

# RADFORD

The Magazine of Radford University

Fall 2019



# DRIVEN BY WHAT'S NEXT

RADFORD UNIVERSITY CARILION

FROM THE BAY TO  
THE BLUE RIDGE

BUILDING IDEAS  
THAT MATTER

A PUSH TO GROW  
ACADEMICALLY



## SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Highlanders explored the infinite possibilities of campus involvement at Club Fair on Moffett Lawn in August. More than 200 groups were represented at the event.

---



## PRESIDENT

Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D.

## BOARD OF VISITORS

Robert A. Archer, Rector

James R. Kibler, Jr., J.D., Vice Rector

Thomas Brewster M.S. '95, Ed.D.

Jay A. Brown, Ph.D.

Gregory A. Burton

Krishna Chachra

Rachel D. Fowlkes, Ed.D.

Susan Whealler Johnston, Ph.D.

Mark S. Lawrence

Debra K. McMahon, Ph.D.

Karyn K. Moran '88

Nancy A. Rice

David A. Smith '85, M.S. '87

Georgia Anne Snyder-Falkinham

Lisa Throckmorton '94

Jake R. Fox, Ph.D.

Faculty Representative

Breon Case '21

Student Representative

The Magazine of Radford University is produced collaboratively by University Advancement and University Relations.

## EDITORS AND CONTRIBUTORS

Bailey Black

Don Bowman

Karen Castele '79

Ryder Deal '19

Robin Dowdy

Max Esterhuizen, M.S. '15

Jessica Fowler

Jeff Greenough

Mary Hardbarger

James Harman '92

Mark Lambert, M.S. '97

Wendy Lowery

Pam McCallister

Hannah Moses

Alexa Nash

Chad Osborne

Stephanie Overton

Caitlyn Scaggs '07

Ashley Schumaker

Meghan Williams Spraker '03

Laura Turk '87, M.S. '90

Justin Ward '10

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings, Fellow Highlanders!

As the most recent edition of *The Magazine of Radford University* arrives, Winter Commencement is just around the corner, and winter break is nearly underway across campus. The Fall 2019 edition focuses on our academic excellence and collective success, strengthened community partnerships and enhanced opportunities for our students as they work to positively impact communities both near and far.

Our talented Highlanders inspire me daily. This edition of *The Magazine of Radford University* highlights just some of their inspirational stories and transformational experiences. As we welcome a new year and a new decade, let us take a moment to reminisce about achievements of the past and our accomplishments together.

By embracing innovation and tradition, we have continuously provided the academic environment needed to foster intellectual growth, not only while our students are on campus, but also after they begin their careers. Their foundation for success is forged right here during their Radford experience. With the ongoing implementation of our five-year strategic plan, we are truly embracing the tradition and envisioning the future.

Our students are responsive, resilient and real. Through the Highlander journey, we instill students with purpose and the ability to think creatively and critically. We provide an educational environment and the necessary tools to address the social, economic and environmental issues confronting our region, nation and the world.

In July 2019, the Radford family grew overnight as our merger with Jefferson College of Health Sciences was completed. From this unique public-private partnership, Radford University Carilion was born. We are expanding the affordability of a quality healthcare education and saving time and money for students. This great work would not have been possible without the dedication of students, faculty, staff and the community, and I am incredibly grateful for their tireless efforts.

I delivered the annual State of the University Address in October 2019. At that time, I assured the Radford family that our University is strong. Today is no different. Radford University Carilion is changing the landscape of healthcare in our region and in the Commonwealth of Virginia. And, the Vinod Chachra IMPACT Lab continues to create greater opportunities for our campus. At the same time, the main campus' historical focus on teaching and learning continues to make a mark regionally and nationally!

Each and every day, the Radford family works to fulfill Radford University's core values. Through a pursuit of discovery, dedication to scholarship and spirit of service, together, we are collectively bridging the knowledge and skills gap by providing new opportunities for our students and our citizens.

Enduring commitment, unmatched dedication and abundant passion are exhibited each and every day by the Radford family in remarkable ways. Indeed, there are so many people who make Radford so very special, and their stories cannot be matched. The stories on these pages are a testament to that fact and showcase the Highlander pride felt each and every day by those who are honored to call Radford University home. Please enjoy the Fall 2019 edition of *The Magazine of Radford University*, and GO HIGHLANDERS!

With Highlander Pride,



Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D.  
President



## We want to hear from you!

Let us know what you think of the stories and photos you find in *The Magazine of Radford University*. The magazine staff welcomes readers' comments but reserves the right to edit letters or to refuse publication of letters considered libelous or distasteful. Space availability may prevent publication of all letters in the magazine. Please send your letters to [editor@radford.edu](mailto:editor@radford.edu).



# Inside

22



14



18



29

## Cover Story

22 Two Locations, One Bold Future

## Features

14 From the Bay to the Blue Ridge

18 Building Ideas that Matter

29 A Push to Grow Academically

## Sections

4 Up Front

32 Alumni

50 The Experience

70 The Arts

72 Athletics

74 Class Notes



You can now catch up and enjoy all of the news, views and exciting happenings from your alma mater wherever you are on the road, at the beach or in your easy chair. Visit [www.radford.edu/magazine](http://www.radford.edu/magazine).



## **IN THE BUSINESS OF HELPING BUSINESSES: THE ROANOKE REGIONAL SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER LEND EXPERTISE TO ENTREPRENEURS**

**Give Davis College of Business and Economics Dean Joy Bhadury, Ph.D., 10 minutes, and he will give you an hour's worth of information about why having the Roanoke Regional Small Business Development Center (SBDC) on campus is a boon for the economic development of the New River Valley, as well as an asset for Radford University.**

It is not that he is a fast talker, but instead brimming with excitement and enthusiasm that the SBDC is in the NRV thanks to the collaboration of several local economic development agencies. And, it is on Radford's campus, in the Davis College, just down the hallway from his office, in Room 300.

The SBDC's location is important to Bhadury, and the SBDC's campus hub in the Davis College has several advantages to the businesses it serves in the region and to the University and its students. Bhadury gleefully talks about them all. He begins with students, because that is "what we do here," according to Bhadury. "We provide a world-class business education."

The SBDC is a champion resource for advising, training and counseling individuals, who operate startups and small businesses. Its mission is to support and strengthen its clientele of small businesses in the New River Valley.

"Many of those clients have ongoing projects that could benefit significantly from the expertise of our faculty and students," Bhadury says. "And, in turn, our students could gain real-world experience by working with small- or medium-sized businesses in their nascent phase. They can learn how to grow a business from those experiences."

It is a win-win situation for both the University, its students and the SBDC.

"Our students learn within the laboratory of a small business and see it from the inside," Bhadury continues. "The SBDC meets its core mission of helping small businesses; we meet our mission of providing a preeminent business education."

Offering assistance, too, is the highly-regarded Davis College faculty, who possess a wide range of business knowledge and know-how.

Regional small business development centers make up a statewide network. The Roanoke Regional SBDC serves the New River and Roanoke valleys, as well as the Alleghany Highlands. By placing the NRV office on Radford University's campus, the center is better equipped to provide its signature pro bono business assistance throughout the region by helping existing businesses thrive and startup businesses navigate a road to success.

In 2018, the Roanoke Regional SBDC served more than 300 clients and provided more than 1,100 hours of counseling. More than 60 percent of its clients were existing businesses, and nearly 40 percent were startups. SBDC engagement resulted in more than \$3.2 million in capital investment in client businesses.

The University announced the SBDC's campus location in June 2019. In doing so, President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D., reflected on the University's strategic plan, which pinpoints community partnerships and economic development as key tenets.

"By fostering relationships and a culture of service within and beyond our community, Radford University significantly contributes to strengthening the economic landscape and workforce needs of the region," Hemphill said.

“The SBDC meets its core mission of helping small businesses; we meet our mission of providing a preeminent business education.”

Joy Bhadury, Ph.D.



The strategic plan calls for the University to identify ways in which it can “contribute to economic development and strengthen community partnerships by identifying ways in which the campus can use its physical and intellectual resources to enrich its mission, define its brand, enhance the region and support job creation and growth.”

“That is exactly what the University is doing through this partnership,” Bhadury says. “We, through providing a location and the expertise of our faculty and students, are helping the SBDC serve the community, which in turn sparks economic growth, which benefits everyone,” he continues. “We are providing opportunities and a world-class education to our students, and we are providing a home to an important economic development office.”

The SBDC campus home brings another benefit that might not be easily seen at first, Bhadury points out, but is an important building block for the University: Visibility.

When the SBDC hosts an event, for example, such as a training seminar for would-be entrepreneurs, it brings to campus some of the top business professionals from the NRV and beyond.

“Wouldn't it be great if they went back to their homes, their communities, and told everyone what a great place Radford University is for helping businesses and helping communities grow?” Bhadury asks rhetorically. “And, wouldn't it be great if they talked about our bright students and their eagerness to learn and help?”

“It reinforces in their minds that, located right here in their backyard, Radford University is, an institution willing to serve and build upon the community and the state it calls home.” ■





## A STATE-OF-THE-ART HOME FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:

### RENOVATIONS PROVIDE A HIGH-TECH FOCUS FOR THE ARTIS COLLEGE

**The dust is settling, and a new era is being ushered in for the Artis College of Science and Technology.**

Following in the footsteps of the Center of the Sciences, Radford University's Reed and Curie Halls, the long-time home to the majority of the departments that comprise the Artis College, have been renovated with a keen focus on the needs of the students, while keeping an eye on developing technologies.

The exciting renovations to the two buildings reinforce Radford University's commitment to experiential education, while supplying ultramodern facilities for students, faculty and staff alike.

"We are incredibly excited to move into our renovated home," said Artis College of Science and Technology Dean Orion Rogers, Ph.D. "This is an ultramodern building designed with intricate detail to meet the needs of both our students and faculty. The learning spaces housed inside these walls will facilitate even more advanced research."

When classes resume in the new decade, students will be greeted by the familiar foyer of Reed Hall, which includes the classic wood paneling. Beyond that, however, everything is entirely new.

The main floor includes a new collaboration space off the main entrance, found one floor above where the old planetarium used to be.

One of the high-tech additions to Reed and Curie Halls is the Geohazards and Unmanned Systems Research Center, allowing for up-close viewing of drones by passersby and a lab for drone research. Drones are in glass displays and easily viewable from the hallways for anyone to see.

"It is important to show that technology is accessible to everyone," Rogers said. "By having the drones on display, we are hoping to increase the visibility of our drone research and collaborations across departments."

Just beyond the renovated buildings is a familiar sight: the greenhouse. Inside, however, are updates





7

1. H. Pat Artis, Ph.D., with President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D. 2. New cabinetry 3. New home for Capture the Flag 4. The original entrance paneling and trim from the 1930s 5. Rolling laboratory tables 6. The Artis College atrium in progress 7. Touring the site, from left: H. Pat Artis, Ph.D.; President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D.; Chad Reed, vice president for finance and administration and chief financial officer; Heather Miano '91, executive director of administration; Nancy E. Artis '73, chair of the Radford University Foundation Board of Directors; and Wendy Lowery, vice president for university advancement

that are not limited to plants and other specimens. The greenhouse itself has been renovated, complete with a modern and updated look.

One of the driving reasons for the renovations to Reed and Curie Halls, though, was the significant attention to cybersecurity, a growing national security issue.

The Capture the Flag event, a competition for high school and community college students that challenges participants in topic areas, such as anatomy of a cyberattack, an introduction to networking, cryptography, forensics, web security and operating system security, now has its own space for events and simulations.

Just last year, the final round of the popular event was livestreamed on Amazon's Twitch.tv, a leading livestreaming platform for gamers. The event brought thousands of online views to campus. With the renovation of Reed and Curie Halls, the event will be hosted in its own space, complete with the ability to livestream future iterations of the popular event.

"Having a modern, beautiful space, combined with unparalleled functionality, will allow us to hopefully expand upon these community-based events," Rogers said. "Our goal is to fully realize the capabilities of our renovated home for both current and future generations of Highlanders."

On the ground floor of Curie Hall is a space dedicated to geospatial science, with a GIS and Remote Sensing Lab and a GIS Center, complete with a Virtual Reality Lab.

If you walk up the stairwell, you will reach the second floor of Reed Hall, where the office spaces for geology and geospatial science are located, as well as faculty and student research spaces, giving

students even more opportunities to work in close collaboration with faculty members.

Nearby lounge spaces further increase these collaborations with faculty members, keeping with Radford University's dedication to student success.

Housed nearby are three geology teaching labs, two for the general geology courses and one for advanced research opportunities.

Also, in the renovated buildings are biochemistry labs, one for teaching and one for research. Between the two labs are a stockroom and a tissue and cell culture space.

The modern and enhanced research facilities allow for students to engage in advanced undergraduate research, said Rogers.

"It gives students the opportunity to learn by doing and to ask original questions, while exploring research projects and possibilities they may have never before considered," Rogers said. "The new academic learning spaces and applied labs allow students hands-on experience, which not only boosts their undergraduate research opportunities, while enrolled at Radford University, but also gives valuable career experience and unique advantages as undergraduates that are valued in corporate settings and graduate programs. The equipment that we have in Reed and Curie Halls is representative of what is used in the field, and our students could begin their scientific careers using equipment they had used previously to learn science in their laboratory courses here at Radford."

Each of the specialized academic learning spaces fosters student growth and exploration, which are pinnacles of the Radford University student experience. ■

“The partnership with the VA is one of the best clinical placements we have, because of the range of work they get to do.”

Philip Mongan, Ph.D.

## SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE:

### M.S.W. PROGRAM OFFERS SOUGHT-AFTER INTERNSHIPS AT VETERANS AFFAIRS HOSPITAL IN SALEM

**In a long-term partnership between Radford University and the Salem Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Center, Master of Social Work (M.S.W.) students have a valuable opportunity to assist veterans with a wide range of issues, as well as enrich their education for their future careers.**

The M.S.W. internships available at the Salem VA Medical Center are dedicated strictly to Radford University students, and competition for the paid positions is fierce. Only eight slots per academic year are available, and it is not uncommon for as many as 20 students to apply.

“The partnership with the VA is one of the best clinical placements we have, because of the range of work they get to do,” said Philip Mongan, Ph.D., LCSW and M.S.W. coordinator. “Students, who participate in the internship, are often hired by the VA.”

Interns experience many aspects of providing care to veterans. Assignments can range from post-traumatic stress disorder treatment, inpatient psychological care, traumatic brain injury and dementia care, long-term care patients, case management, community outreach and therapy to administration.

Interns are required to work 300 hours each semester, or approximately 22 hours per week.

Prior to assuming an internship, students go through a class to educate themselves about the needs of military populations. Learning the culture of veterans prepares them to work with veterans. “Why does the military do what it does?” and “What is combat like?” are some of the areas covered in the class, according to Mongan.

The program also benefits the 79 social workers currently employed at the Salem VA Medical Center.

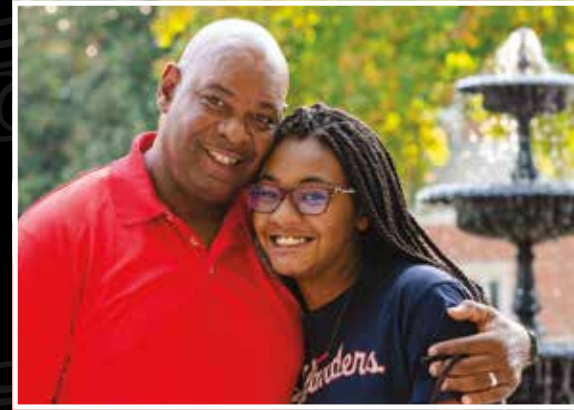
“We need to help develop our profession of social work by teaching those who will later be our peers in the profession,” said Malinda Shelor-Rogers, Transition and Care Management Program coordinator at the Salem VA Medical Center. “Even if they do not end up working for the VA, they will still serve the community and have an awareness of veterans, their needs and how the VA system works.”

Working with and caring for veterans reinforces the Highlander core value of fostering relationships and a culture of service within and beyond the University community. ■

RADFORD UNIVERSITY

# Family Weekend

SEPTEMBER 20-22, 2019



Radford University students reunited with their families September 20-22, 2019 for a gorgeous, fun-filled Family Weekend. With a packed schedule of events that ranged from live music and library golf to a variety of shows — fashion, planetarium and dog — families still made time to pose for photos by the campus fountain.

# RADEFORD HIGHLANDERS



## A DAY DEDICATED TO HIGHLANDER HERITAGE

Radford University welcomed a proud tradition back to campus on October 12 when the Radford Highlanders Festival returned after five years in Bisset Park. Moffett and Heth lawns provided a perfect setting for popular festival features — Highland cattle, sheepherding, clan exhibits, rugby, arts and crafts and various vendors — as well as the headline attractions: music and the Highland Games.

“It’s a really cool event! And, it’s right here on campus,” said Daniel Meany, a sophomore from Christiansburg, Virginia. “There’s a lot to see here. There are so many booths here, and everything is so unique.”

The Celtic soundtrack of the day was provided by the Virginia Highlands, Radford University Highlanders and Appalachian Highlanders Pipes and Drums. Featured on the Highlander Stage were the acclaimed Washington, D.C. folk-rock band Scythian and the Michigan-based CrossBow.

Crowds on the perfect fall day were entranced by the kilt-clad competitors in the Tom Raisbeck Memorial Games, featuring games of ancient origin that included the caber toss, sheaf toss, stone (similar to shot put) and waiver bar.

The Radford Highlanders Festival is an ongoing partnership between Radford University and the City of Radford. People from within the University and the broader community work diligently to organize the annual event. Their efforts yield unique experiences and special memories for families, students and community members. ■



Student and piper Ian Niday has a long history with the Radford Highlanders Festival. At left, he is seen carrying the flag for Clan Donald in 2002.



## **THE ROCK OF THE RADFORD FAMILY: FAMILY AND SERVICE DEFINE BOARD OF VISITORS RECTOR ROBERT A. ARCHER**

**Robert A. Archer, CEO of Blue Ridge Beverage Company, Inc., and rector of Radford University's Board of Visitors, is a stalwart in the region, known for his service, family-owned business and guidance to Radford.**

Archer's father purchased Blue Ridge Beverage in 1959 with other partners and later bought out the partners, truly turning the company into a family owned and operated business. From a humble beginning with 10 employees at one location, the company has grown significantly under the family's guidance with 475 employees at four locations throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Throughout Archer's extensive history with Blue Ridge Beverage, he has had five brothers or sisters involved with the company, and his mother — who is 94 — still comes into the office.

"It's given me the opportunity to do a lot of things that I don't think I would have had the opportunity to do otherwise," Archer said. "My sister, Jackie, is the COO and runs the company day-to-day. We've been blessed to have great people, who have

supported us and worked with us here at Blue Ridge Beverage to help make it a success. My mother brings us the mail each day, and she enjoys doing that. We're just blessed that she's able to do that."

Archer's service to the family business, the community and Radford began with his experience in the Corps of Cadets at Virginia Tech. Following his graduation, Archer was commissioned in the Army, where he served in Vietnam for a year and a half with the 82nd Airborne Division.

After his service to the United States, Archer returned home to serve his family, as he had a feeling that his father needed some help. Not long after his return to Virginia, his father passed away at 51, six months after Archer returned home from the Army.

"In December 1972, here's my mother in an industry that had very few women owners. That was a very trying time for us," Archer said. "We survived and fortunately grew."

Archer maintained his service to the country, even after returning home through the Army Reserve,

**“The University needs to be innovative, creative and provide a level of education that sets students up for success.”**

Robert A. Archer

where he completed his military career with 30 years of service and retired as a colonel.

As Archer continued his service to the country, he also was committed to serving the community.

“There’s so much need out there, and we strive to give back,” Archer said. “Businesses should give back to the extent to which they are able. For us, we’re local. We know the charities, and we know the people here. We’ve gotten to know them over time. We grew up here, and we went to school here. We know what the area’s needs are.”

Some of the ties to the region came from his family. Archer’s oldest daughter earned her master’s degree in speech-language pathology from Radford University, while his youngest daughter attended Radford University on a scholarship for tennis.

“Jill ’00, my youngest daughter, earned her degree in interior design, and it really set her up for success later in life,” Archer said. “After working for an international architectural and design firm, Jill joined the family business.”

Having two daughters attend Radford was where Archer thought his involvement would end — being the parent of two alumnae. Later, an unexpected call came inquiring if Archer would be interested in serving on the Radford University Board of Visitors. He was.

“The more I knew about Radford, the more I was interested,” Archer said.


As a member of the Board, and now as rector, Archer wants to support President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D., the students and the faculty. Being involved with students firsthand is a privilege for Archer.

“If everybody could experience that, it will give you a lot of hope for the future,” Archer said. “The time the Board spends with students is uplifting. It makes you realize why we are really here. We can talk about any aspect of the University, but it has to be about the students and faculty. The University needs to be innovative, creative and provide a level of education that sets students up for success.”

Archer wants the legacy of the current Board to be that of ensuring Radford’s success for years to come. One such example of that is Radford University’s merger with Jefferson College of Health Sciences, which is having a profound impact on healthcare and health education in the region through the creation of Radford University Carilion (RUC).

“These are the types of things that we need to be doing to ensure that a Radford degree has a lasting meaning, and that the school will continue to be successful in the future.”

Through Archer’s dedication to his family, the family business, Radford, the community and himself, he is having a lasting impact on the region he has long called home. ■



# FROM THE BAY TO THE BLUE RIDGE:

**CYBER CAMP EXPANDS  
RADFORD'S CYBER  
TECHNOLOGY  
EDUCATION REACH**

By Mary Hardbarger





**I**N LANCASTER COUNTY, VIRGINIA, LOCATED IN THE NORTHERN NECK OF THE STATE, ITS ALMOST 11,000 RESIDENTS ARE SURROUNDED BY BOUNDLESS BEAUTY.

Founded in 1651, the historic region is situated between the Rappahannock River to the west and the Chesapeake Bay to the east. Students at Lancaster High School admit they spend a lot of time on the water, when they are not studying in the classroom.

Although rich in culture and heritage, the county is less bountiful of diverse career opportunities and resources, especially in the technology sector — a trend of many rural areas across the United States. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, computer and mathematics occupations rank among the lowest in Lancaster County.

“Rural areas suffer from a chicken and egg problem,” explained Professor of Information Technology Jeff Pittges, Ph.D. “They don’t have enough technology companies to attract people, and they don’t have enough information technology workers to attract companies. Consequently, retaining information technology talent is a major challenge.”

This summer, Pittges, along with faculty, staff and students from across Radford University, collaborated in a new outreach project to address this common disparity and empower young students with the skills and the passion to pursue career paths in cyber technology and bring technical expertise back to their hometowns.

Middle- and high-school-aged students from Floyd, Pulaski and Lancaster counties, as well as the City of Radford, participated in the Cyber Camp in late May and July of 2019. The pilot program, held on Radford University’s campus, was sponsored by the Artis College of Science and Technology.

In May, 70 students from Pulaski and Floyd high schools and Radford City's John N. Dalton Intermediate School participated in a three-day version of the camp, which was designed as an experiment to gauge students' interest in and enthusiasm for technology and cybersecurity with the idea that a larger program could be offered in the future, explained David Horton '90, camp co-organizer and assistant to the dean of the Artis College.

Throughout the week, students were introduced to basic cyber literacy concepts and skillsets, such as circuits, networking, robotics, coding and malware. With guidance from Instructor of Information Technology Freeman Lo, students also learned how to program Arduino robots to perform certain tasks, such as maneuver through mazes and roam autonomously using sensors in the hallways and classrooms of Davis Hall.

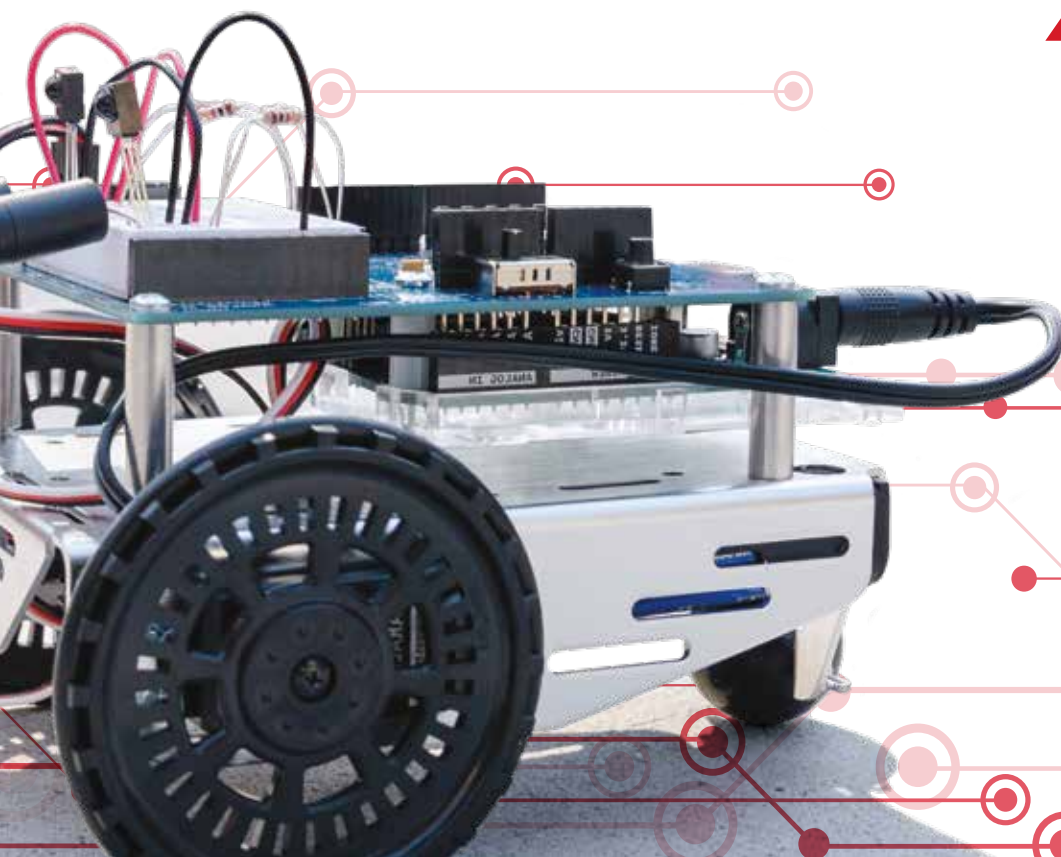
Seventh grade life science teacher Beverly Edwards, M.S. '84 traveled with her Dalton Intermediate School students to the Cyber Camp. As students meticulously programmed their small robots — some spinning and others following pathways mapped out on the ground — Edwards beamed with excitement for her young learners.

"I'm so impressed with what they're learning and doing. It's really reinforcing what they've learned in class and what they're going to be learning next year," she said. "This has been such a fun and educational field trip for these students."

In July, students from Lancaster High traveled from the Bay to the Blue Ridge for a weeklong, residential version of the Cyber Camp.

Radford University's connection to Lancaster County comes through Pittges' relationship with Lancaster County resident Jack Neil of the Verlander Foundation, which provides financial assistance for students to further their education.

"This camp is the first step toward building a pipeline from Lancaster High School to Radford University," Pittges said. "We need to attack the problem from both ends — increase the supply of technology workers and increase technology jobs. As we fill the talent pipeline, we hope to attract more technology companies and tech jobs to Lancaster County."



**THIS CAMP IS THE FIRST STEP TOWARD BUILDING A PIPELINE FROM LANCASTER HIGH SCHOOL TO RADFORD UNIVERSITY.**

Jeff Pittges, Ph.D.



In addition to participating in similar activities as the May campers, the Lancaster County group also heard from cyber experts, including a special investigator, who talked with the students about cyber bullying and cyber predators, and Block.one's Chief Information Security Officer Eddie Schwartz.

Belle Bean, a rising eighth grader and the youngest Lancaster camper, said she had a lot of fun working with the robots, which involved extensive programming to make the machines move forward and backward, turn and stop.

"I used to dislike programming," Bean said. "But, with the robots, we are learning how to program for a purpose. We are learning these advanced skills that we can actually put to use."

Unlike Bean, several of the students said the camp was their first exposure to cyber technology education. The main reason, explained Pittges, is because few educators in Lancaster County Public Schools, and in many other rural localities, have been trained in the subject matter, a challenge he foresees the Cyber Camp helping address in the future.

"We'd eventually like to have teachers attend the camp with the students, and, together, they can take those skills back to their school systems," Pittges said. "Teachers can train other teachers. Students can share stories about the robots they programmed with their friends. It is a win-win for everyone."

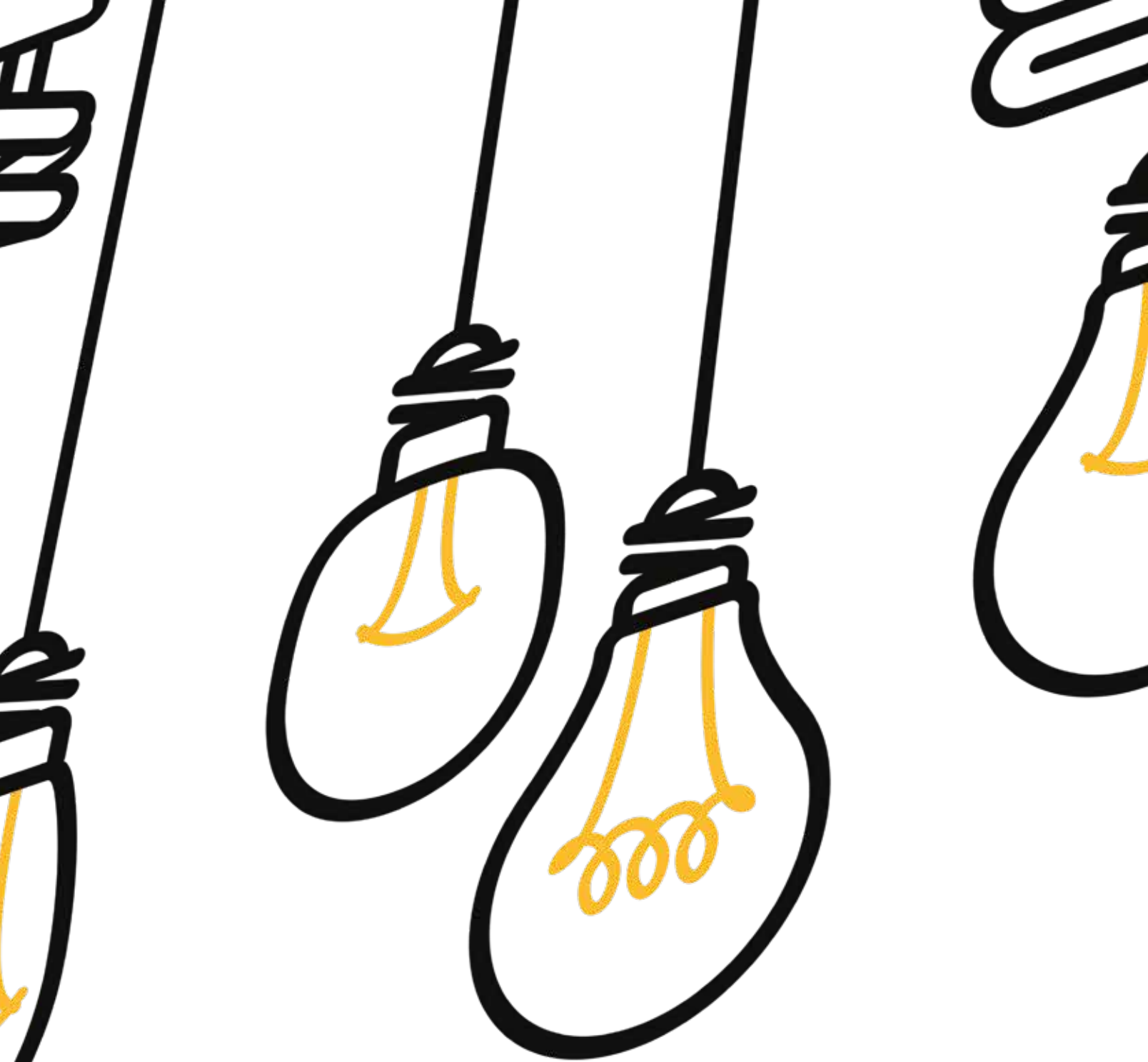
Eager to soak in new knowledge, the campers were equally as excited to explore campus, breathe the fresh mountain air and engage with camp organizers.

"It's really beautiful here," said Troy Cox, a rising sophomore at Lancaster High School.

Many students agreed that Radford University may be their future alma mater, because the camp and its organizers impacted them so much.

Witnessing the students' curiosity and enthusiasm come to life is what made the camp more than worthwhile, Horton said.

"If we can ignite a little spark of interest, we can build a bigger pool of future Highlander students and graduates, who will grow the Commonwealth's tech talent pipeline," Horton said. "This camp has really highlighted Radford University's outstanding commitment to outreach, community partnerships and economic growth, and we look forward to hosting a new batch of students next year." ■



“It’s a place for the inspired, a place where we can help our students.”

Steve Childers, Ph.D.



# BUILDING IDEAS THAT MATTER:

**THE VENTURE LAB IS A PLACE FOR STUDENT ENTREPRENEURS  
TO BRIDGE THE GAP FROM CONCEPT TO MARKETPLACE**

By Chad Osborne

## **INSPIRATION DOES NOT OWN A WATCH.**

It arrives when it wants without any regard for what you are doing, where you are or even if you are awake.

No one knows this better than entrepreneurs. They are not annoyed by inspiration's intrusive ways. They welcome the disruptions, looking, in fact, to inspiration to bring intriguing ideas for a new business, an original product or service. But, inspiration is not simply summoned. It arrives in its own time.

Knowing inspiration's call, and the dreams of many of its students, Radford University and the Davis College of Business and Economics opened the Venture Lab during the Fall 2019 semester.

Education is at the heart of the lab. It is a space for would-be student entrepreneurs, from any discipline, to develop and test business concepts, breathe life into them and construct a bridge that will connect developed ideas of value to the first sale of their product or service, be it a business to help reduce the impacts of climate change or an app to find lost car keys.

"It's a place for the inspired, a place where we can help our students — and faculty and staff, if they wish — make their dream business come true," says Professor of Management and Venture Lab champion Steve Childers, Ph.D., who credits the University's administration for their forward-thinking ideas toward the lab's creation.

The lab is filled with resources, both material and human. There is business plan preparation software and guides, tools for marketing research, meeting and storage space, maps and guides to existing Radford University technological resources, such as 3D printers, and most importantly, human guidance to direct the future entrepreneurs every step of the way.

When planning the Venture Lab, Childers and the steering committee seemingly thought of everything, from the design and location — the lower level of the Davis College — to the individuals who run it. "That's why we created the lab, to help our students create the businesses of their dreams," Childers explains.

“We place people where they need to be with the right people at the right time.”

Steve Childers, Ph.D.





Those dream businesses could be the next Amazon or the next Google. Generally, they are a much smaller scale, but just as important to people's daily lives.

"They are the types of businesses you see all around you every day that make your life great. That's mainly what our students are creating," Childers says. "This lab, with its resources and human connections, is making dreams happen; it's helping, through a hands-on, educational process, our students achieve their dreams and goals."

Childers first formulated the plan for the lab a few years ago, but the idea grew, in true Venture Lab fashion, through the work and guidance of a cross-campus team of multiple disciplines. It was not only business professors involved. "I was the only business school person on the committee," Childers explains. The others were faculty from art and education, science and health, as well as staff from McConnell Library.

"We know from data that most students who start a business are not always business majors," Davis College Dean Joy Bhadury, Ph.D., quickly asserts.

Department Chair and Professor of Music Tim Channell, Ed.D., knows the data well and is informed and influenced by it. He served on the steering committee, because students in the College of Visual and Performing Arts are, by the nature of their disciplines, Channell explains, "entrepreneurial in their thinking."

The Venture Lab is providing students with "a place to work with others to develop innovative businesses that incorporate their crafts—music, art, theatre, dance and design," he says. "To have a center on campus to help students start a new business venture is huge for their success in the industry."

While the lab is ignited by passion and inspiration, it is fueled by connections, both on- and off-campus. There are several influencers and bellwethers connected to business and industry willing to lend a hand.

For students using the lab, Childers wants to see movement and progress toward the ultimate goal, and

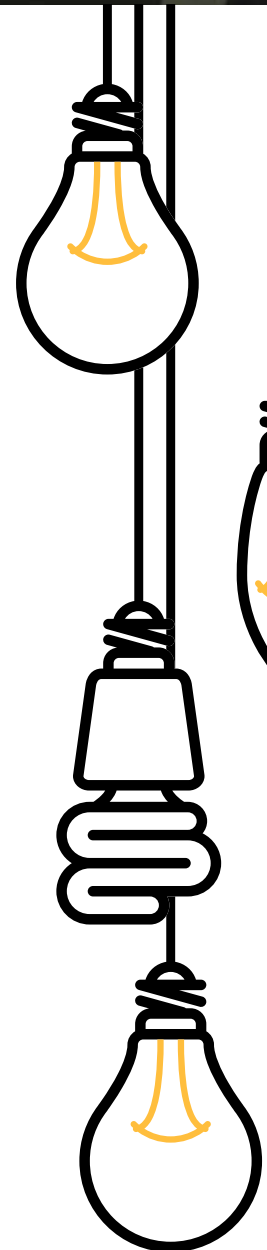
that is how human connections can help. "If someone needs intellectual property (IP) help, we can connect them with an IP attorney," he says. "If someone wants to create an app for their business, but does not have the ability to create it, we can connect them, on campus or off, to someone with that capability.

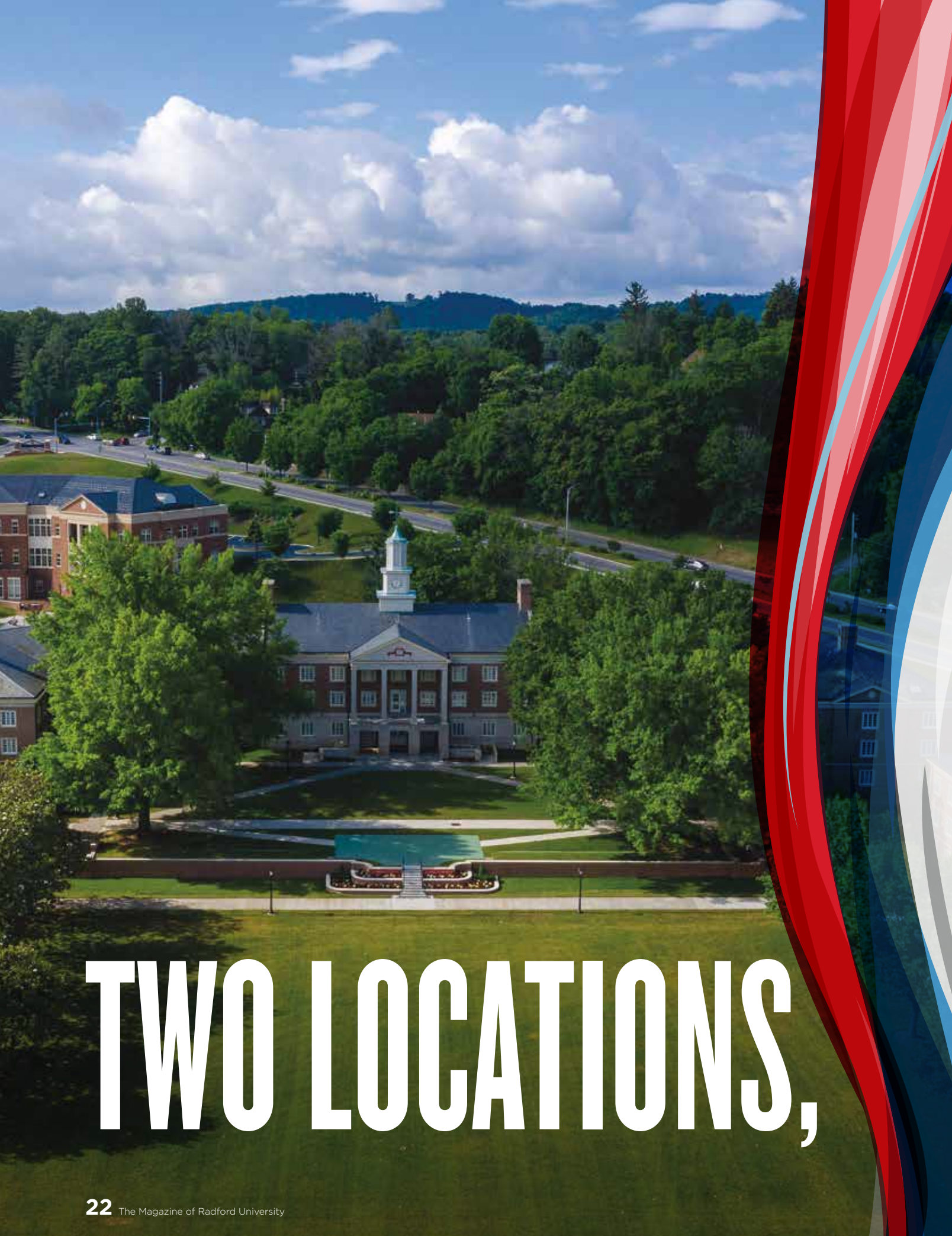
"We're matchmakers," Childers continues. "We place people where they need to be with the right people at the right time."

Not knowing when inspiration will visit, budding entrepreneurs are ready and always primed to take action when it comes bearing its gift. That is the reason the Venture Lab has 24-hour, seven-days-a-week access. It is always there; it is always open.

Last year, at the Board of Visitors quarterly meeting in May, Radford President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D., introduced the idea of the Venture Lab to Board members. He spoke glowingly of the positive impact the lab could have on students, the University and economic development in region and the Commonwealth. He expressed the importance of providing students around-the-clock access to a place, as they are inspired with "great ideas," where they can "work on bringing that potential idea to commercialization."

Because, as President Hemphill said, speaking of inspiration's unpredictable nature, "good ideas do not just happen between 8 and 5." ■





# TWO LOCATIONS,





RADFORD  
UNIVERSITY  
CARILION  
RUC

# ONE BOLD FUTURE

By Mary Hardbarger

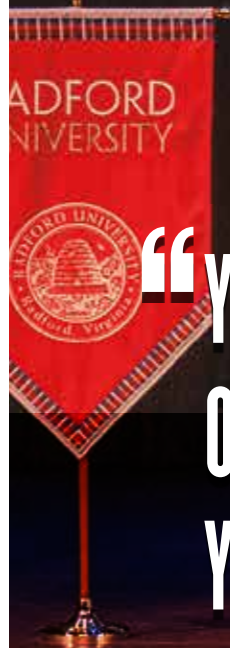
**T**he Fall 2019 semester welcomed the first class of Radford University Carilion (RUC) students into the Highlander family, along with 19 new academic programs as a result of the merger.

Prior to the first day of classes, students attended the inaugural RUC Convocation and New Student Orientation at the Berglund Center in Roanoke, where they were inspired and encouraged by President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D., and Carilion Clinic President and Chief Executive Officer Nancy Howell Agee.

“As the first class of Highlanders at RUC, I will say to each of you that we are making history, and you will continue to do that as we move on past this point,” President Hemphill said.

“You are a part of our Carilion family. You are a part of our Radford family. And, you are the heart of Radford University Carilion,” Agee emphasized.

RUC RADFORD UNIVERSITY CARILION



**“YOU ARE A PART OF  
OUR CARILION FAMILY.  
YOU ARE A PART OF  
OUR RADFORD FAMILY.  
AND, YOU ARE THE  
HEART OF RADFORD  
UNIVERSITY CARILION.”**

Nancy Howell Agee

# RUC

# UNIVERSITY CARILION



To learn more, visit [www.radford.edu/ruc-video](http://www.radford.edu/ruc-video) and watch a video on the merger.





**“AS THE FIRST CLASS OF HIGHLANDERS AT RUC,  
I WILL SAY TO EACH OF YOU THAT  
WE ARE MAKING HISTORY,  
AND YOU WILL CONTINUE TO DO THAT  
AS WE MOVE ON PAST THIS POINT.”**

President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D.

Students shared in the excitement of RUC at a lively reception held afterward.

Maddie Kutzero, of Hagerstown, Maryland, had just moved to the area and was looking forward to a change of scenery and being a member of the Highlander family.

“I’m not familiar with Roanoke, Virginia, but I’m excited to be here and in the mountains. It’s a big change for me, personally, and I can’t wait to be part of a University that really wants its students to succeed,” Kutzero said. “I’m also excited to get to know a lot of my classmates. My program only has 42 people, compared to my undergraduate university, which was much larger.”

Kutzero is enrolled in the Master of Science in Physician Assistant (PA) program, one of the new degrees offered to Radford University students as a result of the merger. The 27-month professional program is very competitive and the first of its kind in the Commonwealth.

“I’ve wanted to do this for a long time, and I’m hoping to specialize in mental health, which is one of my strong passions,” Kutzero said. “This program is a fabulous fit, because it is so patient-centered. It also has small class sizes, so you have the ability to learn so much from really knowledgeable faculty.”

Zach Mineroldi, of Salem, Virginia, had been working at Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital after earning his bachelor’s degree.

“I was working in the physical therapy department, which inspired me to get into that field,” Mineroldi explained.

Because of RUC, he could do just that, not far from his hometown.

RUC offers a Physical Therapy Assistant (PTA) associate degree, which Mineroldi is now pursuing. RUC PTA graduates are highly-skilled and regarded, and a major point of pride is that 100% are employed within a year of graduation — many before they graduate.





Mineroldi said he aspires to be a part of that prestigious statistic and go back to work for Carilion after completing his studies at RUC, this time with a new degree and top-notch educational and clinical experiences on his resume.

Exposing students to expanded opportunities in health sciences, preparing them for real-world work environments and providing valuable hands-on experiences are important goals of Radford University that are being achieved at RUC, explained Waldron College of Health and Human Services Dean Kenneth Cox, Au.D.

“The creation of RUC really takes Radford University to the next level in terms of health sciences education. It gives us the opportunity to be a premier health sciences center,” Cox said. “We gained several new programs as part of the merger, and those programs have added to our portfolio, making us a one-stop shop for students in health sciences disciplines.”

Noteworthy new programs include Respiratory Therapy and Emergency Services. Emergency Services trains firefighters, paramedics and other emergency management technicians from across the region on a baccalaureate level. Students in this program have access to the Emergency Services Lab, which houses an ambulance simulator equipped with a fully responsive

manikin to which students can introduce certain medical conditions, such as a heart attack or stroke.

Cox describes the PA program as a “crown jewel.” The program, on average, receives about 1,000 applications from across the country each year. Of those applicants, only 42 are accepted.

Public health and healthcare leadership is another new area, comprising multiple programs, all online and offered at the baccalaureate, master’s and doctoral level.

Also, located at the Roanoke campus is the Virginia Intercollegiate Anatomy Lab (VIAL) with about 35 cadavers and high-tech equipment that allows students to simulate 3D dissections. VIAL is a partnership with the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine, and the shared space provides education utilizing innovative and progressive technology.

Tracing back to its history as a hospital, the Roanoke building houses several maintained hospital rooms and equipment, exposing students to a real-world feel of what it is like to work in a medical facility.

In addition to new programs, RUC has also dramatically grown several existing departments, schools and colleges at Radford University.

The School of Nursing is doubling in size, Cox said, as are the Department of Occupational Therapy

and the Waldron College of Health and Human Services.

“Overnight, we went from the fourth or fifth largest nursing school in the state to the second largest,” Cox said. “I anticipate in the near future that we’re going to be moving into that No. 1 spot in terms of size.”

The quick influx is welcomed, Cox said.

“The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that we’re going to be 1.1 million nurses short by 2022,” he continued. “The bottom line is that the nursing shortage is there, and it’s prevalent. It’s also there for the other healthcare disciplines, so we know we have to address this issue by increasing the pipeline of healthcare professionals being trained, in particular, nurses, but also the other health sciences disciplines.”

Reflecting on the prominent location of the RUC campus in Roanoke, Cox said he is very optimistic about the opportunities ahead, especially collaboration with entities within the Roanoke Innovation Corridor, such as the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine and Carilion Roanoke Memorial Hospital.

“As we move forward into the future, these collaborations are going to give our faculty, our staff and our students the opportunity to impact citizens of the Commonwealth, particularly in this region. Together, we will make a difference in the lives of many.” ■

**A PUSH TO  
GROW  
ACADEMICALLY:**



**EXCELLENCE INSIDE AND OUT  
DRIVES HONORS COLLEGE  
STUDENTS AND FACULTY**

By Max Esterhuizen, M.S. '15

# FOR SENIOR AUBREE MARSHALL OF FANCY GAP, VIRGINIA, JOINING THE HONORS COLLEGE OPENED THE DOORS TO REALIZING HER FULL POTENTIAL. THROUGH EXPERIENCES IN THE COLLEGE, SHE GAINED COUNTLESS UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES THAT ALTERED HER ACADEMIC TRAJECTORY.



That kind of impact on a student's life is a primary goal for the Honors College, said Director Niels Christensen, Ph.D.

"It's clear that Honors students will push themselves academically, but we want to give them that extra motivation outside the classroom," he said. "We know they are capable of doing things they don't think are possible when the first step foot on campus. To do that, we build relationships among the students themselves and between students and faculty. We want students to feel like they are part of a larger community of scholars, who challenge them, but also cheer them along their path."

As scholars in the Honors College, students foster a community of distinction, have ample opportunities for academic rigor and receive recognition for their academic excellence.

One of the requirements of graduating as a Highlander Honors Scholar is completing a capstone project under the supervision of a faculty mentor. The content of the project is driven by the student and can vary from research presented at a conference to choreography performed in front of an audience. The result is a project that reflects each individual student's interest, one that represents the culmination of their scholarly work, including what might not fit into a standard disciplinary lens.

For Marshall, an anthropological sciences and biology double major, her project involved the study of human health and travel, which she studied in the Peruvian rainforest, as part of the Radford Amazonian Research Expedition (RARE) Program and in the Patagonia region of Chile with the Department of Geology.

"The Honors College provided me the Honors Opportunity Grant for my first time when I traveled to Peru and that boosted me into my research career," Marshall said. "Every time that I went to Dr. [Niels] Christensen, Dr. [Jason] Davis, or Mary [Hagan]

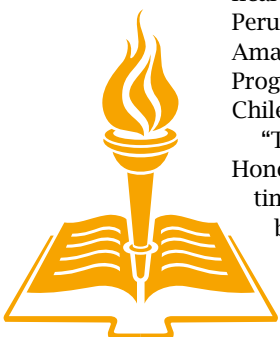
with new ideas on where to do my research or how to get to my end goal, they were always so supportive, which was super helpful with my confidence as a student researcher.

"I am now working on my graduate school applications, so I can continue to do research," Marshall continued. "If it wasn't for Honors, I don't think I would have realized how much I love research, and I am on a totally different academic track with Honors."

Another benefit of the Honors College is smaller class sizes, increasing meaningful interactions between student and professor.

As members of the Honors College, students attend unique events, such as guest presentations and cultural lunches, boosting their exposure to the world from their campus home.

"The Honors faculty and staff aid in finding these opportunities or making your own," said junior Matthew Shuma of Chesapeake, Virginia. "The Honors faculty have







also put me in touch with other passionate professors to get me involved in research.”

Perhaps, the most profound impact that the Honors College has on a student is exposure to dedicated students in majors across the University. In other words, the Honors College is a community unto itself — a community dedicated to academic excellence and offering a unique way to experience the world.

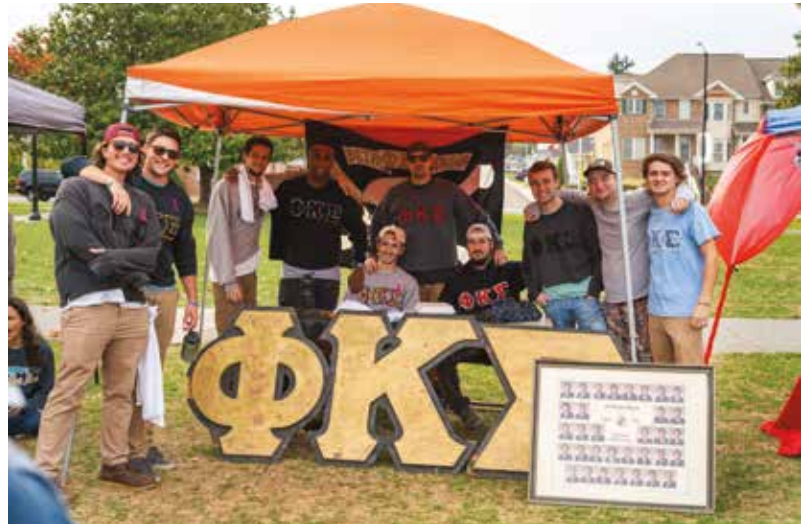
To aid the community building, freshmen in the Honors College live in Floyd Hall, a dedicated community of scholars with a variety of backgrounds and interests. As part of that community, students are able to stretch themselves through tailored experiences in the Honors living-learning community.

“Honors College is the thing about college that I will remember the most,” Marshall said. “This has allowed me to make tons of friends over the years, plus I’ve had the chance to be involved in events that I would have never known about.”

Academic excellence, a pillar of Radford University’s strategic plan, is a significant component of the Honors College, where students are able to participate in unique academic experiences, study abroad opportunities and specialized research opportunities to create a unique experience as a Highlander.

An outcome of the pursuit of academic excellence and achievement is a retention rate of more than 90% for Honors students.

“We’re giving them a community that makes them excited to return to campus,” Christensen said. “The students push themselves academically. Our community pushes them to also grow as people through their connections with other students, faculty, staff and alumni. We hope that we can find the perfect level of challenge and support that’s appropriate for each student. We’re lucky to work with students expressing such above-and-beyond passion for their academic pursuits.” ■



# HOMECOMING 2019

**HOMECOMING 2019** brought alumni and friends together for a grand celebration in the Highlander tradition. During the action-packed weekend, members of the Radford family enjoyed old memories and made new ones.

## RELIVE IT!

Visit [www.radford.edu/welcome-home](http://www.radford.edu/welcome-home) for the full story! Check out the Homecoming photo gallery at [www.radford.edu/alumni-photos](http://www.radford.edu/alumni-photos).





# A MOTHER'S DAY TO REMEMBER:

By Max Esterhuizen, M.S. '15

Mother and son  
share the achievement of  
being college graduates



"There was also a profound pride that I had gone here, and I did well. My mother went here, and she did well, too. If you mentioned it to me four years ago that I'd be graduating from a University with my mother, I wouldn't have believed it." Noah Austin '19



**I ♥  
MOM**

**T**rish and Noah Austin spent an atypical Mother's Day together on Radford University's campus.

In addition to celebrating their mother-son bond, they were also celebrating as recent Highlander graduates. The duo graduated the day before as part of the University's 2019 Spring Commencement.

"It was surreal," Trish Austin said. "It was neat that it worked out that way. I got my degree officially in December, but decided to hold off and walk, so we could do it together."

Noah Austin was on board with her decision from the beginning.

"He said, 'Yeah! That'd be pretty awesome, Mom.' So, that's what we decided to do," she continued.

Now, both mother and son have a special memory to share and reflect on as Radford University alumni.

### **A SPECIAL MOMENT YEARS IN THE MAKING**

For Trish, this Commencement ceremony was 27 years in the making. Her journey began at Virginia Western Community College in the 1980s and resumed in 2014.

"I thought, 'I actually did it. I'm actually here,'" Trish said. "I walked across the stage and got my degree. Even though I got the diploma earlier, that's when it sunk in. After 27 years, it was a big achievement for me. I come from Floyd County, where a lot of my family didn't go to college. For me to get a four-year degree, it is a big accomplishment."

Trish is never going to forget the feeling of walking across that stage. Amidst all cheering, yelling and excitement, there was only silence for Trish.

"I don't know if it's the feeling I had of actually walking across the stage and shaking President Hemphill's hand, I don't know if I tuned out

everything else. My family said they yelled, but I heard crickets," she said. "The actual ceremony made it more real to me that I graduated from college. It was good closure."

For Noah, he had the special experience of seeing his mother walk across only a few minutes before he did so himself.

"When we sat down for the ceremony, she was three or four rows in front of me," Noah said. "It was really cool. With Mother's Day the next day, it worked out really well."

It was not until the bagpipes started playing that the gravity of the moment truly hit Noah — he was graduating, and so was his mother.

"[When] lining up you don't really feel it, it just feels like you're talking with your friends," Noah said. "I remember when the bagpipes started going and the faculty entered. That was when I got that excitement. It felt real when I shook Dean [Matthew J.] Smith's hand."

# Class of 2019



## HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!

Lost in the moment on Saturday was a picture of both Trish and Noah in their caps and gowns. The next day — Mother's Day — was a perfect time to take those pictures. That day ended as one of Noah's favorite moments at Radford University.

"When we were walking around, I did feel this almost kind of sadness. I am going to miss the campus," Noah said. "There was also a profound pride that I had gone here, and I did well. My mother went here, and she did well, too. If you mentioned it to me four years ago that I'd be graduating from a University with my mother, I wouldn't have believed it."

On Mother's Day, it was just Trish, Noah and their photographer. Noah eagerly showed his mother around campus — she had only had one class on campus as she had primarily studied at the Higher Education Center in Roanoke.

"It made it a really special weekend," Trish said.

## A JOURNEY TO ACHIEVEMENT

For Trish, life put her education on hold. She got married, had children and began working. But, in 2014, she decided to resume her education at Virginia Western Community College — the same year that Noah began his higher education journey there.

Trish finished her associate degree at Virginia Western and decided to participate in the 2+2 program at Radford University.

While in the medical field now, Trish completed her criminal justice degree at Virginia Western and Radford University. "When I picked it up again in 2014, it wasn't smart to switch careers and lose all those credits. If I get into law enforcement, that's great. If not, I can use it in the medical field as well," Trish said.

After transferring to Radford University, Noah graduated with a social sciences degree as part of the Department of History in the College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences. Radford University brought out the best in Noah and in his mother. Noah said that he struggled academically in high school, but that he was able to connect with the material upon arriving on Radford's campus.

"I found the passion for the classes I was taking," Noah said. "I had support there, be it friends or professors. I graduated with honors."

## TAKING THE NEXT STEP

For both Trish and Noah, Commencement was the end of a chapter, but not the end of their academic stories. In Fall 2019, Trish is starting at Radford University Carilion to earn her Master of Healthcare Administration.

"I was so used to juggling school and work that I didn't know what to do with my free time," Trish said. "Once you're in that mode, you want to go for it."

Noah is planning on attending graduate school to study German history at either the University of Tennessee or the University of Kiel in Germany.

Before that next step, both Trish and Noah reflect on their special weekend — one that saw two family members walk across the stage as they reached the next step of their lives. ■

# Opening THE World OF Sound:

AUDIOLOGIST CARLA RONDEAU RODRIGUEZ '93  
ENRICHES LIVES INTERNATIONALLY

By Stephanie Overton



“I get up every morning, because it makes me happy to help people. It inspires me to help people have a better life.”

Carla Rondeau Rodriguez '93

*A MOTHER'S VOICE. The wind rippling through blades of grass. Water dripping from a faucet. Music. The words "Hello" or "I love you." Laughter. Imagine being a four-year-old, a 12-year-old or an adult and hearing those sounds and words for the first time. Imagine receiving the gift of sound.*

With a master plan created early in Carla Rondeau Rodriguez's young life, she maneuvered an incredible journey entrenched in the spirit of giving back and making a difference. She dared to imagine what seemed the impossible and embarked on a plan to achieve it.

Growing up in El Salvador, Rodriguez knew before graduating from high school that she wanted to work with people experiencing hearing disorders. There were no opportunities to continue her education in this field in her home country, so she researched programs in the United States. She was accepted into a number of universities, and she ultimately chose Radford University's Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders for her undergraduate degree.

"I applied to a lot of universities, but Radford's program stood out," Rodriguez said. "It's a small program with amazing teachers and opportunities. Everyone was willing to help me."

Claire M. Waldron, Ph.D., professor emeritus of communication sciences and disorders, was Rodriguez's advisor and as she describes, her "guardian angel."

"She was one of my all-time favorite students," Waldron said. "I supervised Carla during a clinical trial with our most difficult client, a two-year-old child, who couldn't hear. She was creative, resourceful and joyful in her interactions with him. He was difficult to engage, but Carla found ways to engage him, like finding a toy that excited him," recalled Waldron.

Rodriguez remembers that little boy as being a pivotal experience that impacted her career and life.

"He showed me what hearing aids can really mean to a family. My experience with him was key to helping me select my master's area of study," Rodriguez said.

"What's wonderful about Carla and other students, who are bilingual, is that they can serve so many more people," Waldron said.



Fast forward through years of study and practice, Rodriguez is now an audiologist in her home country.

She always knew she would return home. It was her dream to be the first audiologist in El Salvador. She met her husband of 24 years, Frederic Rondeau '93, while they were both studying at Radford. They made the move to El Salvador after she earned her master's degree at Gallaudet University.

It was then that the next phase of her dream was launched.

"We got a loan from a bank to build our clinic in El Salvador," Rodriguez said.

The clinic was busy from the onset, and she was seeing lots of patients.

"Fred said, 'Carla, you're seeing all these patients, but they are not paying,'" Rodriguez recalled. "I was seeing 400 children, but people in El Salvador couldn't afford to pay for hearing aids. We started raising money to provide the hearing aids."

"If you really want something, you have to fight for it. I believe God will make it happen if we are destined," Rodriguez continued. "Be excited. Have the right attitude. People will feel your excitement."

That is exactly what happened for the couple. Their excitement was met with the enthusiasm of someone who could help.

When William F. Austin, founder of the Starkey Hearing Foundation and CEO, owner and founder of Starkey Laboratories Inc., met with them, it made all the difference in the world. "Bill Austin met with us and visited El Salvador. He appreciated what we were doing," Rodriguez said. From



Carla Rondeau Rodriguez '93 poses with husband Frederic Rondeau '93 and family.

that meeting, Austin made the decision to support their mission. The Starkey Foundation is a humanitarian organization that provides hearing aids to economically challenged children and adults worldwide. It donates more than 38,000 hearing aids year round through the support of generous donors and selfless contributors.

Starkey Laboratories is a leading global manufacturer of custom-made hearing aids and donated more than 800 hearing aids for the children and families Carla serves in her clinic.

"Bill asked us to help Starkey build their foundation all over the world," Rodriguez said. Specifically aiming to establish programs in countries, like El Salvador, where people cannot afford hearing aids, the Starkey Hearing Foundation has grown and now has programs in 64 countries.

Since 1997, Rodriguez has been the clinical director for the Starkey Hearing Foundation in El Salvador and the Starkey Laboratories' audiology consultant for Latin America.

"I get up every morning, because it makes me happy to help people. It inspires me to help people have a better life," she said.

In 1998, Rodriguez received the Humanitarian Award from the American Academy of Audiology. Her belief in herself, the help of others and her mission to serve has led to her impactful career.

"In the beginning, I had this amazing dream, but wasn't sure that I could make it. Along the way, I have thought about everybody that has helped me and believed in me. I couldn't let them down. Life isn't easy; we go through things, but we just keep up. I have had guardian angels along the way," Rodriguez said. ■



Rodriguez has been the clinical director for the Starkey Hearing Foundation in El Salvador and the Starkey Laboratories' audiology consultant for Latin America since 1997.



# Highlander

## FAMILY TOUR

brings alumni together  
along the East Coast

By Justin Ward '10

*The success of Radford University alumni is easy to measure. Just ask any banker in Atlanta, Georgia about Michael Donnelly '88, who has 30 years of experience in the industry and is the regional vice president for Wells Fargo Bank.*

Turn on the television and watch lawmen defending freedom or cowboys riding through the wild west on INSP, a television and movie network based in Charlotte, North Carolina, where Dale Ardizzone '85, M.S. '86, serves as the chief operating officer.

Or enjoy a conversation in Roanoke, Virginia, with David and

Pebbles Smith, both Class of 1985, whose hard work and dedication to their careers helped them become faithful supporters and generous members of The Highlander Club.

Finding inspiration to flourish is simple within the Radford family. Helping alumni make those connections was the influence behind the Highlander Family Tour, a more than 2,000-mile, eight-city trek along portions of the East Coast led by President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D., and First Lady Marisela Rosas Hemphill, Ph.D.

The tour launched in Bristol, Virginia, where Hemphill welcomed a

crowd of devoted Highlander alumni, friends and family by addressing milestones and goals for the future.

"We have a lot of exciting work to do, and we have the right team in place to help move this institution forward! We take very seriously the role and responsibility that we have as public servants in meeting the needs across the Commonwealth of Virginia," Hemphill said at The Olde Farm in Bristol.

Joined by University leadership, the Hemphills went on to visit Raleigh, North Carolina; Atlanta, Georgia; Charlotte, North Carolina; Roanoke,



Virginia; Virginia Beach, Virginia; Richmond, Virginia; and Centreville, Virginia, to meet with hundreds of other alumni and friends and listen to their Radford stories.

Ashaunda Davis '99 reminisced about her resilience during the tour in Atlanta. "To finish the path that we started the first day that I started at Radford University, it really indeed took a lot of fortitude. It took a lot of getting knocked down and getting back up. And, if I had not had that experience at Radford University, I can't say that I would have been able to easily apply it to my career," Davis said.

Hemphill and the alumni encouraged the Radford family to come back to campus, stay engaged and invest in students. Hemphill also shared information about new programs now available to students and the addition of Radford University Carilion.

A new honor called The Spirit of the Tartan Award was given to alumni and friends during each stop of the tour. The distinction is presented to an individual or couple, who invest passion and dedication in their community and alma mater.

The following Highlander supporters were chosen to receive the award: Tom McGlothlin in Bristol; Matthew Crisp '04 and Kelly Snead Crisp '04 in Raleigh; Michael Donnelly '88 in Atlanta; Dale Ardizzone '85, M.S. '86 in Charlotte; Nancy Artis '73 and H. Pat Artis, Ph.D. in Roanoke; Darin Ely '93 and Jennifer Ely '96 in Virginia Beach; Matt Donlon '82 in Richmond; and Kevin Rogers '87 in Centreville. ■



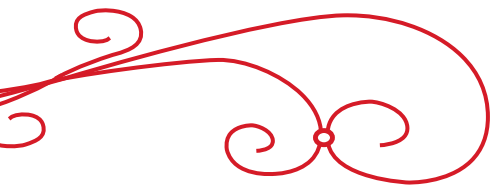
# LOVE, SUCCESS & RADFORD:



ALUMNI DARIN AND JENNIFER ELY GIVE BACK TO  
THE CAMPUS THAT HELPED FORGE THEIR LIVES

By Justin Ward '10





To learn more, visit [www.radford.edu/ely](http://www.radford.edu/ely) and watch a video of Darin and Jennifer Ely.

LIFE ON THE EAST COAST OF VIRGINIA HAS PROVEN SUCCESSFUL FOR DARIN ELY '93 AND HIS WIFE, JENNIFER ELY '96. THE COUPLE AND THEIR TWO CHILDREN LIVE IN A STUNNING CHESAPEAKE HOME — A SHORT AND SERENE DRIVE FROM VIRGINIA BEACH, WHERE DARIN IS OWNER AND PRESIDENT OF AN INVESTMENT FIRM, VIRGINIA ASSET GROUP.

"We're happy. Everybody has ups and downs in life, but this is everything I could have wanted," Darin said.

The couple has dedicated their lives to improving the lives of others in their communities, whether through teaching or financial advising. Their story is one of giving, supporting and finding love, and it all began at Radford University.

"I honestly met him on the first day of school," Jennifer said, reflecting on the moment she locked eyes on her future husband. "We find it funny that I met him on the first day." She still recalls that initial encounter as if it was just yesterday.

Darin was a senior and a resident assistant on the third floor of Muse Hall. Jennifer was a freshman and

living on the first floor. Neither interacted much until she and her roommate needed help heavy lifting, and Darin showed up to lend a hand.

"When I found him at the door, I was so super surprised, because I, of course, thought he was a great catch," Jennifer said. "That's just how it started."

Darin graduated at the end of that academic year in 1993, moved back home to Abingdon, Virginia, and worked four jobs, making a salary of \$23,000. He stayed dedicated to his love and made regular trips to visit Jennifer throughout her remaining academic career in Radford. The two got married her senior year in 1996 and included Radford University friends in their wedding.

"We made connections there, and we wanted that to continue and be a part of our wedding," Jennifer said.

All of her roommates were there and some of his fraternity brothers — a great example of how the Highlander family celebrates joy and success together.

Their love at first sight can also be said of their first visits to campus. Not only was continuing their higher education at Radford University convenient — full of familiar faces from back home and a great way to advance and showcase their skillset to future employers — it just made sense.

Darin grew up an hour and a half from Radford University and was impressed by the College of Business and Economics and the weather during his first visit to campus.

"It was sunny that day," Darin said jokingly. "The weather would be a strange way to pick the school. All I ever wanted to do was work. I knew college was the way to get to work."

That drive and motivation carried him through college. He says he made the right choice to help get him where he is today.

"Radford helped me to become much more outgoing," Darin said. "It gave me the opportunity to get involved, to take leadership positions

and to be an RA. You get to meet a lot of people and help them through different situations."

All of those things created a foundation from which he continued to grow, ultimately resulting in the successful leader he is today. His Radford journey is one he reflects on with pride and confidence.

"It definitely made a big change in my life," Darin said.

Jennifer only applied to one college and was determined to get accepted and become a Highlander. She made that decision during her 11th grade year in high school, when she visited a friend and instantly made new connections. After working hard her senior year, she was thrilled to get the great news of acceptance into Radford University.

"I knew the school size was perfect for me. I knew the people were friendly. I knew I was going to make a lot of new friends," Jennifer said. "I knew that was the school I wanted to go to, and it had the teaching degree that I wanted."

She had that same determination when applying for her first job and got it, teaching first grade.

Together, the Elys agree they are proud to be Highlanders, because coming to the University helped their lives knit together in a meaningful way, both professionally and personally.

Although a lot has changed since those days living in Muse Hall, they have stayed close to their Highlander roots. Darin currently serves as a volunteer member of the Radford University Foundation Board of Directors and remains connected to the great work happening at the University.

"We like what they're doing," Darin said. "We like the additional commitment, the excitement that's going on there and just feel like there's something special going on right now at Radford."

That's one reason why the family is now investing in students' futures

“ I KNEW THE SCHOOL SIZE WAS PERFECT FOR ME. I KNEW THE PEOPLE WERE FRIENDLY. I KNEW I WAS GOING TO MAKE A LOT OF NEW FRIENDS.”

Jennifer Ely '96



President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D., First Lady Marisela Rosas Hemphill, Ph.D., Jennifer Ely '96 and Darin Ely '93 during the Highlander Family Tour

“ WE LIKE WHAT THEY'RE DOING. WE LIKE THE ADDITIONAL COMMITMENT, THE EXCITEMENT THAT'S GOING ON THERE AND JUST FEEL LIKE THERE'S SOMETHING SPECIAL GOING ON RIGHT NOW AT RADFORD.”

Darin Ely '93

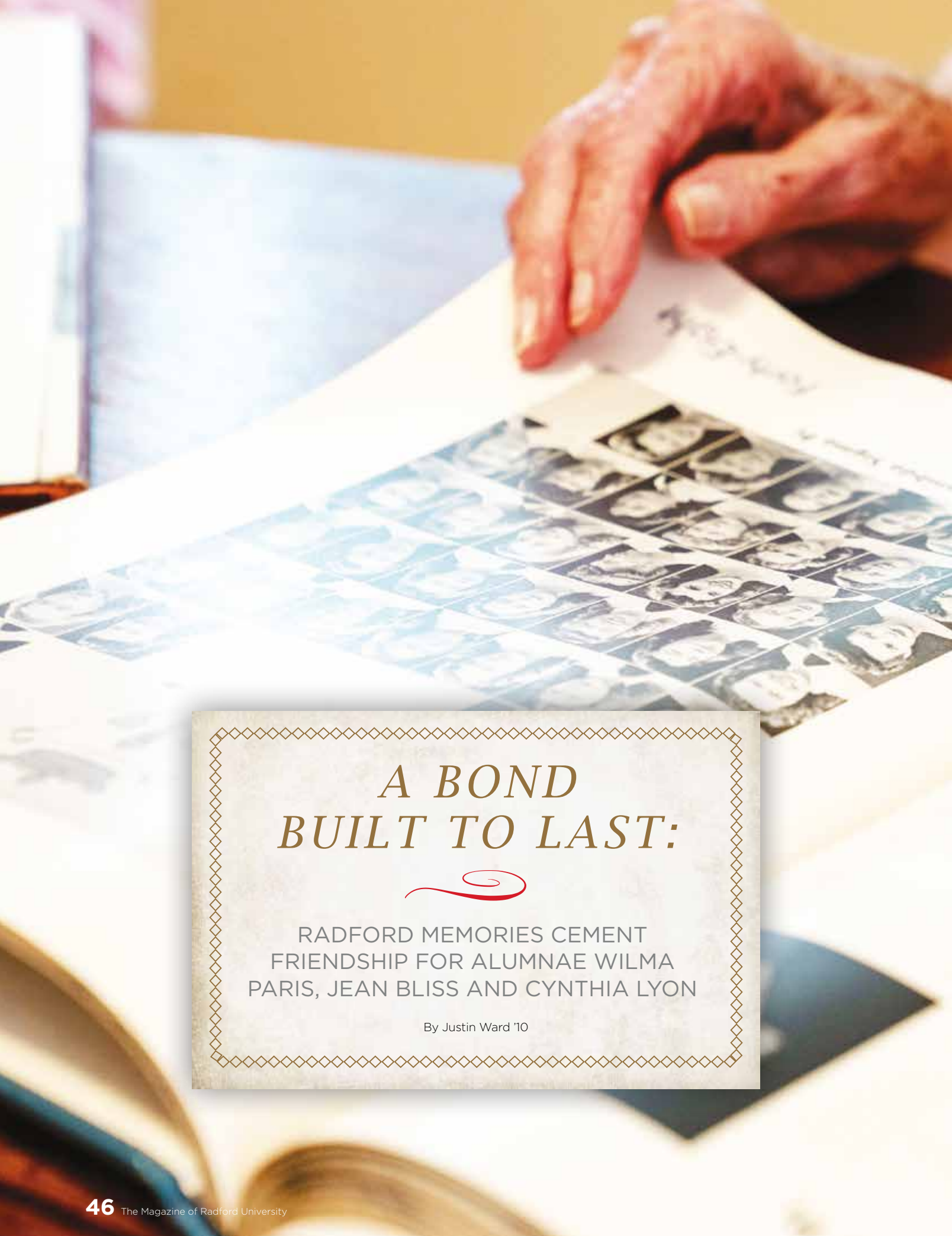
and supporting their enhanced experiences on campus. The couple established the Darin M. Ely and Jennifer W. Ely Virginia Asset Group Scholarship for the Davis College of Business and Economics. The scholarship is for a full-time undergraduate or graduate student in the Davis College of Business and Economics with preference given to

students from Washington County or Chesapeake, Virginia — the two home communities of Darin and Jennifer.

“Those places have been good to us, and we feel like we've been really fortunate,” Darin said. “If somebody from those areas wants to go to Radford, then we want to be able to provide a little bit of assistance.

“I liked the idea of something being around after we aren't. The idea that it's perpetual is really neat. The thought that 100 years from now somebody could still be getting a scholarship, that's just a really cool thing,” Darin said.

“I'm grateful to Radford. I mean, that's where we met, and it's just a great way to give back.” ■



# *A BOND BUILT TO LAST:*



RADFORD MEMORIES CEMENT  
FRIENDSHIP FOR ALUMNAE WILMA  
PARIS, JEAN BLISS AND CYNTHIA LYON

By Justin Ward '10





## EXERCISE CLASS AT DUNWOODY BAPTIST CHURCH IN ATLANTA, GEORGIA, WAS EXACTLY WHAT WILMA PARIS '48 NEEDED.

The 92-year-old has a passion for staying active, and the exercise routines challenged her to keep moving. The class was filled with people with a similar dedication to fitness, but were mostly acquaintances to Paris.

In her same fitness class, counting the same reps only a few feet away, was another woman looking to stay active at 95 years old. Jean Bliss '42 chose the same exercise program at the church. Neither woman knew they had a connection much deeper than health. They both attended Radford University more than 70 years prior and nearly 400 miles away.

"It was interesting, although I had never spoken to her or known anything about her. After that, we got to be buddies," Bliss said.

Both Paris and Bliss finally made the connection three years ago at an alumni gathering. The two found common ground in sharing stories of a bygone campus life. Their faces both gleam when they recall memories from the 1940s. Paris remembers the tradition of serenading then Radford College President David Peters, Ph.D., at 4 a.m. at his house on campus around winter holiday break.

"And, he'd always come raise the window up and talk to us," Paris said with a smile on her face thinking of that special festive, but cold, moment.

The two women recall being required to wear a dress, not pants, on campus and were only permitted to walk on sidewalks, as walking on the grass was strongly discouraged.

Bliss flashes back to times of interacting with Dean M'Ledge Moffett, Ph.D., who she says, "caught you doing everything wrong." She shared a story of students climbing out of a window to sunbathe on the roof of a campus building and getting scolded by Moffett. But, Bliss insists she is not the voice of experience.

The two met at Bliss' home during the summer, along with their friend Cynthia Lyon '69, to rekindle Radford College moments. Lyon, 72, also met her Atlanta alumnae friends Paris and Bliss by chance.

Lyon moved to Atlanta from Tennessee after her husband received his master's degree about four decades ago. She walked her neighborhood streets, often with her dogs. In the mid-1990s, her dogs led her to a new friend living nearby.

"My neighbor's dog used to follow me up the hill. She had two white poodles. They were always wrapped around her legs, because they were trying to get away from that black dog. And, we got to be buddies," Bliss said.

Lyon and Bliss started talking and became fast friends after finding out they were both from Virginia. Then,



To learn more, visit [www.radford.edu/atlanta-friends](http://www.radford.edu/atlanta-friends) and watch a video of Wilma Paris and her friends.

they discovered they too went to the same institution. Bliss introduced Lyon to Paris, and suddenly, the three strangers found out they were part of the same Highlander family all along.

Family is why they found Radford University, at that time still Radford College.

Bliss shared that her parents, Marion and John, were the first married couple to graduate from the institution together. She says they both taught during the academic year and worked on their college degrees together in the summer. This was half a century before Radford became co-ed, but during the summer months, men were allowed to take classes. She remembers their Commencement well. Radford's first President, John McConnell, Ph.D., called her parents to come forward together on stage and recognized them for their commitment to raising three daughters and furthering their education.

"I remember he was a super nice guy," Bliss recalls. "He waited for the two of them to be together, so that he could introduce the three little children that had sent them to school."



**Then and now:** Cynthia Lyon '69, Jean Bliss '42 and Wilma Paris '48 display their class pictures and reflect on their Radford experiences.

Paris grew up in Radford and, like her two friends, wanted to become a teacher. She even has a picture of herself when she was six years old, pretending to teach. Her family followed her father to Radford when he was transferred to build one of the area's first subdivisions. Like a lot of girls she went to high school with, she chose Radford College, because of its affordability and proximity to her home. She did not have a car and did not live on campus, but instead was considered a day student. She remembers walking the hills to class and loved the experience.

"Radford prepared me for the future," Paris said. "I'm proud to tell people I graduated from Radford."

Lyon chose Radford College, because it gave her the independence she wanted. It was six hours from her home and had an excellent reputation, she recalls.

"My education really catapulted my entire life," Lyon said. "I think it's a magnificent University to get a really good quality education."

Because of that experience, Lyon and her family now pay it forward. She and her husband established the Pollard/

Lyon Scholarship for Teachers to support deserving students studying to become teachers.


"It's important that we leave a legacy for other young people to be able to continue their career and to know that there were people before them that care," Lyon said.

Decades after graduation, her friends Bliss and Paris agree it is important to stay engaged, attend alumni events and share an affinity for their alma mater.

"It's just good to know you've got Radford sisters," Lyon said of her Highlander family as their visit ended. Their friendship proves Radford University connections have no boundaries. ■



**FAMILY IS WHY THEY FOUND  
RADFORD COLLEGE.**



*The* **nexus**  
*of* **politics**  
*and* **society:**

By Max Esterhuizen, M.S. '15

**HIGHLANDER DISCOVERY INSTITUTE'S  
INAUGURAL EVENT TRANSFORMS  
CONVERSATION ON CAMPUS**



During the 90-minute panel, topics were explored from gun control to global warming, polarizing politics and the role of media in society.

*WHEN THE CURTAINS PARTED* and Katie Couric stepped onto the stage, it was immediately apparent that everyone was in for a special evening dedicated to thought-provoking discussion.

"I'm thrilled to have a measured, reasonable, but lively conversation, hopefully with minimal yelling, at a time when civil discourse in the country sadly seems to be an oxymoron," Couric said with a smile. "What unifies us has seemed to fade more and more into the background every single day. Unfortunately, I think the current media landscape has only deepened the divide, as consumers often look for affirmation instead of information."

With that opening, Couric immediately addressed the theme that encompassed the entire inaugural Highlander Discovery Institute event held on September 19, 2019: "Exploring the Nexus of Politics and Society."

Radford University President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D., established the Highlander Discovery Institute, so that the campus and surrounding community could experience new ideas and ways of thinking, specifically in the areas of teaching, research and service.

"The purpose of an institution of higher education and the mission of Radford University are to provide transformative experiences," President Hemphill said.

"We also strive, each and every day, to provide incredible experiences for our students, faculty, staff and the local community. By bringing the community together, we are able to hear different perspectives as one Radford family."

Serving as an opportunity to see civil discourse in action, the inaugural Highlander Discovery Institute event featured three renowned individuals: Couric as the moderator and Donna Brazile and Ana Navarro as panelists.

"I'm excited to be here with two women I deeply respect, who are on the frontlines of politics and policy every single day — or should I say every single minute in our current 24-hour news cycle," Couric said.

Transitioning into the panel, she framed the evening's events with the question, "Is there any room for compromise in this age of extremes?"

During a thought-provoking and inspirational 90-minute discussion, difficult and challenging topics were explored from gun control to global warming, polarizing politics and the role of media in society. Additionally, many cultural wedge issues were brought up, which are issues that are used as a political weapon without any intention of implementing solutions.



First Lady Marisela Rosas Hemphill, Ph.D., and President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D., pose with Donna Brazile, Ana Navarro and Katie Couric.



The Highlander Discovery Institute panel sparked lively discussions afterward.

“We look at issues in black and white,” Navarro said. “People play that. Special interest groups play us. That contributes to polarization. There is more common ground among Americans than people think.”

Brazile said that in order to regain the middle ground in politics, our politics should be reformed.

“We have to reimagine government and society, so that it is inclusive of every American regardless of partisanship or political point of view,” Brazile said. “Politics isn’t just about winning. It is about leading and governing.”

Emphasizing the reimagining of government and the future, Brazile said, “There are too many people on the outskirts of hope. We must bring them back inside the circle of opportunity. We can do more with our time and talent.”

A uniquely modern issue discussed during the event was that of the increasing isolation of human beings. Even as people live closer and closer together, interactions are becoming increasingly fewer and further between.

“We are becoming more isolated as human beings. So many people are living virtual lives,” Navarro said. “They don’t go outside and speak to people, who look different or think different or eat different. They just stay inside and want to consume what they already believe in. It’s hard to fight that.”

People are working with their heads down, Brazile said. “They aren’t talking to one another. It is our responsibility as citizens to do more. That is what it means to be in a democracy.”

“I think that it is only getting worse and something that we have

“Politics isn’t just about winning. It is about leading and governing.”

Donna Brazile



to deal with as a society, but also as individuals,” Couric said. “We have to take responsibility for ourselves.”

Following the inspired Highlander Discovery Institute panel, various discussions were held to further the evening’s transformative experience in nearby Young Hall. The discussions invoked all academic aspects from across Radford University, such as “Social Media and Politics,” “America’s Role in the World,” “Transformative Politics of the Arts” and “The Political Landscape in Virginia.”

Starr Woods, a School of Communication senior from Richmond, Virginia, thought that the experience was “absolutely amazing.”

“As someone who is in the public relations field, I admire women who get onstage and proclaim what they believe in. It spoke to me,” Woods said. “We talked about fake news in the discussion I attended after the



Student Hunter Mundy, Student Government Association President Colleen McNickle and Student Representative to the Board of Visitors Breon Case pose with Katie Couric.

event. We talked about how media can control and frame issues.”

John Purcell, from Roanoke, Virginia, is a history and social science major who enjoyed the approach of the event — an approach that signaled unity and common ground among Americans.

“If you aren’t talking about things, no ideas are shared,” Purcell said. “Then, socially and culturally, you come to a standstill. I think that is extremely dangerous to politics. You must be able to share ideas with each other and work together.”

In the weeks and months that followed the inaugural Highlander Discovery Institute event, professors and students alike continued the conversation, using the panel discussion as a spark to ignite their in-class discussions.

“I have noticed students in my international studies classes asking

‘bigger questions’ on the role of U.S. power abroad and a willingness to engage their peers in these conversations,” said Iuliia Hoban, Ph.D., visiting assistant professor of political science. “I also noticed students are more inquisitive about some of the subjects discussed during the events, such as immigration and climate change.”

Those interactions and discussions “illustrate what informed political discourse in a democratic society looks like,” said Department Chair and Professor of Political Science Tanya Corbin, Ph.D.

“Students in political science are quite eager to have these discussions, and I am consistently impressed with the level of civility and respect with which they conduct their discussions,” Corbin said. “Political science is continuing to sponsor and promote events conducted in the spirit of

the Highlander Discovery Institute event, such as the immigration panel, discussions about constitutional questions and similar community and campus events, that continue to foster civic discussion and learning and create a culture of healthy democratic habits of discussion and deliberation.”

Scott Dunn, Ph.D., associate professor in the School of Communication, said that it is important for college students to engage in conversations about topics such as these.

“College is a place where you should open your mind to different points of view,” Dunn said. “The more people only read and listen to what they agree with, well, that is not how democracy works. We need to be able to talk across political lines.” ■

The background of the page is a scenic landscape featuring a wide river flowing through a valley. A bridge spans the river in the middle ground. The hillsides are covered in dense green trees. The sky is a soft, hazy blue. Overlaid on this scene is a large, dark silhouette of a house with a chimney on the right side. The title text is centered within the house's roofline.

**LIVING**  
*and* **LEARNING**  
*as a* **COMMUNITY:**

By Chad Osborne

**A NEW FOCUS ON THE  
ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY**



# Imagine your first year of college is filled with experiences that take you outside of the traditional campus classroom and into nature.

*It puts you in a kayak on the New River, in a dark, damp cave somewhere beneath the Blue Ridge Mountains or on a beautiful winding path on the rich Appalachian Trail.*

Imagine the very first year of your academic career is filled with opportunities to learn about preserving the Earth through sustainable practices and opportunities to bask and soak in the Appalachian culture.

Radford University has developed a program that allows freshmen to explore their interests through its newly developed Environment-Community (ECO) Connections living-learning community, a group of like-minded freshmen living together in a residence hall and are committed to the environment, sustainability, education and leadership.

“Many students are interested in sustainability in the natural world,” explains Brock Cutler, Ph.D., a Radford University faculty member and outdoors enthusiast, who organizes activities and learning engagement opportunities for ECO Connections. “Once they arrive on campus, they begin to learn more about how to put their interests into action, including on our campus.”

The establishment of the ECO Connections underscores the University’s commitment to engage students, faculty and staff to learning, discovering and contributing to positive current and future environmental solutions.

Radford University continues to reduce its carbon footprint in becoming a model institution for sustainability practices in the Commonwealth of Virginia and across the United States. The University has been included in The Princeton Review’s “Top Green Colleges in the Nation” since 2010, and 11 campus buildings have earned either LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) gold or silver certification.

It is only natural for the University to find ways to involve students more in activities that educate

them about their environment on campus — helping reduce its carbon footprint — and on a global scale.

ECO Connections began three years ago as a pilot program, of sorts, Cutler explains, to determine where students’ interests lie. “We determined they really liked sustainability initiatives incorporated with outdoor programming, so we re-conceptualized the community to include more outdoor activities

and learning opportunities,” he said. “It works out great, because we already have this great resource — the beautiful New River Valley — in our backyard.”

Since the newly developed curriculum began in Fall 2019, students have been busy exploring those resources in the natural beauty that surrounds Radford University.

It began before the semester started and before other students moved to campus. The 20 or so students, who are part of the community, arrived early — five days before classes began — packed their belongings into their rooms in Stuart Hall, then headed to the University’s 380-acre Selu Conservancy.

The students were joined by ECO Connections faculty and staff organizers and spent the night there, getting to know each other through activities. It was two days of trail hiking, canoeing and kayaking on the Little River that flows by Selu, bonfires and later a bike tour through the City of Radford.

Throughout the semester, students have spent even more time on the rivers and trails, but also have participated in a cleanup of the New River and tested their mettle on the Radford University Corporate Park ropes course. On solid, dry land, the group has been treated to a campus tree tour, paying particular attention to the white basswood located at the north end of Jefferson Hall. Last year, it was recognized as a national champion tree by American Forests magazine.

Those are among the many living, breathing and learning opportunities for students in ECO Connections.

“The basic concept of the community is introducing the students to basic concepts of sustainability,” Cutler explains, “and helping them understand what it means to the University, to their communities and to their lives.” ■



Faculty mentor Kristina Stefaniak, Ph.D., left, assistant professor of chemistry, with Research Rookie Makenzie Bennington



# RESEARCH ROOKIES NO LONGER:



**PROGRAM ENHANCES UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES AND FACULTY-STUDENT RELATIONSHIPS**

## **When Jose Bermudez moved to the United States from Colombia in 2015, he immediately noticed a discrepancy in an important issue that repeatedly appears throughout mainstream news headlines: mental illness.**

“In my country, people don’t talk about mental illness,” said Bermudez, a junior marketing major. “When I came here [the U.S.], everyone was talking about it, but it was still perceived as taboo. I didn’t understand why mental illness was stigmatized, and I wanted to find answers.”

Through a new Radford University research program, Bermudez had the unique opportunity, at the undergraduate level, to delve deeper into this relevant and real-world topic that impacts millions of people worldwide.

Bermudez was among 13 other highly-motivated and high-achieving Radford University freshman and sophomore students selected to participate in the new Highlander Research Rookies Program for undergraduate students. Launched in Fall 2018, Research Rookies paired each selected student with a faculty mentor to conduct a yearlong research project based on their research interests.

For Bermudez, that interest was mental illness. And, with the help of Associate Professor of Communication West Bowers, Ph.D., he narrowed the focus of his research to college websites and how effectively, or not, they promote mental health services to their campus communities.

“It was a great experience,” Bermudez said, reflecting this summer on the completion of the first year of Research Rookies. “This is the first time I’ve ever gotten to do anything like this. What we accomplished in one year was amazing.”

Because of the Research Rookies Program, Bowers and Bermudez, who had never met before, were able to connect at a level that is rare for professors and undergraduate students at other universities. At Radford University, though, that special student-faculty connection shines.

“Research Rookies is an example of the close student-faculty collaborative work that makes a Radford University education so valuable,” said Associate Provost for Academic Programs Jeanne Mekolichick, Ph.D., who helped establish the program. “Connecting our first- and second-year students so deeply and so early with faculty and

their disciplines creates meaningful academic connections that are the root of all student success.”

President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D., first introduced the bold initiative during his inaugural State of the University Address in October 2017. He envisioned the program as an avenue for “maximizing opportunities for research-based engagement and learning.”

President Hemphill announced that funding of up to \$4,000 would be provided to each Highlander Research Rookie for the full year based on the number of hours devoted to research-based work in order to assist with educational expenses and other related costs. Additionally, faculty mentors participating in the program would receive \$2,000 for supplies and other materials needed for student research performed as part of the program.

In order to bring President Hemphill’s vision to life, the Highlander Research Rookies Program Working Group was established. The group, comprised of University administrators and faculty, worked diligently and rapidly in Spring 2018 to implement the program.

Former Vice President for Enrollment Management Kitty McCarthy selected and recruited a pool of students from diverse backgrounds to apply. The program was open to all majors, which was a very intentional decision, explained Joe Wirgau, Ph.D., director of the Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship (OURS) and director of the Highlander Research Rookies Program.

“Not all universities open up these type of research opportunities to all departments and majors,” Wirgau explained. “They’re often targeted toward a specific major. We wanted all students, no matter their backgrounds, to have the opportunity to experience undergraduate research.”

Mekolichick and Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs Kenna Colley, Ed.D., recruited faculty mentors, also representative of different colleges and departments.

By Summer 2018, the talented students and faculty were selected, paired and ready to hit the



Faculty mentor West Bowers, Ph.D., left, associate professor of communication, with Research Rookie Jose Bermudez

ground running as the first cohort of Highlander Research Rookies. What followed was a dynamic and fast-paced academic year of success, failure, challenge, reward and undeniable academic, cultural and emotional growth.

**'It was a lot of work, but it was worth it'**

Bermudez voiced early on that he wanted to research student mental health, he just did not know where to start or what path to go down, Bowers said.

"That's often how the research process begins," Bowers continued. "You start with really broad ideas and expectations, but what research really is, is small steps, and those small steps lead to something really big."

Bowers' research background included content analysis of websites, so the pair decided to mesh their interests and study universities' student health websites to gauge their effectiveness in reaching their student audience. Bermudez and Bowers



Faculty mentor Wendy Downey, D.N.P., left, assistant professor of nursing, with Research Rookie Mary Brown

# “You start with really broad ideas and expectations, but what research really is, is small steps, and those small steps lead to something really big.”

West Bowers, Ph.D.

spent the fall semester gathering data from about 20 websites, categorizing them based on school size. Winter break included lots of coding, the most frustrating part, Bermudez said, and the spring semester was spent analyzing the data collected.

“It was a lot of work, but it was worth it,” Bermudez said.

Throughout the fall and spring semesters, Bowers saw a noticeable transformation in his student-researcher. His confidence grew. His writing skills improved. He craved critique, accepted challenges and celebrated achievements.

“Watching Jose grow throughout the research process was exciting to see,” said Bowers. “His skills were clicking, and he was so energetic — more energetic than I thought someone might be at the undergraduate level. I was very impressed with his enthusiasm and his willingness to see the project through from start to finish.”

At the end of the spring semester, Bermudez presented his research at the Virginia Association of Communication Arts and Sciences (VACAS) Conference, held on Radford University’s campus in early 2019.

Nalani Story, a junior computer science major, is passionate about undergraduate research. That is one of the main reasons she enrolled at Radford University, she said.

“I knew I wouldn’t get this opportunity at other schools,” Story said. “The Research Rookies Program offered me that opportunity in a structured environment. Sitting down to work on my research was the highlight of my week.”

Story was paired with Assistant Professor of Information Technology Caleb Bradberry, Ph.D., to conduct research on student retention analysis, specifically looking at what characteristics make a student

majoring in computer science at Radford University likely to succeed and graduate. Using the University’s data system, they tracked a group of computer science students from their freshman to senior year, focusing on their classes and professors.

“It was awesome to be able to stop by Dr. Bradberry’s office and know that for an hour, we were able to talk about the research,” Story said. “Dr. Bradberry, in general, was understanding, and we talked about things beyond the research. He felt more like a mentor than just a faculty advisor.”

When Samantha Doncaster, a junior interdisciplinary studies major, enrolled at Radford University, she came with a lengthy bucket list. Because of Research Rookies, she is already checked off three accomplishments that were high on the ambitious list.

“I wanted to participate in undergraduate research, present my research and meet the Board of Visitors,” Doncaster explained.

Check. Check. Check.

“I did all of that in one year,” she said. “Wow.”

Doncaster was paired with Professor of Criminal Justice Nicole Hendrix, Ph.D., to research perceived risk and its connection to firearm possession, an ongoing project of Hendrix.

“This project provided Sam a window of opportunity to think a little more critically about a topic that many people find challenging,” Hendrix said. “We spent this last year immersing her in literature and how data is gathered and measured. We were able to really open her up in ways that a traditional student might not get in a classroom experience. It was never linear and a little messy at times, but overall, she was able to obtain a broader understanding and

see that we have a lot of tools and research to answer her questions.”

In the spring, Doncaster had the exciting opportunity to present her research to the Board of Visitors during a special research poster presentation. She took the endeavor one step further and was the only student to present her findings on a large digital board, versus a traditional poster board.

The mentorship she gained and the friendship she established with Hendrix was invaluable, Doncaster said.

“Dr. Hendrix is a phenomenal woman, and I am honored to have worked beside her on this project,” Doncaster said. “She has taught me so much about life itself. It’s only added to my love of learning.”

The feeling is “absolutely mutual,” Hendrix said.

“I am honored to help Sam continue on her exciting journey at Radford University,” Hendrix said. “Research Rookies highlighted the close relationships that faculty have with students on our campus. It reflects our strong commitment to undergraduate education, particularly the role that research has in providing students with skills they can take into any field.”

Looking toward the future of the Highlander Research Rookies Program, Wirgau said he is both excited and challenged to build upon the experience, tweak shortcomings and prepare the next cohort of researchers to be just as successful as the first.

“These researchers, no longer rookies, along with their potential, growth and accomplishments from this past year, represent the best of higher education,” Wirgau said. “They exemplify why so many of us are passionate about Radford University and becoming educators.” ■



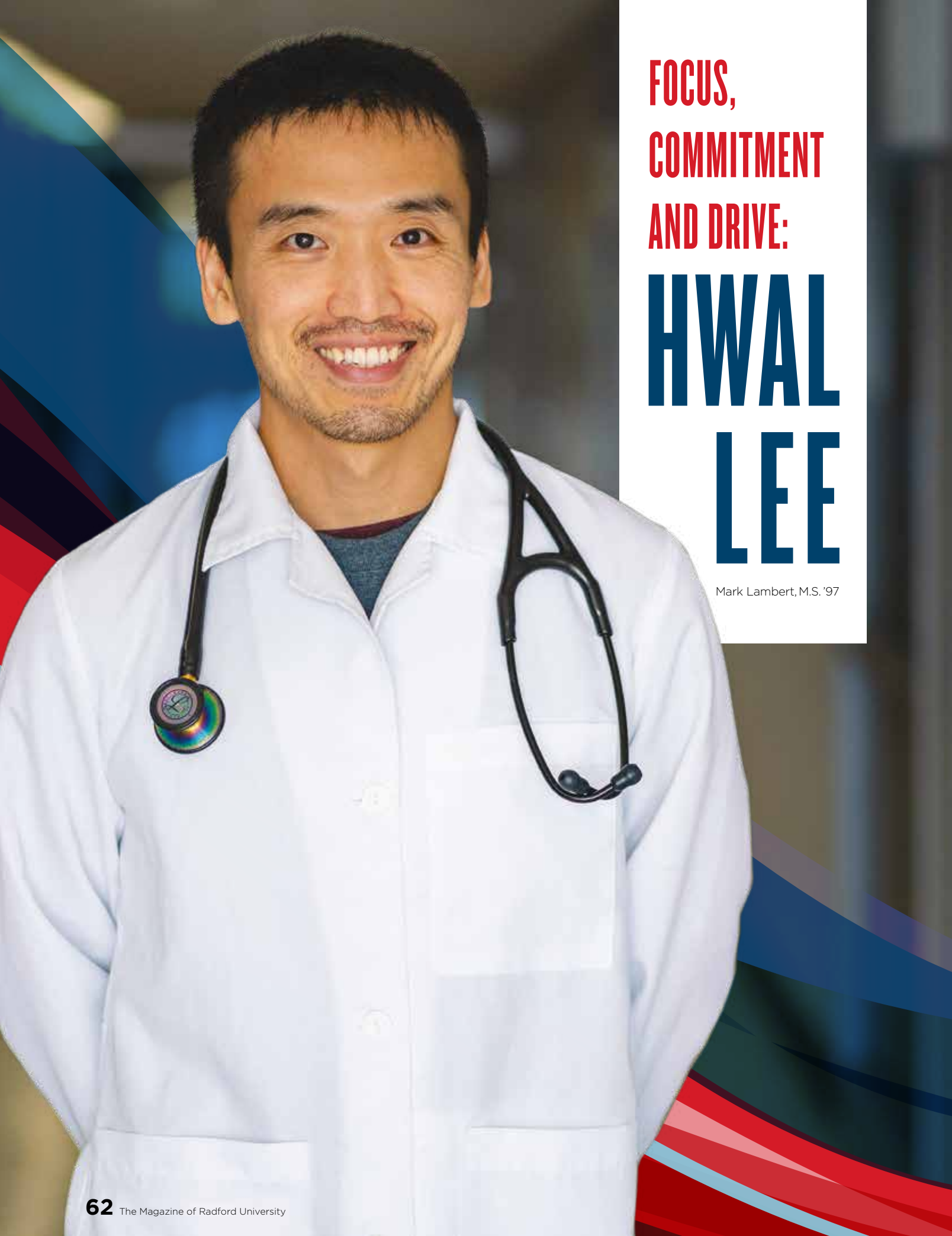
Research Rookie Jillian Rauch, left, with faculty mentor Nicole Iannone, Ph.D., assistant professor of psychology



Faculty mentor Kathleen Poole, Ph.D., left, professor of health and human performance, with Research Rookie Madison Gaminds



Faculty mentor Jennifer McDonel, Ph.D., left, assistant professor of music, with Research Rookie Bryan Dowd



**FOCUS,  
COMMITMENT  
AND DRIVE:**

**HWAL  
LEE**

Mark Lambert, M.S. '97



**H**wal Lee is a very busy man. In addition to recently completing his first year in the challenging Radford University Carilion (RUC) Physician Assistant (PA) program, Lee has been leading multiple sessions of an eight-hour Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training course in his spare time.

MHFA is a public health education program that began in Australia in 2001. During the training, participants learn to recognize early warning signs, risk factors and symptoms of common mental and substance use disorders. They can then connect the person in distress to the professional, peer and self-help support and/or treatment they need.

"It can be difficult to find the time for it. I spend 70-plus hours each week learning to practice medicine," Lee said. "But, I truly believe in the value and impact of MHFA, and I consider it a privilege to share information and resources with others, who may not have access otherwise." Lee completed his training in Adult MHFA in 2010 in his native Australia.

By offering MHFA education, Lee is helping RUC foster relationships and a culture of service both on campus and in the Roanoke community. This innovative approach to supporting others through service provides participants the opportunity to embrace the diverse needs of families, friends and neighbors across the region.

"Participating in that training ultimately inspired me to become a trained counselor," Lee said. "I

became a certified Adult MHFA instructor in 2018, as one of the PA Foundation's inaugural Mental Health Outreach Fellows, and have since been hosting training sessions in the Roanoke Valley. Being an MHFA instructor is particularly meaningful for me, because I also happen to be the only PA student in the country who is a certified MHFA instructor."

Over the last year and a half, Lee has trained 350 community members in the Roanoke Valley. Sessions included training with RUC students, faculty and staff, as well as agencies like the Roanoke City Health Department, Goodwill Industries of the Valleys and Virginia CARES. In September, he led sessions again on the RUC campus in recognition of Suicide Prevention Awareness Month.

Lee recently became a dual-certified Youth MHFA instructor with support from Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare and the Virginia Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Services, which recognized his ongoing efforts in mental health education and suicide prevention.

"I host MHFA training sessions in my own time, and I think of it as a hobby," Lee said. "Some might consider it unusual, but it's something that I'm truly passionate about."

A lot goes on behind the scenes to plan and host the training sessions. Lee dedicates time to those duties during his weekends, school breaks and after-class hours.

"The devastating personal and financial burden of mental and substance use disorders is widely known and affects

communities across the nation, but it disproportionately affects communities in Southwest Virginia, including Roanoke," Lee said.

Lee followed an unusual educational path to Southwest Virginia after moving to the United States six years ago.

"My educational path has been unconventional, because I'm a middle school dropout. I earned my middle and high school diplomas at 16 through self-study, while working full-time to support family. Then, I earned my bachelor's degree in sports and health sciences in 2017 from American Public University."

Lee and his partner moved to Northern Virginia in 2015 before deciding to relocate.

"We chose Roanoke, because we both felt most comfortable here," Lee said. "I'd already planned on applying to PA schools and was aware of the program at RUC. I felt most comfortable when I interviewed here. A year later, I can say it was the right decision."

In addition to his PA classes and MHFA training duties, Lee also volunteers with Crisis Text Line as a crisis counselor and is an active member with the Suicide Prevention Council of the Roanoke Valley.

As for his PA studies at RUC, Lee says he has really enjoyed his first year in the program.

"Many of the tools I teach in MHFA training, such as empathy and active listening, have universal utility. They're certainly essential during every counseling shift I serve, but they also come in handy no matter where I am," Lee said. ■



“

I consider it a unique privilege to share information and resources with others who may not have access otherwise.”

Hwal Lee



# PERUVIAN RAINFOREST JOURNEY: A ONCE-IN-A-LIFETIME LEARNING EXPERIENCE

By Max Esterhuizen, M.S. '15



**R**adford University students and faculty members returned from a three-week-long transformative experience in the Peruvian rainforest after taking part in the Radford Amazonian Research Expedition (RARE) Program from May 20 to June 11. The experience expanded students' boundaries and pushed their personal growth. Students conducted individualized research projects, hiked, climbed an 85-foot tree, explored the jungle and, after all that, became tourists when visiting Cusco and the ancient ruins of Machu Picchu.

**“The trip is a cornerstone of Radford University’s learning opportunities,”**

said Associate Professor of Geospatial Science Stockton Maxwell, Ph.D.

“We cross a lot of different disciplines with RARE,” Maxwell said. “Seeing the students light up and change before your eyes is one of the most rewarding outcomes of teaching. One of the most engaging ways to teach is to take students there, engage them in their own scholarship and watch them work through the challenges and problems associated with being a researcher in the rainforest.”

That experience goes beyond just being a researcher. Students get to soak in the local culture — including the food, music and local populations — a critical component of the RARE Program. Students can experience that culture and see its impact on their research projects.





The cultural journey began when the group of 10 students and two professors arrived in Puerto Maldonado, a remote city in southeastern Peru. After staying in the city for a couple of days, the group headed north on the Trans-Amazonian Highway before heading down a muddy logging road to reach the small, remote town of Lucerna. After the luggage was loaded onto a small boat, the group traveled upriver to the biodiversity station. After arriving, the group still had to make a quarter-mile hike with a steep incline before reaching their temporary home.

Sydni Pennington, of Dublin, Virginia, is one of the students who benefited from the transformative experience.

"I feel like I am more ready to take obstacles head-on," Pennington said. "I was in the Amazon for two weeks, so I feel like problems at home are a lot easier to face. I learned about myself and how to push my limits."

Each of the students overcame issues in the field. For Kateri Schoettinger, of Cincinnati, Ohio, it was equipment issues for her research. Schoettinger was measuring the carbonic acid and pH of covered

streams versus streams in direct sunlight. The equipment she brought on the trip was not working, but there was some backup equipment left at the biodiversity station. "You have to be flexible," she said.

"I always knew I wanted to study abroad and take as many opportunities as possible," Schoettinger said. "Since RARE has been such an impactful experience, it seemed like it should be the one I should attend. Every time we went out into the jungle, we learned something new."

Helping the students on their life-changing adventure were Associate Professor of Mathematics Jean Mistele, Ph.D., and Assistant Professor of Biology Sarah Redmond, Ph.D.

"I think this is a fascinating program," Mistele said. "It's a wonderful way to work with students and help them grow. It's an incredibly unique opportunity."

For the last five years, Radford University has partnered with Tamandua Expeditions, an eco-tourism company that focuses on conservation- and sustainability-based expeditions, to guide the students through their life-changing experiences.

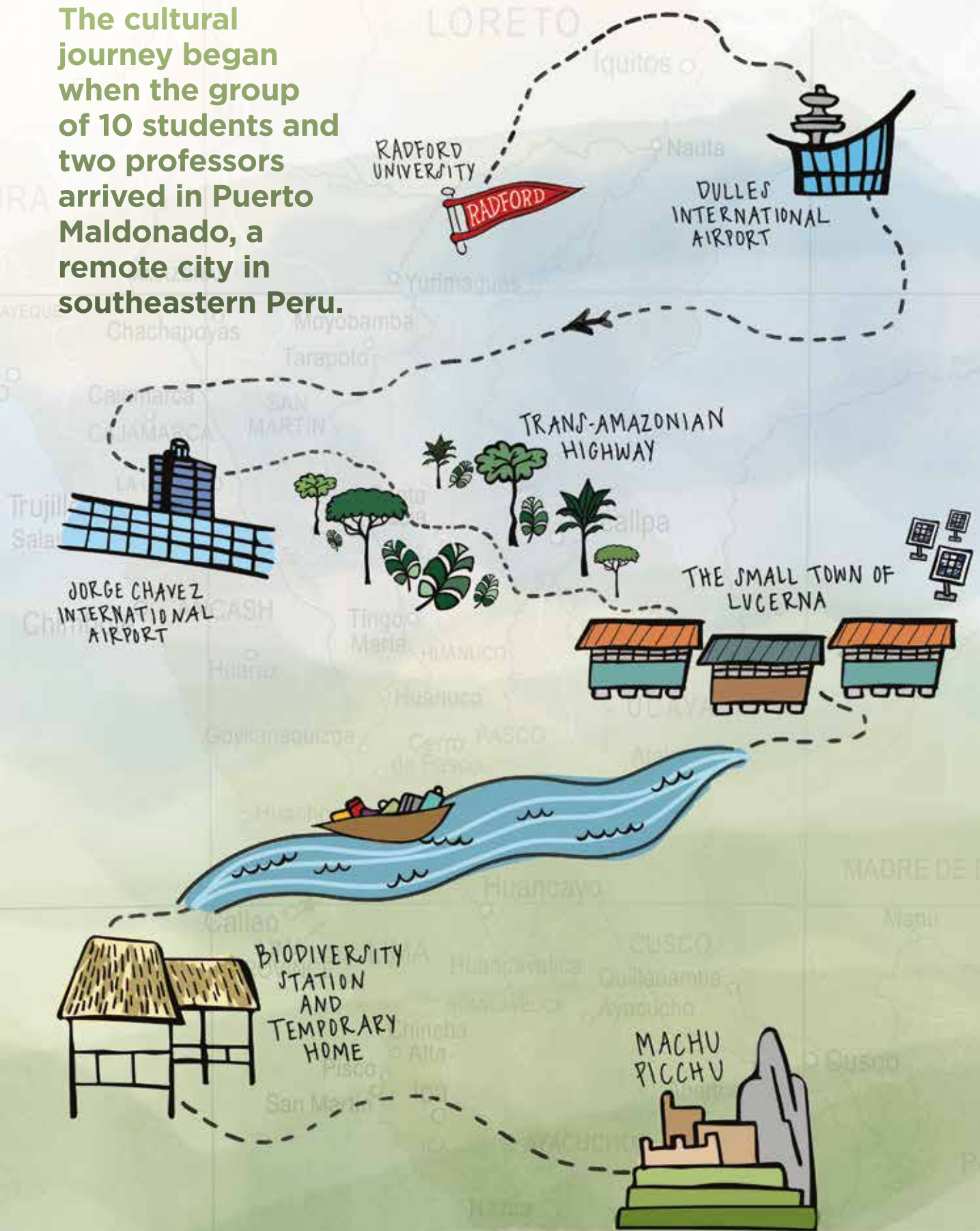
"We've been able to create a study abroad program that I'm confident is the only study abroad program like this in the United States," said Mohsin Kazmi, a guide for Tamandua Expeditions. "There are individual students working on individual projects. The professors are coming from interdisciplinary backgrounds. They are working so hard to allow these students to feel a real-life work experience. They get to go into the jungle and solve problems. They are getting a head start on their careers before they approach graduation. It's empowered people and changed people's lives."

Maxwell emphasized the unique and life-changing nature of the RARE experience, one that is designed to not only benefit the students who attend, but also their families.

"They bring that experience back and communicate what they have seen in the world and in a place most people don't have the opportunity to visit," Maxwell said. "It really pulls together communities, because they get to share their experiences with the Radford community and their families." ■



The cultural journey began when the group of 10 students and two professors arrived in Puerto Maldonado, a remote city in southeastern Peru.





# FROM THE TO THE

## Drew Myers

BIOLOGY MAJOR | DUBLIN, VIRGINIA

**F**rom an early age, freshman Drew Myers knew she wanted to be a veterinarian.

At Radford University, Myers is working toward her lifelong dream by attending the Radford Amazonian Research Expedition (RARE) Program and studying veterinarian practices in Peru.

"My sister helped me come up with the idea that I could compare and contrast veterinary medicine here with services offered in Peru," Myers said. "I went with it and am so glad I did."

As part of RARE, the entire group visited an animal rehabilitation center near the city of Puerto Maldonado, Peru. As part of the visit, students were able to prepare food for the animals and tour the facility, which is found on the edge of the rainforest.

Myers took the experience a step further by spending the night at the rehabilitation center, where she conducted the bulk of her research over that day-and-a-half period. Myers was able to speak with interns and a principal veterinarian at the facility.

"Being able to stay there was amazing," Myers said. "Waking up and feeding the animals and being able to see them again in a closer

view than the rest of the group got to see. I got to hold a baby howler monkey. It was amazing being that hands-on and that close."

Myers said that the experiences have given her a new respect for veterinarians that treat wild animals, especially those that do so in a challenging environment.

The other aspect of the trip that positively impacted the diverse cultural experiences for Myers, something she has brought back to Radford University. "Since I had never been on a plane and never been out of the country, I didn't really have that view of the world. I knew it from books, but I didn't know it firsthand," Myers said. "Now, I have that valuable experience."

Myers gained a "let's do it" mentality on the trip.

"I feel like I am a lot more open to doing new things," Myers said. "Before I went to the jungle, the idea of jumping off a small cliff into the river and swimming across the river would've been terrifying to me. The idea of swimming with a caiman would have been tough. Now, I'm like yeah! I'm willing to do anything instead of being the shy me."



To learn more, visit [www.radford.edu/rare-video](http://www.radford.edu/rare-video) and watch the video of the Radford Amazonian Research Expedition.



# CLASSROOM AMAZON

## Trevor Tidwell

PHYSICS MAJOR | RURAL RETREAT, VIRGINIA

The idea for senior Trevor Tidwell's research began in January 2017, when he attended the Arctic Geophysics Research Expedition to Alaska. On the expedition, research on the thermal balance and properties of the Arctic sea ice was conducted. Tidwell wanted to take what knowledge he gained in Alaska and apply it to an entirely different environment — the Peruvian rainforest.

With the goal of collecting data to accurately discuss how clear-cut deforestation is changing the Amazon rainforest, Tidwell set out to Peru as part of the RARE Program to apply his physics knowledge in a jungle environment.

To create his climate-data sensing equipment, Tidwell took an Arduino microcontroller, which is a highly-programmable computer platform that allows people to build digital and interactive devices and programmed sensors attached to the controller to capture temperature and humidity data.

Tidwell said there was a significant difference in the data collected from the jungle to the data taken from Lucerna, a small, remote village of 75-100 people.

"The humidity is far greater in the jungle than it is in Lucerna, and the jungle is much cooler in temperature," Tidwell said. "The reason that it is cooler in the jungle

is because the trees shade the area, making it cooler. The trees help keep in the moisture, too, I think. Lucerna is open with the sun beating down on you all the time. Everything was very dry. That sun that is beating down on you is causing evaporation, which is leaving the area much drier than if the trees were there."

As Tidwell collected his data, he also experienced Peruvian culture firsthand.

"It broadened the way that I think," Tidwell said. "It opened my eyes to other parts of the world. While we were there, I made new friends, and I am grateful for that. I learned a lot about myself, as well as the people around me. I definitely pushed myself a lot harder. Overall, I found new limits for myself."

Tidwell will take his data — and his experiences — with him throughout the rest of his Radford journey, including presenting the data at the Undergraduate Research Forum and a forum dedicated to the research conducted during RARE.

"This must be one of the best experiences I have ever had at Radford," Tidwell said. "There is a saying they have in the Center for Global Education and Engagement — 'all classrooms do not have four walls.' I really believe that. This was one of the best experiences of my life."



# A DYNAMIC RHYTHM FOR SUCCESS:

## *Ishmale Davis*

By Chad Osborne







## Ishmale's grandmother has an iPhone now.

Her persistent texts and late-night calls keep him grounded and often awake at night.

"She'll text me and say, Ish, you better..." he explains, cutting off his sentence and bursting into laughter about the texts his grandmother sends to remind him of what he needs to do to succeed in college. He is laughing, too, about the confession he is about to make.

"She called at 11:40 last night, and I didn't answer," he laughs more, like an eight-year-old who knows he is in trouble for doing something he just could not help doing.

"She will talk all night if I answer," says Ishmale, or Ish, as his friends and family call him. "She'll talk about nothing, and then she'll fall asleep sitting on the edge of her bed."

Ish is mostly kidding about his grandmother, of course. They have that sort of relationship. The two, along with Ish's grandfather, are close. His grandparents helped raise him and, along with his mother, instilled in him an unbreakable work ethic.

They are proud of who he has become and what he is accomplishing at Radford University, which is a lot.

Since first stepping foot on the Radford University campus, Ish, a senior from Danville, Virginia, has been a dynamic, life-changing force for many people. He has touched the hearts of those fortunate enough to be captured by the gravitational pull that is powered by his warm personality and infectious smile.

His welcoming, familial nature is in his DNA. His warmth stems, too, from his feeling of comfort at Radford. "It feels like home here," he explains. "Everyone here makes you feel like you belong. Everyone, President Hemphill, the faculty and the staff, pushes you to succeed in every way possible. This feels like family."

During his first three years at Radford, Ish majored in music education. It seemed to be a natural progression. He began playing drums when he was six years old, and he has been sharing his talents since. He was in high school band, chorus and orchestra. He came to Radford to learn more, share more and teach others.

"The music program here is phenomenal," he says, "one of the best in Virginia."

But, before entering his senior year, Ish changed directions. He flipped the record. He realized his passion was not in teaching, but simply making other people smile.

"There is no better feeling than walking into a room, smiling and making everyone feel better," Ish says. "That's just the best feeling in the world."

It is a feeling that inspires him to engage with the Radford family and beyond. He must strike balance between his schoolwork, his role as "a man of the Phi Beta Sigma Fraternity Incorporated," the West African Drum and Dance group he founded as a freshman, the gospel group he plays with that just released an album last summer, the high school drumline he works with and his jazz band.

"It's hard sometimes, but I love it all," he says. "As long as I can find time to sleep, I'm fine."

Somehow, Ish manages it all, while maintaining a 3.7 GPA and serving as a Quest Assistant and an ambassador for the College of Visual and Performing Arts. Simply reading his day-to-day calendar would render some exhausted. He studies, works, performs, helps others where and when he can and rarely misses a beat.

Ish is always busy, working jobs, planning activities and performing at gigs. And, he will always be people-focused. It is one reason he changed his major from music education to political science. Someday, Ish plans to hold public office and create change that is positive for his community and good for the people.

His grandmother, miles away in Danville, knows the kind of person Ish is, and that he is leaving an indelible mark on the Radford University community with his kindness and benevolence.

She will talk about him to anyone who will listen. ■



Todd Drexler / Big South Conference



A



Brian Babineau / Celtics / NBA

B



Todd Drexler / Big South Conference

C

**A.** Nelia Perez notched the game-winning goal in the second overtime period in the Big South Conference Tournament Semifinal that sent the Highlanders to the Big South Conference Tournament Final. With the match tied at two, Perez corralled the ball out of a scrum five yards away from the goal. She turned to her right, saw an open net and finished for the golden goal. The Highlander bench erupted in celebration as the score placed Radford in its second Big South Conference Tournament Final appearance in the last two years. The Camels did not make it easy for the Highlanders, after taking a two goal lead with 37 minutes left to play in regulation. The Highlanders came back from a 2-0 deficit with two goals in the second half and one in the second overtime period.

**B.** Former Radford men's basketball standout, Javonte Green, has earned the Boston Celtics final 15-man roster spot. Green becomes the first Radford men's basketball player in program history to make an NBA roster. First impressions are everything, and Green immediately had the attention of the fans – and clearly the front office – when he scored 15 points on 7-of-7 shooting in the team's preseason opener against the Charlotte Hornets. Green got a shot with the C's in summer, competing with the team in the Summer League. He helped guide the Celtics to a 4-0 record and the No. 1 seed in the Summer League Bracket before falling to eventual champion, Memphis. Green appeared in five games and averaged 10.8 points, 4.8 rebounds and 2.8 assists during summer league play.

**C.** The Radford women's soccer team defeated No. 4 Gardner-Webb, 2-1, to claim the 2019 Big South Women's Soccer Tournament Title on November 10, 2019 at the Matthews Sportsplex in Matthews, North Carolina. Radford claimed its seventh Big South Tournament Title in program history, which is now the most of any Big South school. The Highlanders have now won back-to-back tournament titles for the second time in school history. The 16 wins this season also ties a single-season record and is the first time Radford has ever tallied 16 wins in two consecutive years. The Highlanders competed in their 8th NCAA Tournament in program history.



Radford Athletics

D



Radford Athletics

E

**D.** After leading the Highlanders in the first race of the year, Caitlin Apps added a big note to her freshman resume with a school-record 6K time and a 16th place finish against big competition. This also marked her second consecutive top-20 finish. The Dawlish, United Kingdom native is off to a hot start and has set two tough PR's to beat in the 4K and 6K races, while also dropping six seconds off her average mile going from 5:48 to 5:42, earning Big South Runner of the Week for this performance. Caitlin Apps, who was nominated onto the All-Conference team as the top finishing freshman, won Radford's first-ever Freshman of the Year award.

**E.** Radford travelled to the ITA Atlantic Regionals with multiple Highlanders picking up victories in the singles and doubles matches spanning from October 17-19, 2019. Rodrigo Magalhaes and Yevhen Sirous were the last Highlanders standing in the tournament in the main doubles draw bracket, taking on the No. 1 seed in the tournament (and ranked 47th in the nation) from Old Dominion. The duo played a back and forth match tying each other up on multiple occasions, but Old Dominion pulled out the win late 8-5 concluding Radford's run at the ITA Regionals.

**F.** Men's soccer defender Jacob Wilkinson was named to both the Big South All-Academic Team and the CoSIDA Academic All-District Team and is also a nominee for the Academic All-America Team after setting career-best numbers in nearly every statistical category on the field, while maintaining a 4.0 GPA as a finance major.



Radford Athletics

F

# Weddings, Births & More

## 1960s

Since her retirement in 2008, **Margaret Clowe Campbell Nicholson '68** has served on two nonprofit boards, in her local food pantry, at a senior fellowship center, as a member of the Lions Club and as an Officer of Election.

## 1970s

"Labyrinth," a poem written by **Kathleen Smith '78, M.S. '82**, has been published in the inaugural Alumni Epsilon Journal, Inkblot. This publication is organized by the Alumni Epsilon Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta International Honor Society.

## 1980s

**Steve Robinson '81, M.S. '85**, was one of eight Division I coaches selected for induction into the A STEP UP Assistant Coaches Hall of Fame. Robinson has served as an assistant coach at the University of North Carolina for 16 years and for 24 years under head coach Roy Williams.

**Douglas Cerv '86** started a new position as a product specialist at Duncan Hyundai in Christiansburg, Virginia.

**Jon Hart '88** has been named chief commercial officer at VirtualHealth.

## 1990s

**Mark Lodge '90** has been named senior vice president of business development and strategy at Archer Tactical Group.

**Kevin Trainum '90** has been named enterprise account executive at HashiCorp in San Francisco, California.



## We want to hear from you!

Let us know what you think of the stories and photos you find in The Magazine of Radford University. The magazine staff welcomes readers' comments but reserves the right to edit letters or to refuse publication of letters considered libelous or distasteful. Space availability may prevent publication of all letters in the magazine. Send us your letters to the editor at [editor@radford.edu](mailto:editor@radford.edu).

**Scott Arthur '91** was named vice president of sales and business development at Attacktica, Inc., a veteran-owned cyber security services company in Tysons Corner, Virginia.

**Jane Humphries Grout '91** was recently named executive vice president at Sysco in Florida. Prior to this, Grout worked for Coca-Cola.

**Judy Seibel '92** was promoted to manager at CapVentures, Inc. in Richmond, Virginia.

**Dante Washington '92** was named director of team strategic partnerships and business development for Major League Soccer (MLS) club Columbus Crew SC in Columbus, Ohio. Washington is also the owner of Dante Washington LLC, a consulting service for individuals and companies seeking to do business in the U.S. soccer market.

**Earnest Hayden '95** has accepted a position at Systems Accountants in San Diego, California as an ERP consultant. Previously, Hayden served as a business process analyst at The Nature Conservancy.

**Melissa Rosato Racklin '95** has been named vice president at Zeta Global, a customer lifecycle management marketing company.

**Brian Mistretta '96** was recently named director of product and segment marketing at NICE inContact located in Alexandria, Virginia.

**Kim Day Tuttle '96** was named the 2019 Charlotte Mecklenburg Teacher of the Year.

**Jennifer Kirby '98** married Matthew Edens on April 1, 2017, in New Orleans, Louisiana.

**Joshua Nodell '98** was recently named sales director at OneSignal in Washington, D.C. Previously, Nodell served as the vice president of global business development at Pushwoosh.

ESPN reporter **Marty Smith '98** released a book, "Never Settle: Sports, Family, and the American Soul," described as a love letter to the New River Valley.

**Erin Schultz Gibson '99** transitioned from client services executive to facilities project manager at Atlas Technical Consultants, based in Austin, Texas.

**Kevin Horvath '99** was promoted to global director of threat and vulnerability at Verizon Enterprise Solutions. Horvath has worked at Verizon Enterprise Solutions since 2011.

**Annie Whittaker '99, M.S. '03, '06**, has been appointed deputy superintendent of instruction for Montgomery County Schools in Virginia.



More than 800 Radford alumni and friends joined for the annual Radford Night with the Washington Nationals. It was great to be part of the World Series run. The 2020 event details will be shared soon. To see more photos from the event, visit [www.radford.edu/alumni-photos](http://www.radford.edu/alumni-photos).



## Highlander Pride. GIVE BACK!

**SHOW YOUR HIGHLANDER PRIDE!** Every gift, no matter the amount, strengthens our Radford family.

*"Without scholarship support, I would not have been able to pursue my dream at Radford University to become a nurse. I cannot imagine getting my degree from any other school. Thank you for your contributions."*

— Kristen Bishop '20

You can make a difference for current and future generations of Highlanders by making your gift today!

[www.radford.edu/give](http://www.radford.edu/give)

## Celebrate! Connect! Contribute!

Make plans to attend the 2020 Volunteer Summit during Winter Celebration on February 22, 2020.



### WHY ATTEND?

- Be an insider and get the scoop directly from Radford University experts!
- Select breakout training sessions to learn more about volunteer roles!
- Network with fellow alumni and friends!
- Cheer for Highlander basketball!

**Questions?** Call the Office of Alumni Relations at 888-478-4723 or email [alumni@radford.edu](mailto:alumni@radford.edu). Visit us at [www.radford.edu/alumni](http://www.radford.edu/alumni).



# YOU'RE NEVER TOO YOUNG TO GIVE!

You can support Radford University today, while preserving your assets for retirement and providing for your family.

## Gifts You Can Give Now

- Gifts from a Will or Trust
- Beneficiary Designations
- Life Insurance
- Real Property
- Tangible Personal Property
- Life Estate
- Appreciated Securities
- Business Interests, Closely Held Stock and Partnerships

Contact the Office of University Advancement to learn more about Planned Giving at Radford University and how you can make a difference now. Call Tom Lillard at 540-831-6172 or visit [radford.giftlegacy.com](http://radford.giftlegacy.com).

**Diana Wyman '99** was selected by the American Association of Textile Chemists and Colorists (AATCC) Board of Directors as the new executive vice president. Previously, Wyman served as the AATCC's technical director from 2014-2019 and as the membership and publications director from 2006-2012.

## 2000s

**Syiisha Deatria Dale '00** accepted a position as the accounting director for Mecklenburg County in Charlotte, North Carolina.

**Tim Langford '00** is a new member of the University of Oklahoma track and field coaching staff. Langford formerly served as the head coach of both the cross country and track field teams at South Carolina State. During his time as a student-athlete at Radford, Langford was an all-conference honoree in the high jump, triple jump, long jump, 4x100-meter relay and 4x400-meter relay, as well as a back-to-back Big South conference champion in the high jump.

**John B. Massey '02, M.S. '05**, was accepted into the United States Air Force Air War College.

**Kristin Walker-Donnelly '03, Ph.D.**, married Ryan Donnelly on May 4, 2019 in Sewickley, Pennsylvania. Kristin serves as the director of assessment in the Division of Student Affairs at Clemson University. The couple reside in Greenwood, South Carolina.

**Justin Prillaman '04** was named territory sales manager at Blacklidge Emulsions, Inc. in Roanoke, Virginia. Prillaman covers Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland and Delaware.

**George Hummer '05, Ed.D.**, has accepted the position of executive director of special education and student services for Stafford County Public Schools in Virginia. Hummer has served as a supervisor of student services since 2015.

**James Reynolds '05** has been named regional director of safety and security for the Eastern United States and Canada at Hilton.

**Richard Sarver '05** launched The Flatwoods Press Observer newsletter following the closing of his publishing platform, Flatwoods Press, LLC. Sarver is also a steelworker and author.



## Calling all members of the Class of 1970!

Start planning now to come back to campus during Homecoming 2020 for a special celebration of your Golden Reunion. Reminiscence with classmates throughout the weekend and meet President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D., and First Lady Marisela Rosas Hemphill, Ph.D.

It's not too early to let us know you'll attend. We would love to have you join us as a volunteer for the reunion! Call the Office of Alumni Relations at 888-478-4723 or email [alumni@radford.edu](mailto:alumni@radford.edu).



**Vanessa Quesenberry '12, M.S. '15**, married Blake Conner on June 2, 2019 in Riner, Virginia.



**Greg Juanarena '12 and Lauren Juanarena '10, M.O.T. '12**, along with their son Theo, welcomed new baby Cecilia to their family in February 2019.



**Christine Minchak '11** married **Tyler Reedy '11** on May 4, 2019 in Occoquan, Virginia, surrounded by their Radford family from the class of 2011: **Lauren Welch, Kyle Bryant, Nick Valentine, Hannah Sweede and Kiersten Miller.**



**Frank West '15** married **Danielle Gangloff '17, M.S. '18**, on June 15, 2019 in Christiansburg, Virginia surrounded by many Radford alumni.

To submit a class note, please visit [www.radford.edu/alumniupdate](http://www.radford.edu/alumniupdate) or call 1-888-4RU-GRAD. Photographs may be submitted as .jpg files with a **resolution of at least 300 dpi**. If you submitted a class note and it does not appear in this issue, please look for it in the next magazine.

**Tiffany Goddard '06**, sales director at Carahsoft, has been awarded a place on the CRN 2019 Women of the Channel List. This recognition is a high honor from one of the premier publications in the government contracting space.

**Kim Rygas '07, M.S. '08, M.S. '16**, has been appointed principal of Auburn Elementary School in Riner, Virginia.

**Patrick Beggs '08** was named head of cyber defense development and incident response at AIG in Reston, Virginia.

**Megan Hawley '08** has been appointed assistant principal of Auburn Elementary School in Riner, Virginia.

**Michael Goodin '09** was named manager of multimedia and digital communications at the International Dairy Foods Association (IDFA).

## 2010s

**Greg Juanarena '12** and **Lauren Juanarena '10, M.O.T. '12**, along with their son Theo, welcomed new baby Cecilia to their family in February 2019. See *photograph*.

**Ashley Stroehlein '10** has joined the WCNC NBC Charlotte as a weekend sports anchor. Previously, Stroehlein spent five years as a weekend sports anchor at WBTV Charlotte. She also works with the Charlotte Knights and Charlotte Checkers as an in-game host.

**Christine Minchak '11** married **Tyler Reedy '11** on May 4, 2019 in Occoquan, Virginia, surrounded by their Radford family from the class of 2011: **Lauren Welch, Kyle Bryant, Nick Valentine, Hannah Sweede** and **Kiersten Miller**. See *photograph*.

**Tabitha Green '11, M.S. '13** married Cody Youell of Christiansburg, Virginia, during a small, private ceremony at Lake Norman in North Carolina.

**Jeffrey Burns '12** was recently named account executive at ChurnZero in Washington, D.C.

**Matthew Hillsinger '12** graduated from The George Washington University with a Doctor of Physical Therapy degree and accepted a job as a physical therapist at Body Dynamics, Inc. in Falls Church, Virginia.

**Jason Patten '12** was promoted to manager at Lanigan, Ryan, Malcolm and Doyle P.C. in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

**Daniel Mitchell '12** was promoted to flagship branch manager at Enterprise Rent-A-Car in Blacksburg, Virginia.

**Vanessa Quesenberry '12, M.S. '15**, married Blake Conner on June 2, 2019 in Riner, Virginia.

**Derrick Brewer '13** married **Sarah Anne Wells '13** on May 24, 2019 in Richmond, Virginia.

**Keith Fritz '13** of Baltimore, Maryland, married Ashley Libonate on May 5, 2019, surrounded by many Radford alumni.

**Holly Mueller '13** married Colin Ware on October 20, 2018. She has also accepted a teaching job in Anne Arundel County Public Schools in Maryland.

**Niki Strutzel '14** has been promoted to team manager at Workbridge Associates in Orange County, California.

**Madison Worley Boothe '14** and alumnus **Tyler Boothe** of Vinton, Virginia, welcomed their first child, Grayson Edward Boothe, to the world on March 5, 2019.

**Brad Keen '15** and **Alexis Keen '15** of Columbus, Ohio, welcomed their daughter, Jovie Noelle Keen, to the world on June 5, 2019.

**Sarah Nielsen '15** has been named manager of on-boarding ITSM at SolarWinds in Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina.

**Frank West '15** married **Danielle Gangloff '17, M.S. '18** on June 15, 2019 in Christiansburg, Virginia surrounded by many Radford alumni. West has worked for Radford University since 2012 and currently serves as the senior regional coordinator for alumni engagement. See *photograph*.

**Erik Czajkowski '16** started a new position as an account manager at Reynolds American Inc. in Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

**Alexa Jupe '16**, assistant director of annual giving and alumni relations at Randolph-Macon College and wedding planner in Richmond, Virginia, has been published three times in Richmond Weddings magazine.

**Nick Mayhugh '18**, Radford Men's Soccer alumnus, was selected as one of 14 players to represent the United States on the Paralympic 7-A-Side National team at the 2019 IFCPF World Cup.

**Iván Thirion '18** started a new position as policy specialist at Open Society Foundations in Washington, D.C.

**Jenna Sudol '19** joined the Farm Credit of the Virginias (FCV) team in Roanoke, Virginia, as the marketing and digital media coordinator. As a graduate student at Radford, Sudol served as a graduate teaching fellow.

## Obituaries

### 1940s

**Mae Turner '43** of Abingdon, Virginia, April 25, 2019.

**Jean P. Bane '45** of Pearisburg, Virginia, March 24, 2019.

**Aimee G. Lyle '45** of Peterborough, New Hampshire, March 23, 2019.

**Frances E. Trent '45** of Roanoke, Virginia, March 16, 2019.

**Dorothy K. Wall '47** of Tazewell, Virginia, May 12, 2019.

**Norma J. Moethena '48**, June 22, 2019.

**Barbara A. Young '48** of Exmore, Virginia, January 14, 2019.

**June E. Strachan '49** of Naples, Florida, May 16, 2019.

### 1950s

**Annita J. Havemann '50** of Anaheim, California, February 14, 2019.

**Ruth J. Moss '50** of Danville, Virginia, April 2, 2019.

**Betty J. Hines '51** of Blacksburg, Virginia, March 14, 2019.

**Margaret A. Smith '51** of Hiwassee, Virginia, April 25, 2019.

**Mary A. Flowers '52** of Virginia Beach, Virginia, July 7, 2019.

**Dorothy J. McNally '52** of Fairlawn, Virginia, January 22, 2019.

**Nina B. Frey '53** of Marietta, Georgia, January 19, 2019.

**Lucille Henderson '55** of Chester, Virginia, February 8, 2019.

**Helen M. Meredith '55** of Roanoke, Virginia, June 23, 2019.

**Elizabeth A. Bowers '58** of Severn, Maryland, April 5, 2019.

**Benita D. Lackey '58** of Collinsville, Virginia, June 20, 2019.

**Anna S. Crabtree '59** of Marion, Virginia, February 26, 2019.

**Nancy W. Jackson '59** of Max Meadows, Virginia, August 6, 2019.



**1960s**

**Dorothy R. DuRant '61** of Chesapeake, Virginia, August 2, 2019.

**Sue Neale '61** of Scarsdale, New York, February 19, 2019.

**Jo A. Pope '62** of Waynesboro, Pennsylvania, July 22, 2019.

**Louise H. Grant '63** of Jarratt, Virginia, January 15, 2019.

**Elizabeth Felts McGee '63** of Troutdale, Virginia, May 19, 2019.

**Elizabeth L. Nichols '63** of Salem, Virginia, February 28, 2019.

**Emily S. Pope '65** of Christiansburg, Virginia, June 29, 2019.

**Frederick W. Clemens, M.A. '66**, of Blacksburg, Virginia, July 29, 2019.

**Judith G. Miller '69** of Enterprise, Alabama, April 21, 2019.

**1970s**

**Jon V. Hypes, M.S. '70**, of Floral City, Florida, April 4, 2019.

**Heidi A. Willis '70** of Glen Allen, Virginia, March 16, 2018.

**Deborah A. Rolfe '71** of Staunton, Virginia, March 4, 2019.

**Doris L. Jones '72** of Wirtz, Virginia, February 2, 2019.

**Sandra J. Miller '72** of Mechanicsville, Virginia, May 21, 2019.

**Richard V. Perdue, M.S. '73**, of Roanoke, Virginia, August 11, 2019.

**Patricia A. Aker '76** of Max Meadows, Virginia, August 3, 2019.

**Virginia B. Clark '76** of Eufaula, Alabama, January 31, 2019.

**Billye V. Farthing '76** of Lutz, Florida, June 22, 2019.

**Pamela B. Mackintosh '76** of Newport News, Virginia, June 2, 2019.

**Patricia Muldoon '76** of Pembroke, Virginia, July 20, 2019.

**Rachel V. Slate '76** of Hillsville, Virginia, January 24, 2019.

**Catherine M. McDermott '77** of Silver Spring, Maryland, April 16, 2019.

**Frank J. Radnoczi '77** of Martinsville, Virginia, June 9, 2019.

**Alan F. Sands '77** of Danville, Virginia, March 29, 2019.

**Karen M. Bohn '79** of Sykesville, Maryland, February 1, 2019.

**Mark A. Hubbard '79** of Wando, South Carolina, March 18, 2019.

**1980s**

**Brown G. Howard '80** of Marshall, Virginia, February 24, 2019.

**Karri K. Perez '81** of Tamuning, Guam, January 27, 2019.

**Robin J. Snow '81** of South Boston, Virginia, July 18, 2019.

**Michelle M. Semones '82** of Hickory, North Carolina, May 24, 2019.

**Deborah A. Gegner '83** of Virginia Beach, Virginia, April 23, 2019.

**Charles H. Richards '84** of Boones Mill, Virginia, May 21, 2019.

**Charlotte A. Davis '89** of Martinsville, Virginia, June 22, 2019.

**Michael D. Medlin '89** of Midlothian, Virginia, February 1, 2019.

**1990s**

**Jonathan E. Matheny '91** of Wytheville, Virginia, June 8, 2019.

**Jennifer S. Ebert '92** of Brooklyn, New York, April 9, 2019.

**Gerardo A. Espinoza '95** of Chantilly, Virginia, July 21, 2019.

**J. P. Hatcher '96** of Christiansburg, Virginia, July 26, 2019.

**Courtland A. Stewart '96** of Lillington, North Carolina, January 13, 2019.

**Herbert D. Epperly '97** of Martinsville, Virginia, April 11, 2019.

**Samuel M. Pope '97** of Roanoke, Virginia, January 5, 2019.

**Cynthia R. Buchanan '98** of Clarksville, Tennessee, August 5, 2019.

**2000s**

**Wesley C. Bradley '00** of Roanoke, Virginia, April 25, 2019.

**Patricia H. Stump '00** of Willis, Virginia, February 16, 2019.

**Lori A. Holliday '05** of Salem, Virginia, July 5, 2019.

**Robert R. Henry '06** of St. Cloud, Florida, February 9, 2019.

**Jared R. Jones '07** of Blacksburg, Virginia, July 17, 2019.

**Melissa A. Penrod '07** of Charleston, South Carolina, February 23, 2019.

**Meryl A. B. Zigila '09** of Fort Lauderdale, Florida, July 5, 2019.

**2010s**

**Lucas B. Dowell '13** of Chilhowie, Virginia, February 4, 2019.

**Tucker R. Shaheen '15** of Radford, Virginia, March 27, 2019.

**Non-Degreed**

**Peggy J. Zirkle '51** of Berwyn Heights, Maryland, February 13, 2019.

**Nancy H. Johnson '52** of Falls Church, Virginia, January 10, 2019.

**Freda M. Latta '61** of Williamsburg, Virginia, February 27, 2019.

**Jared W. Martin '17** of Pembroke, Virginia, March 24, 2019.

**Faculty/Staff**

**Julein M. Axelson** of Blacksburg, Virginia, April 8, 2019.

**Tammie D. Duncan** of Radford, Virginia, March 30, 2019.

**Lois M. Edmonds** of Christiansburg, Virginia, March 23, 2019.

**Jonathan C. Harris** of Christiansburg, Virginia, March 13, 2019.

**Melca T. Honeycutt** of Fairlawn, Virginia, January 30, 2019.

**Ronald W. Kolenbrander, Ph.D.**, of Orange City, Iowa, January 6, 2019.

**Mary C. Lewis** of Radford, Virginia, June 30, 2019.

**Beatrice O. Martin** of Christiansburg, Virginia, August 3, 2019.

**Paul McTeer, Ph.D.**, of Charleston, South Carolina, August 14, 2019.

**Mary G. Murphy** of Dublin, Virginia, April 5, 2019.

**Stephen Tibbetts, Ph.D.**, of Radford, Virginia, September 10, 2019.

# THE GRADUATE

Wilma Paris' diploma from the Class of 1948 at Radford College. Read about Paris' friendships with fellow Radford alumnae on page 46.

HAS COMPLETED THE RE-  
THE DEGREE OF  
BACHELOR OF SCIENCE  
IN WITNESS WHEREOF WE HAVE  
SIGNED THESE WRITINGS  
AT RADFORD VIRGINIA THIS  
DAY OF JUNE NINETEEN HUNDRED AND FORTY

*John R. Hood*  
RECTOR BOARD OF TRUSTEES

*Robert S. Murren*  
CHANCELLOR OF COLLEGE



RADFORD COLLEGE  
WOMAN'S DIVISION OF  
VIRGINIA POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE

THIS DIPLOMA CERTIFIES THAT  
WILMA CARR DAMERON

REQUIREMENTS OF THIS INSTITUTION FOR  
DEGREE IN EDUCATION  
HEREBY AFFIRMED FOR

**RADFORD**  
UNIVERSITY

P.O. Box 6915  
Radford University  
Radford, VA 24142

Change Service Requested

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
RADFORD UNIV.

I am  
Responsive.



I am  
Resilient.



I am  
Real.



**RADFORD**  
UNIVERSITY

[www.radford.edu](http://www.radford.edu)