

# RADFORD

The Magazine of Radford University

Fall 2020



**TOGETHER,  
WE RISE!**

CLASS OF  
2020

HIGHLANDER  
WISDOM

HIGHLANDERS  
RISE



## A CLASS UNITED

These freshmen, who gathered four years ago for their class photo, could not have known the extraordinary challenges they would face. In this issue of The Magazine of Radford University, we honor their dedication, resiliency and ultimate success.





SNAP OPEN





# RADFORD UNIVERSITY

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings, Fellow Highlanders!

With the beginning of the 2020-2021 academic year, the Radford family is excited to provide a warm Highlander welcome to our new and returning students, faculty and staff, who have chosen to be a part of Radford's continued journey of significant progress and great promise. And, as the most recent edition of The Magazine of Radford University arrives, our campus has successfully reopened in the wake of the COVID-19 global health pandemic.

Although the pandemic has disrupted nearly every facet of our society and our work, Radford University is continuing to fulfill our worthwhile mission and make a profound impact. As Highlanders, we have faithfully pledged to support the safety and well-being of our campus and beyond. It will take each and every one of us being socially responsible on a daily basis in order to maintain the health of our communities!

The Fall 2020 edition focuses on the many ways in which Highlanders are responsive, resilient and real, especially during difficult times. In a world of uncertainty, there is comfort in seeing the caring and compassionate nature of the Highlander spirit, as well as the reliability and resiliency of the Radford family. Indeed, in the midst of uncharted territory, unknown challenge and unexpected opportunity, Radford University students, faculty, staff, alumni, friends and supporters have, time and time again, risen to the occasion.

In our community, across the Commonwealth and throughout our nation, Highlanders have upheld our commitment to service above self. Within the pages of this magazine, we are honored to share inspirational stories of past, present and future Highlanders while providing a special tribute to the Radford University Class of 2020, a talented group of dreamers and scholars who succeed in the face of adversity.

These powerful stories are particularly reassuring during a time in which our society has experienced injustice and unrest. At Radford, we will advocate for equality and fairness now and well into the future. It is part of who we are as a community of educators and learners. And, it defines our critical role as change makers and thought leaders.

Without question, we are in this together. We are a strong community, but we can and will be stronger together. Please enjoy the Fall 2020 edition of The Magazine of Radford University as you reflect on the vital importance of the Radford family and the lasting impact of our great University! GO HIGHLANDERS!

With Highlander Pride,



Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D.  
President

[@BrianOHemphill](https://twitter.com/BrianOHemphill)



## 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 it 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).





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### On the Cover

This magazine cover photograph tells a powerful story of the strength, commitment and resilience of the Class of 2020. Pictured are seven alumni from the Class of 2020, who individually represent each academic college. Spaced six feet apart on the Moffett stage area, they stand tall and proud as they represent the graduates from a truly historic class that will forever have a special connection.

From left: **Lauren Slough** – College of Visual and Performing Arts

**James Tillery** – College of Education and Human Development

**Trevor Testerman** – College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences

**Claudia Paniagua-Ugarte** – Artis College of Science and Technology

**Chanera Durante** – Waldron College of Health and Human Services

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**Jessie Quesenberry** – College of Graduate Studies and Research

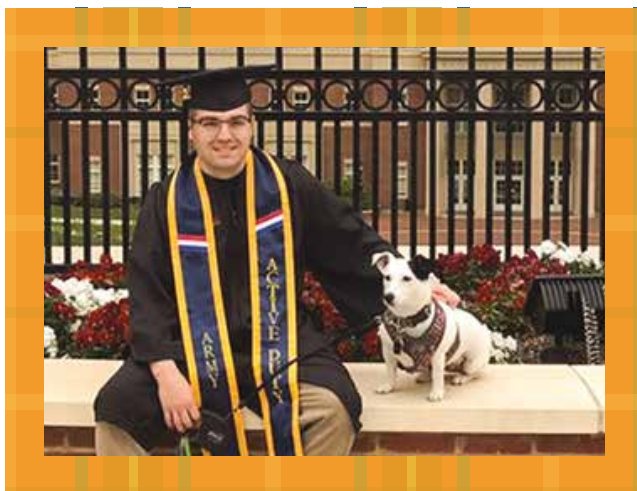
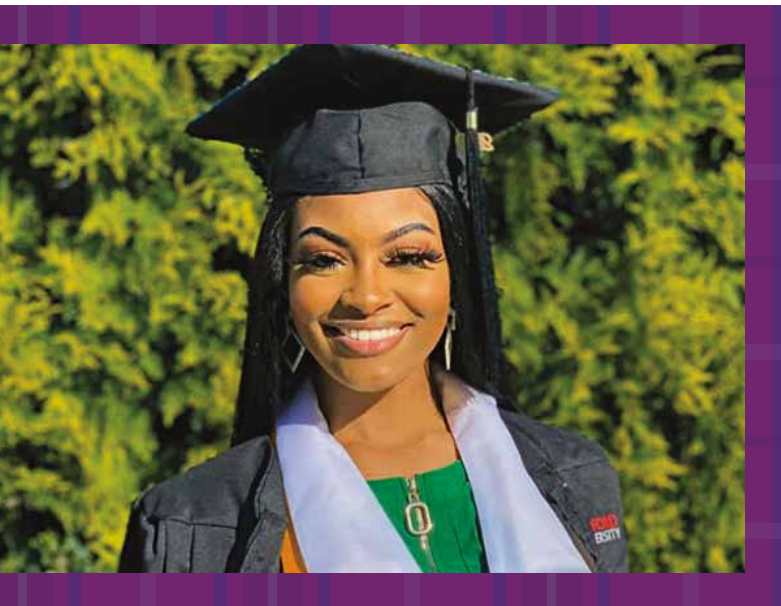




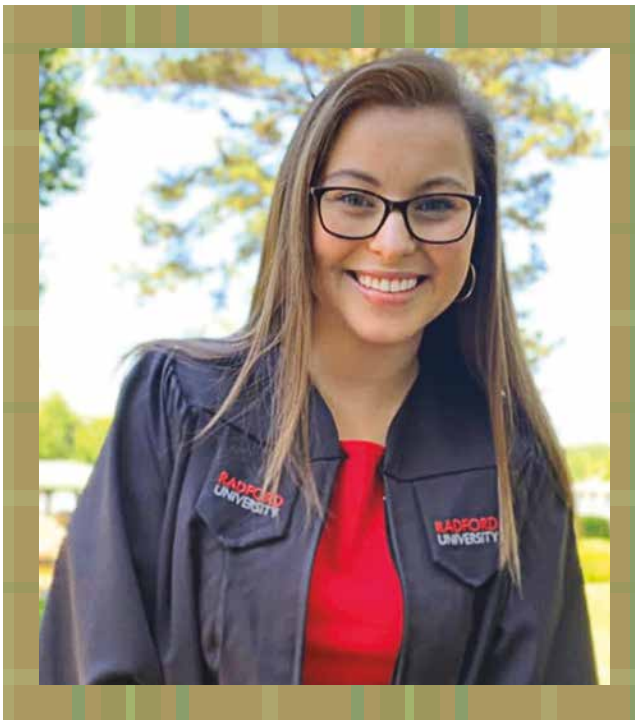
# CLASS of 2020

## MAIN CAMPUS

Radford University's Spring 2020 semester was filled with adversity, but the Class of 2020 persevered. Congratulations to all the graduates, who rose above the circumstances and succeeded!







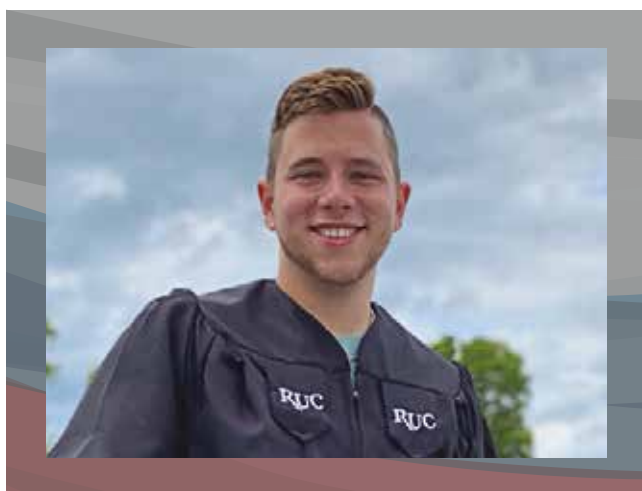
Watch a tribute to the Class of 2020 and discover more information by visiting [www.radford.edu/2020](http://www.radford.edu/2020).



# CLASS of 2020

RADFORD UNIVERSITY CARILION

These Class of 2020 graduates were among the first to complete a full academic year as Radford University Carilion students. They are now proud alumni and forever a part of the Radford family!







Watch a tribute to the Class of 2020 and discover more information by visiting [www.radford.edu/2020](http://www.radford.edu/2020).



# TAYLOR MARRS

## B.S.W. '20

*Social work alumnus finds Radford the perfect place to learn*

**For Taylor Marrs '20, the spark that ignited his interest in social work arrived via the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Virginia. Marrs worked at the club near his Orange, Virginia, home before becoming a Highlander and joining the Radford University School of Social Work.**

"At the Boys & Girls Clubs, I learned about the value of human connections and interpersonal relationships," Marrs said. "Working alongside club members and clients was very appealing, providing me with incomparable experiences. Plus, it helped me discover that I wanted to use that experience in my education and career."

Marrs researched three other social work programs in the state before applying to Radford's Bachelor of Social Work (B.S.W.) program, but there were several factors that

ultimately drew him to the New River Valley.

"I wanted to stay in one place for the entirety of my education, and Radford offered a graduate degree in

social work in addition to the undergraduate program," Marrs recalled. "That was important to me, because I wanted my education to have continuity."

Marrs said the Radford community also played a role. He felt that Radford would provide him with exposure to a student body with unique backgrounds and experiences, different from his own, helping him expand his skills as a social work student.

While a B.S.W. student, Marrs discovered many opportunities to get involved beyond the classroom on campus. These experiences also helped him meet more Highlanders and expand his skills and experiences. He minored in sociology, and one of his favorite experiences was working with the Sociology Club.

"It was really great to be part of a group that took time to advocate for human rights and diversity, while educating one another on important issues," Marrs said.

As he completes his B.S.W. fieldwork this summer at an equine therapy facility, Healing Strides of Virginia, Marrs says Radford University continues to provide him with one-of-a-kind experiences.



"The undergraduate social work curriculum has been instrumental in helping me develop into the professional I am today. I plan to continue expanding and implementing that knowledge, while working with clients through the Master of Social Work (M.S.W.) program at Radford," Marrs said.

Marrs expects to finish his M.S.W. and graduate in August 2021. After that, he plans to return to Northern Virginia, where there is a great need for social workers. Marrs says he feels his work will have an important impact as he works with clients in need there.

"In social work, the importance of relationships is an ethical principle that guides decision making during practice," Marrs said. "Radford University has been an important part of my life when it comes to developing those relationships, and I know it will continue to be for some time to come."

BB ...I wanted my education to have continuity."



# MARISSA MOMCHILOV

'18, M.S. '20

*A steady path through  
twists and turns*

**Her plans were set: finish her master's program in clinical counseling-psychology, walk across the stage and get hooded to celebrate her accomplishments then find a job as a mental health counselor.**

COVID-19 had other ideas.

"I've gotten really used to Zoom," said Marissa Momchilov '18, M.S. '20, who reflected on her time at Radford University as she wrapped up her final classes online this summer.

"I'm really trying to make the best of it and encourage the people around me, especially the people coming back for the fall semester," Momchilov said.

Amid the uncertainty of the world around her during a pandemic in her last semester of college, she remained positive, found the silver lining and encouraged fellow students around her to do the same. Instead of dwelling on the challenges, Momchilov spent her last weeks on campus reflecting

“...this is where I'm supposed to be.”

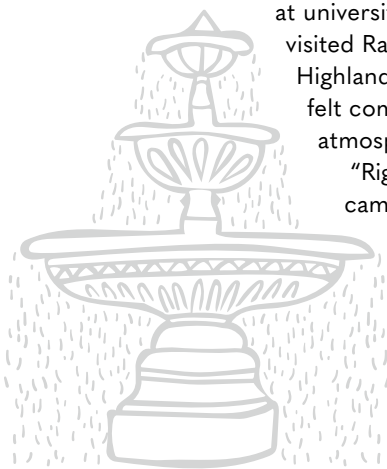
on her progress and growth as a student.

"I'm so proud to be a Highlander. This school has given me so many opportunities. I've made so many great relationships with professors on campus," she said. "The small class sizes make that possible, because at larger universities it's harder to make those connections."

Her journey to becoming a successful Highlander started more than six years before, when she was looking at universities. When she visited Radford University for a Highlander Day experience, she felt comfortable and loved the atmosphere.

"Right when I walked on campus, I was like, this is where I'm supposed to be," Momchilov said.

Through challenges and rewards, she found a connection and community unlike anything before.



She joined Sigma Sigma Sigma, where she met friends and mentors and made a network of connections to help her professionally and academically. She credits professors for checking on her during hardships and celebrating her accomplishments. And, she acknowledges Student Counseling Services for helping her find positive resources and a foundation for her future career after graduation.

"This school has given me more than I could ever say," Momchilov said. "I cannot thank Radford enough for everything this school has done for me. I'm so proud to be a Highlander just with the diversity on this campus and the different opportunities that I've received. It's so amazing to see how far I've come since freshman year."

Even through a pandemic, Momchilov remains hopeful for a successful career in mental health counseling. She has wrapped up her time as a graduate assistantship, her final internship and her on-campus job with the Office of New Student and Family Programs. Now, she's confident with a solid foundation for a bright future.

"Radford has made me feel comfortable," she said. "The environment is so welcoming and open. I think that I was able to reach out to people when I needed help, and I think that is what got me to where I am today."



# VERONICA HYMAN

'20

*An experience characterized by community and support*



**From her newly furnished apartment in Williamsburg, Virginia, Veronica Hyman '20 made a lasting impact on the lives of future Radford University students this summer.**

Hyman participated in the University's first-ever virtual Quest orientation. Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, the program, historically held on campus, was moved to an all-online format.

It was challenging, said Hyman, an experienced Quest Assistant (QA), but she could not imagine missing out on the opportunity to inspire the newest class of Highlanders.

After all, Quest is one of her favorite undergraduate experiences. The holistic and high-energy orientation was also the final push she needed when she was a freshman

to fully embrace Radford University as her own.

It took a little convincing and a lot of faith for Hyman to commit to Radford University.

Torn between community college and Radford, Hyman struggled to decide which path to take.

Coming home from a high school field trip, she prayed for direction.

"I said, 'God, tell me what to do, and I'll do it,'" she said.

On the drive back to her hometown of Richmond, Virginia, she spotted several cars displaying Radford University bumper stickers.

"That was definitely a sign," Hyman said.

Hyman enrolled in 2016, and that summer, she attended Quest along with the rest of the Class of 2020.

"As soon as I stepped on campus, there was a QA there to help," Hyman said. "Seeing people so passionate about Radford University was really exciting for me to see. From then on, I never looked back."

Quest ignited Hyman's desire to step out of her comfort zone and get involved. She

worked with Quest in a variety of positions, including a QA, a Parent Orientation

Guide and a student director. Aside from Quest, she taught University 100 classes and was a member and past president of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.

Early on, she found a strong support system in the Office of New Student and Family Programs, the staff that organizes Quest.

"I have received so much help and so much advice from each and every one of them throughout the past four years," she said. "Any time I needed something, I knew who to call; I knew who to go to. They focus on you as a student leader, but they also focus on you 10 times harder as a student and as a person."

Inside the classroom, she found that same support from her professors, especially when she decided to change her major from nursing to education.

"Professors and faculty at Radford University truly care about their students. They are always there to help," Hyman said.

Hyman's senior year came to an end like many others' across the world — at home.

Although sad she could not say goodbye to her friends and mentors in person, Hyman said she chose to find "the positives" in the situation.

"I think for the 2020 graduates, this graduation has been the most special," Hyman said. "We've received support from presidents, celebrities and musicians. The response has been amazing."

Hyman graduated from the College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences with an interdisciplinary studies degree and concentrations in elementary education and English. She is currently pursuing a master's degree in elementary education at The College of William & Mary. She aspires to be a third grade teacher.

On May 9, 2020, the day originally scheduled for Spring Commencement, Hyman put on her cap and gown and celebrated all that the day represented: four years of dedication to growth, leadership, education and a bright future.

"I'll never forget that day, and I'll never forget all of the incredible opportunities I had at Radford University," she said.

63 **From then on, I never looked back."**





# ELI COLLINS

## '20

Healthcare hero finds the perfect preparation at RUC

**Eli Collins, a May 2020 graduate from the Radford University Carilion (RUC) Bachelor of Science in Emergency Services program, was introduced to healthcare as a Boy Scout in his native Williamsburg, Virginia. Although his interests were piqued early, it was not until his senior year of high school that he discovered the path that would lead to his career.**

"I started scouting in first grade and finished the year after I received my Eagle Scout rank in 2012," Collins said. "Around that time, a friend of mine introduced me to Fire Explorers, a program affiliated with Boy Scouts that educates participants about firefighting. Through the program, I was able to go on ride-alongs with the local fire department that sponsored us and instantly fell in love with the profession."

“It's a big picture approach...”

Collins said the more he accompanied the firefighters, the more he realized that the part he enjoyed most was the emergency medical services (EMS) experience.

He said it was then that he decided he wanted to be a firefighter-paramedic.

When Collins began exploring how to achieve his career goal by earning a bachelor's degree in emergency services, he found only about seven schools nationwide that both offered a firefighter-paramedic degree and were accredited.

"There were several factors that brought me to RUC and Roanoke," Collins remembered. "I have some family here, and that was important to me, but I was also very impressed with the school and the program."

Collins said the emergency services program at RUC encourages students to develop a deeper, more theoretical understanding of the pathophysiology behind how a patient is presenting and why. He said the program also pushes students to think outside of the box in terms of what medications and treatments would work best for each patient.

"Whether it's something simple like running a 12-lead ECG and interpreting that to look for abnormalities or something complex like recognizing, deciding and carrying out a plan to electively take over the patient's airway so their condition doesn't worsen, the emergency services students learn that every action they take has



consequences," Collins said. "It's a big picture approach that doesn't just educate paramedics, but prepares the industry's next leaders."

Collins said that every student is also encouraged to seek out the most current literature in evidence-based practice, some of which are authored by RUC Emergency Services program graduates. He said this ensures the students are learning the most advanced and innovative techniques in treatments.

For a little over two years, Collins has been working part time with Roanoke City Fire-EMS Department as an Emergency Medical Technician (EMT), and he says he loves his job.

"Being an EMT can certainly be challenging at times," Collins said, "but it really is the best job ever. I enjoy the people I work with and going into situations with little to no previous knowledge of what's going on to help my patients as best as I can."

Collins hopes to reach another milestone professionally by becoming a full-time employee with Roanoke City Fire-EMS soon. This fall, however, he'll reach a personal milestone.

"I am marrying the love of my life in October," Collins said.

Collins says he and his fiancée are planning on staying in the area for several years, while they both get experience in their careers. Then, he said, "we'll see what life throws our way."

No matter where Collins and his family end up, he says he will always trace his love for paramedicine and emergency services back to the experience he earned as a Boy Scout — and his experience at RUC. ■





## SCIENCE ON DISPLAY

The newly renovated Reed and Curie Halls offer a transformative space for learning, teaching, researching and connecting.

By Mary Hardbarger

**Radford University's Artis College of Science and Technology has completely transformed the way its students and faculty will teach, learn, research and connect with the opening of the renovated Reed and Curie Halls in January 2020.**

The nearly \$34 million, three-year-long project was officially unveiled on February 12, 2020. Artis College namesakes and benefactors Nancy Artis '73 and Pat Artis, Ph.D., joined President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D., First Lady Marisela Rosas Hemphill, Ph.D., and other members of the Radford family for the special ribbon-cutting ceremony.





The significant structural investment will not only impact those on campus, but those living in the surrounding community, the Commonwealth and beyond, as it will soon prepare well-equipped science and technology professionals, produce innovative research and provide an abundance of learning space.

Upon entering the state-of-the-art complex, which includes 94,840 square feet of high-tech teaching and learning space, visitors are immediately immersed in innovation.

Open windows reveal students and faculty working with Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), most commonly known as drones, in the UAV Center and Geohazards and Unmanned Systems Research Center, or operating high-

tech 3D printers and plotters in the Geology Maker Lab. In the Artis Cybersecurity Training and Education Lab, they are gathered around computer screens studying big data and Internet of Things research.

In the Geographic Information System Center and Virtual Reality Lab, although students may seem to be walking around aimlessly wearing unusual headgear, they are being transported to destinations across the universe, virtually.

Scanners, saws, sanders and high-powered microscopes are scattered across the galley-style Tree Ring Lab, a research facility for dendrochronology, the study of tree rings.

On the ground floor of Curie Hall is the Physics Wind Tunnel Lab, which enables faculty and students to pursue





Nancy Artis '73 and H. Pat Artis, Ph.D., are the namesakes and benefactors of Radford University's Artis College of Science and Technology.



On February 12, 2020, the Artises joined, from left, Breon Case, First Lady Marisela Rosas Hemphill, Ph.D., President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D., Board of Visitors Rector Robert A. Archer and Board of Visitors member Rachel D. Fowlkes, Ed.D., for a special ribbon-cutting ceremony.



The Radford community and friends gathered in the atrium to celebrate the official unveiling of the state-of-the-art complex.

aerodynamic research, such as air flow turbulence over models of vehicles to improve gas mileage.

Also on the ground floor, one might hesitate to enter the Insectarium and Invertebrate Research Lab, which provides facilities to research mosquitoes and Madagascar hissing cockroaches, among other invertebrates.

The Physics Faculty-Student Research Lab is a highlight of the second floor of Reed Hall. The lab displays the research of students who travel with Professor of Physics Rhett Herman, Ph.D., to Alaska every other year to conduct ice thickness research (see page 50 for more details on this amazing research opportunity).

The Department of Chemistry impressively encompasses the third floor of Reed and Curie Halls.

In the Chemistry Instrumentation Lab, students get hands-on experience analyzing and identifying chemicals in biological, organic and inorganic samples. Just down the hall, the Inorganic Chemistry Research Lab contains instruments to conduct inorganic chemistry research and techniques, such as glassblowing.

With every Artis College discipline now contained in one area of campus, Artis College Dean Orion Rogers, Ph.D., said, "The possibilities are endless."

"Almost every element of STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) can now be found in this complex," he said. "And, there's a showcase for everything."

The building's unique and vibrant layout is intentional.

"It is called 'science on display,'" Rogers said. "What students and faculty are doing is visible. They are not trapped behind closed doors. The open classrooms and research facilities give them new, state-of-the-art spaces to showcase the work that they do and make additional work possible."





Visit [www.radford.edu/Reed-Curie](http://www.radford.edu/Reed-Curie) to see inside the newly transformed Reed and Curie Halls.

The elegant campus-side atrium sets the stage for the renovated halls' use of light and open space.

The remodeled Reed and Curie Halls complement the connecting Center for the Sciences and create an integrated and sophisticated science complex. They also encourage cross collaboration among the Artis College disciplines, an integral, and again, "very intentional component of the structures' design," Rogers said.

"There is now a more natural synergy between the departments, because they are so close together, opposed to being across campus from one another," Rogers said. "For example, the cybersecurity labs and geospatial labs are now right across from each other. There is so much interaction between these two disciplines. Students and faculty within these studies will surely collaborate and create new ideas, projects and research. This interaction will be mirrored across the Artis College complex for years to come, and that is very exciting." 📍



Open spaces allow students and faculty to showcase their work.

“It is called ‘science on display.’”

Artis College Dean Orion Rogers, Ph.D.





Professor of Biology Jeremy Wojdak, Ph.D., is a distinguished scholar and a racing enthusiast. He started the hobby a few years ago. Here, he is pictured at the Dirtfish Rally School in Washington state, near Seattle.

## ON THE RIGHT TRACK

Jeremy Wojdak came to Radford University in 2004 and found what he was looking for: a student- and teaching-focused institution.

By Mary Hardbarger

**When he's not wading through a body of water, Professor of Biology Jeremy Wojdak, Ph.D., is most likely revving up the engine of his car at the Virginia International Raceway.**

His racing hobby began when he received an invitation on the way to a National Science Foundation conference to take a side trip to a race track.

"After that first day on the track, people would pat me on the shoulder and say, 'You're in for it.' They knew it was addictive," he said.

So, when he finds free time, Wojdak heads to the world-renowned raceway, located about two hours from Radford in Alton, Virginia.

“New hobbies serve that purpose: to remind you what it’s like to be a beginner.”

Professor of Biology Jeremy Wojdak, Ph.D.

"It's exhilarating," he said.

But, it wasn't always that way, he explained.

"When you first hit the track going 120 to 130 miles per hour, it's overwhelming. You get flustered," he said.

After years of practice — and decades of studying science — he is now both a racing rookie and distinguished scholar.

Wojdak approaches teaching and research much like he did the time he first put his foot on the gas on the race track.

"I've been studying biology for 25 years, but I realize when students walk into my classroom for the first time, the material may be completely new to them — like racing was totally new to me. There is a gap there that has to be appreciated in order to succeed," he said.

"New hobbies serve that purpose: to remind you what it's like to be a beginner."

Wojdak, of Cleveland, Ohio, earned his doctoral degree from Michigan State University in 2004, the same year he started at Radford University. It was a perfect fit, he said.

"I found what I was looking for in terms of student- and teaching-focused," he explained.



## “Students come first at Radford, and that’s why I’ve stayed here.”

Professor of Biology Jeremy Wojdak, Ph.D.

Sixteen years later, he reflected on what has kept him here.

“Because Radford prioritizes student outcomes, faculty here have the freedom to try risky research projects and challenge students to tackle hard problems that may or may not work out. Faculty at other institutions can be under so much pressure to rack up professional achievements, in terms of publications and grant dollars, that their choices of how to invest their time in students are compromised. We still publish and garner research grants, but those are not our top priority. Students come first at Radford, and that’s why I’ve stayed here.”

Wojdak’s personal research focuses on two areas: science education and aquatic ecology. The latter he compares, not surprisingly, to a car.

“Some pieces can fall off, and you’re totally fine. But, then maybe when the next part falls off, you’re stuck on the side of the road,” he explained. “We know that species are being lost at a rate comparable to the last great extinction. The questions are, ‘How many and which ones can we lose before something dramatic happens to the system as a whole?’”

The research takes Wojdak and his students out in the field to study the ecosystems of local lakes, streams and ponds. Historically, he has taught a weeklong class, Tropical Field Biology, in St. John where a small group of Highlanders explore and conduct research around the exotic, sub-tropic island. The course — recently halted due to hurricane damage of the research station — is a highlight of his career.

“Students literally learn something about the world that nobody knows, and several of them have shared those results with the scientific community,” he said. “As you’d imagine, that really means something to them. They are transformed in that experience.”

As part of his science education research, Wojdak works with K-12 students to get them excited about science through hands-on workshops, such as robotics.

Back at Radford, he helped launch the REALISE program (Realising Inclusive Science Excellence), which is reforming



Wojdak (second from left) was a recipient of the 2020 State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) Outstanding Faculty Award. He is pictured with (from left) SCHEV Director Peter Blake; William “Bill” Murray, SCHEV council member and managing director of public policy at Dominion Energy; and Heywood Fralin, SCHEV council chairman.

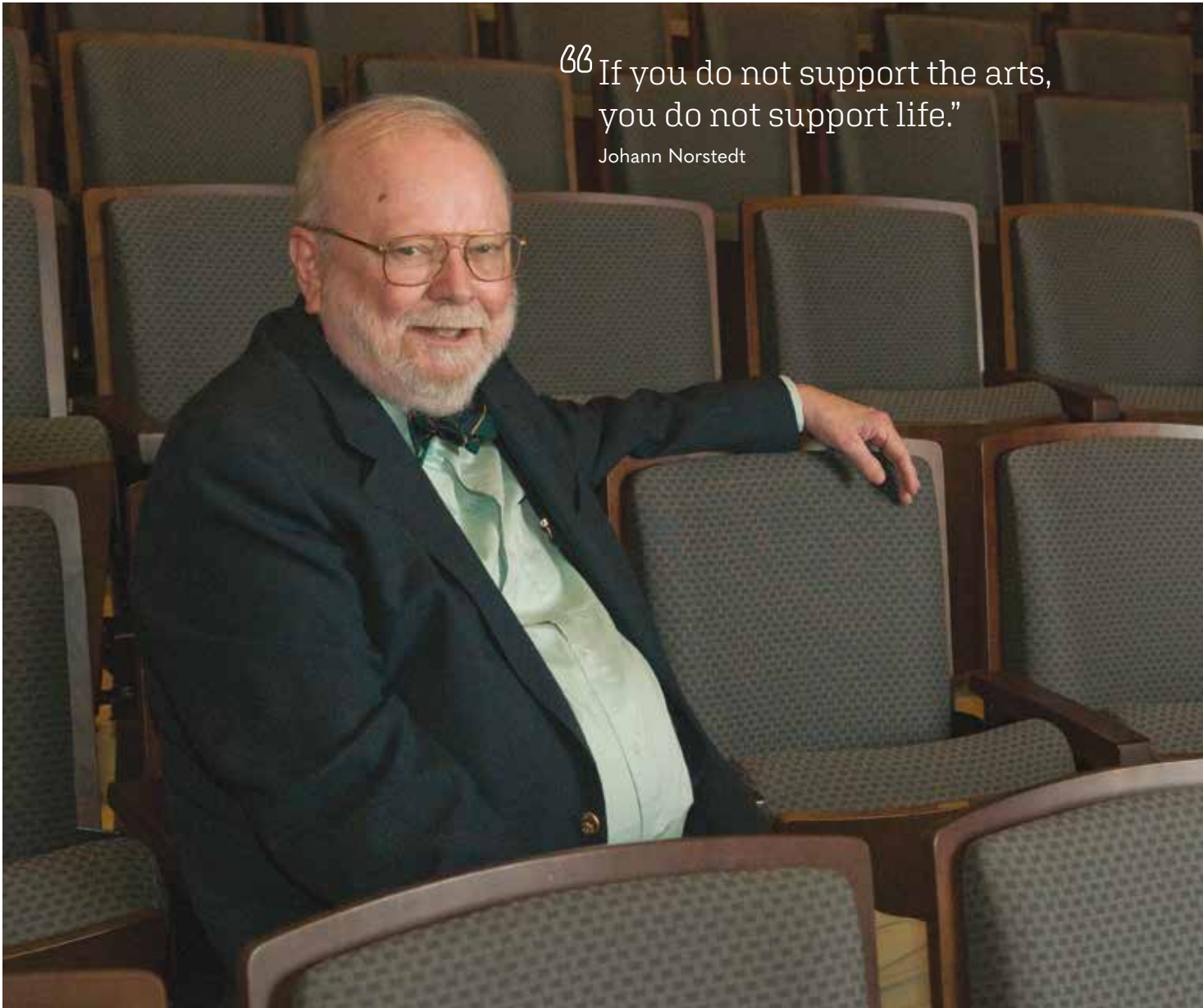
biology, chemistry and physics curricula to increase student success in the science fields.

Wojdak’s rich resume of research and outreach, his passion for teaching and compassion for his students and colleagues earned him the 2020 Virginia Outstanding Faculty Award. The prestigious award is administered by SCHEV, sponsored by Dominion Energy and recognizes faculty at Virginia’s institutions of higher learning, who exemplify the highest standards of teaching, scholarship and service.

Humbled by the honor, Wojdak said there are so many outstanding professors at Radford University deserving of the award. His colleagues, he said, “are an inspiration.”

“Everywhere you look, there are faculty going the extra mile for their students,” he continued. “We’ve had faculty leading living-learning communities for new science students, leading campus-wide student-success initiatives, teaching study abroad courses that transform students’ education, working with students on publishable scientific research in partnership with state agencies, identifying more inclusive and equitable practices to help all our students succeed, and so much more. In this environment, surrounded by passionate and inspirational teachers and scientists, it is impossible not to set high expectations for yourself and for our students.”





“If you do not support the arts,  
you do not support life.”

Johann Norstedt

## A SOUND INVESTMENT

Retired Professor of English Johann Norstedt, Ph.D.,  
is a benefactor of the arts at Radford University.

By Mark Lambert

Every year, the students enrolled in Radford University’s College of Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA) arrive on campus, full of creative energy and ready to share their visions with the world. Those artistic expressions take the form of paintings, drawings or sculptures; instrumental, voice or dance performances; fashion and interior design shows; and theater or cinema productions. The dozens of opportunities to experience these endeavors are an important part of the artistic culture in the New River Valley and across Southwest Virginia.





- Jack Butler Yeats Memorial Scholarship in Art
- Johann & Marilyn Norstedt Scholarship for Voice
- Margot Fonteyn Memorial Scholarship in Dance
- Marie Powers Memorial Scholarship in Theatre
- Rudolf Serkin Memorial Scholarship in Piano

That is why Johann Norstedt, Ph.D., a retired professor of English, has been a generous benefactor to CVPA for more than two decades.

"My late wife and I started coming to concerts at Radford, and we were impressed by what we heard. It was very spontaneous, and there was a lot of talent there," Norstedt said. "When I retired after 30 years of teaching, I was at that stage when you think about your finances and where that money should go."

In 2009, Norstedt established the Johann & Marilyn Norstedt Scholarship for Voice in recognition of the many evenings spent enjoying productions. Norstedt

said he knew that the Radford students were receiving an excellent education in classical music at a great value, and he felt that, by establishing a scholarship at Radford University, he could add even more affordability for students in need.

"I saw the quality of the programs offered through the College of Visual and Performing Arts," Norstedt said. "It was important to me to ensure students could have access to the programs and continue to develop their talent."

Since the implementation of the scholarship, many CVPA students have benefited from the scholarship, including Josh Brown, a CVPA graduate from the music therapy program with a focus in voice. Brown received the scholarship in 2014 and explained at the time what the scholarship meant to him.

"Winning the scholarship has given me the opportunity to put my primary focus into my studies," Brown said. "As a

college student, money is always a potential issue, but with this scholarship, I can spend extra time on studies rather than having to pick up an extra job."

Brown continued by praising the contributions Norstedt has made to CVPA and the Radford artistic community. "Dr. Norstedt is a really kind, caring, generous man, who is a very strong supporter of the arts."

Recently, Norstedt has expanded his generosity by establishing several new scholarships, including the Marie Powers Memorial Scholarship in Theatre, the Margot Fonteyn Memorial Scholarship in Dance, the Rudolf Serkin Memorial Scholarship in Piano and the Jack Butler Yeats Memorial Scholarship in Art.

"I wanted to extend the opportunities to students in the other arts programs at Radford," Norstedt said. "So far, I've created five scholarships, and I plan to create one for the sixth program in design soon. I have been naming them after famous people I have admired and who inspired me."

In addition to scholarships, Norstedt has supported Radford students in the arts in additional ways, such as purchasing named seats in Radford University's performance halls, contributing to international trips to Ireland and Russia, and financing aspects of performances on campus.

At the Fall 2016 Department of Music Convocation, Radford University President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D., recognized the importance of longtime donors like Norstedt to the diverse and dynamic success of CVPA students.

"We are dependent upon the generosity of individuals that step forward and invest in this institution by investing not only their time and ability but also their treasure," Hemphill said.

Hemphill said that such generosity has helped fulfill the vision of "transforming Radford into an innovative, premier university in the Commonwealth of Virginia and beyond with a keen focus on teaching, research and service."

Norstedt said his objective was simply to bring the same joy to others that the arts at Radford have brought to him.

"I am so satisfied with the result of my donations," said Norstedt. "Supporting Radford is an investment in the future of the cultural arts in the New River Valley, Southwest Virginia and beyond. It's giving to the students, who will give back through their art for years to come." 📌





## BUILDING THE FUTURE

With immense energy and an eye for potential, Georgia Anne Snyder-Falkinham champions Radford University.

By Justin Ward '10

**Georgia Anne Snyder-Falkinham, founder and owner of Snyder & Associates, has no plans of leaving her post anytime soon.**

"I love being at work. Retiring is not in my vocabulary," said Snyder-Falkinham, who started her successful Blacksburg contracting company in 1985. She began by restoring five houses in downtown Blacksburg in

1985 and has spent 35 years growing her company and the area economy substantially since then by providing jobs and building businesses.

She started her career in construction with Appalachian Power Company and helped create the Smith Mountain Dam. She eventually married a man in the construction business. After his death, she expanded her talent and started her own business.

She has mastered the skill of cultivating a flourishing workplace by

expecting one main factor from her employees.

"Workmanship is number one with me, they know it, and I appreciate that, because that's what I want as the result," she said. "It's very satisfying."

Now, her company, which includes her son and grandson, focuses mainly on commercial construction and recently started developing housing communities in and around Blacksburg.

"Creating new homes for people, creating new offices for people,



## “When you say the Radford family, it really is the Radford family.”

Georgia Anne Snyder-Falkinham

restaurants, you name it, we’ve done it. It gives people another outlook on life. They’ve got a new piece of property they can work from,” Snyder-Falkinham said. “It’s very pleasing.”

Her accomplishments have earned many accolades also, including the Radford University Foundation Lifetime Achievement Award in 2006 and the Building Construction Honor Award from the Building Construction Department at Virginia Tech in 2001.

The work of her company has extended across the New River Valley and has impacted Radford University.

She joined forces with a partner and renovated a house formerly owned and built by former Virginia Governor James Tyler. The pair gifted their finished work to the Radford University Foundation. It is now the home of the University president.

Snyder-Falkinham’s connection to Radford University began in the late 1980s, when a friend invited her to watch Radford women’s basketball. From there, she joined the Foundation Board of Directors and stayed committed to the Radford University family. Thirty-one years later, her love and passion for the University hasn’t wavered.

“When you say the Radford family, it really is the Radford family,” she said.

That family atmosphere is what’s kept her close to Radford University leadership, faculty and students for so long. At various times since 1989, she served as a member of the Radford University Foundation Board of Directors and the Real Estate Management LLC Board of Directors. She has also had a long tenure on the Radford University Board of Visitors, where she currently serves.

Her Highlander spirit glows when she talks about University building projects she’s helped start or approve through her leadership roles. The love she has for Radford University is evident.

“Having the money to do scholarships or cosign a loan with the Athletic Department to create a baseball field, that’s what the Foundation is for, it’s for the students and being able to help the University,” she said.

Another notable project she helped approve is the conversion of a former warehouse building into additional space for the expansion of the facilities management department and printing services. Snyder-Falkinham says fundraising is what she’s most proud of since she’s joined the Radford University family, and she has had a direct hand in shaping it into what it is today.

“If we do not fundraise, we do not have scholarships for the students who really need scholarships. I see that as very critical to Radford,” she said.

But, it has always been the future — the next project and the additional work to make it successful — that keeps her connected to the institution and bringing her back to campus. The merger with Jefferson College of Health Sciences resulting in Radford University Carilion is exciting for her.

“Our nursing program at Radford has always been first class, and I’m proud that we’re expanding on that. By expanding the physician assistant and physical therapy programs, as well as everything that is involved with the healthcare industry that Radford’s been able to take part in with Carilion, I think it’s just outstanding,” she said.

With the future in mind, she’s worked closely with Radford

University President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D., and the Board of Visitors and commends his leadership through fundraising efforts. She says now is a remarkable time to be involved at the University.

“I think Dr. Hemphill is such an outstanding, dedicated individual, and he has a great vision. To be on the Board of Visitors and to be working with him during this time for the University, I think it is outstanding. His staff is very impressive to be with, listen to and learn from,” she said.

Snyder-Falkinham is impressive and remarkable in her own right. Through her professional career and storied history with Radford University, she has witnessed thousands of Highlanders graduate and thrive. Her advice for current and incoming students is simple — gain experience and lots of it.

“I think that anyone needs to start as young as they can working as many different jobs as they can. Start at 16, have a different job and pretty soon you will find something you love to do,” she said. Then, once in college, she recommends doing internships to continue developing a hands-on approach to an eventual profession. Right now, she says, accepting change and being adaptive is critical.

“Right now, we have a different atmosphere, and we do not know how different it is going to be next year,” Snyder-Falkinham said. “We do not know how different it is going to be 10 years from now. You’ve got to be able to adapt, just like you may have to work from home, but you’re still important, you’re still needed.” ■



**AS** the nation adjusted to the impacts of COVID-19 in the spring of 2020, the Radford family, like many other families, relied on a new way of communicating — via Zoom. With the Highlander Wisdom Series created by the Office of Alumni Relations, Highlanders maintained their close bonds and shared their stories through virtual connections and a passion for learning. Alumni and supporters offered their time and talent to present webinars on a wealth of subjects — yoga and golf, healthcare and business, education and art, just to name a few. “This has allowed us to continue to reach our alumni in new ways and engage alumni who haven’t been able to participate, due to physical distance, in new and different things,” said Executive Director of Alumni Relations Laura Turk ’87, M.S. ’90.



To view recordings of past webinars and to sign up for upcoming events please visit [www.radford.edu/Highlander-Wisdom](http://www.radford.edu/Highlander-Wisdom).



# BRIAN FANZO '03



## The key to the future? Old-fashioned empathy

By Chad Osborne

Brian Fanzo '03 is accustomed to zipping around the world at a pace that is almost as fast as he talks.

The digital futurist and iSocialFanz founder ordinarily delivers 60-some keynote talks a year, but like many of us, Brian is working mostly from home these days. However, in typical Brian Fanzo fashion, he is shaping new and innovative ways to connect with his ever-growing audience.

Not only is he connecting, he is spreading a profound message about an idea he calls digital empathy.

“What I mean by that is we need to form an empathy perspective.”

**“WE HAVE THIS UNIQUE ABILITY TODAY TO BE ABLE TO LISTEN AND LEARN AND BE ABLE TO FEEL WHAT SOMEONE ELSE FEELS NO MATTER WHERE THEY’RE AT IN THE WORLD,”**

Brian said, gesticulating in front of a camera in his home office, donning his trademark backward ballcap.

“We now have the ability to not only tell our story, but to listen and learn from people around the world.”

Many people Zooming into Brian’s Highlander Wisdom Series webinar in April listened and learned a lot, too, as Brian told his story and imparted wisdom that comes from years of experience of conducting business — he’s worked with such brands as IBM, Dell, Adobe, UFC and Applebee’s — and forming friendships in person and online.

Brian majored in business information systems at Radford and went straight from graduation to a job with the U.S. Department of Defense. He soon began managing a global security team involving all military branches. After nine years there, he pursued his dream job as a “digital evangelist.” Now, the Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania native and father of three daughters is an influencer with close to a half million social media followers.

“In my career, a lot of things have transcended since Radford,” Brian said in the Highlander Wisdom webinar. “It’s been pretty amazing; it’s been a wild ride.”

He has certainly accomplished great things, and he sees others achieving greatness, too. And, he encourages them — and everyone — to tell their authentic story.

“I believe there are a lot of people doing great things, but most of us do not know about all of that, because we have this noise, we have bad news... and right now we have coronavirus news,” he says.

How can the world become more empathetic? Brian rhetorically asks.

“I’m here to give you that answer,” he teases before revealing truths from his experiences.

“The answer is, we have to allow other people to be empathetic toward us. If every one of us tells our story and allows people in and to be empathetic to us, to understand who we are, together we would combine to make the world a more empathetic place. I do believe we are a world full of good people doing good things.”



@iSocialFanz

# KRISHA CHACHRA

Sharing the gift of virtual travel

By Chad Osborne



Krisha Chachra has been a freelance travel reporter since she was 15.

It began in August 1991, on a family trip to the former USSR. Her father was attending a conference there, and one morning, they awoke to commotion in the streets.

More accurately, “It was chaos,” Krisha said. She and her family found themselves in the middle of a coup when communist leaders attempted, unsuccessfully it turned out, to overthrow Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Moved by the excitement and gravity of the moment, Krisha and her then 12-year-old brother, Vishesh, grabbed a camcorder and fearlessly took to the streets, amid protesters and tanks in Red Square, to capture history in the making. When she returned to the United States, she wrote an article about the experience for the Roanoke Times.

Krisha had her first newspaper byline at age 15. “I’ll never forget that feeling of freedom and elation,” she said. “I was hooked.” She became hooked on writing and hooked on traveling.

Krisha, a member of the Radford University Board of Visitors, has traveled around the world — that’s 45 countries and six continents — and she has documented many of those trips in travel columns for NPR, PBS, USA Weekend Magazine, the Roanoke Times and the Honolulu Advertiser. Most recently, she authored travel stories for New River Valley Magazine.

In the time of COVID-19, physical distancing and wistfully canceling unnecessary trips, Krisha gave a virtual gift of travel through a webinar in the Highlander Wisdom Series. For those watching and engaging in early June, she helped viewers zoom around the world by providing a guided tour, telling stories and sharing vivid photos and videos of past trips to Greece, Turkey, Dubai and India, her family’s home country.

**“TRAVEL IS A GIFT; IT’S A PRIVILEGE,” SHE SAID.  
“IT’S THE BEST GIFT YOU CAN GIVE YOURSELF. IT’S  
THE BEST GIFT YOU CAN GIVE TO ANYONE ELSE.”**

Krisha also passed along writing tips for “crafting your perfect travel story,” future sightseeing and cultural explorations.

“This is a great topic for us to talk about, because we’ve been missing travel, given the pandemic,” Krisha said in the webinar, which can be viewed on the Alumni Relation’s website. “I know many of you may have had plans to travel overseas that were thwarted, but we can still talk about it. We can share.”

“Having this webinar series is a great opportunity to connect with people and also learn about something we might be interested in,” Krisha said. “It’s nice to meet people through webinars like the Highlander Wisdom Series and explore new ideas. We can learn more about things we’ve been curious about.” 📺





# KIM TUTTLE '96, M.S.'98

An honored teacher's insight on teenagers

By Bailey Black

With 22 years of experience teaching in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Kim Tuttle '96, M.S. '98, was able to bring her expertise to the Office of Alumni Relations' Highlander Wisdom Series on "teaching teens through a pandemic." Tuttle was named Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools 2019 Teacher of the Year, bringing her full circle after being named New Teacher of the Year two decades prior during her first year of teaching.

Tuttle has been involved inside and outside of the classroom since her first day at Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools in 1998. She is the advisor for the International Club, Black Student Alliance Club, LGBTQ Club and YCI Christian Club, and she travels with her students, bringing them abroad to study real-world examples of the material they learn in the classroom.

"I'm a firm believer in teaching the whole child — getting to know the children themselves, what they love and bringing that content to life," said Tuttle. "About 11 years ago, we were studying the Holocaust, and one of my students said, 'Let's go on a field trip.' That field trip became a two-week stay in Europe. Since then, we have been going every year."

Tuttle has brought her students to the Berlin Wall to study Ronald Reagan's "Tear Down This Wall" speech and Neuschwanstein Castle to see the inspiration for the setting of "Beauty and the Beast." Tuttle and her students also experienced London during Brexit voting and were able to see Notre Dame in Paris before it burned in 2019.

"I owe a lot of what I do and how I interact with my students to my English professors at Radford," said Tuttle. "They made sure I understood more than just the content. They wanted me to see how the content related to real-world situations, and I mimic that in the classroom."

In Tuttle's Highlander Wisdom Series conversation, she touched on the importance of staying connected to her students during the COVID-19 pandemic when classes were held virtually.

"You have to learn to laugh with the kids. We sometimes start the class off with jokes," said Tuttle. "I find ways to get them back in and build that relationship. With any student, the relationship is the key. I guess it's not as difficult for me with that relationship piece, because at the beginning of every semester, I do not open a book. We do not do content work — we do relationship work."

In addition to teaching, Tuttle also works with Hairston Education Consulting, a team of educational leaders led by her sister that provides schools with instructional and leadership coaching, professional development and school needs assessments.

"Teachers bring their jobs home. They're working at night, on the weekends, during holidays and during the summer," said Tuttle.

**"WE'RE NOT GETTING PAID OVERTIME — IT'S JUST PART OF WHAT WE DO. WE CAME INTO THIS PROFESSION, BECAUSE WE LOVE THE CONTENT, AND WE LOVE THE KIDS."** 



# HIGHLANDERS RISE Series

When the Radford family was faced with the challenges of COVID-19, we knew we needed to come together to support, encourage, collaborate, listen and RISE! Through the

## #HighlandersRise

initiative, we have spotlighted how Radford University students, faculty, staff, alumni and community members have pushed through fear and frustration to pursue their hopes and dreams, even in trying times. We know our resiliency sustains us, and our responsiveness empowers us. We are so proud of how the entire Radford family, both near and far, is demonstrating a tremendous amount of strength during the unprecedented times we are facing locally, regionally, nationally and globally.





## President Hemphill

### surprises students over Zoom.

By Mary Hardbarger

**S**tudents in a social media marketing class taught by Associate Professor of Marketing Gary Schirr, Ph.D., were pleasantly surprised when a very special member of the Radford family appeared on their computer screens.

One student, in particular, was especially excited to see a friendly face many on campus have missed over these past several months.

Radford University senior Lauren Miller, a marketing major, promptly entered Schirr's virtual classroom via Zoom the morning of April 22.

"I was scrolling through to look at all of my classmates, and one person immediately stood out to me," Miller said. "I thought, 'This guy looks familiar, and then it clicked. That's President Hemphill!'"

Radford University President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D., made several guest appearances in Zoom classrooms throughout the Spring 2020 semester, as a creative and meaningful effort to stay

connected and engaged with students during their absence from campus.

Miller, who has met with the President several times in person, said she expected nothing less of him.

"He is a great man," Miller explained. "He is always trying to talk with students and engage with them. That is just one thing I love about him, and I love about Radford."

Schirr said he was honored when he learned that President Hemphill expressed interest in meeting with his students.

"I thought this was a great opportunity," Schirr said. "But, I also understood that his time was tight. He was only going to be able to visit a limited number of classes. So, I was pleasantly surprised the night before when I got a note that said he was going to be in my class in the morning."

To keep the surprise visit a secret and stay on track with President Hemphill's busy schedule, Schirr made up an excuse as to why his students had to sign in to class at 10 o'clock sharp.

"It worked, and I think it was a very informative and fun experience for all of them," he said.


During class, the President checked in with students and asked how they were doing during these challenging times.

"He wanted to make sure we were staying on a positive path through all of this," Miller said.

He also answered questions, the main one being: "When are we going to be able to come back to campus?"

The Radford family learned the answer to that pressing question on April 28, when President Hemphill announced that the campus would reopen for the Fall 2020 semester.

"He was very hopeful," Miller said. "In his words, he said he was praying for us to come back. He told us multiple times that he misses seeing our faces, and he misses us being on campus."

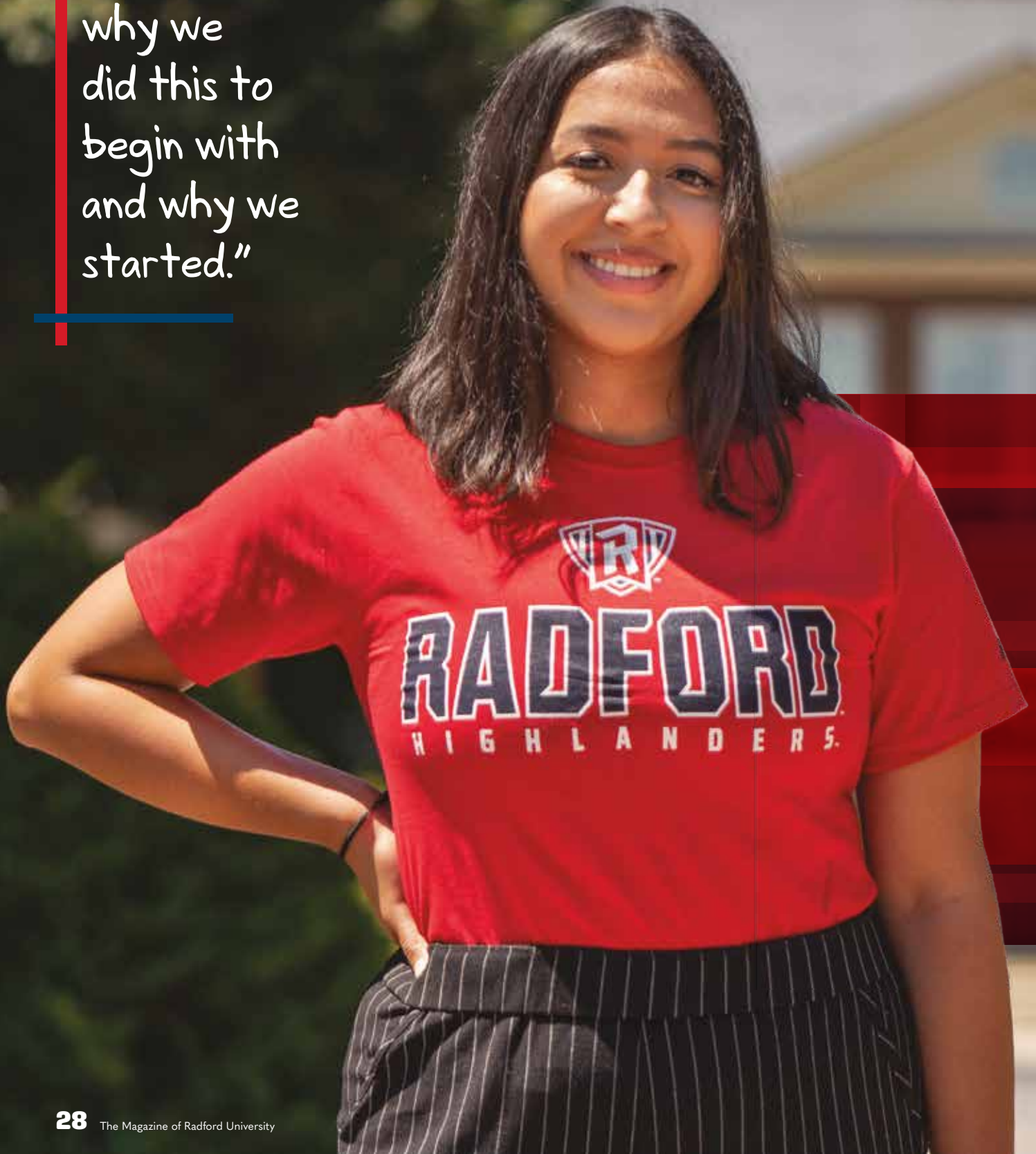
President Hemphill and the entire Radford family are excited to reunite for the semester and continue the Highlander traditions that make Radford University such a special place. 



Watch a moving message from President Hemphill by visiting [www.radford.edu/Highlanders-Rise](http://www.radford.edu/Highlanders-Rise).

“

We have to remember why we did this to begin with and why we started.”





# Michelle Acosta

## Plenty of opportunities ahead

By Christina Edney

**A**s she begins her junior year at Radford University, Michelle Acosta is more than ready for things to get back to normal.

When COVID-19 cut her sophomore year short, she felt unsure what the future might hold. With the reopening of campus, Acosta says she's excited to move into her University-operated apartment and work with the Latino Student Alliance (LSA) to plan a variety of welcome-back events for students, even though they may look a little different from years past.

"Hispanic Heritage Month is a really big deal for us," Acosta said. "We always host an annual dinner with a guest speaker. I always like people to know it's not just Hispanic people who join us — it's various people from various backgrounds embracing the culture. We're planning in-person and virtual events, and we cannot wait to see everyone."

As Acosta gets closer to her 2022 graduation date, she recognizes that this year's freshman experience is different from years past. Acosta says that it is nothing to be concerned about as there are still plenty of ways to connect with faculty, staff and students.

"It can feel scary to not find people with beliefs and values that align with yours," she said. "But, there are a lot of groups on campus that help students realize we aren't alone. LSA, for example, is a safe space for everyone of all different backgrounds. We have a mentee/mentor program where an upperclassman and an underclassman will get paired together through their similar interests, and it's like you have a best friend. I have a mentee, and whenever she's in need, it's unconditional, I'm always here for her."

When it comes to COVID-19, Acosta says she is looking at the positives. She explains the transition from campus to

home gave her a different perspective on education, helping her become more self-sufficient with her studies and communicative with her professors.

"We have to remember what we were doing before all this happened and forced us into this different type of lifestyle; we have to trust that it's possible to get back there if we are mindful of other people and taking the necessary safety measures. College is hard, especially during times like this, it can be easy to want to give up and lose sight of why we started. We have to remember why we did this to begin with and why we started," Acosta said.

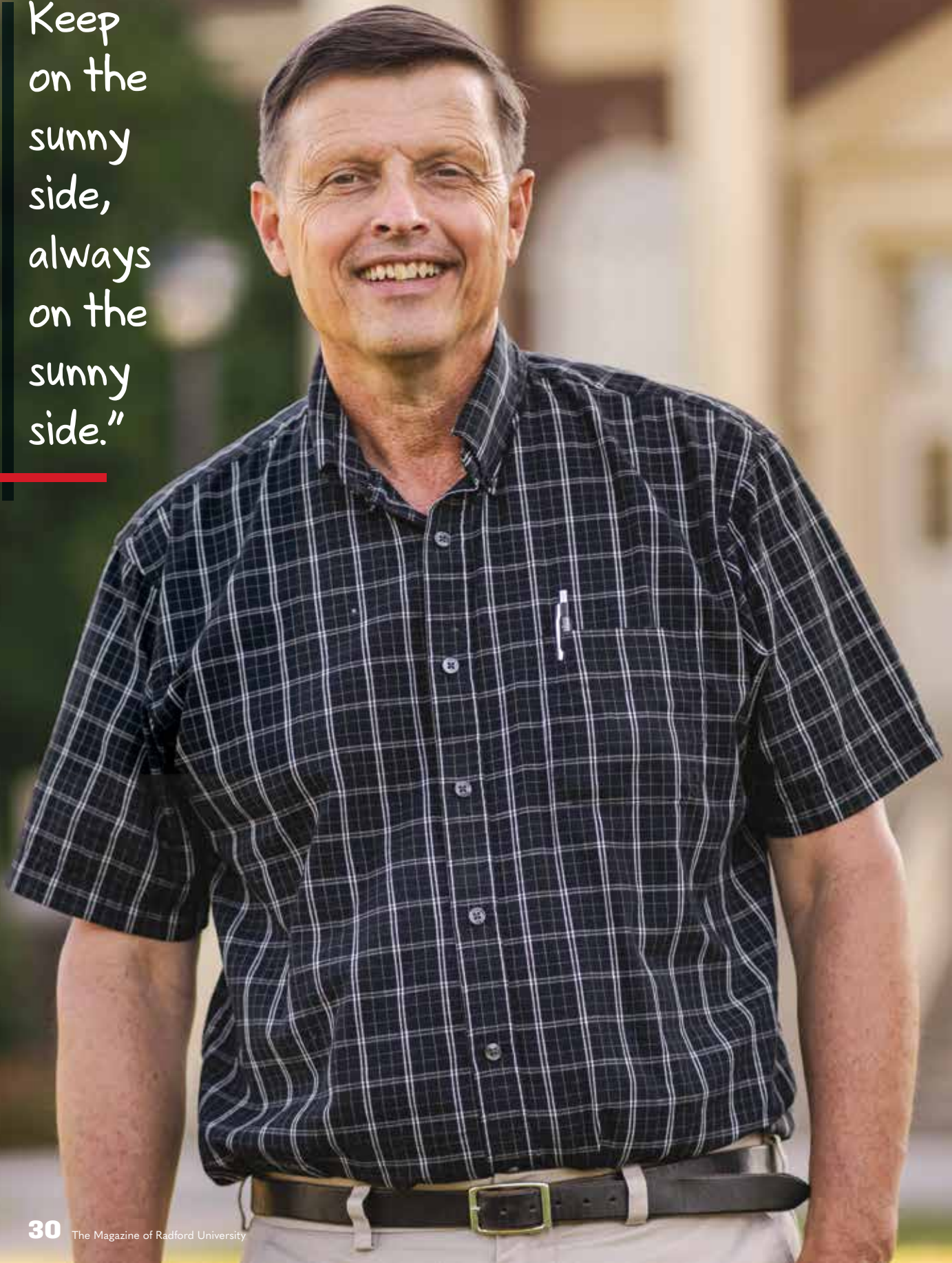
Acosta is dedicated to continuing her Radford journey with strength and cites the fighting Highlander spirit as her inspiration to rise to the occasion, adjust to the changing times and be resilient against adversity. 🍷



To learn more about Michelle Acosta's story in her own words, visit [www.radford.edu/Acosta](http://www.radford.edu/Acosta).

“

Keep  
on the  
sunny  
side,  
always  
on the  
sunny  
side.”





# Ricky Cox '86, M.A.'90

## Brighten all the way

By Chad Osborne



Keep on the sunny side, always on the sunny side,” Ricky Cox sang out from a small box at the top left corner of the computer screen.

It was just past lunchtime on a Tuesday, and, after an hourlong in-depth discussion about Appalachian music, Cox picked up his 1968 J50 Gibson guitar, rested it on his right knee, then played and sang the Carter Family classic for the dozen or so faces filling out the boxes on the Zoom screen. Many smiled; some swayed to the music.

*“Though we meet with the darkness and strife / The sunny side we also may view.”*

Cox’s voice carried a comforting message to his Appalachian Studies students, who were joining class digitally from various locations, away from campus, amid the coronavirus pandemic.

“This was my first time ever playing or singing via Zoom, and it wasn’t great,” Cox admitted. “My computer was too far away for me to see any faces, and I didn’t know until I viewed the recording later that I had the camera angled so that the students could see my face, but not the instruments.”

Still, the message was clear and assuring.

*“Clouds and storms will in time pass away / The sun again will shine bright and clear.”*

Cox, a now retired senior instructor in the Department of English and a staff member in the Appalachian Regional and Rural Studies Center at Radford University, is well aware of the power music holds, particularly in times of struggle and loneliness.

Smiles are never far from faces when he turns up with one of several instruments — guitar, old time banjo, fiddle, harmonica, mandolin and autoharp — on which he modestly says he “can make at least one recognizable tune, and in several cases only one.”

“For four groups in the Selu Farmhouse parlor, I can do a passable rendition of ‘When They Ring Those Golden Bells’ on the pump organ,” said Cox, who was raised in a family of singers and musicians and first learned to play guitar when his father brought home a \$10 guitar.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Cox and his music were always a welcome presence around campus and in the community. He played in classrooms and during special events. He also made weekly visits to a memory care ward at a local nursing home and occasionally played and sang for residents there during evening meals. “They are some of the most isolated people I know, both physically and personally,” he said.

While he played, the residents “were an attentive and appreciative audience. Some, who could hardly talk, sang along with songs like ‘Keep on the Sunny Side’ and ‘Will the Circle Be Unbroken.’ One of their daily activities is listening to music through individual sets of headphones.”

Cox’s students at Radford find joy in the music, too. It is customary for him to play his guitar, banjo and fiddle in the classroom during the Appalachian music lesson. It is more of a hands-on experience when done before a classroom full of students, he said. Cox often passes his fiddle around to let students get a feel for the instrument.

“Ordinarily, it’s a good way to wrap up or wind down a lecture or presentation,” he said. “One or two students will stay around to ask a question, make a few chords on my guitar, or talk about a grandparent or uncle, who plays this kind of music.”

It is those musical days that often leave the biggest impression on students, Cox said.

“A year or two ago, a very good student named Chris, who was pretty much into the whole class, recorded parts of the music presentation on his phone and asked whether he could put it on YouTube,” Cox recalled. But, “something crashed or he changed his mind. I was just as glad not to have it on YouTube, but I was pleased that he thought it worth sharing. He stopped me in McGuffey Hall last semester to talk about it, which made my day. Maybe my whole week.”

Music has that impact on people.

On that early April afternoon Zoom lesson with his students, Cox picked up his guitar and began strumming. “I’m going to take us out with this one from the Carter Family,” he said, almost as if he were closing down the Grand Ole Opry on a Saturday night in Nashville with “Keep on the Sunny Side.”

“It is the most overtly encouraging song I know,” he said later, “and hopefully it had a little of that effect.”

And, from his living room in Floyd County, Virginia, he sang to the dozens of students populating the digital squares ...

*“Keep on the sunny side of life / It will help us every day, it will brighten all the way / If we’ll keep on the sunny side of life.”* 🎸

“

There  
is magic  
here,  
and the  
magic  
is in the  
people.”





# Meredith Peters

## Alumna finds strength, comfort in President's message of hope

By Chad Osborne

**T**here is magic living at Radford University.

Those seven words came directly from Meredith Peters '11, a physician assistant in Student Health Services, amid and despite all the uncertainty happening on campus in the spring.

When the coronavirus forced the University into a new reality of physical distancing and online-only courses, Meredith, like many in the campus community, felt inspired after watching a video message in March from President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D.

So inspired that she sat down to craft a letter to the president, "so I can express to you that I've never been prouder to be a Highlander," she wrote.

In the video, President Hemphill spoke directly to the Radford community.

"Lead by example with compassion, patience and understanding in all that you do and say. Help others understand that we do not have the ability to control the situation, only the manner in which we respond to it."

"That means a lot," Meredith says. "It goes a long way."

Months later, Meredith reflected on the letter.

"I kept telling patients and students at the time, 'you need to watch this video of

the president sending us this really strong message,'" she says. "It honestly brought me to tears. I've thought to myself, 'YES! This is exactly what it means to be a Highlander!' Afterward, I felt compelled to thank him for it because it was a strong and unified message."

The president's message, delivered to the University community via email shortly after campus closed, "embodied the community I see at Radford, and that is how it has always been."

President Hemphill's message conveyed what people needed to know in the early stages of the global pandemic, Meredith says, and he did so with uplifting confidence. His tone conveyed a sense of expectation from students, faculty, staff, alumni and the Radford community to push through the fear with the responsible and resilient strength of a Highlander.

"I think that he has high expectations for himself," Meredith says, "and for the people who work at Radford and for the people who go to school and have gone to school here."

Those expectations, she asserts, build and enforce the Radford University story.

Meredith's personal Radford story is sprinkled with delightful details. She grew up in nearby Giles County and always had Radford on her college radar.

Meredith earned a bachelor's degree in athletic training in 2011 — she's an avid athlete, who always knew she wanted to work in healthcare — and her husband, Ben Peters, has a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies and a master's degree in special education, both earned at Radford.

"Our love for the University runs deep," she pronounced to the president.

Meredith's story within the University doesn't begin and end there. It weaves back to her grandmother, who attended Radford when it was a women-only college, and to her grandfather, who, as a boy, delivered newspapers by bicycle on campus. Gratitude for his early-morning hard work came each morning in the form of a fresh warm biscuit from a college dining hall cook.

"The way he smiles when he tells the story shows me what kind of experience it was," Meredith wrote, about her grandfather, in the letter to President Hemphill.

Those stories are just a few of the many that make up the spirit of Radford University, Meredith maintains. "There is magic here, and the magic is in the people. It's the way we treat one another, and care about one another and the community around us in good times and tough times." ■



# The power of caring

Briyana Jackson knows firsthand the impact of healing — and helping others heal.

By Mark Lambert

From the time Briyana Jackson '18 was seven years old until her junior year at Radford University, she cared for her mother, who battled kidney disease and diabetes. Providing support for her single mother was not a chore or burden, Jackson recalls, but rather inspiration for what she would eventually pursue with her professional life.

“My mother was a very strong woman,” Jackson said, “I never looked at it as me being her caretaker. I just saw her as my mother, and I wanted to do everything I could to help her.”



# “Radford is the reason why I am the woman I am today.”

Briyana Jackson

## Responsive

In June 2015, after more than a decade of providing loving care, Jackson’s mother passed away. At that time, Briyana was preparing for her senior year at Radford, which would begin in August. Although she was dealing with a tremendous amount of grief and navigating a very difficult time, Jackson knew she could not pause or stop her education.

“I had one month to essentially heal,” remembered Jackson. “But, it was such a shock that my grief didn’t hit me until later during the fall semester. Through all of that, though, I never thought about time off or leaving my studies. I knew I had to finish to make my mother proud, even if that meant I had to grieve along the way.”

## Resilient

Around that same time, Jackson began to explore other ways she could work with people to make a different kind of impact in their lives. “I wanted to reach them on a therapeutic level and make a difference in their lives,” Jackson said. “I wanted to make their day by listening, making them feel safe and impacting all aspects of their lives physically, socially, spiritually, emotionally and mentally.”

Jackson says it did not take long for her to discover her new path. She first encountered recreational therapy while working an after-school job at Commonwealth Assisted Living as a Certified Nursing Assistant in the memory care wing. There, she worked with certified recreational therapists and occupational therapists in helping clients with activities of their choosing while developing deep and long-lasting relationships.

“There was a particular recreational therapist that I was very close to from day one,” Jackson said. “I worked with her and

her caseload of clients every day, and I saw how meaningful her services were to the wing. I explained to her how I wanted to change my major because I wanted something fresh, but I wanted to remain in healthcare and make a difference with clients. From that conversation, she introduced me to and sparked my interest in the therapy world.”

Jackson soon changed her major to recreation, parks and tourism with a concentration in recreational therapy. The change in her studies motivated her to keep going during the difficult times of grief.

“There would be days when I had no strength to go to work or class,” Jackson said. “But, recreational therapy healed me. It opened up my eyes to a lot of things and people that I honestly did not expect to be connected to. It allowed me to build relationships with my peers and professors, and it helped me embrace the very part of me that faded when I lost my mother, my passion.”

The program also helped Jackson discover occupational therapy.

“I remember a lecture when my professors were talking about what recreational therapists do and how they serve the community. A student raised her hand and asked about the difference between recreational and occupational therapy. They said occupational therapists do exactly the things recreational therapists do, but they are more hands-on. They make the tasks recreational therapists facilitate more functional for their clients, and they work to gain the client’s independence in their chosen occupation. From that day on, I felt connected to occupational therapy.”

## Real

Jackson immediately began searching for occupational therapy programs

in Virginia and found one of the best closer than she ever imagined, Radford University Carilion (RUC).

“I began completing my requirements because I made up my mind that I wanted more. I wanted to push clients to be better, so that they can succeed in their daily lives,” she said.


By the time Jackson graduated from Radford in May 2018 with her bachelor’s degree, she had already been accepted into the Master of Occupational Therapy (M.O.T.) program at RUC in Roanoke. She has excelled in the program and will graduate in December 2020.

“Getting an undergraduate degree at Radford was special, because Radford really is home for me,” Jackson said. “I’ve met, bonded with and created some wonderful relationships with individuals that made an impact on me. Radford is the reason why I am the woman I am today.”

Jackson feels just as strongly about her current educational home at RUC.

“RUC is just as amazing,” she said. “What I love most about RUC is the intimacy of the campus. It’s just the right amount of people in just the right location. I feel like we’re one, and I still feel the family atmosphere.”

Jackson has not settled on the specific client population she will work with once she graduates, but she says she still has time to explore her passions and establish the right fit.

“With occupational therapy, I realize that I am an open canvas,” said Jackson. “That means whatever paint is handed to me, I’m determined to create a masterpiece. Even though I haven’t chosen which population I want to serve yet, as long as I am serving and helping others make a difference, I will be happy.” 



To read other stories of Highlanders sharing what it means to be responsive, resilient and real, please visit [www.radford.edu/3R](http://www.radford.edu/3R).





# THE TIME OF OUR LIVES

A CHANCE ENCOUNTER  
DEVELOPS INTO A LIFETIME  
OF HIGHLANDER LOVE.

By Justin Ward '10

**T**he encounter was random, but the connection made outside the Bonnie Hurlburt Student Center between two students from Zimbabwe was life-changing.

Brian Gwanzura '12, MBA '14 was leaving the building, heading to his residential hall, when he heard footsteps behind him.

"He was taking a stroll from the Bonnie. I decided to, uh ...," said Nicole Gwanzura '12, MBA '13.

"Sprint after me," Brian said, with a laugh, each of them taking turns to fill in details of their first meeting.

"I walked really quickly to catch up to him, because I heard there was another Zimbabwean on campus," Nicole said. A huge smile across her face and excitement in her voice as if the encounter had just happened.

"Be honest," Brian said cheerfully. "She ran after me. She actually ran after me. She started calling my name."

At the time, Brian didn't have any other friends except those on the Radford University men's soccer team. Walking to his residential hall was usually a quiet, non-eventful experience. This time was memorable.

"I turn around, and I see somebody come full speed," Brian said. "She's running towards me, and after that she introduces herself."

"The rest is history," Nicole said.

This moment was significant: not only were Brian and Nicole meeting for the first time as freshmen, but they were also finding a piece of home in each other from a world away.

Both of them were born and raised in Zimbabwe. At the time, the two of them were the only students on campus with roots there.

Brian was still learning American culture, because prior to accepting an athletic scholarship, he had never left his home country. Radford was his introduction to the United States.

He is a soccer fanatic, and it is obvious even in a short conversation with him. He started kicking a ball and playing the sport shortly after he learned to walk, but boots, equipment and a nice field were considered luxuries.

Growing up, Brian and his friends played soccer barefoot on makeshift dirt fields and sometimes, when the rare opportunity was available, he would share shoes with friends for better traction, while playing.

In the spring of 2010, he started Boots 4 Brian on campus, an opportunity for fellow soccer players to donate used cleats for people in his home country. The turnout was overwhelming for him.

“The response was just so surprising. The awareness was promoted by the school, by the Athletic Department, by my coaches and my teammates, and it was a good thing,” Brian said.

That love and support from his teammates continued months later when his father died in Zimbabwe. Members from the Athletic Department helped him get home. That family atmosphere on campus carried him through his remaining time on the field, as faculty, staff and administrators cared for Brian as if he were their own. They checked in on him and made sure he was keeping good grades in classes. His teammates became brothers by teaching him how to use a computer when he first arrived and giving him clothes. The interactions and connections made falling in love with Radford so much easier and gave him a sense of home.

“When I look back at it, great experiences upon great experiences. You meet people from different backgrounds — Venezuela, El Salvador, Brazil and England — it’s just a great thing to happen,” Brian said. “Radford was the introduction of my life in the United States. It gave me the friends, the closest family that I have here.”

Supporting him along the way was Nicole, who had an earlier introduction to the United States and Radford University.

She moved with her parents from Zimbabwe in 2004 to Northern Virginia and in middle school started looking at colleges. Through the College Partnership Program

that celebrates diversity, she was able to take bus trips to universities to help her set goals and dream of her future. It was a visit in eighth grade to Radford University, where she experienced college through classes and food options on campus, that something clicked — Radford University was the choice for her.

Nicole was admitted in her senior year to Radford during early admission. She immediately turned down offers from other universities and stopped filling out applications. Her dream college was awaiting her arrival.

She joined a Facebook group, Becoming Radford Students, and started chatting with another female incoming student about their connections to Northern Virginia. They shared experiences visiting campus. Nicole had already fallen in love with the facilities and was using her instinctive marketing skills to help sell the University to incoming students. The chat turned into a lasting friendship, and now Brian and Nicole are the godparents of her children.

Through their college experience, Nicole and Brian’s friendship grew and developed a strong foundation. Many of the friends they both made, while students at Radford University, have remained close.

“You just do not find that anywhere else, it’s just not there. There are so many other things that any other schools could have offered, but it would not have been

“THERE ARE SO MANY OTHER THINGS THAT ANY OTHER SCHOOLS COULD HAVE OFFERED, BUT IT WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN THE SAME COMMUNITY.”

Nicole Gwanzura '12, MBA '13



To learn more about how they met and their love for Radford University, visit [www.radford.edu/Highlander-Love](http://www.radford.edu/Highlander-Love).



“RADFORD GAVE ME THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE HERE IN THE UNITED STATES, AND IT ALLOWED ME TO MEET MY WIFE AND GET MY EDUCATION. IT MEANS SO MUCH TO ME.”

Brian Gwanzura '12, MBA '14



Prilix Photos

the same community,” Nicole said. She made close friends being a part of Diversity Awareness Programming, Delta Sigma Pi and Quest, and becoming homecoming queen.

“All of our best friends are from Radford. The soccer coaches have left and work at other schools, but we still stay in touch,” Brian said.

The two of them studied together on campus, talked for hours on end, shared meals and encouraged one another academically and professionally. They still continue these habits more than 10 years after they first met.

“Here it is, 2020, and we’re still talking about Radford,” Nicole said. “I just got appointed to be a member on the Alumni Association Board of Directors. That’s something I would have never imagined in my wildest dreams. You think about that investment, and people still remember you or think of you all these years later.”

That one impulsive meeting outside the Bonnie was the beginning of a shared lifetime of Highlander memories. Brian and Nicole married in 2016 and now have a two-year-old daughter, who already has Radford University clothing and Highlander love running through her veins.

“Radford gave me the opportunity to be here in the United States, and it allowed me to meet my wife and get my education. It means so much to me,” Brian said. “I have a job, a wife and a kid. Radford shaped my whole life.” 🇺🇸



# The Legacy Lives on

FOUR GENERATIONS OF  
RADFORD UNIVERSITY EDUCATORS

By Mary Hardbarger

To Belle Heth and McHarg Elementary  
School Principal Tara Grant M.S. '03, M.S. '09:  
"School is love."

That profound belief was instilled in her by the women who not only taught her — they raised her.

Grant, of Radford, Virginia, is a third-generation Radford University educator. Her mother, Linda Ferrell Edwards '80, M.S. '90, and grandmother, Sibyle Larine Crigger Ferrell, a 1942 Radford College graduate, are proud alumnae and former teachers and administrators.

This spring, the family's fourth-generation educator officially emerged.

Grant's daughter, Haley Smith '20, earned a bachelor's degree in interdisciplinary studies and middle school education. She began her first teaching job at Dalton Intermediate School, also in Radford, this fall.

"It's always been a family affair," Grant said, sitting in her office at Belle Heth with her mother and daughter by her side. "Now, Haley is carrying on our legacy."

"I think Radford University, itself, is a legacy," Edwards added. "Education is a legacy. You have somebody, who helps somebody, who helps somebody, and it just keeps going on."

Edwards has lived in Radford her entire life. She grew up just blocks from Radford University during the time it was called Radford College, and tuition was \$150 a quarter, she recalled. Her mother, Sibyle, earned a bachelor's degree in home economics with a certification to teach at the high school level.

"Mother was my eighth-grade math teacher," Edwards said. "She told me I'd better call her 'Mrs. Ferrell.' So, the first day we were in class, I yelled, 'Mother,' and that was over with real fast."

The old McGuffey Elementary School, where Edwards attended, was on campus and served as a teacher training school. The teachers Edwards had there would

later become her professors.

"Do you remember any of their names?" Grant asked her mother.

"I remember them all," Edwards said.

Edwards taught in the Pulaski County Public Schools System for seven years and later served as an assistant principal, then principal for 20-plus years.

Grant has fond memories of growing up in her mother's classroom with her sister, Angie Edwards.

"We were always cutting out lamination and helping with this and that," Grant said.

"And, the children just loved it," Edwards continued. "They got to know the girls. Tara did this for us. Angie did that. They would love that connection."

But Grant's path to education wasn't always as clear as her mother's and grandmother's. She calls herself a "late bloomer."

"I got married, had a baby (Haley), got





Generations in the classroom: from left, Tara Grant, M.S. '03, M.S. '09; her mother, Linda Ferrell Edwards '80, M.S. '90; her daughter, Haley Smith '20; and her grandmother, Sibyle Larine Crigger Ferrell (in framed photo), a 1942 graduate of Radford College.

divorced and moved back home with my parents. I was blessed to have my family," she said. "I remember my mom told me that anything you do, it's going to help you. It's like a tool in your tool bag."

So, she enrolled, and quickly excelled, at Radford University. She has earned both a master's degree in curriculum and instruction and educational leadership. She is currently part of the University's first cohort of Doctor of Education students.

Personally, Grant married a man named Mike Grant, Radford University men's golf coach. Together, they have a son, Thomas.

2020 is Grant's 20th year in education. She just finished her fourth year as principal at Belle Heth, which has temporarily consolidated with nearby McHarg Elementary School as it undergoes renovations.

"It's a heavy job, but it's also a work of passion," she said. "If you keep students at the forefront of what you're doing, you're always going to do what's best for them."

Smith is following that advice as she begins her first year of teaching, one that is faced with unprecedented challenges due to the COVID-19 global pandemic.

"I'm excited for them to be back, just to see their faces," Smith said. "It's been difficult, but there is a lot of grace."

As she celebrates achievements and overcomes setbacks, Smith remembers the teachers and professors who inspired and supported her.

The middle-school English teachers sparked her creativity. The now-retired Radford University education professor made breakfast and baked desserts every week for her students and sewed quilts for them when they graduated. A professor offered her essential oils and let her have

a day off from student teaching when she was tired and overwhelmed.

"So many incredible professors have helped shape me and guide me. You're so much more than just their student, because they really do care for you. And, I love that about Radford University," Smith said.

Recently married, Smith recalls what she said at her bridal shower.

"And, what made us all tear up," her mom added.

"I told them I was raised by strong women. Not only my family members, but my teachers, too," Smith said. 📖

# WHEN Dreams CHANGE

Alice Frazier '87 reaches her ultimate career goal.

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By Bailey Black





**Alice Poutasse Frazier '87, a native Virginian and resident of Nelson County, went from being an avid equestrian with aspirations of making her hobby into her career to being the president and CEO of Potomac Bankshares, Inc.**

“Initially, I was an equestrian major at another college; however, I realized that mucking stalls for the rest of my life wouldn’t be much fun,” Frazier said. “As most college students do, I made a road trip to visit a good friend from high school at her college, Radford University. I enjoyed the weekend and loved the campus. The fact the school was large enough to provide diversity, yet small enough to not be lost in the numbers, was very appealing. It was an easy decision to transfer to Radford.”

When Frazier realized equestrian studies did not fit her future, she found herself looking toward business as her new area of study. As required by all business majors, Frazier took Basic Accounting I and II and found that the material “surprisingly” made sense to her. She enjoyed the organization and processes that went along with accounting and continued to pursue it. Frazier also was involved on campus, serving as an accounting tutor, member of the Accounting Club and little sister to a fraternity.

"I think anytime someone becomes engaged with a business, civic or social club, opportunities for personal growth and networking occur," Frazier said. "My husband, Todd Frazier '85, and I have continued to stay connected with the relationships we built at Radford."

As Frazier looked back on her time at Radford, many professors and classes stuck out as making an impact on her student experience.

"The student population size of Radford allows the students and professors to connect in ways that build upon what's taught in the classes. I still appreciate Dr. Lynn Saubert's high expectations of perfection, Dr. Amenkhienan's way of simplifying cost accounting and Dr. Wooley's effort to open doors. Each professor took interest in the success of the student. To this day, I think of Dr. Brinckman's Business Law classes when in the midst of contract or lease negotiations," Frazier said.

After graduation, Frazier began a path toward her current position as the president and chief executive officer (CEO) of Potomac Bankshares, Inc.

"After graduating in 1987, I joined the audit practice of what was then a Big 8 public accounting firm, Ernst & Whinney. Today, that firm is Ernst & Young," Frazier said. "When Todd and I moved to Winchester in 1988, I was able to join a regional public accounting firm, Yount, Hyde & Barbour (YHB). YHB has a large bank audit practice to which I was assigned several community banks as clients.

"In 1991, I was approached by a small community bank to begin its loan review and internal audit program. Over the next 16 years, I was given tremendous latitude to work beyond the traditional role of a chief financial officer, which allowed me to be deeply engaged in most aspects of community banking, resulting in the role of chief operating officer."

A career coach helped Frazier identify that direct commercial lending and sales experience were necessary for her to meet her ultimate career goal of becoming the CEO of a community bank.

"This was a scary thought for someone who had never been a 'sales person,' but

**sometimes being uncomfortable affords professional growth,"** she said.

At a pivotal point in her career, an opportunity arose for Frazier to join a large regional bank to lead a commercial lending team and sales in her hometown market. She decided to take what many would perceive as a "step back" to invest in her long-term goals.

"After a couple years, a Northern Virginia regional bank with \$1.8 billion in assets, 315 employees and 25 branches called me to be their chief operating officer. Over eight years, this bank

grew to \$4 billion in assets, 800+ employees and 31 branches before it was acquired by another bank," Frazier said. "From the early days of my first community banking job, I was inspired by the commitment of the bankers to the customers and the community.

**"That commitment drove me to continually find ways for each bank I led to be better, more innovative and more forward."**


After 26 years of building upon her banking experiences, Frazier assumed the role of president and CEO of Potomac Bankshares, Inc., a locally owned community bank with offices in Virginia, West Virginia and Maryland.

"My career would not have been possible without the full support of my husband, Todd, for which I am grateful," Frazier said. "When our boys were 12 and nine, he sacrificed his IT career to become a stay-at-home dad. Sixteen years ago, a stay-at-home dad was not nearly as common as it is today, but having Todd home with our boys gave him the opportunity to pursue his passion of coaching youth baseball."

Frazier offered some advice to students wishing to follow her path: "Find mentors willing to be honest with you and help you build relationships. Be curious, be resourceful and early in your career, focus on helping your leader. Invest in your career by learning as much as you can about the industry in which you are employed. Read the news, become involved in the industry associations and build relationships with others in the same industry.

"To become a leader, someone else has to be willing to follow you, so relationships matter," Frazier said. "Because I have high standards for myself, it took me awhile to learn to not take things so personally. Business is business, and if everyone is working toward the common goal, then it's not personal. A personal mantra I share with my team and children is, 'minimize the should haves' — you do not want to be left behind or regretful, because you 'should have' done something."

Business as usual is not quite the norm in 2020. Frazier recognizes this and shared a few words of wisdom for Radford students entering the workforce.


"This is a point in time, and in some ways, a gift of time — use it wisely," Frazier said. "I suggest they use this time to build connections, expand their skill sets and be open to opportunities that seem completely different than their intended career path. Some of the best entrepreneurial ideas come from challenging times." 





“My career would not have been possible without the full support of my husband, Todd, for which I am grateful.”

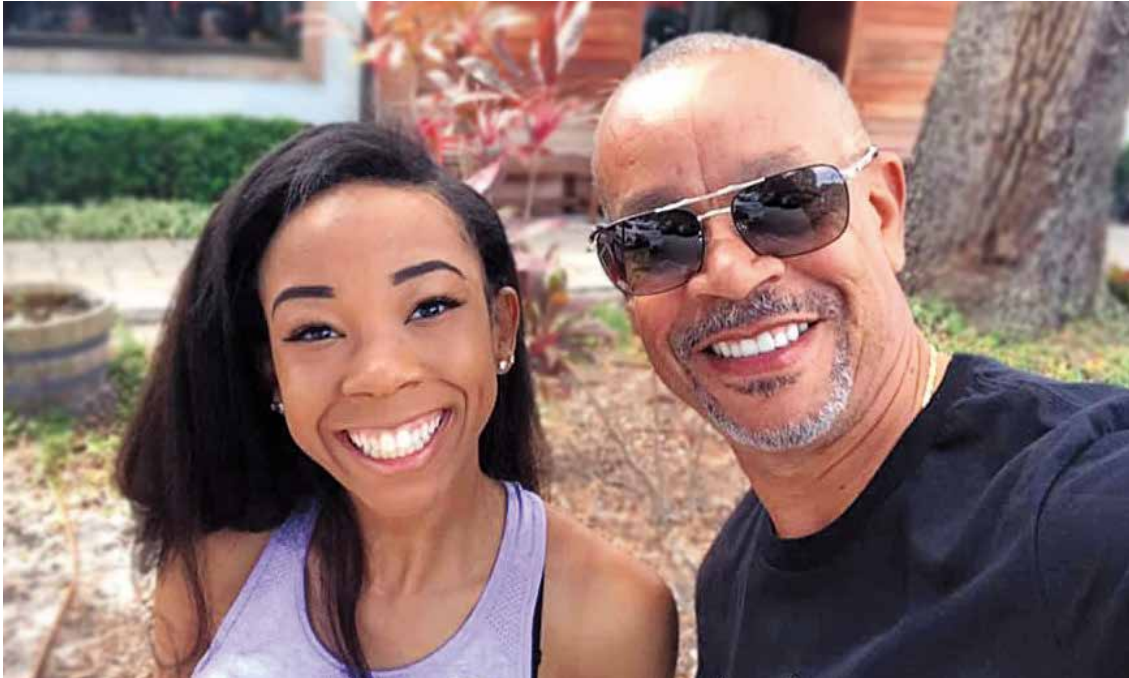
# SERVICE BEYOND A CELL TOWER



Marquett Smith '85 lives by his values —  
engagement, giving back and helping others.

By Stephanie D. Overton





Marquett Smith '95 and his daughter, Cassidy Smith '19

**If Marquett Smith '85 had a highlight reel, it would be filled with stories of hard work, determination and success. He set goals, reached milestones and earned new opportunities through dedication and staying the course. He has made some impressive moves along the way.**

Smith's career began at Sprint after graduating from Radford University. Five years later, he was recruited by America Online (AOL) to lead the company's expansion from one to five customer support centers. By 2002, after completing the Executive Management Program at Massachusetts Institute of Technology and holding positions at Cybercash and Interliant, he began his executive career at Verizon Wireless. He swiftly moved up through the Verizon ranks, with titles of director of customer service, director of retail stores, executive vice president of customer service, president of the upstate New York region, chief communications officer, vice president for Verizon Enterprise Services and then to his final role as region president of Verizon Wireless of Washington/Baltimore/Virginia. In this role, Smith was responsible for profit and loss and

operations with a \$2.8 billion revenue stream for the nation's largest wireless company.

He earned numerous awards, including being a two-time winner of Verizon Wireless' President's Cabinet Award for sales excellence and the prestigious Verizon Chairman's Award for outstanding business leadership. Among his achievements, Smith includes mentoring other leaders to become top-performing executives and raising the bar on corporate giving and engagement with the community.


"I believe that one critical measure of success is how many lives you positively impact along the way ... making a difference in the lives of others is a blessing and not an obligation," Smith said.

His Radford experience continued to impact him long after graduation. Professors used varying approaches to teach those who learned in different ways, whether it be written, verbal or hands-on, made an impression on him and his career.

"This multifaceted approach to education and teaching others worked for me as a student, and I subsequently employed it when developing high performance teams," Smith said.

If there is a common thread woven throughout Smith's life, it is his focus on engagement, giving and service.

In 2019, he was awarded the Radford University Alumni Association Outstanding Service Award, which recognizes a graduate who has made exceptional contributions to furthering the mission of the University and has demonstrated how alumni can



**“Service, to me, boils down to assisting those in need by sharing your personal resources — time, talent, treasure and a willingness to coach. It’s important to me that we all take action and help others.”**

continue to support their community and Radford University through their time, talent and resources.

In remarks given at the awards presentation, executive director of alumni relations Laura Turk praised Smith’s enthusiasm for Radford University and “his ripple effect on other alumni, students and the Radford community.”

“His commitment to Radford has never wavered. He is a humble leader, who provides selfless acts of kindness,” Turk said.

“I love the Radford culture — the solid mentoring, meaningful contributions and engagement. I want to see Radford University continue to gain prominence in the Commonwealth and nationally ... growing with an unwavering commitment to education,” Smith said.

He values the opportunities Radford has created for him and his daughter, Cassidy Smith ’19. So much so, that he created the endowed fund CARE — The Cassidy Achievement, Resource and Equality Fund — to honor his daughter and assist students from diverse ethnic backgrounds that experience an immediate personal need for funds to continue their education at Radford.

“Service, to me, boils down to assisting those in need by sharing your personal resources — time, talent, treasure and a willingness to coach,” Smith said. “It’s important to me that we all take action and help others.”

In his community, he has been involved in a variety of initiatives, including serving on boards for United Way, Big Brothers Big Sisters of America, the National Domestic Violence Hotline and the Washington, D.C. Public Library.

He believes the most meaningful way to personally make an impact on others is by leveraging resources to assist them. Smith says it is “more than check writing, let’s roll up our sleeves and get involved.”

Reflecting on his journey, he is focused and appreciative of those who have helped him.

“I could not have achieved any of this alone,” Smith shared in his alumni awards remarks. “Yes, I worked hard, but there was also support provided to me by loved ones and people I encountered along the journey. For me, Radford University played a major role in my progress through life. Radford laid the foundation for my success.”

He encourages others to get engaged. “There’s no amount of time or money that’s too big or too small. The satisfaction that you will get from helping our leaders of tomorrow will prove to be life changing,” Smith said.

He achieved another major milestone in 2015 — retirement at the age of 53. Nowadays, he’s able to devote time to his hobbies, like playing saxophone at local gatherings of jazz musicians.


Smith once said that he doesn’t hang up awards or plaques. “I’ll put them up when I’m done, but for now there is more to be done,” he stated.

Whether he is officially “done” or not, maybe in retirement he will take some time to hang a plaque or two. 🏆





Marquett Smith '85 enjoys playing the saxophone and meets up with local musicians for classic jazz sessions.



*a*  
cool *head*  
*in* the  
*Arctic*

By Christina Edney





**Utqiagvik, Alaska**

**Farthest northern  
point of the  
United States**

300 miles

Arctic Circle

4,619 miles

The teaching style of Rhett Herman, Ph.D., looks a little different from the traditional approach. As one of his Arctic Geophysics students showed great concern over a last-minute roadblock just days away from the group's trip to Alaska, Herman remained calm.

"How do we get ethanol on the plane to Alaska for my experiment?" one student asked. Herman responded, "Well, we cannot, but that's okay."

His mantra? Adapt. Students say that ideology proves intimidating at first, but in the end gives them the freedom to learn through hands-on trial and error.

"Dr. Herman guides you, but leaves enough room so you can learn and grow independently," said Will Nape, a senior from Radford, Virginia.

"When I came into class the first day, I had no idea what was going on," Nape said. "Over time, I learned this class is about discovering and researching for yourself, setting goals and meeting those goals. It's a unique teaching style, but it's helped me grow professionally and personally. It's helped me be more independent knowing I have Dr. Herman there for me if I need direction, but he's not giving me all the answers."

"Dr. Herman helps you achieve your goals and takes none of the credit," said Hunter Witt '20.

It is all part of Radford University's Physics 325 — Geophysics Field Research course. Prior to this four-credit class, students were required to take a one-credit preparatory course in order to have enough time to plan, research and build their projects. Herman says the class is designed to teach students three things:

- 1** That science does not have to be done on a big budget;
- 2** To gain a broader perspective through stepping outside their comfort zones; and
- 3** To develop self-efficacy and reliance.

Rhett Herman's relaxed leadership guides student researchers to adapt and improvise when conditions are not ideal.



Students help each other conduct research on the frozen Arctic Ocean.

The preparation, months in the making, all leads to one trip, 4,619 miles from Radford University, more than 300 miles above the Arctic Circle, to the farthest northern point of the United States, in Utqiagvik, (formerly known as Barrow) Alaska. The March 2020 trip marked Herman's 14th year leading a group of students to the tundra for research.

What kind of research? Whatever the student chooses. The students are given the autonomy to discover, study and test anything they are interested in as related to geophysics.

"Some classes, you memorize formulas or styles, but physics is about thinking, not memorizing. Dr. Herman is like a guide leading you in the direction of the answer without giving you the answer," said Alex Anderson '20.

With the freedom to discover, student projects varied from testing the temperature of the water under the ice of the ocean to determining when, why and how strong cracks in the ice begin to form. One student set out to test how microplastics might be

filtered from the ocean. Once students developed a topic, they then researched and proposed ways to study that topic in the Arctic.

After months of testing, building and learning, students would soon learn that the preparatory work would be the least challenging part of their research. As the veteran leader of the Radford University trip to Alaska, Herman says this 2020 excursion posed unique challenges previous students had not faced.

"There was a problem with the airline, and our equipment wasn't shipped on time. We didn't end up getting our gear until the day before half of our students left. While frustrating, the delay proved a great time to recognize the semblance to life — things do not always go as planned," said Herman.

Banding together, the group came up with a strategy to use what resources they did have until the equipment arrived.

Herman reached out to connections in the Utqiagvik community he had made throughout the years and was able to borrow enough gear for students to be safe on the ice. He then





Katelynn Collett, Southwest Virginia Governor's School student



Deanna Perales, senior



Hunter Witt '20



Rhett Herman, Ph.D., professor of physics and adjunct professor of geology



Barrow Atmospheric Baseline Observatory



Utqiagvik, Alaska



Visit [www.radford.edu/Alaska-2020](http://www.radford.edu/Alaska-2020) to watch our students' experience in Alaska.



"The Theatre," where students spent time piecing their projects together, analyzing data, brainstorming new ideas — and staying warm in the subfreezing temperatures.

worked with a local company to borrow, and in some cases purchase, equipment to help students conduct research, while waiting on their shipment to arrive.

As nearly a week went by, the young scientists followed the lead of their relaxed professor, developing a plan of action. It was a life lesson in adapting and overcoming. In the end, students were able to borrow enough gear to get through the week until equipment eventually arrived.

The delay proved minimally invasive as Radford University students once again proved to be responsive, resilient and real.

With the weather a balmy -62 degrees, students donned several thermal layers, multiple socks, face masks, scarves, two sets of gloves and their specialized Arctic boots, parkas and bibs. Thanks to the help of the Ukpeagvik Inupiat Corp. in Utqiagvik, the students were safely equipped to head onto the frozen Arctic Ocean. While the frozen waters had been solid sheets in years past, this year the cold weather had a late arrival, resulting in a choppy, icy tundra to hike through. Getting enough distance from the shore for research meant what seemed like a trek through boulders. Each day and twice per day, students began the lengthy process of dressing for the weather, gathering their equipment and hiking through the ice to a place suitable for their research.

The most frequently used item for several of the students was what is known as the core sample drill. Using the hollow drill was a team effort as students drilled into the ice several feet to remove core samples. The researchers were surprised to see just how deep the ice measured, often coming in at around 1.8 meters before reaching the water underneath. One by one, students took turns stabilizing or drilling the core sample. Each one also experienced a rite of passage, taking a taste of the Arctic Ocean when ice turned to slush and slush turned to water.

In the end, all the students were able to retrieve their data and bring their research back to Radford for further study.

"This is my first big research experience. I feel an experience like this helps you advance not only in your research, but in how you think and solve problems," said Deanna Perales, a senior from Sterling, Virginia.

Experiences like these make Radford University a leader in innovative research, giving students opportunities they never imagined possible. In those opportunities, students find guidance through their relationships with professors like Herman. That guidance prepares students to grow both professionally and personally — equipping them with the necessary tools for future challenges and successes. ■



“Dr. Herman  
helps you  
achieve  
your goals  
and takes none  
of the credit.”

Hunter Witt '20



# Finding Common Ground in Faraway Mountains

By Chad Osborne

**Its communities once produced an abundance of coal. Jobs were plentiful. Towns were vibrant.**

Circumstances change, though, and so do narratives. These days, most of the mines in those same communities are empty. Jobs have vanished — poverty, therefore, is rising — and populations in those once-booming towns are dwindling.

While coal still provides much of the region's energy needs, only a handful of mines remain open.

This is the story of the Jiu Valley in Romania's Carpathian Mountains, a story that closely mimics that of the Central Appalachian region. People in the Jiu Valley, like many in the Appalachians, are struggling to rebuild their communities.

"Mining has been such an integral part of the people's identities there," said Theresa Burriss, Ph.D., Radford University's Director of Appalachian Studies and the Appalachian Regional & Rural Studies Center. "Much like what has happened in

**Both regions  
"face the challenging  
task of creating  
new identities that  
continue to  
honor their rich  
coal-mining history."**

Theresa Burriss, Ph.D.

Central Appalachia, the mining industry has been decimated. It has been a difficult transition re-inventing not just their communities, but their very identity."

Burriss, a Southwest Virginia native, is a scholar of the region and carries a deep understanding of Central Appalachia and its struggles. She also carries with her a desire to help.

It's one reason she agreed to serve as U.S. co-chair of the 2019 Appalachian/Carpathian Mountain Conference, which convened that year in October. The goal of the conference was to explore the striking parallels between the two regions, which are located thousands of miles apart.

Burriss was already familiar with the Romanian Carpathians, having previously visited and taught in the area. She and fellow Radford University faculty members — Professor of Geospatial Science Rick Roth, Ph.D., and Professor of Biology Christine Small, Ph.D. — presented at the conference in 2015, and she taught at Transilvania University in Brasov,

Romania in 2017. While there, she visited the coal mining region and was struck by the similarities it shared with the Appalachian mining region, particularly in Southwest Virginia, Southern West Virginia and Eastern Kentucky.

On her 2017 trip to Romania, Burriss met with miners and residents in towns





where mining had been abandoned. “They had so much pride in their communities and the work they had done,” Burriss said. “It’s very similar to the Appalachian coal miner.”

In Petrila, a town in the Jiu Valley of about 22,000 people, Burriss met a former coal cartographer, Ion Barbu, who is diligently working to turn around the fortunes of the communities. “He is a visionary; he pushes boundaries and is very provocative,” she said. “He is transforming this once-thriving coal-mining community.”

While visiting the Jiu Valley in 2019, Burriss was interviewed by local media and asked about her work with Barbu, former miners and others in the region.

“As Appalachians, we have much to learn from Barbu. The whole community has something to teach the United States, and we are here to learn from them,” Burriss said, “and to take those lessons back home.”

People in the Jiu Valley inspired Burriss and her colleagues with their willingness “to go beyond what we typically know,” she said.

One such strategy has Barbu — a charismatic, renowned artist and “a visionary,” Burriss said — and those living in the Jiu Valley, looking to purchase a once state-owned mine, now abandoned, and converting it into a museum, and theater and gallery spaces. Other plans are being developed to reshape the mines and revitalize the communities.

“I fell in love with the country in terms of its beauty and culture,”

Burriss said. “It’s a special kind of place.”

Like Romania’s Jiu Valley, Central Appalachian communities are transitioning to post-coal economies, and both regions “face the challenging task of creating new identities that continue to honor their rich coal-mining history,” Burriss said. “Barbu and some residents of Petrila are demonstrating deeply creative ways to reimagine life after coal. Their efforts provide a renewed sense of purpose to many and illustrate what successful industrial heritage can look like as a tourist destination.” 

FIGHTING

# POVERTY

Intellectual discovery  
leads to lasting global impact.

A Radford University faculty member and four students created an anti-poverty toolkit at the behest of a United Nations Anti-Poverty Working Group.

A

fter more than a year of long hours and demanding work, Emily Jenkins '19 finally clicked the activate button to make the website go live.

The website that she unleashed was an anti-poverty toolkit, a website designed to increase access to materials to help reduce poverty around the world — built at the request of the United Nations Anti-Poverty Working Group.

Tay Keong Tan, Ph.D., associate professor of political science and director of International Studies, has extensive international experience, including work with the United Nations. He was approached about the feasibility of creating the web-based toolkit in early 2018. He accepted the challenge and set out to recruit Radford University students to assist in the endeavor.

At the behest of Milenko Gudić and Alfred Rosenbloom, co-chairs of the Anti-Poverty Working Group, Tan joined the team to create a clearinghouse of materials for anyone in the world teaching anti-poverty courses or conducts research on poverty alleviation. Both Gudić and Rosenbloom agreed to peer review the work of the Radford University research team over the next year.



Throughout the project, a total of four Radford University students contributed: Gabriel Bennett '19 of Blacksburg, Virginia; Haley Nunez of Roanoke, Virginia; Emily Jenkins '19 of Radford, Virginia; and Rachel Sharrett '19 of Bristol, Virginia. Working steadily from the Fall 2018 semester and through the summer months, they collaborated as a team under Tan's supervision until the completion of their project in the Fall 2019 semester.

## A STUDENT-FACULTY CONNECTION

"I asked Gabriel and Rachel if they wanted to volunteer some time to work on a very meaningful project for the United Nations," Tan said. "They immediately said yes. I knew these students well from my courses and was confident that they would be able to produce a very high standard of scholarship."

After proving the quality of the work to the group, the scope of the project was expanded to include the development of a website to host the educational materials; creation of courses using only free online materials from the toolkit; and panel presentation proposals to international conferences and Radford campus events. Tan also added two additional student volunteers to the project.

As the work progressed, Bennett, Jenkins and Nunez each earned Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowships from the Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship (OURS) to continue their work over the summer. OURS awarded student travel funds to the team to present their work in Sweden. In addition, Tan wrote several grant proposals and received funding from the College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences (CHBS) Research and Scholarship Award and the Dean of CHBS Office Student Research Fund.

"Dr. Tan was very vigilant and very determined, and he really helped us, while we worked on the toolkit," Bennett said.

## AN INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATION AND PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

Bennett and Jenkins presented the toolkit in two panels with Gudić, Rosenbloom and Tan to the 2019 Global Gathering of United Nations Scholars at the University of Jonkoping in Sweden in November 2019.

For their dedication to the creation of the toolkit, the four students each received an award in excellence in advancing teaching and research on poverty around the world.

"This is a very prestigious accolade," Tan said. "The Anti-Poverty Working Group is a network of well-published world experts in the field of poverty who rarely give out awards and only do so for the best research and presentations. It was the first time such an award has been given to students for their work."

Up-to-date materials, including syllabi, research articles, educational videos, case studies, student papers and organizational reports, are all reviewed, synopsised and housed

"in one place," because of the work of Tan and the four Radford University students. Together, they added 502 artifacts to the toolkit. The toolkit can now be accessed at [www.radford.edu/tool-kit](http://www.radford.edu/tool-kit).

"Presenting at an international conference made me feel more confident in myself to present in front of scholars and professionals. Participating in research of this level also helped me in my coursework at Radford," Jenkins said. "I do not think I fully grasped the magnitude of the project until we went to the conference and learned how thankful the working group was that the four of us created the toolkit."

## CHALLENGES ALONG THE WAY

Creating the toolkit was not without its challenges. One of the most critical steps was the creation of the website to host the anti-poverty materials. Tan enlisted a web developer, but when progress was not being made, Jenkins took it upon herself to learn how to create a website and use a content management system.

"I used YouTube to teach myself how to make websites," Jenkins said.

A challenge faced by Bennett was finding unbiased sources during his research on socialism and poverty. "Finding information that was both accurate, and also reasonably unbiased was difficult," Bennett said.

## INSPIRING FUTURE IMPACT

For Nunez, the experience was life-altering. Because of her experience working on the toolkit, she changed her major to political science with the goal of entering public service.

"I realized what I truly enjoyed and what I wanted to do forever was something along the lines of political science and international studies," Nunez said.

The Anti-Poverty Toolkit's success resulted in another request in January 2020 for a University faculty-student research team to develop a new toolkit. The U.N. Sustainability Mindset Toolkit will be an open, universally accessible, online repository of teaching and research resources. This request came from the U.N. Working Group on Sustainability Mindset, consisting of some 143 scholars in 132 universities in 43 countries.

Tan recruited a political science major, Anna Ogan, to develop an initial database of about a hundred resources for the portal. Working through Summer 2020, they designed and created a new website for the repository: [www.radford.edu/sustainability-mindset](http://www.radford.edu/sustainability-mindset) and synopsised some 120 artifacts on sustainability.

The work on the Anti-Poverty Toolkit emphasizes Radford University's commitment to academic excellence, dedication to research and pursuit of intellectual discovery, all while leaving a lasting impact across the globe. ■







# COACHING THE GAME OF LIFE

For Karl Kuhn, winning is not limited  
to numbers on a scoreboard.

By Chad Osborne

**K**arl Kuhn is the embodiment  
of a Highlander.

To truly understand that sentiment, to know what makes Radford University's new baseball coach tick and understand what makes him successful, you simply have to listen as he speaks.

He talks about process, and Kuhn's process begins with three simple words: athletic, competitive and tough.

"Coach told us in our first meeting that we were going to change Radford baseball," outfielder Anthony Galati said. "He told us that we were going to play smart, tough baseball, and the sky was the limit. Hearing that from someone who has won a College World Series opened our eyes and excited us."

Kuhn — or Coach Ks as he is affectionately known to seemingly everyone — began instilling these virtues as soon as he arrived in Radford.

That was in August 2019, when he was introduced as the Highlanders' sixth baseball coach at a news conference in the Dedmon Center. Wearing a suit and tie, transitioning to Radford red and white and out of the blue and orange he donned for more than a decade and a half as the pitching coach at the University of Virginia (UVa), Coach Kuhn spoke about goals he had for his players, on and off the diamond.

"The mark of a good coach is to make a player a better player," Kuhn said that day. "The mark of a good leader is to make a man a better man. I am committed to doing both."

Helping his players become better at baseball — and life — is a goal Coach Ks has been striving for and achieving for years.

Kuhn made his way to Charlottesville in 2004 and began what would become an immensely successful tenure as UVa's pitching coach. Through his 16 years there, he established himself as one of the best in college baseball.

Coach Ks mentored pitchers who helped UVa win a national championship in 2015 and earn four trips to Omaha, Nebraska — every Division I baseball players' field of dreams — to compete in the College Baseball World Series. In 2014, Kuhn was named the Collegiate Baseball National Pitching Coach of the Year.

Awards and accolades can go only so far, but memories and relationships are the emotional pieces that complete life's journey.

Just ask Chesdin Harrington.

A simple question from Coach Ks surprised Harrington as his UVa baseball team wrapped up one of their final practices of the 2019 college baseball season:

"Do you want to have a catch?"

"Yes," Harrington quickly replied to Kuhn.

As he recounted the story, you can hear the emotion in Harrington's voice. The simplicity of having a catch, tossing a baseball back and forth and hearing the

pop of the glove, often evokes a special bond between coaches and players, between fathers and sons.

"So, we tossed the ball a little," Harrington, the former UVa pitcher, recalled of that April afternoon in Charlottesville. He was holding out hope that his team would be playing in the postseason.

"But, I think in Coach's mind — and I should have realized it too — that maybe that was the last time he and I were going to toss a ball to each other," Harrington said.

"We came in after a few minutes, and he gave me a big hug. I sensed a little emotion with him, certainly looking back on it. It brings out emotion in me, too.

"I'll always keep that memory with me," Harrington said.

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As Coach Ks transitioned to his new Radford home, his process of molding the Highlanders into his image of a good baseball team took time and spawned a rollercoaster of early results. The Highlanders opened the season with three wins, but they followed their early success with seven losses in eight games.

Then, the team hit a hot streak, winning five games in a row. Bats were hot. Pitching was solid. The team was forming a bond as tight as the 108 red stitches that bind together a baseball.

"I think we were finally gaining the confidence we needed to become the best team we could be," Galati said.

Soon thereafter, the unimaginable happened. The spread of COVID-19 threw a knee-buckling curveball — at everyone — and presented unprecedented challenges. Radford University and other colleges across the United States transitioned to online instruction and soon, the NCAA canceled all 2020 spring sports.

"It was pretty heartbreaking to have our season cut short," said catcher Straton Podaras, a senior on the 2020 Radford squad, will be back on the team in 2021 as a graduate student working on his MBA. "We hit some speed bumps and lost some tough games, but we were gaining momentum."

The Highlanders played only 17 games under Coach Ks in the shortened 2020 season, but they quickly took on the personality and enthusiasm of their coach.

"I think their energy was different," Kuhn said. "A lot of our seniors have told me that this was the closest team they've been. This team grew individually and collectively an enormous amount."

Losing the season, however, was a tremendous blow to Kuhn, his coaches and their players.

Anyone who follows baseball knows it is a humbling game built on failure. Failure makes baseball players better, Coach Ks believes, and as former ballplayer and sporting goods entrepreneur Albert Spalding once said, "Baseball is a man-maker."

The principles Kuhn teaches are man-makers, too. And, baseball, he says, is a "gimmick" to teach life.

"Less than 1% of these guys will go on to play professional baseball," Kuhn said. "Well, these guys are going to be 99.9% fathers, husbands and leaders in business and industry."

Podaras is a perfect example of what the Highlanders baseball team is becoming. If you ask the players, their words about their new coach sound similar, as if they have read and studied a script.

In a way, they have. The script and guidance Coach Ks is using to direct his young players into maturity on the field, in the classroom and in life.

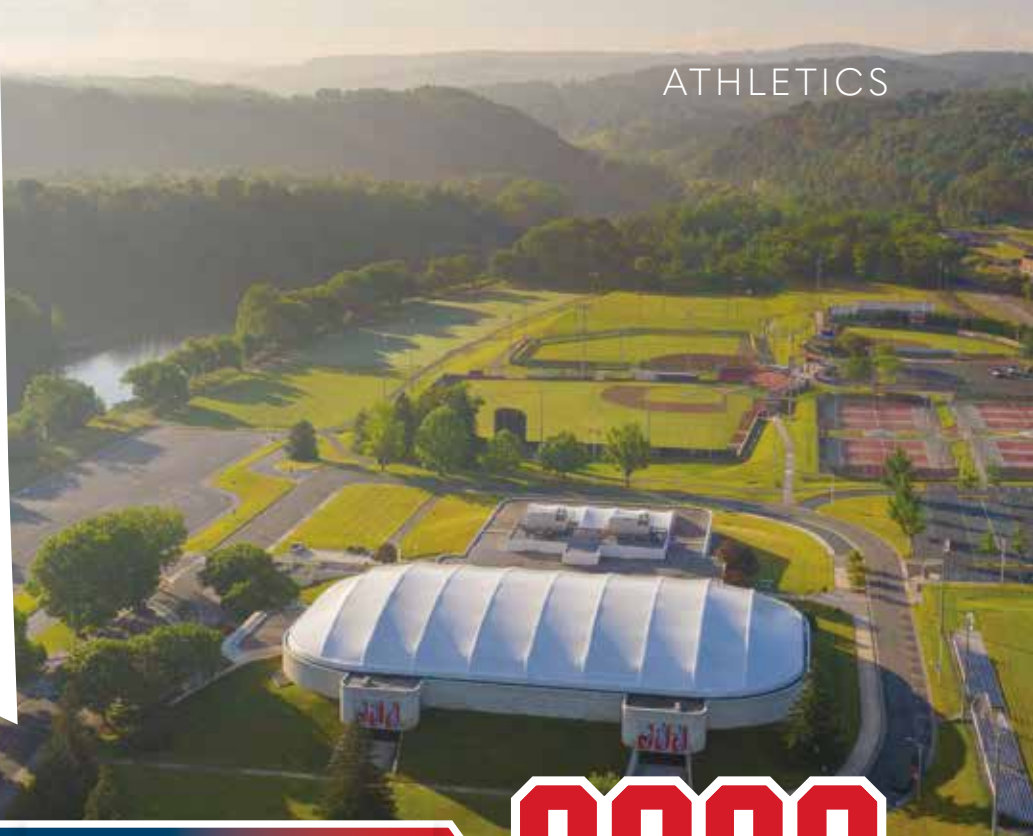
"He treats us like men and talks to us like men," Galati said. "He always tells us that he wants us to be good players, but it's not possible if we aren't good men first. I respect that a lot." 📌



2019-2020

# ATHLETIC ACADEMIC ALL-STARS

This spring, 58 deserving student-athletes received their undergraduate degrees from Radford University. For the 2019-2020 academic year, the average GPA was 3.45.



# 2019

Spring Semester Highlights

# 2020

68%

Big South Honor Roll  
(3.0 or higher)

82%

52%

Dean's List  
(3.4 or higher)

67%

48

Earned a GPA of 4.0

75

15

Athletic programs that had team GPAs over 3.0  
(out of 16)

16

3.6

highest team GPA

Women's soccer and cross country

Team GPA Stats

3.8

highest team GPA

Women's tennis and lacrosse









# THE BIG TIME

After lots of practice — plus dreams, determination, grit and nerves — the Radford University Singers perform at Carnegie Hall.

By Justin Ward '10

## THIS WAS THE LONG-AWAITED MOMENT.

The spotlight was shining brightly on singers from Radford University from one of the world's most famous stages. Every footstep to their marks onstage reverberated through the hall. An audience filled with supporters of the arts watched with anticipation. And, then, their unforgettable moment began.

The voices, seemingly flawless, harmonized on the Ronald O. Perelman Stage at Carnegie Hall in New York City. The impeccably melodic vocalists stood on a platform that has hosted the world's most distinguished musicians. But, for the Radford University Singers, acclaimed now in their own right, this wasn't the time to stand in awe. They were focused on singing the right pitch, watching for cues and listening for harmony





"To be onstage and to hear the women and that ethereal sound of them coming together and all the energy and all that focus... I was in tears"

Meredith Bowen, D.M.A.  
Director of Choral Activities

among their neighbors, all while making history for the University. This marked the first time a group from Radford University has performed on that stage.

The Radford University Singers were performing as part of the National Concerts women's chorus on February 16, 2020. The group was one of five ensembles made up of high school and college singers and was the largest group at the concert. Thirty-nine women traveled to Carnegie Hall from Radford University by bus.

Meredith Bowen, D.M.A., director of choral activities and assistant professor of music at Radford University, soaked in every moment.

"To be onstage and to hear the women and that ethereal sound of them coming together and all the energy and all that focus," Bowen said. "I was in tears, and I do not get that way. It was so moving and a beautiful experience. I think it was life-changing for a lot of people, including myself."

She directed the group onstage and had a perfect view of this experience.

"There is a certain energy that happens when a group comes together with a single focus," Bowen said. "Our hearts start to beat together when we sing together. That's one of the special things about singing in a choir. We're all breathing together, and our hearts beat as one, and everybody without exception was in it to win it."

Bowen helped lead the singers to this remarkable moment thanks to connections she made throughout her accomplished career. Through grants and those connections, she helped commission a friend, composer Andrea Clearfield, D.M.A., to craft a piece that evolved into a 15-minute work with three movements. Other connections led Bowen to National Concerts, a New York City-based company that offers performance collaborations for choirs at Carnegie Hall and other

venues throughout the United States. The company offered to premier Clearfield's piece at Carnegie Hall, and the women of the Radford University Singers started their journey to New York.

Bowen said the vetted group that made the trip jumped on board to an amazing level.

"That's the best they have ever sung. That's the best that any choir has sung since I've been here," Bowen said.

As their voices resonated through the hall, the marquee outside clearly celebrated the momentous occasion. Under the theme of the concert, "What is Home?" was a familiar name that made them all proud to see in person — the Radford University Singers.

It was a surreal moment for Bowen, who once sat high in the hall, far from the stage, dreaming of performing on the stage below. That moment arrived for her and her students from various backgrounds, majors and experiences.

"Singing is a skill, not a talent," Bowen said. "We had at least 10 students onstage at Carnegie who were not music students. That's what a little perseverance, determination and grit can yield."

This was a mountaintop experience for the women. They sang three songs as an ensemble, then collaborated with other groups throughout the performance. The partnerships and connections they made added to the experience.

The singers spent months before the concert perfecting their voices. When they arrived in New York City, they practiced hours more with industry insiders to gain more knowledge of their craft. All this work prepared them for that long-awaited moment.

"That was the energy I've been trying to find for the last four years for these folks. They were all there, singularly focused," Bowen said.



Visit [www.radford.edu/Carnegie-Chorus](http://www.radford.edu/Carnegie-Chorus) to hear the Radford Singers share their songs and stories from Carnegie Hall.











## CIERRA BIRD

"We are in New York City to sing at Carnegie Hall." Words Cierra Bird, now a sophomore, never imagined saying this early in her college career.

**"I'm only 18, and it is an opportunity of a lifetime,"** Bird said. During her first full day in New York City, a day before their Carnegie Hall debut, she and her fellow Radford University Singers were confident they had memorized and practiced enough to make this performance impeccable. Still, nerves were starting to set in just thinking of the upcoming concert and the history-making weight it carried.

"I am nervous a little bit, but I think I am well-prepared enough that I will be fine. If we can just go out there and sing, I think we'll be good," Bird said.

This once-in-a-lifetime opportunity became even rarer when the composer of one piece the ensemble sang, Andrea Clearfield, coached the singers during a practice session at a nearby event space in a hotel blocks away from Carnegie Hall.

"It was really cool to get to know what she went through when she was composing this piece and what she wanted from it. We were able to make her visions come to life, while we were singing," Bird said.

Radford University helped prepare her for this moment by instilling courage and helping her embrace new moments.

"It's just amazing, and I'm very proud to be a Highlander."

## RACHAEL CAHOON '20

Rachael Cahoon '20 ended her undergraduate college years with this magical experience. She double-majored in history and philosophy and religious studies. Her passion for music led her to the Radford University Singers and eventually Carnegie Hall.

"I've been in choir since middle school, and they would mention Carnegie Hall, but it was this faraway magical place," Cahoon said. "Then, I decided my majors, and I said, 'probably won't happen now, but it's such a beautiful place and would be amazing,' and now we're doing it. My mind is constantly, 'oh my goodness.'"

She absorbed every moment, bonding with her Highlander choir sisters as they walked through New York City, saw Broadway musicals and saw the historic building for the first time where they performed.

The magnitude of the experience did not set in until she was on the bus traveling back to Radford

University. She admits the bright lights and tall buildings were overwhelming, but they inspired her to find confidence and courage to finish her semester strong and begin the next chapter as a Radford University graduate.

**"It's a little bittersweet for me,"** Cahoon said. **"I'm about to graduate, and I've made all these friends. It's like one big celebration in New York before I go to grad school."**

She loves learning and stepping outside her comfort zone, and Radford University helped her have new and tangible experiences.

"It makes me very proud to be a Highlander and to be able to show Radford and show the people that this is what Radford can do for people. It can provide them with amazing opportunities, like performing at Carnegie Hall."

## Y'VONNE THOMAS

The glow of the lights from the stage at Carnegie Hall still shines in the eyes of Y'Vonne Thomas, now a junior at Radford University. The soft-spoken music therapy major was blown away by the appearance of the massive concert hall, down to the cushioned seats and the unforgettable sound.

"We sounded amazing. I thought we sounded great. The acoustics in there were amazing. Vibrato, and then when you stopped singing, you could hear it bounce back to you. It was breathtaking," Thomas said.

Photos of past notable performers lined the halls and screens on the walk from a backstage entrance to centerstage. The magnitude of the experience settled in during that walk with the group.

"I saw an animated slideshow, and I was watching it and was like, how did I make it here?" Thomas said.

The answer is simple: perseverance, grit and curiosity, all things Radford University and her director, Meredith Bowen, entrusted within her to reach this moment. This experience was unforgettable for her. It left her speechless as she tried to grasp the enormity of performing on one of the most well-known stages in the world.

**"I could not have asked for a better choir to come to Carnegie Hall and perform with,"** Thomas said. **"For some people, this is like a dream come true for them. Being a Highlander pushes you to do your best, so you can achieve these things."** 📌

# CURTIS BROWN '02

Inspired to serve and committed to protect

By Stephanie D. Overton

**Curtis Brown '02 has been named state coordinator of emergency management at the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM). On June 16, 2020, Governor Ralph Northam appointed Brown to lead VDEM, which advances emergency preparedness and public safety and responds to severe weather and other emergencies across the state. The department also coordinates the Commonwealth's COVID-19 response.**

Brown served more than four years as chief deputy state coordinator prior to taking the helm at VDEM. As state coordinator, he leads the department's work with various state agencies, including the Virginia Department of Health, to coordinate the COVID-19 response by providing resources, such as personal protective equipment (PPE) to healthcare facilities and local governments, increasing public messaging and coordinating various strategies to support the response.

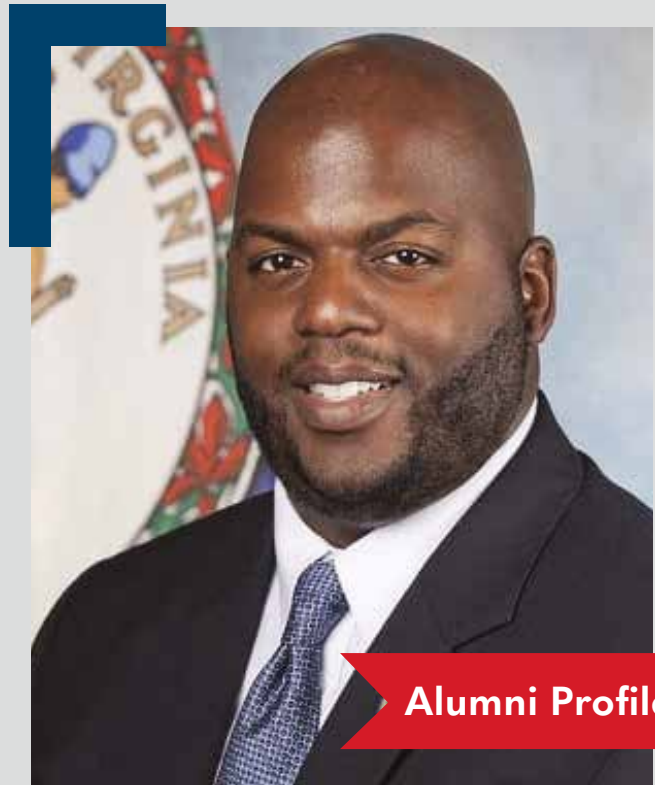
"The COVID-19 disaster is an unprecedented disaster that has impacted the state in numerous ways. The loss of life, health and economic impacts have been felt across the state," said Brown. "A critical priority throughout this response has been to focus on the disproportionate impact of the disaster on people of color, individuals with disabilities and others in at-risk populations."

Brown's work also influences many policy and planning efforts to implement strategies to prevent or mitigate emergencies in the future.

"After the mass shooting at Virginia Tech, I worked with higher education institutions across the state to implement new policies, create new plans and build capabilities to better alert and warn the campus community of emergencies. On Capitol Hill, I worked on a portfolio of issues related to emergency management," said Brown.

His efforts helped pass legislation to ensure first responders have access to critical communication technology used to close gaps identified after 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina. Brown also coordinated efforts that resulted in Virginia receiving a \$120 million grant to assist with building resilience to the impacts of climate change and sea-level rise.

His commitment to service extends beyond his role at VDEM. Brown explained that disasters have a disproportionate impact on people and communities that are more vulnerable due to historic and existing inequities. Making a difference, particularly for these communities, inspired him to co-found the Institute for Diversity and Inclusion in Emergency Management (I-DIEM).



Alumni Profile

"I'm passionate about making a meaningful impact by integrating and leveraging diversity, equity and inclusion in emergency management to build more resilient communities and improve disaster impact for people with disabilities, communities of color and other underserved and at-risk individuals and communities," said Brown. I-DIEM works towards this goal.

As he reflects on the early challenges and experiences that have prepared him for the work of keeping the citizens of Virginia safe, Brown credits the people, opportunities and events that helped shape and inspire him, many of which have been pivotal in honing his commitment to public service.

"The terrorist attack of 9/11 occurred during my senior year at Radford University and while I was serving as the Student Government Association (SGA) president. Of course, it was a very sad time in the nation's history, with a lot of uncertainty," he said. "The SGA believed it was important to promote unity and emphasize the need to affirm the importance of diversity as the campus grieved. Despite the tragedy of that time, it was wonderful to see everyone come together and support one another.

"Radford University provided an opportunity for me to challenge myself and work with others to solve issues."

As Brown leads Virginia's emergency management efforts, it is his commitment to improve the well-being and safety of others. He reflects the Highlander spirit and inspires others to engage in service to their communities. ■



## WEDDINGS, BIRTHS & MORE

### 1970s

**Sherry Schliesser, M.S. '79**, principal at Kingswood Montessori Magnet Elementary School in Cary, North Carolina, celebrated her 50-year anniversary as an educator.

### 1980s

**Frank Dunne '81** was named solutions advisor at ClikFocus in Colorado Springs, Colorado. ClikFocus is a web development company that focuses on custom and semi-custom software.

Roanoke City Manager Bob Cowell named Deputy Chief **Chester R. Smith, Jr. '84** as the city's acting police chief. Smith has served on the Roanoke City police force since 1985.



**Heide Hotchkiss '84**, residential coordinator at Foxcroft School, received the Jane Lockhart Service Award at the school's annual awards assembly.

**John Ashworth '84**

is the new vice president of strategic accounts at YRC Worldwide, Inc., a Fortune 500 company in Atlanta, Georgia.

**Cheryl Hickox '86** was named director of business development at I95 BUSINESS, a regional B2B news platform in Cockeysville, Maryland. Hickox also volunteers at Swim Across America, Inc., Wellness House of Annapolis and Historic Annapolis, Inc.

**Mark Baker '86** is the new president of 101 Mobility, headquartered in Wilmington, North Carolina. Previously, Baker served as the president of franchising at Clockwork Home Services. He also retired from the Army as a lieutenant colonel.

**Eddie Morris '87** joined Mission Essential in Herndon, Virginia, as the senior director of pricing.

Lynchburg (Virginia) City Schools announced that **Rose Flaughter '87** is the new principal at E.C. Glass High School. Flaughter has worked at E.C. Glass since 1999, serving as the athletic director, assistant principal and associate principal.

Encompass Health Rehabilitation Hospital in Morgantown, West Virginia, has chosen **Mark Rader '89** to serve as its new CEO. Rader has 26 years of healthcare experience, including 16 years of experience as a CEO.

**Stacie Marshall '89** started her business, Marshall Arts Photography, serving as a destination wedding photographer based in Richmond, Virginia.

**Doug Johnson '89** was promoted to senior spokesperson at Bonneville Power Administration in Vancouver, Washington. Johnson has worked at Bonneville Power Administration for more than 12 years.

**Marcelo Bravo '89** was promoted from rail industry solutions manager to director of rail business development at Trapeze Group. Bravo has worked for Trapeze Group since 2015.

### 1990s

**Jill Green '90** is returning to Roanoke County Public Schools to serve as the new principal at Northside High School. Previously, Green served as the assistant principal at Northside Middle School and the principal at Glenvar Middle School.

**Sonja Twiford '90** joined Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) as the director of business development for the Department of Energy.

# HOMECOMING 2020

We're  
going  
virtual!

Alumni from across the globe  
are invited to celebrate  
**Radford University's  
Virtual Homecoming 2020!**

**OCTOBER 16-17, 2020**

This year's virtual opportunities will include campus tours, thought-provoking discussions, social activities, milestone class and affinity reunion gatherings, opportunities to hear from President Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D., and more. Enjoy a weekend with Radford, all from the comforts of your home.



A full schedule of activities and online registration will be available this fall at [www.radford.edu/alumni](http://www.radford.edu/alumni).

**Questions?** Call the Office of Alumni Relations toll free at **888-478-4723** or email [alumni@radford.edu](mailto:alumni@radford.edu).

AeroParts Now appointed **Mark Cumm '90** to the newly created position of vice president of sales. Cumm will lead AeroParts Now's global direct and channel sales activities.

**Maria Moore '90** was named the senior vice president of global marketing at HireRight in Irvine, California. In this role, Moore oversees all global marketing functions, strategic alliances and the proposal team. Previously, Moore served as the vice president of marketing at DLT Solutions and vice president of field marketing at Deltek.

**Steve Shelton '91**, a Radford University instructor of health and human performance, was named the Virginia Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (VAHPERD) College/University Physical Educator of the Year for 2019.

**Chad Burke '91** was named IT project manager at Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) in Washington, D.C. Burke manages IT projects as part of the FMCSA IT modernization program. Burke served as a colonel in the Marine Corps Reserve.

**Mike Kopp '91** is the new vice president of channel sales at Unite Private Networks.

**John Lugar '91**, president and co-founder of Virginia Varsity Transfer, Inc., was recognized as one of the region's top entrepreneurs by Junior Achievement of Southwest Virginia, Inc.

**Scott Arthur '91** is the new vice president of business development at QOMPLX in Reston, Virginia. Arthur is also a board member at Attacktica, Inc., a veteran-owned cybersecurity services company, and a managing partner at Diversified Outlook Group LLC.

1901 Group LLC named **Steve Hamric '91** its new chief financial officer. Previously, Hamric served as the chief financial officer of TeraThink Corporation.

**Susan Painter '92** was named director of admissions and marketing at Salem Terrace at Harrogate, a Salem, Massachusetts, retirement community managed by Friendship.

**Luefrans Robinson '92** is the new program manager/senior communication strategist at Organizational Development Resource Group LLC of Arlington, Virginia.



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**682**

students received scholarship support,  
because of the generosity of private donors.

*"I am so incredibly grateful to have been the recipient for this scholarship, I will continue to persevere and push myself to reach my fullest potential and be the dancer that I am motivated to be. Your support through this scholarship drives my determination to succeed."*

Madeline Blair '22, Dance Major  
College of Visual and Performing Arts  
Recipient of the Bethany Lorraine Rooker Dance Scholarship

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all members  
of the Class of 1970!*

Plan to participate in your Golden Reunion activities during Radford University's Virtual Homecoming on **October 16-17, 2020**. This year's unique opportunity will allow you and your classmates from across the globe to engage from the comfort of your own homes. Let us know if you need help with Zoom technology. Call the Office of Alumni Relations toll-free at **888-478-4723** or email [alumni@radford.edu](mailto:alumni@radford.edu).





Jared Tyler Hutchens '19 married McKenzie Lea Moore '19 on December 22, 2019.



Karishma Tovey '08 and Michael Tovey welcomed their son, Blaine Tovey, on April 25, 2019.

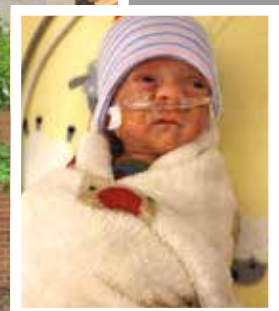
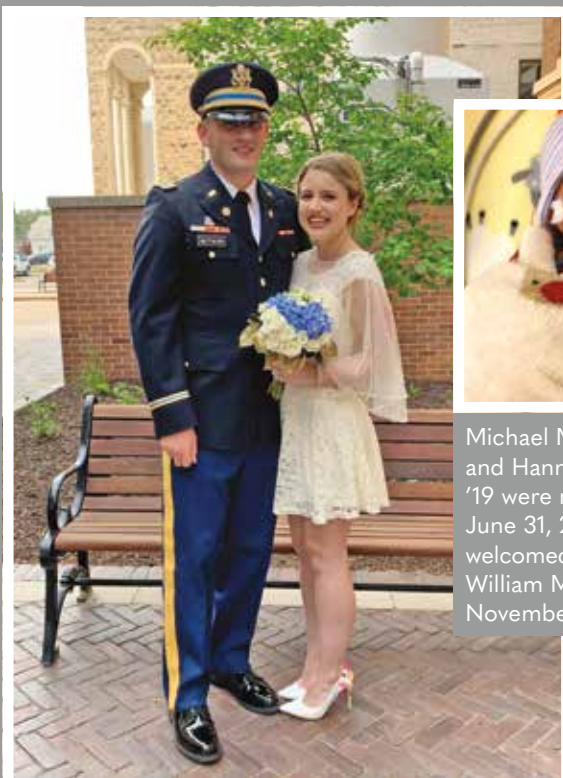


Jesse Lykins '15 married Jesse St. Jean '16 on June 11, 2016.



Photo courtesy of Jay Dee Photography

Kara Clark '10 married Robert Carrington on May 10, 2020.



Michael Matthews '18 and Hannah Matthews '19 were married on June 31, 2019. They welcomed a son, Kayden William Matthews, on November 17, 2019.

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.



**Susan Badger '92**, coordinator of the secondary learning center in Franklin County Public Schools, is pursuing a doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies from Virginia Tech.

**Ashleigh Griffin '93** was named director of wholesale services at CoreTel Communications in Austin, Texas.

The Carroll County (Virginia) Board of Education Sulphur Spring District has a new member, **Bill Sturgill '94**.

**Bret Gauthier '94** was named vice president and talent acquisition consultant at MUFJ in Arlington, Texas.

**Dana Truxell '94** started a new position as an account manager at World Kinect Energy Service.

**Melissa Racklin '95** joined Zeta Global as the vice president of enterprise business development. Previously, Racklin served as the vice president of enterprise business development at Epsilon.

**Tim Buhler '95** has been promoted to managing director of sales and relationship management at Oakbrook Solutions in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. Buhler has worked at Oakbrook Solutions for 14 years.

**Jennifer Keating '96** was named director for the U.S. Public Sector Partner organization at Cisco in Herndon, Virginia.

**Brian Breedlove '96** is now the security/executive protection specialist at Rees-Jones Holdings LLC in Dallas, Texas. Previously, Breedlove served as the executive protection specialist for BP Capital.

**Jason Goyanko '97** started a new position as a corporate team building instructor at The Trident Approach in Imperial Beach, California. Goyanko is also a freelance drone pilot for GBC Remodeling, a home remodeling business.

**Lee Morton '97** was named enterprise account manager at Nutanix in Washington, D.C.

**Richard Veal '97** is now an associate partner of market research and strategic consulting at Magnolia Innovation in the greater New York City area. In this role, Veal partners with leading biopharma manufacturers and health innovation leaders to develop market research and deliver insights and intelligence.

**Jenn Jordan '97** is the new senior manager of benefits at Extreme Networks in North Carolina.



**Jane Bolin '97**, Vice Mayor of Oakland Park, Florida, has been appointed as chair of the global governance committee for the Entrepreneurs' Organization. Bolin is the first woman to assume this role.

ESPN sports reporter **Marty Smith '98** was named The Roanoke Times Sports Person of the Decade.

**Kyle Brown '98** has been promoted to president of RDR, Inc. in Centreville, Virginia. RDR, Inc. is a privately held security specialist firm.

**Karen M. Peterson '98** started a position as chief marketing officer with Lenidio in Utah. Lenidio is the nation's leading marketplace for small business loans.

**Charlesiah McLean '99** joined Novartis in the Washington, D.C., metro area as head of talent acquisition, diversity and inclusion.

## 2000s

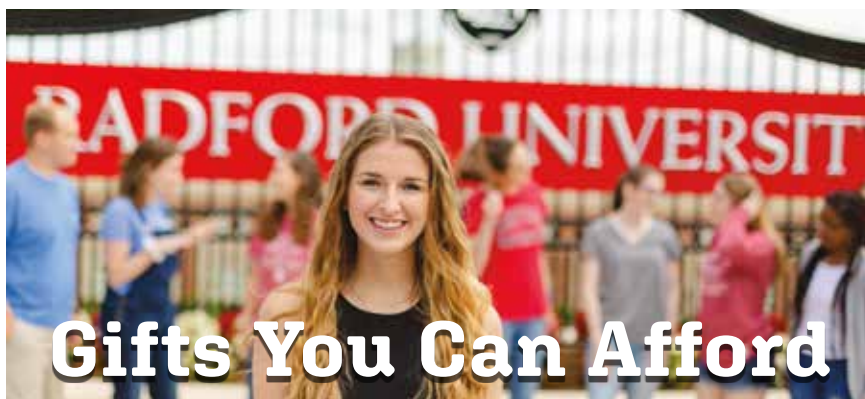
Founder and president of Bridger Consulting LLC **Shannon Price '00** has a new role as senior business developer of commercial maintenance at Lindgren Landscape of Fort Collins, Colorado.



Capehart Scatchard welcomed **Geoffrey Stark '00** to its School Law Department as a shareholder in its Mount Laurel, New Jersey, office. Previously, Stark

served as a deputy attorney general in the Education and Higher Education Section of the New Jersey Office of the Attorney General.

**Alex Mereish '01** was promoted to senior vice president and market manager for PNC Business Banking in Indiana, Missouri, Central Illinois and Southwest Michigan. Based in Indianapolis, he will oversee a team of bankers serving clients in small business, agriculture and healthcare.



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

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- 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 '79 at 540-831-6172 or visit <https://radford.giftlegacy.com>.



**Michael Burton '02** is now the vice president of land development at Lennar in Washington, D.C. Lennar is one of the nation's leading homebuilders.



**John B. Massey '02, M.S. '05**, graduated from the U.S. Air War College in May 2020.

**Emily Hale Toalson '03, M.S. '08**, was named director of major gifts at the Children's Hospital Foundation in Richmond, Virginia.

The Bank of Fincastle welcomed **Brooke Miller '03** to its team as a commercial loan officer. Miller has worked in banking for 17 years with experience at Bank of America, Wells Fargo and First Citizens Bank.

**Patrick Malecky '04** has been named chief revenue officer at CompRecovery, Inc. in Richmond, Virginia.

Davis & Elkins College faculty member **Melissa A. McCoy '04** has been promoted to professor of nursing and appointed director of the Davis & Elkins associate degree program in nursing. McCoy has been teaching in Elkins, West Virginia since 2004 and is currently pursuing a Ph.D. from West Virginia University.

**Christopher Lewis '05, M.S. '10**, is now a senior consultant at Deloitte Consulting. Previously, Lewis spent six years serving the Federal Bureau of Investigation as a human resources specialist.

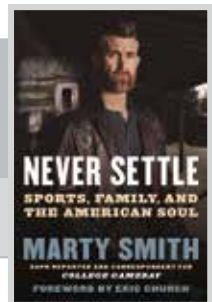
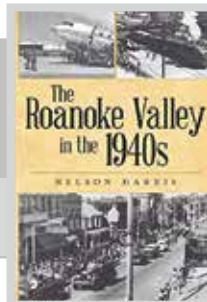
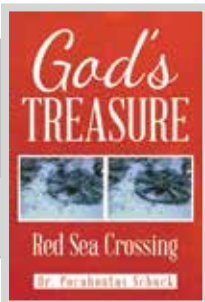
**Christopher Davidson '06, M.S. '08**, was named postdoctoral research and policy analyst for the West Virginia Higher Education Policy Commission. Previously, Davidson served as a postdoctoral research associate for the Postsecondary Education Research Center (PERC) at University of Tennessee.

**Bradley Guin '06** is the new senior director of product management at Jellyfish in Brighton, United Kingdom.

The Henry County (Virginia) School Board selected Sanville Elementary principal **Elizabeth Motley '06** to be the new principal of Drewry Mason Elementary.

**Mary Gary-Ford '06**, ICAC detective for the City of Richmond Police Department, currently serves on the Southern Virginia Internet Crimes Against Children (SOVA ICAC) Taskforce, Child Exploitation Taskforce and FBI Joint Child Abduction Rapid Deployment Team (JCARD).

**Emily Wise VanderWoude '06** and Seaton VanderWoude announced the birth of Danielle Frances, born on July 31, 2019. Emily was also recently appointed to the Frederick (Maryland) Public Art Commission for a three-year term (2019-2022).



## ALUMNI AUTHORS

**Pocahontas Simpkins Schuck '62** published her first book, "God's Treasure: Red Sea Crossing," in May 2020.

**Jacqueline Davis Allen '66** published her third book, "No Illusions: Through the Looking Glass."

Henrico Schools librarians **Ann Martin '69** and Kathleen Roberts have written a book for school librarians, which they debuted at their presentation on leadership during the American Association of School Librarians' national conference in Louisville, Kentucky.

**Marcy Brenner '84** and Kristin Donnan released a book, "A Baker's Daughter: Recipes & Memories from a Family Bakery," which tells the story of a bakery run by Brenner's father, Max. The book fuses a memoir and cookbook, alternating between recipes and the story of the Brenner family.

Local historian and former mayor of Roanoke **Nelson Harris '87** has partnered with the Roanoke Public Library Foundation on his new book, "The Roanoke Valley in the 1940s," to be released this year.

"Never Settle: Sports, Family, and the American Soul" shares the amazing and blessed life of popular ESPN reporter and correspondent for College GameDay **Marty Smith '98**, whose mission in this thoughtful and funny memoir is to return fans to the true soul of sports in this country. "Never Settle" includes all the best stories and behind-the-scenes moments from Marty's interesting life, covering topics that include college football, racing, fathers and sons, how sports can bring us together and how it all goes back to growing up on a farm and playing high school ball in Pearisburg, Virginia.

**Shai Cullop '06, M.S. '08**, and Meredith Oldham Cullop welcomed the birth of Grayson Nathaniel on June 22, 2017.

**Arthur Vašarević '06, MBA '08**, started a new position as a country general manager at Schneider Electric in Croatia.

**Patrick Becker '06** is the new defense and security sales manager at Western Shelter.

**TJ Banasik '07** has been named senior program manager at Microsoft.

Artwork by **Tina Butterfield '07** was purchased by the state of New Mexico and will be permanently displayed in the Hobbs Allied Health Nursing Building at New Mexico Junior College.

**Robert Allen Burns '08** and wife Chelsea Shields Burns welcomed the birth of their daughter, Francesca Victoria Burns, on April 5, 2019.

**Karishma Tovey '08** and Michael Tovey welcomed their son, Blaine Tovey, on April 25, 2019. See photograph on page 73.

**Tyler Sigmon, M.S. '09**, started a new position as a marketing and communications coordinator at PCI in Columbia, Maryland.

**Erin Brooks Rowe '09** was promoted from interior designer to market manager at SMBW, PLLC in Richmond, Virginia.

**Bryan Wood '09** joined Altria in Richmond, Virginia, as a data analyst in the corporate audit department.

## 2010s

**Kara Clark '10** married Robert Carrington on May 10, 2020, in an intimate outdoor ceremony at a private residence in Murrells Inlet, South Carolina. The wedding ceremony was followed by an outdoor reception overlooking the Inlet at sunset. See photograph on page 73.

**Katie Meier '11** joined FirstHealth Hospice & Palliative Care in Pinehurst, North Carolina, as a community liaison.

**Krystle Virginia Smart '11** and Brett Jason Werblow were married on April 26, 2019, at King Family Vineyards in Charlottesville, Virginia.

**Daniel Testerman '11, '13** was named assistant director of campus safety and security at Hollins University in Roanoke, Virginia.

**Mike Gartland '11, M.S.W. '13**, joined the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs as a licensed clinical social worker.

**Nicole Gwanzura '12, MBA '13**, was promoted from coordinator of college programs to program manager of undergraduate programs at Forte Foundation in Washington, D.C.

The Town of Christiansburg has named **Alicia Dials, MBA '13**, the new human resources director. Previously, Dials worked in various human resources roles at Radford University for more than 12 years.

**Gabe Guglielmo '13** joined Zscaler as a regional sales manager in Raleigh, North Carolina.

**Evan Scott '14** began his first season as a full-time NBA official in September 2019 after officiating nine regular season games as a non-staff official. Prior to 2019, Scott officiated three seasons in the NBA G League and had five years of college officiating experience in the Big South, ODAC and Capitol Athletic conferences.

**Emily Normandy '14** is the new manager of strategic communications and outreach at the Space Foundation in Washington, D.C.

**Jesse Lykins '15** married **Jesse St. Jean '16** on June 11, 2016 in Floyd, Virginia. Lykins and St. Jean met at Radford University, where they both obtained degrees in music and performed together in several ensembles, including their favorite: jazz band. See photograph on page 73.

**Julian Young '15** joined Thycotic in Washington, D.C. as the manager of business development representatives.



The Twin County Chamber of Commerce in Galax, Virginia welcomed **Laura Whitt '15** as its new executive director.

**Jordan Eagle '16** was awarded a Chandra X-ray Observatory pre-doctoral fellowship to study the origins of cosmic rays at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics (CfA) in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

**Jimmy Eavers '16** started a new position as an energy consultant at Sigora Solar in Charlottesville, Virginia. Previously, Eavers served as a site acquisition project coordinator and site acquisition specialist at Shentel.

**Jamie Summers '16** was promoted from corporate account manager to enterprise account manager at HashiCorp in London, United Kingdom.

**Mark Tanner '16** joined American Express as a field marketing agent in Norfolk, Virginia.

**Anna Graham '16** was featured in Professional Remodeler magazine as an awardee of the 2020 Forty Under 40. Graham launched her company, Anna Graham Interiors, in December 2018.

**Michael Matthews '18** and **Hannah Matthews '19** were married on June 31, 2019. The Matthews welcomed a son, Kayden William Matthews, on November 17, 2019. See photograph on page 73.

**Maddie White '18** has been promoted to assistant director of operations at Rhino Sports & Entertainment Services in Lynchburg, Virginia. Previously, White served as an account operations assistant and as event staff.

**Athena Beidler '18** has been promoted to in-charge accountant at Lanigan, Ryan, Malcolm & Doyle, P.C. in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

**Jared Tyler Hutchens '19** married **McKenzie Lea Moore '19** on December 22, 2019. Hutchens graduated from Officer Candidate School and was commissioned into the U.S. Marines Corps as a second lieutenant. He then graduated from The Basic School and is now stationed in Twentynine Palms, California, where he is finishing training as a communications officer. Moore started her nursing career at Inova Health System in Loudoun, Virginia, and is now working in an emergency room in southern California. See photograph on page 73.

**Jarid Weddle '19** is now the digital marketing account manager at Practice Promotions in Richmond, Virginia.

**John Laufer '19** accepted a sales development representative position at Squelch, a customer experience optimization software company based in Redwood City, California.



## OBITUARIES

### 1930s

**Mary M. Whitmore '36** of Frederick, Maryland, November 5, 2019.

### 1940s

**Virginia E. Quillen '43** of Waynesboro, Virginia, August 8, 2019.

**Rheda Dalton Wheeler '43** of Narrows, Virginia, November 23, 2019.

**Virginia Ramsey Layman '43** of Stuarts Draft, Virginia, December 29, 2019.

**Dorothy E. Haynes '44** of Tulsa, Oklahoma, September 21, 2019.

**Reba A. Hicks '47** of Virginia Beach, Virginia, June 25, 2020.

**Geneva Hodges '48** of Danville, Virginia, November 22, 2019.

**Anne Y. Morris '48** of Chesapeake, Virginia, February 1, 2020.

**Mary F. Datig '49** of Gate City, Virginia, August 16, 2019.

**Bobby J. Wampler '49** of Wytheville, Virginia, October 26, 2019.

**Carolyn V. Eggleston '49** of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, December 21, 2019.

### 1950s

**Jean Layne Blankenship '51** of Pulaski, Virginia, June 28, 2019.

**Gertrude C. Gillespie '51** of Pearisburg, Virginia, August 23, 2019.

**Peggy H. Cirelli '51** of Radford, Virginia, November 13, 2019.

**Estelle Davis '51** of Virginia Beach, March 23, 2020.

**Hallie V. Currin '51** of Hillsville, Virginia, March 12, 2020.

**Eunice I. Starkey '51** of Java, Virginia, April 4, 2020.

**Katie M. Compton '51** of Charlottesville, Virginia, April 21, 2020.

**Ann E. Jones '52** of Winchester, Virginia, January 2, 2020.

**Alice M. Meacom '52** of Chesapeake, Virginia, May 13, 2020.

**Elliuise R. Little '53** of Dallas, Texas, October 7, 2019.

**Mary T. Thomas '53** of Richmond, Virginia, February 8, 2020.

**Elizabeth A. Ramsay '54** of Wilmington, Delaware, November 5, 2019.

**Mary L. Winton '54** of Oak Ridge, Tennessee, February 16, 2020.

**Doris L. Gross '55** of Roanoke, Virginia, December 20, 2019.

**Mary E. Prior '56** of Lexington Park, Maryland, November 6, 2019.

**Betty Mabry '56** of Pembroke, Virginia, January 30, 2020.

**Mary R. Gallimore '56** of Williamsburg, Virginia, April 20, 2020.

**Barbara M. Hassell '57** of Bedford, Virginia, September 28, 2019.

**Elizabeth A. Sumner '58** of Richmond, Virginia, September 17, 2019.

**Louwanda J. Bryant '58** of Ladson, South Carolina, January 1, 2020.

**Valla Ree Lawson Myers '59** of Daleville, Virginia, October 26, 2019.

**Glenda Dalton '59, M.S. '70**, of Hillsville, Virginia, July 7, 2020.

**Opal Martin '59, M.S. '77**, of Salem, Virginia, December 1, 2019.

### 1960s

**Marguerite A. Crews '60** of Roanoke, Virginia, November 4, 2019.

**Myrna F. Rockwell '60, M.S. '67**, of Petersburg, Virginia, November 5, 2019.

**Wilma G. Egas '60** of Virginia Beach, Virginia, December 26, 2019.

**Doris R. Bardusch '60** of Yorktown, Virginia, March 26, 2020.

**Amanda Hanks '61, M.S. '67**, of Franklin, Virginia, January 1, 2020.

**Joyce D. McLemore '61** of Roanoke, Virginia, April 28, 2020.

**Jean Piercy Chestnutt '61** of Williamsburg, Virginia, May 26, 2020.

**Vada L. Boyd '62, M.S. '66**, of Fairlawn, Virginia, January 3, 2020.

**Elizabeth H. Lamons '62** of Roanoke, Virginia, May 15, 2020.

**Anne D. Smith '63** of Moneta, Virginia, February 26, 2020.

**Margaret A. Amos '64**, of Critz, Virginia, October 4, 2019.

**Shirley G. Vasy '64** of Harrisonburg, Virginia, October 27, 2019.

**Wilton M. Rhea, M.S. '64**, of Saltville, Virginia, February 19, 2020.

**Martha C. McConnell '64** of Chester, New Jersey, May 24, 2020.

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

**Robert L. Fariss, M.S. '65**, of Roanoke, Virginia, January 12, 2020.

**Gilbert C. Brittle, M.S. '65**, of Bowling Green, Virginia, March 10, 2020.

**Joanne Self Paugh-Payne '66** of Madison Heights, Virginia, September 1, 2019.

**Omar G. Ross, M.S. '66**, of Christiansburg, Virginia, October 5, 2019.

**J. L. Williams '66** of Crofton, Maryland, February 20, 2020.

**Elizabeth C. Brooks '66** of Roanoke, Virginia, April 19, 2020.

**Linda S. Duncan '66, M.S. '69**, of Fredericksburg, Virginia, December 4, 2019.

**Patricia Shields '67** of Sterling, Virginia, April 20, 2020.

**William L. Dail, M.S. '67**, of Lynchburg, Virginia, January 13, 2020.



**Barbara-lyn Belcher '65** of Wintergreen, Virginia, passed away on July 24, 2020, after a brief illness. Upon receiving her English degree, Belcher's love of language fueled a career of almost four decades as an educator and leader. She loved her alma mater and shared the stories of Radford wherever possible. In 2010, Radford University was honored to have Belcher serve as co-chair of the Centennial Committee and the yearlong celebration.



**Ann M. Rice '79**, of Fairfax, Virginia, passed away on January 11, 2020, at the age of 62. Rice was a member of the women's tennis and basketball teams. Described as "well-respected and very kind" by her peers, Rice was a part of the first wave of women competing in collegiate athletics following the passing of Title IX and a prime example of the benefits of sport on the lives of women. She graduated with a Bachelor of Science

degree in social work and spent her 31-year career as a social worker for Fairfax County Public Schools. Rice is survived by her six siblings and many nieces and nephews. In June 2020, with contributions from her family, the Ann M. Rice '79 Memorial Scholarship for Women's Tennis was established. The scholarship will be gifted to a member of the Radford women's tennis team in good academic standing, preferably studying social work. To contribute to the scholarship, please contact Penny White '85, MBA '87, at 540-831-5344 or pwhite@radford.edu.

**Robert R. Young, M.S. '67**, of Radford, Virginia, March 17, 2020.

**Carl R. Tacy, M.S. '67**, of Winston-Salem, North Carolina, April 2, 2020.

**Merry A. Rucci '67** of West Hartford, Connecticut, May 2, 2020.

**Carol J. Tuning '68** of Frankfort, Kentucky, December 3, 2019.

**Martha L. Shelton '68, M.S. '77**, of Pulaski, Virginia, January 11, 2020.

**Victoria Fuller Thacker '69** of Roanoke, Virginia, November 26, 2019.

**Patricia Elizabeth Ingham Barrett** of Pilot, Virginia, November 28, 2019.

**Janie C. Hinson '69** of Catawba, Virginia, December 19, 2019.

**Dawn M. Gill, M.S. '69**, of Roanoke, Virginia, December 20, 2019.

**Sally F. Blanchard '69** of Williamsburg, Virginia, February 22, 2020.

## 1970s

**Rosa F. Satterfield '70** of South Boston, Virginia, April 28, 2020.

**Barbara B. Langford, M.S. '71**, of Salisbury, North Carolina, November 19, 2019.

**Susan E. Spotts '71** of Fishersville, Virginia, February 27, 2020.

**Elizabeth D. Cochran '72** of Christiansburg, Virginia, September 30, 2019.

**Linda L. Coleman '72, M.S. '80**, of Roanoke, Virginia, December 28, 2019.

**Nina Giles '72, M.S. '89**, of Chatham, Virginia, January 6, 2020.

**Charles A. VanLear, M.S. '73**, of Roanoke, Virginia, May 18, 2019.

**Elizabeth A. Toms '73** of Clarks Green, Pennsylvania, April 11, 2020.

**William Glenn Clingempeel, M.A. '73**, of Florence, South Carolina, December 23, 2019.

**Donald R. Massie, M.S. '74**, of Blacksburg, Virginia, October 18, 2019.

**Cynthia Sue Fisher '74** of Roanoke, Virginia, May 23, 2019.

**Harold D. Miller, M.A. '74**, of Lexington, North Carolina, May 2, 2020.

**Carol S. Brenner '75** of Fincastle, Virginia, October 14, 2019.

**Elizabeth B. Graham '75** of Radford, Virginia, September 17, 2019.

**Sally A. Pierce '75** of Blacksburg, Virginia, September 25, 2019.

**Frances Dirks Davis '75** of Mechanicsville, Virginia, February 4, 2020.

**Hannah J. Hobbs-Roulstone '75** of Alexandria, Virginia, May 26, 2020.

**Mary L. Burnley, M.S. '75**, of Roanoke, Virginia, June 12, 2020.

**Vicky F. Smedley '76, M.S. '81**, of Bedford, Virginia, December 2, 2019.

**Shirley Peterson '76** of Hiwassee, Virginia, December 29, 2019.

**Rosanna Reaser, M.S. '77**, of Princeton, West Virginia, April 28, 2020.

**John E. Watts, M.S. '77**, of West Jefferson, North Carolina, June 9, 2020.

**Victoria C. Sullivan '78** of Reston, Virginia, April 1, 2020.

**Thomas M. Huggins '78** of Bristol, Virginia, June 26, 2020.

**Richard K. Culbertson, M.S. '79**, of Blacksburg, Virginia, January 24, 2020.

**Ruth A. Bryant '79** of Wytheville, Virginia, February 8, 2020.

**Betsy A. Brendle '79, M.S. '81**, of State Road, North Carolina, March 3, 2020.



## 1980s

**Terry W. Lowery '80** of Christiansburg, Virginia, November 13, 2019.

**Julie Elizabeth Scherrep '81** of Roanoke, Virginia, February 5, 2020.

**Steven D. Watson, M.S. '81**, of Radford, Virginia, March 19, 2020.

**Gwendolyn S. Tinsley '83** of Richmond, Virginia, April 18, 2020.

**James B. Link '83** of Newport, Virginia, June 26, 2020.

**Charles A. Downs '84** of Cincinnati, Ohio, February 17, 2020.

**Paul E. Bishop '85** of Graham, North Carolina, February 21, 2020.

**Wanda S. Smith '86** of Roanoke, Virginia, August 15, 2019.

**William B. Mowe '86** of Lawrenceville, Georgia, April 26, 2020.

**Russell C. Capps '89** of Kensington, Maryland, August 19, 2019.

**Timothy R. White '89, MBA '91**, of Fredericksburg, Virginia, June 20, 2020.

## 1990s

**Debra S. Tudor '90** of Bumpass, Virginia, January 3, 2020.

**Janet P. Harrell '91** of Meadows of Dan, Virginia, May 15, 2020.

**Christopher R. Hodges '92** of Roanoke, Virginia, August 18, 2019.

**David D. Jervey, MBA '92**, of Radford, Virginia, May 2, 2020.

**Grace Leary, M.S. '93**, of Radford, Virginia, February 16, 2020.

**Benjamin M. Woods '95** of Ferrum, Virginia, July 5, 2020.

**Jennifer Lynn Elia '96** of Leesburg, Virginia, March 10, 2020.

**Tony D. Moser '97** of Danville, Virginia, June 24, 2020.

**Aaron H. Faulkner '98** of Bland, Virginia, March 29, 2020.



**Richard A. Baynton, MBA '98**, of Roanoke, Virginia, March 20, 2020.

**Karen D. Winesett, M.S. '98**, of Galax, Virginia, July 6, 2020.

## 2000s

**Joseph D. Parker '05** of Roanoke, Virginia, November 16, 2019.

**John K. Purifoy, M.S. '08**, of Bristol, Virginia, November 6, 2019.

**Bradley J. Mitchell '08** of Chantilly, Virginia, May 8, 2020.

## 2010s

**Erin M. McPherson '11** of Alexandria, Virginia, September 13, 2019.

**Jacob S. Pillis, M.S. '15**, of Salem, Virginia, April 10, 2020.

**Brooke D. Riley '16** of Middletown, Maryland, October 29, 2019.

**Scott W. Ratigan '19** of Gainesville, Virginia, January 17, 2020.

**Katherine J. Harris '19** of Salem, Virginia, February 5, 2020.

**Mercedes D. Scales '19** of Falls Church, Virginia, June 7, 2020.

## Students

**Aris E. Lobo Perez** of Culpeper, Virginia, September 12, 2019.

**Wayne T. Swain** of Roanoke, Virginia, December 15, 2019.

**Kyle Glenn Landis** of Stephens City, Virginia, January 25, 2020.

## Non-Degreed

**Gwendolyn Hope Douty Hepp** of Springfield, Virginia, August 16, 2019.

**Christopher L. Vail** of Troutville, Virginia, August 16, 2019.

**Christopher M. Olenik** of Los Angeles, California, September 9, 2019.

**Charmaine Hahn Downs** of Bardstow, Kentucky, September 21, 2019.

**Elizabeth A. Ramsay** of Wilmington, Delaware, November 5, 2019.

**Carolyn V. Eggleston** of Bassett, Virginia, December 21, 2019.

**Edward T. Van Lear II** of Christiansburg, Virginia, December 21, 2019.

## Faculty/Staff

**Richard E. Worringham** of Christiansburg, Virginia, September 27, 2019.

**John P. Helm** of Saint Charles, Missouri, September 30, 2019.

**Alice C. Bond** of New River, Virginia, November 19, 2019.

**Juergen Gerlach** of Radford, Virginia, November 11, 2019.

**Elizabeth Ann Dawson Campbell** of Floyd, Virginia, November 16, 2019.

**Patricia Elizabeth Ingham Barrett** of Pilot, Virginia, November 28, 2019.

**Troy D. Arnold** of Pulaski, Virginia, December 3, 2019.

**John J. Bradstreet** of Andover, New York, December 28, 2019.

**John M. McPhail** of Matthews, North Carolina, January 2, 2020.

**Raymond R. Kirby** of Floyd, Virginia, January 27, 2020.

**Sean M. McDonough** of Jacksonville, North Carolina, January 30, 2020.

**Bobby R. Hickman** of Pulaski, Virginia, February 4, 2020.

**Jo H. Thomas** of Dublin, Virginia, March 6, 2020.

**Rebecca T. Hamilton** of Parrott, Virginia, March 11, 2020.

**Mary S. David** of Venice, Florida, April 17, 2020.

**Patricia L. Hix** of Dublin, Virginia, June 3, 2020.

## Friends

**Thomas L. Tilley** of Radford, Virginia, September 21, 2019.

**Gordon Clinton King Jr.** of Charlotte, North Carolina, September 25, 2019.

**Jacqueline L. Painter** of Fairlawn, Virginia, October 27, 2019.

**Bittle Wilson Porterfield III** of Roanoke, Virginia, November 29, 2019.

**Robert D. Suess** of Neenah, Wisconsin, December 22, 2019.

**Russell L. Davis** of Elkton, Virginia, February 7, 2020.

**Lilli Hawes** of Radford, Virginia, February 10, 2020.



R.S.  
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MOVING FORWARD, WITH RESILIENCE AND HOPE  
As students, they supported a war effort at home and dealt with the effects of a global pandemic on campus. As graduates, the Class of 1920 looked to a brighter future.

2020



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