical partner, Alfred Banks, a rapper extraordinaire,” Allen-

“It’s a whirlwind. It’s kind of like a musical theater production, but a musical theater production fueled by Tank’s inner child and it’s great!” Allenback says. “It’s delightful. It’s whimsical, it’s chaotic, it is enrapturing. It is consuming. It is swirling. It’s all of those things. And that’s what it feels like.”

Allenback says that Ball has the ability to create such a strong connection with the audience through music that is complex and thoughtful.

“Tank can be this interlocutor with the audience to just communicate it so effectively and people actually dig this music because she



back says. “I do the saxophone thing, he loves shoes. He is a huge sneakerhead!”

The best part of being a performer for him, Allenback said, is playing live.

“Just communicating in real time. I really love that,” Allenback says.

While on stage Allenback says he concentrates on trying not “to mess up” while also pondering the gift of being allowed to perform music.

“That’s the energy I like to play from, just being appreciative while it’s happening,” he says. “But honestly, I’m pretty nervous.”

When asked to describe the vibe of playing with Tank and the Bangas, Allenback lets loose with a litany of descriptors.

is singing or delivering and believes in it,” he says.

ADVICE: SWING HARD

While Allenback says he was always hopeful about the band’s success, he says he is still absorbing the enormity of their popularity—sold-out tour dates, a Grammy nomination, albums. His advice to others: Swing hard in case you hit it.

“I’m not talented in that these things have come easy to me,” Allenback says. “But I have tried harder than most and that gave me better odds to be where I am today.”

Finally, he delivers a heartfelt shout-out to UNO:

“Thanks UNO PAC (Performance Arts Center) for holding the flyer that got me into one of the coolest bands in the world!” 🙌

ALUMNUS BRIAN MITCHELL, HISTORICAL SCHOLAR AND AUTHOR HAS A PASSION FOR THE PAST



BY LITTICE BACON-BLOOD

IT WAS THE BICENTENNIAL YEAR, UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans alumnus Brian Mitchell recalls, and his elementary school teacher was telling the class about historical leaders in Louisiana. He waited, expecting to hear the name Oscar Dunn, the first Black lieutenant governor of Louisiana.

“Even though we were learning about governors at the time, there was no mention,” says Mitchell, who grew up in New Orleans and is the director of research and interpretation at the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum in Springfield, Illinois.

When he didn't hear Dunn's name, Mitchell injected into the conversation the stories he'd learned at home from his great-grandmother about Dunn, a distant cousin of his great-grandfather.

“They didn't believe me,” Mitchell says of his teacher and classmates. “And it didn't get better as time went on. As I got into middle school and high school, there wasn't any emphasis put on the accomplishments that were made by African Americans.”

“We heard that Black people were slaves. We heard that Abraham Lincoln came and there was a Civil War and Black people weren't slaves anymore and then the modern Civil Rights Movement ... what were Black people doing in between these two times? What sort of progress?”

“It wasn't until I got to college that I had people who were capable of explaining that,” says Mitchell, who earned a bachelor's, two master's and a doctoral

degree from the University of New Orleans.

There was an informational void, Mitchell says, that wasn't filled until he enrolled at UNO and met history professor Raphael Casimere, among others.

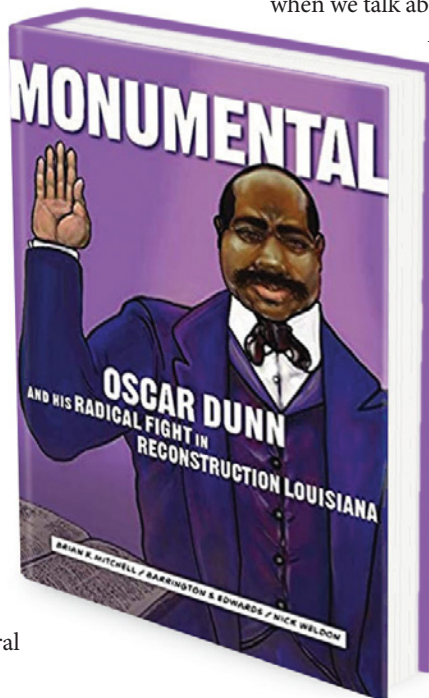
“He was actually the first African American male teacher I ever had,” says Mitchell, a former associate professor of history at the University of Arkansas Little Rock. “He was particularly influential when we talk about me becoming a specialist in African

American history. He spoke with a passion and he was able to fill in so many holes in what I'd been taught. He made it all make sense.”

'MONUMENTAL'

Mitchell's recent book, *Monumental: Oscar Dunn and His Radical Fight in Reconstruction Louisiana*, is an outgrowth of his doctoral dissertation and the historical void he found as a younger student. He decided to create a graphic novel in an effort to reach younger readers, says Mitchell, who is an expert on Reconstruction after the Civil War.

“I've chosen to share Oscar Dunn's story as a graphic history to make sure that people, especially younger readers, won't forget,” Mitchell wrote in the book's introduction. “Decades after my



own teacher denied the story of this critical person in not only my family's history, but America's, I still feel the sting."

The book, published in 2021 by The Historic New Orleans Collection, has earned several awards, including the Phillis Wheatley Book Award from the Sons and Daughters of the United States Middle Passage, which recognizes recent books covering the topic of slavery. It was also Louisiana's choice for the 2021 Library of Congress National Book Festival's Great Reads from Great Places.

The 200-plus page novel chronicles the life of Oscar James Dunn, who rose to prominence in New Orleans as he led the fight for fairer treatment and wages for recently freed African American men and soldiers in the aftermath of the Civil War. In 1868, he was elected lieutenant governor of Louisiana as part of the Republican ticket. He was an early champion of what was seen at the time as "radical" causes, such as universal male suffrage, civil rights and integrated public schools during the early years of Reconstruction in Louisiana.

In 1871, amid in-party political strife, Dunn died under what some have described as mysterious circumstances following a brief illness.

WHY HISTORY?

Mitchell earned four degrees from UNO: a bachelor's and master's degrees in history, a master's degree in urban studies, and a doctorate in urban studies with a concentration in history.

Those degrees helped steer him into a career he's always wanted, Mitchell says.

"I'm doing exactly what I'd hope to do," Mitchell says. "I always wanted to be a historian and that's exactly what I do. My work has been covered internationally. Whenever I can, I try to plug the people who were part and parcel in that making, you know Dr. Cassimere, Dr. (Arnold) Hirsch ... they were all really important in my development."

Mitchell's historical research into the 1919 Elaine Massacre of Black sharecroppers in Arkansas resulted in the awarding of a Purple Heart medal in 2019 to one of the victims, Pvt. Leroy Johnston, a World War I veteran who had only recently returned home.

"We came across his service records and his service records indicated that his wounds sustained in battle had been changed from severely to slightly, which would have negated him receiving any of the awards that were given for valor on the battle field," Mitchell says. "I began a campaign petitioning the Secretary of Defense, with the help of our member of the U.S. House of Representative French Hill and was able to get those awards to the family posthumously."

Mitchell also worked with Hill on federal legislation that



Mitchell's recent book, Monumental: Oscar Dunn and His Radical Fight in Reconstruction Louisiana, chronicles the story of the Louisiana governor in a graphic novel form to reach a younger audience.

re-opened all of the service records for minority soldiers serving in World War I. His historical research and efforts earned him an invitation to the White House and President Donald Trump's 2020 State of the Union address.

"Remember the Nancy Pelosi rip?" Mitchell asks, referencing when Pelosi, a Democrat and Speaker of the House, tore in half a copy of Trump's speech during the televised address. "I was there; I saw it all!"

MAKING HISTORY RELEVANT

Mitchell describes himself as an inquisitive child growing up, always asking questions and wanting to know "why?" Hours spent in museums and libraries fueled and fed that curiosity.

"I always wanted to be a historian as far back as I can remember," Mitchell says. "Our big pasttime was the library or museum; those were free! In doing that, I just developed a passion for the past."

As a college professor, Mitchell said he tries to instill the importance of an inclusive history and one that is connected to the future.

"I purposely am extremely plural in educating my students in regards to diversity," says Mitchell who spent 16 years at UALR before moving to the Lincoln Library. "I always tell them that the United States is made up of people that came from all over the world and that nobody came and brought nothing; everybody brought something to the table."

Mitchell said he made his courses as relevant to his students as possible, emphasizing that we are connected to the past and that our past influences decisions that we make all the time.

"This is one of the things that most of my students walk away with: history is likely the most important class that they will take because it makes everything else make sense," Mitchell says. "It puts everything else in a chronology, it shows how everything is connected. It shows how we came up with thoughts; it shows how we evolved those thoughts."

So, history is essential to understanding who we are and where we're going. And, as John Hope Franklin said, "We use it as a barometer to measure the progress that we're making." 📖



WELL DONE

*Tom Fitzmorris' 50-year
career of writing and
talking about food
started at UNO*

BY DOMINIC MASSA

THE COVER OF TOM FITZMORRIS' 2010 BOOK *HUNGRY TOWN* calls it a culinary history of New Orleans, "the city where food is almost everything." For the city's preeminent restaurant critic, you could say everything began at the University of New Orleans.

It was here—50 years ago—that Fitzmorris wrote his very first restaurant review. It appeared Sept. 1, 1972 in the student newspaper *The Driftwood*. He's been eating, writing and talking about food nearly every day since.

Fitzmorris calls himself a walking New Orleans cliché: born in the city on Mardi Gras, delivered by a jazz musician-obstetrician and never absent from his hometown longer than the six weeks after Hurricane Katrina. His mother was a fabulous French-Creole cook at home, but until his college years, Fitzmorris said he hadn't developed a passion for New Orleans' restaurants.

IN THE BEGINNING

The UNO campus was where he met a history professor who would change his life and become his mentor: Richard Collin. When not chronicling or teaching history, Collin wrote about food like few others had, as the city's first newspaper restaurant critic, starting at the *States-Item* in 1972. Two years earlier, he published *The New Orleans Underground Gourmet*, a book of more than 250 of his highly-opinionated reviews.

"I didn't understand the pleasures of the table until I read Collin's book," Fitzmorris says. "He turned me on to the food world and it was straight upward ever since."

It took a bit more time before Fitzmorris began writing about food, however. At first he penned movie, theater and music reviews for *The Driftwood*, where he was also an editorial cartoonist. That soon changed.

"When the fall semester began, a new editor cleaned house," Fitzmorris writes in his *Hungry Town* memoir. "He told me his friend would take over my cartoonist gig—and that I was, like, fired. Not wanting to give up the clubhouse privileges that accrue to newspaper staff, I begged to stay on to write feature articles."

Asked by the editor to elaborate on what topics he might tackle, Fitzmorris gave a quick answer. "Do you know about the Flambeau Room?" I asked, quite sure that he didn't. 'Sure,' said the new editor. "Write about that."

THE FLAMBEAU ROOM

The Flambeau Room was, at the time, the restaurant in the University Center. But its menu didn't feature ordinary campus cuisine. The chef, Leon Dicort, was schooled in France. The manager was Peter Sclafani Jr., scion of a well-known local food family. Fitzmorris was a Flambeau Room regular.

"Wanna eat something a lot better than the dismally dull cafeteria and snack bar food substitute commonly thought to monopolize campus food service facilities?" Fitzmorris wrote in his *Driftwood* review. "The Flambeau Room, situated at the lake end of the University Center, offers a tremendously refreshing break with the usual style of institutional food services."

Fitzmorris went on to describe some of his Flambeau Room favorites: Eggs Sardou, Quiche Lorraine, Chicken Béarnaise, Chicken Florentine, Redfish Hollandaise and Cornish hen.

Again, not your typical college campus fare. Inspired by Collin's tell-it-like-it-was writing style, Fitzmorris also commented on menu items he didn't care for.

"It is best to stick with unusual dishes; red beans, roast beef, rib-eyes and other commonplace offerings are generally disastrous."

He complimented the service staff, however, calling them "very fast and pleasant," and adding that "the kitchen operates quickly and an hour is sufficient time for a refreshing and leisurely meal." He

closed with this: “Perhaps best of all, cretins rarely go there, making it a great escape hatch.”

Reflecting about his first review, Fitzmorris remembers: “I held forth on what I thought was great and what could be better. I based my decrees purely on the impressions of my naïve palate. Despite that, the article was received as credible.

“The editor, in the only smart move he ever made (he was gone by the spring semester), told me I ought to write a weekly column about other places to eat on- and off-campus.”

A PASSION AND A DREAM

Fitzmorris kept writing, eating and continuing that weekly restaurant column in one form or another for decades to come. The month he graduated from UNO in 1974, he wrote his first restaurant column for *New Orleans Magazine*. After four months, he was offered the job of editor-in-chief. He was 23.

Writing about food was his new passion, but there was an earlier dream that Fitzmorris was about to see realized as well. He had fallen in love with radio as a young boy and dreamed of one day working in broadcasting. At UNO, he was one of the original staffers of WWNO, which signed on the air as the campus radio station in February 1972.

In 1975, shortly after graduating and landing his magazine job, Fitzmorris was given his first professional on-air radio gig. Appearing as “Mr. Food,” he gave a daily restaurant review on WGSO-AM, then the city’s leading news-talk radio station.

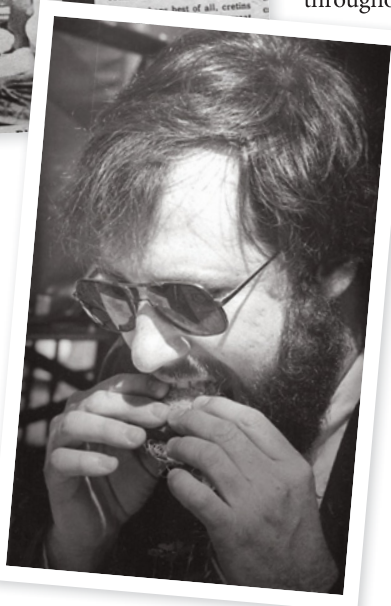
“It did not surprise me when that grabbed much more attention than all my work in print had. And it brought many new readers to my column,” he later wrote.

Fitzmorris was now talking and writing about restaurants for a living. His portfolio—which also included owning a print and graphic design business, authoring eight books and serving up weekly reviews for *Figaro*, *CityBusiness* and WYES-TV’s “Steppin’ Out”—would expand when he launched his own publication, “The New Orleans Menu.”

At first a printed newsletter featuring his restaurant reviews and mailed to subscribers, “The New Orleans Menu,” is now nomenu.com.

After Hurricane Katrina in 2005, the menu became an indispensable barometer of the city’s recovery as Fitzmorris published a running list of the city’s restaurant reopenings. He did so while also hosting a daily radio talk show, which began in 1978 on WGSO.

Initially, Fitzmorris’ shows didn’t focus solely on food but also talked politics and even played “oldies” music. That changed in 1988, when he moved to WSMB Radio, hired to host “The Food Show” by program director Mary



TOP: Fitzmorris started as a cartoonist for *The Driftwood*. **ABOVE, CENTER:** The review of *The Flambeaux Room*, located in the University Center, started his 50 year career as a food writer. **ABOVE, BOTTOM:** Fitzmorris is photographed sampling for a future review in 1980.

Ann Connell.

Connell was fired a few weeks later (though not for hiring Fitzmorris). He kept his job and even landed a promotion: to husband. Connell and Fitzmorris were married in February 1989. Two children, Jude and Mary Leigh and three grandchildren followed.

Today, Mary Ann Fitzmorris is host of “The Food Show,” where Fitzmorris joins her, their guests and listeners in conversing about food, weekdays from 2 to 4 p.m. on WGSO 990 AM and wgso.com.

A DAILY RADIO FOOD SHOW LIKE NO OTHER

A longtime local broadcaster herself, Mary Ann Fitzmorris has freshened up the daily radio show, now the longest-running radio show in New Orleans. It follows much the same freewheeling format Fitzmorris established on WSMB and later WWL. Some current listeners have been tuned in all that time; they remember and celebrate the quirks of the show and its host.

There was the distinctively vintage theme music, “Holiday for Strings,” that opened the show and the sounds by French jazz guitarist Stéphane Grappelli that played in and out of commercial breaks.

There were goofy running gags like the make-believe colored phones that each caller would be assigned when Fitzmorris introduced them to the audience. Those callers included Clark the Gourmet Truck Driver, Carl the Gourmet River Pilot and Daniel the Gourmet Cellist.

And then, there were the “Ciao Numbers” assigned to callers, who could win a prize when their number was pulled and they called in to claim it. Another prize went to the listener who could correctly guess where Fitzmorris had dined, based on clues he’d reveal throughout the show.

Through it all, Fitzmorris did what he’s done for 50 years now: share his opinion (like it or not) about restaurants, dining, cooking, food, drink—the pleasures of the palate.

He boasts that there is no other daily radio food show quite like his in America. That’s also because there’s no one else quite like Tom Fitzmorris.

“No city restaurant critic in U.S. history has written more, eaten more, or knows more of their cuisine than Tom Fitzmorris,” wrote political pundit James Carville for a dust jacket review of *Hungry Town*.

Fitzmorris’ body of work, in print, radio, television and the internet, leaves a delicious legacy—first cooked up 50 years ago on the UNO campus. In Mr. Food’s mind, it could only have happened here in his hometown.

“What most engages me, in work and play, is the food of New Orleans,” Fitzmorris says. “I love it passionately.” 🍷

Written by Dominic Massa. Massa is the executive vice president and chief operating officer at WYES-TV. He holds an MBA from the University of New Orleans and bachelor’s degree in communications from Loyola University.

WHILE WORKING AT CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL NEW ORLEANS, University of New Orleans alumna Lana Joseph-Ford realized two things that sent her down an entrepreneurial path in the healthcare industry: The 15-minute time allotted to care for each of her young patients was too short and the waiting list for hearing services was too long.

"There were so many patients that needed speech therapy and hearing services, but there was such a long waiting list," says Joseph-Ford, who has a doctorate in audiology from Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis. She earned a master's in healthcare management from UNO with an emphasis in public health in 2011.

"The waiting list at that time was six months for hearing aids and for speech therapy, it was almost a year and a half ... I knew immediately that there was an opportunity there for me to help these kids, for me to open opportunities so that they can get the service they needed."

Joseph-Ford also felt a kinship with her patients. As a child, she struggled with a hearing and a speech impediment that was not addressed until she was 12.

That experience was the impetus for her wanting to become an audiologist, says Joseph-Ford, who grew up in Marrero and Belle Rose, Louisiana.

"When I was in high school, I wanted to learn how to do sign language to help other people with hearing impairment," she says. "I was also interested in becoming a doctor, so I told myself it would be 'awesome if I could be a doctor for the hearing impaired.' That was even before I knew that the career of an audiologist even existed."

In 2016, Joseph-Ford founded High Level Speech and Hearing Center in New Orleans, where she assists children and adults with hearing and balance issues.

"The field is far broader than people think because not only am I providing solutions for hearing loss and hearing tests, but I am also

providing preventative care as well as educating people on how we can prevent (hearing loss)."

Joseph-Ford also collaborates with local schools to conduct tests to detect hearing and speech impairments.

"Right now we are in over 23 parishes across the state of Louisiana," Joseph-Ford says. "We are in over 100 daycares and over 70 schools. We are really making a huge impact in the community."

Joseph-Ford, who has been recognized in the business community with awards such as JEDCO's 2020 Business of the Year and Biz New Orleans' 2018 Business Person of the Year, has expanded her healthcare brand with vlogs, podcasts and a news segment called "Healthy Habits with Dr. J," which airs on WWL-TV's Great Day Louisiana on Friday mornings.

Joseph-Ford has also created another company called JRUMZ Ear Wear, a high-performance earphone that she says will help mitigate hearing loss over time.

"My UNO degree was helpful because it provided me with the fundamentals I need in order to understand administrative policies and procedures," Joseph-Ford says. "And it really prepared me to be able to be a CEO of a healthcare company. When it came to ... understanding the different laws and acts that govern how we deliver care and understanding inequality in health care."

While her business ventures are producing fruit, Joseph-Ford says she still understands the difficulties and hurdles faced by novice entrepreneurs, especially Black women.

"As a woman who has endured my fair share of adversity in business, I am a firm believer that Black

women are capable of starting and scaling successful businesses," she says. "We may encounter obstacles, but with the right amount of passion, hard work, determination and drive, nothing is impossible."

"Understand your metrics. Set your goals and achieve them," Joseph-Ford says. "Lastly, remember, 'No,' means 'Not right now.'" 🍌

Hearing the Call

UNO alumna Lana Joseph-Ford is charting her own path as a healthcare entrepreneur



UNO MATRIX

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THE UNIVERSITY *of*
NEW ORLEANS

Running the Rails

UNO graduate student Carrie DeMers Donchez is a railway industry leader

By Littice Bacon-Blood



UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS STUDENT CARRIE DEMERS Donchez started working for Norfolk Southern as a conductor at the urging of her father, who worked as a mechanic for the rail company. She approached the job with a practical eye, not an arched brow intent on making her mark in the male-dominated industry.

Women make up less than 10 percent of the Class I railroad workforce, according to industry reports. Railroad companies are divided into classes, with Class I being the largest, based on the amount of revenue generated. Norfolk Southern (NS) is one of seven Class I rail companies in the U.S.

“I needed health insurance,” Donchez says, with a shrug in her voice. “They offered pretty good insurance and benefits.”

Almost 20 years later, Donchez is, nevertheless, making her mark. As a Norfolk Southern yardmaster based in New Orleans, Donchez is responsible—literally—for keeping the trains running on the tracks and helping to efficiently deliver boxcars filled with consumer and industrial goods all across the U.S.

“I manage all aspects of rail operations, so it would be very similar to that of an air traffic controller, just in the train world,” says Donchez, who is pursuing a master’s degree in transportation at the University of New Orleans. “It can be an extremely high-stress job. You learn to manage it over time.”

In addition to managing trains on NS tracks, part of Donchez’ job is collaborating with the city’s other Class I rail companies and the passenger train Amtrak to schedule access to the nation’s fourth-

largest rail gateway, the New Orleans Rail Gateway.

The gateway is critical in the national freight rail system and provides access to Mexican and Canadian markets.

The other Class I railroads include Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway, Canadian National, CSX, Kansas City Southern Railway and Union Pacific.

“You have to collaborate with everyone who has a different agenda than you and you have to make it all fit and work,” says Donchez, who earned a bachelor’s degree in logistics. “We all know it’s hard and for us to be able to make it work, despite the difficulties, it’s extremely self-satisfying.”

In May, Donchez was recognized as an influential leader by industry magazine *Railway Age* for her work at Norfolk Southern and as the union chair of the Local 1972 of the Transportation Division of the International Association of Sheet Metal, Air, Rail and Transportation Workers (SMART-TD).

“I DID IT BECAUSE PEOPLE TOLD ME I COULDN’T”

In her nomination for leadership recognition, Donchez’s skills as a team builder and advocate were cited. An NS superintendent in Alabama applauded Donchez for facilitating a more efficient interchange between NS and connecting railroads on traffic originating and terminating in New Orleans.

In her union leadership roles, Donchez was praised for collaborating with others to reduce friction between labor and management

on quality-of-life issues, in the handling of discipline cases and in pressing for increased yard security following a yard-trespasser attack on a conductor.

In addition to helping decide the order of trains that use NS tracks to head to the gateway, Donchez also must ensure that there's room to house the freight trains that come into the rail yard—and take care of any mechanical issue that might arise.

"It definitely takes a certain type of personality," Donchez says. "You have to have high emotional intelligence. You have to because you're going to be blamed for everything. And, you've got to be like, 'whatever' and just move on. People are going to be rude to you and you have to be assertive."

Donchez, who grew up in St. Bernard

Carrie DeMers Donchez is a yardmaster for Norfolk Southern Railway and is pursuing a master's degree in transportation at the University of New Orleans.

Parish and now lives in Slidell, says she's seen improvement in the rail industry, in terms of diversity, since she started.

"It's not as bad as it was 20 years ago; (co-workers) are more accepting," Donchez says. "I did not break the glass ceiling by any means, but I did try to excel and, in the process, I started earning the trust of my co-workers.

"I did it because people told me I couldn't; that's just my personality."

From her watchtower, which oversees the New Orleans rail yard, Donchez tracks trains via GPS, satellite and sensors on the rails. In a typical 12-hour shift, she creates and manages a traffic schedule that includes, on average, 16 trains that are going in multiple directions, but also must keep an eye on what is headed to the rail yard.

"So you're looking at eight hours later—what's coming, how can I arrange traffic so I have room?" Donchez says. "You're always working ahead of what's happening."

The NS network spans approximately 19,500 route miles in 22 states and Washington, D.C. Connections with rail and trucking partners enable NS to ship goods to the west coast, Canada and Mexico. Types of cargo shipped include agriculture, automobiles, clothes, coal, electronics, furniture, lumber, machinery and paper, according to the NS website.

Donchez laughs when asked if she's ever "driven" a train. It's an inside rail industry joke.

"We all chuckle when people say 'drive a train,'" Donchez says. "Driving is kind of like having a wheel, and we don't have a wheel. I have operated a train before; we call it operating or 'running.'"

She is not qualified to run a train; one has to be trained and certified for that. However, as part of her training, she learned the basics, particularly the art of stopping a vehicle equipped with a 4,000-horsepower engine and carrying between 12,000 to 20,000 tons of cargo.

For comparison, a typical car has a 150-horsepower engine and weighs about 2 tons. One loaded boxcar behind a train's engine can weigh over 150 to 200 tons, Donchez says. Some trains are hauling dozens of such boxcars.

"The whole idea of operating a train is learning to stop or reducing your speed when you need to," Donchez says. "You're concentrating on learning how to stop with a lot of tonnage behind you, pushing you. You have three different brakes and you learn how to use those brakes to efficiently stop."

Donchez is not sure what her next career move will be once she graduates. She would like to explore more options in the rail industry.

"I want to branch out," Donchez says. "I enjoy writing case studies from the railroad. Maybe I'll be an analyst or something." 🌱





Alumna Melissa Sims Manages the Iconic Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Beverly Hills

BY LITTICE BACON-BLOOD

A PORTION OF ALUMNA MELISSA SIMS' CHILDHOOD WAS spent visiting her paternal grandparents in the fishing community of Grand Isle, Louisiana and her maternal grandparents in a rural, deer hunting community near Jackson, Mississippi.

She cultivated a love for cooking by keeping company with her grandmothers and as a youngster aspired to become an executive chef, Sims says.

On Grand Isle, she recalls going fishing in the mornings and cooking the seafood catch in the afternoons and in Mississippi, there was the staple of deer, fried chicken, collard greens and corn bread.

"So, I had Cajun and what I call 'low-country' kind of a banquet to choose from growing up," says Sims, who grew up in Lake Charles, Louisiana, but now lives in Beverly Hills, California.

Her chef dreams manifested into a bachelor's degree in culinary arts from Nicholls State University. However, her career path diverged after she took a job at a New Orleans hotel as the executive assistant for three department heads.

"You start to see that there's a bigger world than you thought, particularly in a hotel when you see there are so many departments and so many different areas to dip your toe in," Sims says.

Her interest in the hotel industry led her to enroll at the University of New Orleans where she earned a master's degree in hotel, restaurant and tourism administration in 2004.

"I thought, 'Wow, this is perfect. Not only can I get more education about my industry, I can also look at it from a different lens in my current job because I went from working in the kitchen to being made executive administrative assistant to the hotel manager, the director of food and beverages, and the director of rooms,'" Sims says. "To see the world through their eyes was, along with the education I was getting, incredibly eye-opening.

"It forced me to look bigger and beyond what I thought was going to be the end of the road."



Melissa Sims is the hotel manager of the Beverly Wilshire, a Four Seasons Hotel located in Beverly Hills at the intersection of Wilshire Boulevard and Rodeo Drive

Sims is now 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. The hotel has hosted many of Hollywood’s rich and famous, including Warren Beatty, Elvis Presley and the Beatles.

“The history of this hotel is pretty magnificent and it continues to redefine itself,” says Sims. “The \$45 million renovation that we’re in the middle of right now, we’re not even calling it a renovation, we’re calling it a ‘refresh’ and calling it a ‘facelift’ for sales and marketing purposes.”

And while in Hollywood terms the hotel has gotten “a little work done,” it still pays tribute to its “Pretty Woman” fame. There’s a named cocktail in the bar and a special guest experience called “Pretty Woman for A Day” that includes a behind-the-scenes tour of Rodeo Drive fashion houses with a personal stylist.

“We do get quite a few guests who are still enamored with the whole phenomenon that was ‘Pretty Woman,’” Sims says. “This hotel obviously has changed since then, but it’s fun to see how much fanfare is around it and how people want to come and experience that moment.”

Sims has been employed with Four Seasons since 2005 and arrived in Beverly Hills from a New York property. She compares her hotel manager’s role to the duties of a chief operating officer.

“I’m responsible for all things operational, spa, rooms division, inclusive of housekeeping, the food/beverage divisions ... all of the services that we provide to our guests comes through me,” Sims says.

The five-star luxury hotel has 395 rooms, includes two restaurants, and “tons” of banquet space with ballrooms capable of hosting 800 people, she says.

“It is fun, no two days are alike,” Sims says. “We do a lot of group business. We do a lot of leisure travel, so you have people coming from all over the world.”

Sims started with Four Seasons as an assistant restaurant manager in New York and over the course of nearly a decade worked her way onto the general manager’s track.

“What I tell people—the hundreds that I’ve done orientation for at the Four Seasons so far—is to just follow your heart and trust your gut because my path has not been traditional by any stretch of the imagination,” Sims says. “I started out in culinary, did front of the house, did learning and development, did people and culture, administration then back to operations.”

“I’ve just been all over the place, but in every job that I’ve taken it was something very interesting to me and my heart was saying ‘go for it.’”

In addition to New York, Sims has managed properties in Chicago and San Diego; she has traveled around the globe as one of the organization’s six senior learning and development managers, held a post as human resources director, and in 2016 supervised the construction and opening of a Four Seasons hotel in downtown in New York.

“I always joke that’s my first child,” Sims says. “It was truly building something from the ground up. It was a new build, near the 9-11 Memorial and it opened to such fanfare and wonderful accolades. It’s just an amazing property.”

Sims jokingly compares the difficulty of being hired by Four Seasons to getting accepted into an Ivy League school. She recalls a time when the company had nearly 15,000 applicants for 200 advertised positions.

She attributes her employment success to her UNO degree.

“The ratio of people who want to be hired to the ones we hire is very slim,” Sims says. “So, I think it absolutely afforded me the opportunity to have my resume go a little higher on top. Because I had the master’s degree and it showed that I wanted and cared enough to learn more about the industry. It definitely set me apart.” 🌟

All Abroad!

Visit from U.S. Ambassador Among Highlights at 45th Session of UNO-Innsbruck Summer Program

UNIVERSITY OF NEW Orleans students and administrators returned to Innsbruck, Austria this summer as the University's flagship study abroad program resumed in 2022. All study abroad programs were canceled in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

While the pandemic delayed

the program's official 45th year celebration in 2020, the University's largest and oldest study abroad program marked that milestone this year.

The UNO-Innsbruck International Summer School held its 45th summer session from July 2-August 12 with 213 students from more than 15 different universities. The students were enrolled in 36 classes representing 16 disciplines taught by 20 faculty members from the U.S. and Austria.

"Classes were augmented by numerous guest lectures and field trips as well as extracurricular afternoon activities every week," says Alea Cot, assistant provost for international education. "Activities offered were as diverse as visits to Swarovski headquarters for business students and local museums for anthropology students, to summer tobogganing, castle visits and mountain hikes."

A highlight of the summer was a lecture given by Victoria Reggie Kennedy, the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Austria. Kennedy was born in Crowley, Louisiana.

"We were honored to welcome her and introduce her





to the rich tapestry of student and faculty activities that are a hallmark of the 45 years of partnership between UNO and the University of Innsbruck,” Cot says.

“We learned that Ambassador Kennedy is a strong advocate for the transatlantic relationship between Austria and the U.S. and considers international exchange and student mobility as vital to the continuing bonds between the two countries.”

Irene Ziegler, program director for UNO-Innsbruck, helped organize the event, which included a question and answer session with Kennedy.

UNO student Da’Yanah Smith, a senior majoring in interdisciplinary studies with a concentration in community and leadership development, asked Kennedy about her life’s journey from a small town to being appointed an ambassador.

The University of New Orleans’ flagship study abroad program in Austria is the University’s largest and oldest study abroad program. FACING PAGE: UNO-Innsbruck Global Ambassadors pictured with Victoria Reggie Kennedy, the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Austria.

“Her response resonates in my mind and heart,” says Smith, who hails from the small town of Cairo, Georgia. “She said, ‘Sometimes you must borrow someone else’s belief in you. Trust that!’”

Adrienne Simmons, a theatre arts and management major at UNO, says meeting Kennedy was special.

“How many chances in life do you get to meet a United States Ambassador? I was inspired by her mastery of public speaking, resilient career path, hope for a more united future, and humility,” Simmons says. 🇺🇸



ATHLETICS



Privateers experience Pura Vida

IN JULY, THE NEW Orleans men's basketball team spent a week in Costa Rica playing exhibition games, doing community service projects, and experiencing the culture and tropical beauty of the Central American nation.

With 10 new players on this year's team, the Privateers competed in a series of games against the Costa Rican national team. They held a basketball

clinic for local children in San Ramon and a Special Olympics clinic in the capital of San José.

The team visited the La Paz Waterfall Garden Nature Park, which features five famous wa-

terfalls and the largest animal sanctuary in Costa Rica. The Privateers also ziplined through a rainforest and went whitewater rafting. For many of the players, this was a series of first-ever experiences.

"I felt it was an incredible trip for our student-athletes and staff," said head coach Mark Slessinger. "We had so many dynamic experiences that will be lifetime memories for us all; it was a great opportunity to grow closer."



FACING PAGE: Sophomore forward Darrius Washington engages with children at a basketball clinic. BELOW: Sharing their basketball skills with local children, freshman

guard Jamond Vincent and junior forward Juan Cajelli. BELOW RIGHT: Freshman guard Preston Murphy, Jr. captures the sights in La Paz Waterfall Garden Nature Park.



Capital Culture for UNO's Volleyball Team

Members of the University of New Orleans volleyball team were able to take in some cultural sites during a three-day visit to Washington, D.C. in August. The team, which played three matches against George Washington, Georgetown and George Mason universities, explored the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of African American History and Culture located near the National Mall and Memorial Parks. 🌍



ALUM NOTES

1970s

Evelyne Windmeyer Berner (B.A., '72, M.Ed., '88)

Evelyne Windmeyer Berner was named "Alumna of the Year" by St. Mary's Dominican High School in New Orleans. Berner earned a bachelor's degree in anthropology and a master's degree in early childhood education in curriculum and instruction from the University of New Orleans.

Jack C. Jensen (B.S., '78)

Jack C. Jensen has been elected to serve as chairman on the Port of New Orleans Board of Commissioners. Jensen was appointed by Gov. John Bel Edwards in 2018. He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of New Orleans.

1980s

Mark Friedrich (B.A., '80)

Mark Friedrich has been named an associate artistic director by the Mendocino Theatre Company Board of Directors in Mendocino, California. Friedrich earned his bachelor's degree in theatre arts from the University of New Orleans.

Jan Ramsey, (B.S., '80)

Jan Ramsey, *OffBeat* publisher/Editor-in-Chief, has received the Cutting Edge Music Influencer Award. Ramsey earned a degree in business administration from the University of New Orleans.

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

Thomas E. Kranz has been named the new chief financial officer for the Winston-Salem/Forsyth County Schools. Kranz earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from the University of New Orleans.

Erica Spindler (M.F.A., '82)

Erica Spindler, a *New York Times* bestselling author, has published a new book, *The Detective's Daughter*. Spindler holds a master's degree in fine arts from the University of New Orleans.

Dr. Tina Q. Tan (B.S., '82)

Dr. Tina Q. Tan, professor of pediatrics at the Feinberg School of Medicine at Northwestern University, Chicago, has been inducted into the Marquis Who's Who Biographical Registry. Tan earned a bachelor's degree in science from the University of New Orleans. She holds a medical degree from Louisiana State University.

Bill Hrapmann (M.B.A., '83)

Bill Hrapmann has published a new book *Taxes, Assets and Heirs: Personal Wealth Management for Business Owners*. Hrapmann earned an MBA from the University of New Orleans.

Jerlene Crawford Hales (M.Ed., '85)

Jerlene Crawford Hales, a veteran educator of more than 40 years, has published a new children's book *Alfred the Monarch Butterfly*. Hales earned a bachelor's degree from Alcorn State University, Lorman, Mississippi, and a master's degree in educational leadership from the University of New Orleans.

Harsha Chacko (PhD., '87)

Harsha Chacko was included on *New Orleans CityBusiness* Hospitality & Tourism Power 20 List for 2022. Chacko earned a doctorate in educational administration from the University of New Orleans.

Tony Adams (B.S., '89, M.B.A., '94)

Tony Adams has been elected to the New Orleans Museum of Arts (NOMA) Board of Trustees. Adams earned a bachelor's degree in finance and a master's degree in business administration from the University of New Orleans.

1990s

Rev. Randy Wells (B.A., '90)

Rev. Randy Wells, founder of the Building Bridges to the Bahamas outreach ministry, organized a mission trip in July that included a basketball camp and youth revival in Freeport, Bahamas. Wells holds a bachelor's degree in sociology from the University of New Orleans.

Susanne Hall (B.S., '92)

Susanne Hall is the new vice president and chief commercial officer of The Coca-Cola Bottling Company United, Inc., and the third largest Coca-Cola bottler in the U.S. Hall, who will be based in Atlanta, will oversee national retail sales, marketing, on-premise, revenue growth management, eCommerce and planning and analysis. She will also lead coordination with The Coca-Cola Company and other Coca-Cola bottlers on critical commercial topics.

Raffael Neal (B.G.S., '92)

Raffael Neal, coach and CEO of the St. John Heat Youth Organization, coached a basketball clinic in Freeport, Bahamas as part of a ministry outreach program. Neal earned a bachelor's degree in general studies from the University of New Orleans.

Claudette Pierre (B.S., '92)

Claudette Pierre, special education teacher at John Yeates Middle School, is the recipient of a community leadership award from the S. Delois Mayes Scholarship Foundation in Suffolk, Virginia.

Pierre has a human resources degree from the University of New Orleans and a master's degree in public administration from Troy University.

Darryl K. Willis (M.S., '93)

Darryl K. Willis was nominated to the Board of Directors at Drill-Quip, Inc. Willis holds a master's degree in geology from the

University of New Orleans.

Gina M. Mushmeche (B.A., '94)

Gina M. Mushmeche has been named shareholder in the Las Vegas law firm of Kravitz, Schnitzer, Johnson, Watson, & Zeppenfeld. Mushmeche earned bachelor's degree in English from the University of New Orleans.

Kimberly Cook-Nelson (B.S., '94, M.S., '97, M.B.A., '99)

Kimberly Cook-Nelson has been named chief operating officer, overseeing Arkansas Nuclear One, River Bend Station and Palisades Power Plant. Cook-Nelson joined Entergy in 1996 as the general manager of plant operations at Waterford 3 Steam Electric Station. She holds a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering, master's degree in engineering management and an MBA from the University of New Orleans.

Steve Picou, (B.G.S., '94, M.S., '14)

Steve Picou, director of the Lafayette Regional Airport, received the Airport Project Award for the new LFT terminal and the Commercial Service Airport Award from the South Central chapter of the American Association of Airport Executives. Picou earned a bachelor's degree in general studies and a master's degree in urban studies from the University of New Orleans.

Tina Simpson (B.S., '94)

Tina Simpson has been named the chief clinical diversity officer for the School of Medicine at Tulane University in New Orleans. Simpson earned a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of New Orleans and holds a master of public health degree and a medical doctorate from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Doug Aucoin (B.S., '95)

Doug Aucoin has been inducted into the College Sports Video Association Sports Film and Video Hall of Fame. Aucoin earned a business

Kevin Mangum (M.Ed., '88)

Kevin Mangum, an assistant athletic trainer for the New Orleans Saints, received the Joe Gemelli "Fleur de Lis" award for his contributions to the Saints organization.

He is among the club's longest tenured employees, entering his 42nd season with the team in 2022. During that time, Mangum has worked for 10 head coaches.

Mangum's contributions helped the Saints' athletic training staff earn several awards, including the NFL Athletic Training Staff of the Year in 1986 and 2006.

He received a bachelor's in athletic administration from the University of Southern Mississippi and master's in physical education at the UNO.



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

David Schexnaydre has been named the 2023 Louisiana Principal of the Year. Schexnaydre, principal at Harry Hurst Middle School in St. Charles Parish, was honored during the 16th Annual Cecil J. Picard Educator Excellence Awards Gala in New Orleans on July 30.

Schexnaydre earned his master's degree in educational leadership and a doctorate in educational administration at UNO.

"I'm grateful for the opportunity to serve and looking forward to championing the students and teachers of Louisiana!"

The Louisiana Department of Education annually recognizes some of the state's most exceptional educators through the Teacher and Principal of the Year programs.



2000s

administration degree from the University of New Orleans.

Greg Granger (Ph.D., '96)

Greg Granger has been named president of the Louisiana Political Science Association. Granger holds a doctorate in history from the University of New Orleans.

Kiki Baker Barnes (B.S., '97, Ph.D., '14)

Kiki Baker Barnes has been appointed commissioner of the Gulf Coast Athletic Conference. She earned a bachelor's degree in communications and a doctorate in higher education administration from the University of New Orleans. She also holds a master's degree in communications from the University of Louisiana Lafayette.

Natalie Jadid (M.A., '97)

Natalie Jadid has been appointed principal for Moody Elementary School in Bradenton, Florida. Jadid holds master's degree in curriculum and instruction from the University of New Orleans.

Kevin Dolliole (M.B.A., '98)

Kevin Dolliole, director of aviation at the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport, has been elected to serve as vice chair of the board of directors for Airports Council International-North America. ACI-NA is an international airport trade organization that represents more than 300 airports in the U.S. and Canada. Dolliole holds an MBA from the University of New Orleans.

Terri Baquet (B.A., '98)

Terri Baquet has started a new position as the early learning director for the Louisiana Children's Museum. Baquet earned a bachelor's degree in social studies from the University of New Orleans.

Dan Charbonnet (M.F.A., '00)

Dan Charbonnet's painting exhibition, PARTERRE, was displayed at the Glassblock Gallery in the Fred J. Taylor Library & Technology Center at University of Arkansas at Monticello. Charbonnet earned a masters of fine arts degree in painting from the University of New Orleans.

Jeff Fernandez (M.B.A., '00)

Jeff Fernandez has been named CEO of Ochsner Health Plan. Fernandez received a bachelor's degree in marketing from LSU, an MBA from the University of New Orleans and a law degree from Loyola University New Orleans College of Law.

Melissa Legaux (B.S., '00)

Melissa Legaux has been named president of Meeting Professionals International (MPI) Georgia Chapter for the 2022-23 year. MPI is the largest meeting and event industry association worldwide. Legaux earned a bachelor's degree in hotel, restaurant and tourism administration from the University of New Orleans.

Kara Olidge (M.A., '00)

Kara Olidge has been appointed associate director for collections and discovery at The Getty Research Institute in Los Angeles. Olidge earned her bachelor's degree from Spelman College, master's degree from the University of New Orleans and her doctorate from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

Heath Barker (B.A., '01)

Heath Barker has been inducted into Marquis Who's Who biographical registry. Barker earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education from the University of New Orleans.

Adierah (Abair) Berger (B.S., '02)

Adierah Abair Berger has been named CEO and head of school for the International High

School of New Orleans by the Board of Trustees of the Voices for International Business and Education (VIBE). She earned her bachelor's degree in biology from the University of New Orleans and her master's degree in public health from Tulane University School of Public Health and Tropical Medicine with a concentration in health education and communication. Her doctorate in educational leadership is from Xavier University.

Kirk Coco (M.B.A., '02)

Kirk Coco has been named director of support at Susco Solutions in Metairie. Coco holds an MBA from the University of New Orleans, and a bachelor's degree in business administration and a juris doctorate from Louisiana State University.

Alejandro Dabdoub (B.S., '02)

Alejandro Dabdoub, a strategy and investment manager at Allied Orion in Houston, Texas, has been recognized by Continental Who's Who as a Top Pinnacle Executive for his outstanding work in the financial and entrepreneurial fields. Dabdoub earned a bachelor's degree in finance from the University of New Orleans.

Jasmine Haralson (B.G.S., '02)

Jasmine Haralson has been hired as communications and operations director for The Louisiana Policy Institute for Children. Haralson holds a bachelor's degree in general studies from the University of New Orleans.

Bernadette Lucas (M.B.A., '02)

Bernadette Lucas has been appointed interim CEO of Liberty's Kitchen, a New Orleans nonprofit dedicated to youth development, youth empowerment and food security. Lucas earned an MBA from the University of New Orleans.

Chris Coulon (B.S., '03)

Chris Coulon has been hired

as senior vice president/director of SBA Program Lending at Home Bank. He holds a bachelor's degree in business management from the University of New Orleans.

Henrietta Pichon (Ph.D., '03)

Henrietta Pichon is the new dean of the College of Education at the University of Colorado-Colorado Springs. Pichon holds a bachelor's degree in English and a master's degree in secondary English education from Louisiana Tech. She earned a doctorate in higher education administration from the University of New Orleans.

Kimberly Frazier (Ph.D., '03)

Kimberly Frazier is the new president of the American Counseling Association. Frazier is an associate professor in the Clinical Rehabilitation and Counseling Department at the Louisiana State University Health Sciences Center-New Orleans. She earned a doctorate in counselor education from the University of New Orleans.

J. Bryan Ehricht (M.S., '04)

J. Bryan Ehricht has been named managing director at James Lambert Riggs & Associates, Inc. in Hammond, Louisiana. He holds a bachelor's degree in accounting from Centenary College of Louisiana and received his master's in tax accounting from the University of New Orleans. He is a licensed certified public accountant.

George Lunsford (B.S., '04, M.B.A., '17)

George Lunsford has been named president and CEO of Riverlands Federal Credit Union. Lunsford earned a bachelor's and a master's degree in business administration from the University of New Orleans.

Vianka Miranda (M.B.A., '05)

Vianka Miranda has been

promoted to associate professor in the School of Business at Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, LA. Miranda earned a bachelor's degree in economics from Tulane University, an MBA from the University of New Orleans and a doctorate in business administration from Walden University.

Chad Brown (M.B.A., '05)

Chad Brown has been appointed chief administrative officer for the Bizzell Group in New Carrollton, Maryland. Brown holds a doctorate in management from the University of Maryland, a master's of public health from Emory University and an MBA from the University of New Orleans.

Megan Hougard (M.Ed., '05)

Megan Hougard has started a new position as chief of college and career success with Chicago Public Schools. Hougard holds a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from the University of New Orleans.

Patrick Kent (B.A., '05)

Patrick Kent has been hired as the first full-time history instructor at Martin Community College in Williamston, North Carolina. Kent earned a bachelor's degree in history from the University of New Orleans.

Dane Brodber (M.B.A., '05)

Dane Brodber has been appointed interim CEO for Barita Investments in Kingston, Jamaica. Brodber holds a master's degree in business administration from the University of New Orleans.

Marcus Gilmer (M.F.A., '05)

Marcus Gilmer has started a new position as associate managing editor for digital content creation at Crain's Chicago Business. Gilmer holds a master's degree in film and theatre from the University of New Orleans.

Raphael Cassimere, Jr. (B.A., '66, M.A., '68)

Raphael Cassimere Jr., an emeritus professor of history at the University of New Orleans and civil rights leader, was inducted into the Louisiana Justice Hall of Fame for 2022.

The Justice Hall of Fame was established by the Louisiana State Penitentiary Museum Foundation Board of Directors to acknowledge people who have made a difference in their community and in the state.

Cassimere, who earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in history from UNO, was the first Black instructor hired at UNO. He made his mark on the political landscape of New Orleans by helping lead boycotts as president of the NAACP Youth Council during the civil rights movement in the early 60s and 70s. Cassimere remained in the history department for more than 35 years.



Veronica E. Henry (B.A., '78)

Veronica E. Henry was re-elected without opposition to the New Orleans First City Court, where she is Chief Judge.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Henry led the court in implementing the first eviction diversion program to keep individuals housed by finding solutions to disputes. The program was recognized with an innovation award from the Louisiana Bar Association and, in July, Henry was invited by the White House to give a virtual presentation about the program's success.

Henry earned a bachelor's degree in drama and communications from the University of New Orleans and a Juris Doctorate from Loyola University of New Orleans School of Law.



2010s

Megan McMurry (M.S., '05)

Megan McMurry has been appointed to the advisory board for The Salvation Army of Omaha, Nebraska. McMurry holds a master's degree in tax accounting from the University of New Orleans.

Merry Sorrells (M.A., '06)

Merry Sorrells has been appointed the new head of school at Principia School in St. Louis, Missouri. She has a doctorate in executive leadership from the University of Holy Cross, a master's in educational administration from the University of New Orleans and a bachelor's degree in international relations from Principia College.

Jacqueline Richard (M.S., '06)

Jacqueline Richard is the new director of coastal studies at Nunez Community College. Richard holds a master's degree in geology from the University of New Orleans.

Alicia Lagarde Craig (B.S., '07)

Alicia Lagarde Craig has joined Athena Real Estate in New Orleans. Craig earned a bachelor's degree in finance and business administration with a minor in real estate from the University of New Orleans.

Lish McBride (M.F.A., '08)

Lish McBride has published a new book, *A Little Too Familiar*. The romantic fantasy is available on Amazon and Barnes and Noble. McBride earned a master's degree from the University of New Orleans Creative Writing Workshop.

Walter Fienco (B.S., '08)

Walter Fienco has been appointed product line manager, commercial thrusters at ZF Marine. He holds a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from the University of New Orleans.

Jane Tardo, (M.F.A., '08, M.F.A., '20)

Jane Tardo had her exhibit, "Adventure Cattery Quilt Show and Boutique" on display at The Front art gallery in New Orleans. Tardo earned a master's degree in art from the University of New Orleans.

Christie Cognevich (B.A., '10, M.A., '12)

Christie Cognevich has published her second book *Dealing with Stress: Insights and Tips for Teenagers* published in July by Rowman & Littlefield. Cognevich earned a bachelor's and master's degree in English literature from the University of New Orleans and a doctorate in English literature from Louisiana State University.

Blaise Pezold (B.S., '11)

Blaise Pezold, coastal and environmental program manager for the Meraux Foundation in St. Bernard Parish, Louisiana, is the 2022 recipient of the 44th Guy Caire Award for Louisiana Conservationist of the Year. Pezold holds a bachelor's degree in earth and environmental sciences from the University of New Orleans.

Precious Jackson-Howlett (B.S., '11)

Precious Jackson-Howlett has started a new job as director of program management services with Construction Management Partners, LLC., in St. Louis, Missouri. She holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of New Orleans and an MBA from Lindenwood University in St. Charles, Missouri.

Pedro Rosario (M.B.A., '11)

Pedro Rosario, division vice president, corporate engineering at Abbott Laboratories, has been named to the Illinois Manufacturers' Association Board of Directors. Rosario holds a master's degree in business administration from the University of New Orleans.

Daniella Irle (M.P.A., '12)

Daniella Irle has been hired as athletic director at Carl Sandburg College in Galesburg, Illinois. Irle graduated from Lamar University with her bachelor's in physical education and earned a master's in public administration from the University of New Orleans.

Jamison Ross, (M.A., '13)

Jamison Ross, a multi-Grammy nominated artist, has released a new album, "JAMO." Ross holds a master's degree in music from the University of New Orleans.

Rachel E. Pollock (M.F.A., '13)

Rachel E. Pollock has published a new book, *Theatre Costume Business: Creators of Character* with Triffin Morris and Gregory Morris (Routledge Press). Pollock holds a master's degree in creative writing from the University of New Orleans.

Calvin J. Jonker (M.S., '13)

Calvin J. Jonker has joined the Gibbons Corporate Group as an associate in the firm's New York office. Jonker holds a master's from the University of New Orleans Lester E. Kabacoff School of Hotel, Restaurant, and Tourism Administration. He earned his J.D. from Pepperdine University School of Law.

Laura Wilber (M.A., '13)

Laura Wilber been hired as an English teacher at St. Michael Catholic High School in Alabama. Wilber earned a master's degree in English from the University of New Orleans.

Joyana Peters (M.F.A., '14)

Joyana Peters has published a new book, *The Girl from St. Petersburg*. The historical fiction was published by Amaryllis

Press. Peters earned her MFA in Creative Writing from the University of New Orleans.

Nathan Favaloro (B.S., '14)

Nathan Favaloro has been hired as assistant professor in the counseling department at Chadron State College in Nebraska. Favaloro earned a doctorate in Counselor Education and Supervision and a master's in School Counseling from the University of Holy Cross. He earned a bachelor's degree in psychology from the University of New Orleans.

Chad Hrapmann (M.B.A., '15)

Chad Hrapmann has published new book *Taxes, Assets and Heirs: Personal Wealth Management for Business Owners*. Hrapmann holds a master's degree in business administration from the University of New Orleans.

Ross Peter Nelson (B.A., '15)

The Montana Playwrights Network Staged Reading Series launched with a new play written by Ross Peter Nelson, called "Les Chiens Errants." Nelson earned a bachelor's degree in playwriting from the University of New Orleans.

Tara Lambeth (Ph.D., '16)

Tara Lambeth has been named planning and zoning director for St. John the Baptist Parish. Lambeth earned a master's degree in city and planning from Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York, and a doctorate in urban studies from the University of New Orleans.

Taylor Berry (B.A., '15, M.A., '17)

Taylor Berry has been appointed morning executive producer at CBS affiliate WTSP in Tampa Bay, Florida. She holds a bachelor's degree in

Melanie Montroll (M.B.A., '09)

Melanie Montroll has been named the Harbor Police Chief for the Port of New Orleans, the department's first woman chief of police. Montroll, a 21-year-veteran of the force, previously served as the assistant chief.

Montroll has been regularly recognized for her leadership skills and steadily progressed through the ranks.

"I look forward to leading our already outstanding Harbor Police Department and pledge to work tirelessly to ensure that HPD is a shining star in our beloved state of Louisiana and a model for law enforcement agencies," Montroll said.

Montroll holds a masters of business administration from the University of New Orleans.



Privateer Pioneers

The University of New Orleans' first-ever graduating class, the class of 1962, was welcomed back to campus in May to celebrate its 60th anniversary. Members of the class, who were treated to a luncheon and recognition during the spring commencement ceremony, also received special medallions to commemorate the occasion.

President Nicklow said of the group: "They are an integral part of our institution's history. They are indeed Privateer pioneers."



film, theater, communication arts and journalism, along with a master's degree in professional writing from the University of New Orleans.

Katelyn Mulkey (B.S., '18)

Katelyn Mulkey has started a new position as sales and marketing coordinator at Search Influence. Mulkey earned a marketing degree from the University of New Orleans.

Byron Reiger (M.F.A., '17)

Byron Reiger has been selected to lead the 10th annual Outer Banks Veterans Writing Workshop at the UNC Coastal Studies Institute in November. Reiger, an Army veteran, earned an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of New Orleans.

Devin Foil (M.U.R.P., '18)

Devin Foil has joined C.H. Fenstermaker & Associates as senior planner. Foil holds a master's degree in urban and regional planning from the University of New Orleans.

Laura Bonanno (Ph.D., '19)

Laura Bonanno, professor of nursing and director of the nurse anesthesia program at LSU Health New Orleans School of Nursing, has been selected as a Fellow of the American Academy of Nursing. Bonanno holds a doctorate in educational administration from the University of New Orleans.

Saroj Duwal (B.S., '19, M.S., '22)

Saroj Duwal has been hired as a software engineer at Google in Austin, Texas. Duwal earned a bachelor's and master's degree in computer science from the University of New Orleans.

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

Anna Laura Quinn has released her first full-length album, "Open the Door." Quinn holds a master's degree in jazz studies from the University of New Orleans.

Anabel Mifsud (Ph.D., '20)

Anabel Mifsud, assistant professor in the counselor education program at the University of New Orleans, received a Dissertation Excellence Award from the National Board for Certified Counselors. Mifsud earned her doctorate in counselor education and supervision from UNO.

Bradley Feig (B.S., '20, M.B.A., '21)

Bradley Feig has been promoted to director of basketball operations for the New Orleans Privateers men's basketball. Feig earned a bachelor's degree in marketing and a master's degree in business administration from the University of New Orleans.

Boone Clemmons (Ph.D., '22)

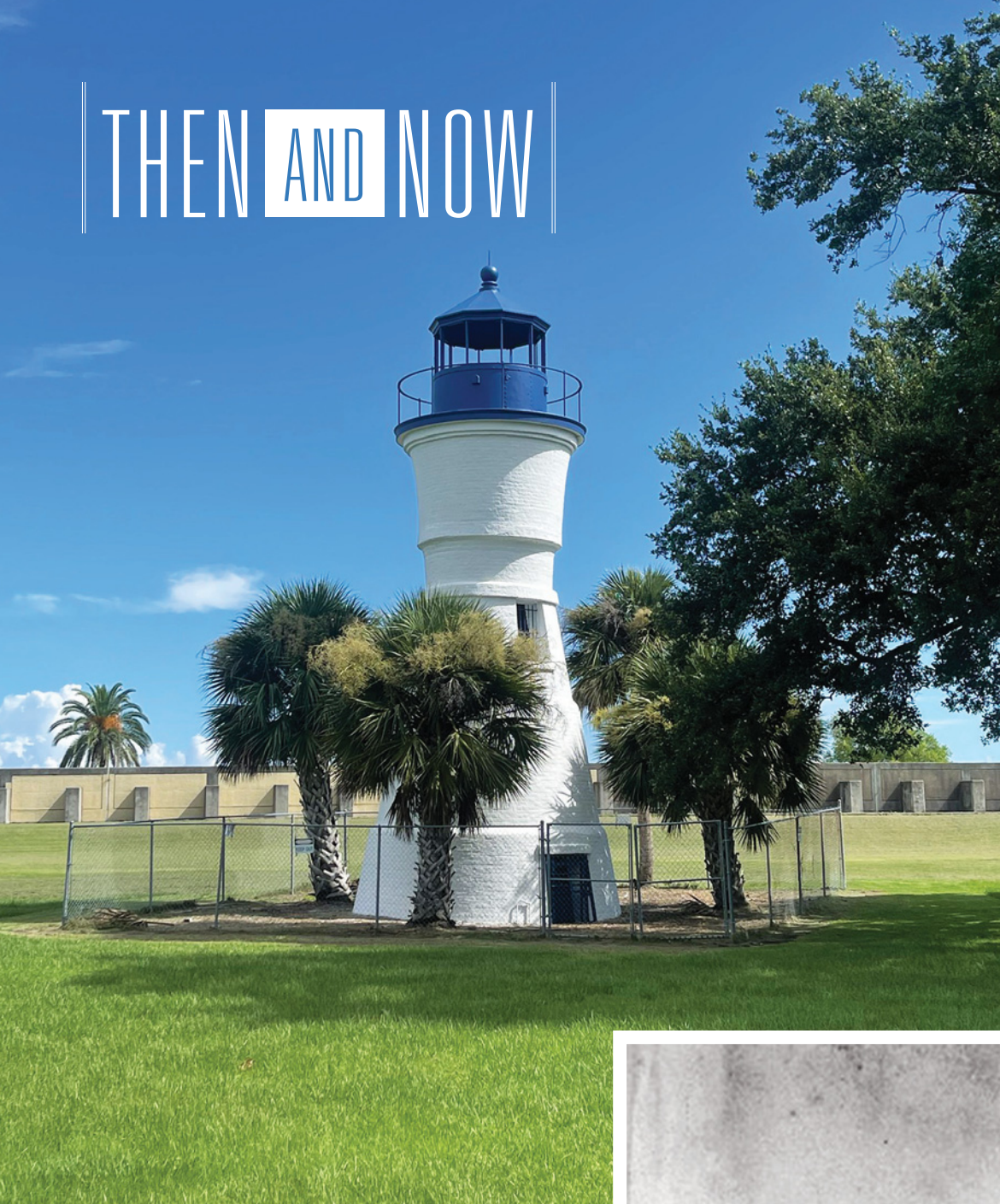
Boone Clemmons has been named assistant vice president for public relations and marketing at Southwestern Oklahoma State University. Clemmons holds a doctorate in educational administration from the University of New Orleans.

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



THEN AND NOW



Milneburg Lighthouse

YES, THE WATERS OF LAKE PONTCHARTRAIN once surrounded this (now landlocked) lighthouse!

The Milneburg Lighthouse, also known as the Port Pontchartrain Lighthouse, was erected in 1838 and later rebuilt as a brick tower in 1855. It stands 56-feet tall and is one of a series of federal lighthouses erected around Lake Pontchartrain that guided vessels on what is the present-day site of The Beach, UNO's research and technology park.

The undated yesteryear picture is courtesy of the U.S. Coast Guard Historian's office. The modern photo of the lighthouse, which shows the recent refurbishing, is courtesy of UNO's social media coordinator, Daniel Sumrall. 🌐

NEXT IS NOW

THE CAMPAIGN FOR
THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW ORLEANS



INVESTING IN STUDENTS



CREATING BOLD ACADEMIC PROGRAMS



BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE



CULTIVATING OUR KNOWLEDGE

We are proud to announce NEXT IS NOW: The Campaign for The University of New Orleans!

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You too can be a catalyst for change, and show your excitement about what's possible, what's essential, and what's next, with a gift to UNO First!

A gift to UNO First supports the ever-changing needs of the University, providing flexibility to address needs as they arise. Your participation will make a difference and help ignite new ambitions and empower future generations of Privateers.

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