

HONOR *the* FUTURE THE CAMPAIGN FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

ENVISION

FALL 2024

NEUROSCIENCE CONNECTIONS

University researchers will pioneer life-changing advances in neuroscience while also mapping the workings of the human brain.



VIRGINIA VISION

THE HARDIE FOOTBALL OPERATIONS CENTER INSPIRES EXCELLENCE

FIVE QUESTIONS

ARTS & SCIENCES DEAN CHRISTA ACAMPORA SHARES HER ANSWERS

WITH HEART AND RIGOR

ETHICAL LEADERSHIP GUIDES DARDEN ALUMNA MANDY LOZANO

MAKING HIS MARK

RUSSELL H. AND LAURA LEE TURNER BICENTENNIAL SCHOLAR BRIAN DOUGLAS

12 BEST WISHES FOR THE FUTURE

Dr. Ken Botsford and Nina Botsford commit to neurology and neuroscience at UVA.



ENVISION

FALL 2024
VOL. XXXIII

Through storytelling, design, and video, Envision illustrates the power of philanthropy across the University by showing the many ways in which alumni, parents, and friends demonstrate their devotion to—and play a vital role in—the life of this institution.

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CAMPAIGN MOMENTUM

As a place dedicated to community, discovery, and service, the University is committed to remaining a leader in higher education and serving the common good. The Honor the Future Campaign supports this commitment, inspiring initiatives across Grounds that strengthen the public and create a better future for all.

CELEBRATING



IN GIFTS

Many continue to support the University of Virginia in its mission to serve the world through teaching, research, and patient care. The thousands of gifts made by alumni, parents, and friends each year are an indispensable source of support for the University of Virginia.

THE COMBINED IMPACT OF THE
BICENTENNIAL SCHOLARS AND
PROFESSORS FUNDS HAS REACHED

\$ **1.2** BILLION
AS OF JULY 2024

BICENTENNIAL SCHOLARS FUND

The University of Virginia remains committed to investing in scholarships, which help provide financial security, educational opportunities, and a solid foundation for our most promising students. The University's matching fund initiative continues to encourage gifts for bicentennial scholarships and increase access and affordability. The success of the matching fund program is due to the many alumni, parents, and friends who have given generously to honor the future of our students.

TOTAL IMPACT WITH MATCHING FUNDS

\$645
MILLION **643** NEW ENDOWED
SCHOLARSHIPS

AS OF JULY 2024

BICENTENNIAL PROFESSORS FUND

With substantial support for endowed bicentennial professorships, UVA is recruiting and retaining research and teaching faculty who are proven leaders in their fields—world-class scholars across disciplines who are driving the great advances of this century. Response to the matching opportunities of the Bicentennial Professors Fund has resulted in attracting these talented experts who sustain the University's tradition of outstanding teaching and groundbreaking research.

TOTAL IMPACT WITH MATCHING FUNDS

\$528
MILLION **133** NEW ENDOWED
PROFESSORSHIPS

AS OF JULY 2024

MILESTONE GIFTS

Gifts honoring the future across Grounds are advancing priorities that support President Jim Ryan's vision for UVA to become the best public university by 2030 and one of the very best in the world. The campaign promises to transform the student experience, strengthen support for faculty, and accelerate innovation and discovery.

“This campaign has shown, repeatedly and profoundly, the ties that bind us and make this UVA family special.”

—JIM RYAN, PRESIDENT

Dr. Carol R. Angle made a gift to endow the Daniel M. Becker Professorship in Geriatric Research and create the Matthew J. Goodman M.D. Geriatric Research Seed Fund. Her investment will enable the Department of Medicine's Division of General, Geriatric, Palliative & Hospital Medicine to support a leading investigator in geriatrics research. It will also provide critical resources for the chair holder to advance the most promising geriatrics research within the division and across UVA Health.

Michael S. Augins (Darden '99) made a gift through his estate to provide support for the Michael S. Augins Bicentennial Scholarship Fund for students pursuing a Darden education with an interest in entrepreneurship and innovation.

Stephen E. Bachand (Darden '63) and his wife, **Phyllis Bachand**, created the Stephen E. Bachand University Professorship Fund to increase Darden's momentum in business ethics, extend the impact to the University, and educate ethical business leaders for our society.

John J. Bradshaw Jr. (Arch '84) and **Jane H. Bradshaw (Col '85)** increased their bequest to benefit several areas across Grounds, including the College of Arts & Sciences, the Jefferson Trust, the School of Architecture, the Alumni Association, athletics, and historic preservation.

Mark E. Galant (McIntire '80) and his wife, **Cynthia Terry Galant (Col '80)**, made a gift to the McIntire Expansion Project and established a bequest for the

benefit of the school. The Galants' generosity has been critical to the success of the McIntire School's Galant Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship and the annual Galant Challenge, which has grown into one of the largest collegiate start-up funding vehicles in the U.S.

The Law School Foundation raised more than \$5 million from alumni and friends to establish a distinguished professorship in honor of (now former) **Dean Risa Goluboff**. During her eight years of leadership, the School of Law met its \$400 million campaign goal 15 months early, with the support and participation of more than 72% of law alumni.

John B. Koch (Engr '85) and **Anne M. Koch** have provided generous support to endow the John B. and Anne M. Koch Jefferson Scholars Foundation Distinguished Professorship in Systems and Information Engineering, which will elevate the Department of Systems and Information Engineering in the Engineering School and clear the path for it to emerge as a global leader in the field.

A realized bequest from the estate of **Dr. Faith H. Kung (Med '57)** established the Faith H. Kung Scholarship at UVA School of Medicine. The scholarship will support outstanding female minority students, especially those who are Chinese-American, who intend to pursue a career in academic medicine or serve their community in a meaningful way. Dr. Kung arrived in San Diego in 1969 as the area's first pediatric hematology/oncology physician. She practiced for nearly 61 years and retired in 2018.

John Lert (Darden '73) and his son, **Devin Lert (Darden '21)**, made a generous gift through the **Alert Giving Fund** to nurture budding entrepreneurs and innovators.

A commitment made by **Bonnie** and **Wick Moorman** will benefit the Department of Psychiatry and Neurobehavioral Sciences. Their

The family of the late **David Harrison (Col '39, Law '41)** and **Mary Harrison**, two of the University of Virginia's most generous benefactors, made a pair of commitments to the Olympic Sports Center in the Department of Athletics and to create the Harrison Family Translational Research Center in Alzheimer's and Neurodegenerative Diseases in the new Paul and Diane Manning Institute of Biotechnology. The Harrison Family Olympic Sports Center, scheduled to open in the summer of 2025, will be centrally located in the athletics precinct.

gift will establish a Psychiatric Strategic Advancement Fund to help attract clinical research experts; a Psychiatric Research Seed Fund to support high-risk, high-reward research and facilitate further funding; a Perinatal Mood Disorders Clinic Startup Fund to meet critical mental health needs of new mothers; and the Zachariah C. Dameron III Endowed Lectureship in Psychiatry to enhance the department's educational programming for faculty, staff, and trainees.

William L. Polk Jr. (Col '78) and his wife **Carolyn K. Polk** provided generous support to endow the William L. and Carolyn K. Polk Jefferson Scholars Foundation Distinguished University Professorship, which will be used to attract to the College of Arts & Sciences a world-class University Professor, a title reserved for exceptionally distinguished faculty. Holders of these professorships are unique in that they are appointed by, and report directly to, the provost and president.

Curtis W. Schade (McIntire '80) and his wife, **Angel Schade**, made a gift to the McIntire Expansion Project in memory of Curt's father, **Robert H. Schade (McIntire '47)**. Curt and Angel have three children who are also Commerce graduates—**Christopher (McIntire**

'15), Emily (McIntire '16), and Harlan (McIntire '20). The Schade family also established the Robert H. Schade Bicentennial Professorship Fund earlier in the campaign.

A commitment made by **Alexander J. Sloane (Col '74)** created the Sloane Endowed Graduate Fellowships in History at the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences. Their gift will support Ph.D. candidates in the Corcoran Department of History as they pursue research and teaching.

Andrew P. Stepanian (Col '97) and **Elizabeth N. Stepanian (Col '96)** made a commitment to create the Stepanian Endowed Graduate Fellowships Fund. Their investment in future Ph.D. candidates will impact the teaching, learning, and research endeavors at the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences.

Steven M. Tadler (McIntire '81) and **Joyce E. Tadler (Col '82)** made a gift to establish the Steven M. and Joyce E. Tadler Endowed Graduate Fellowship for Global Development Studies at the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences. The fellowship will provide resources for graduate students studying topics in global development, strengthening efforts in the field for years to come.

The FUTURE on GROUNDS

It is clear to visitors and members of the UVA community that numerous projects across Grounds are in various stages of completion—made possible largely by generous support from alumni, parents, and friends. Amidst the ribbon cutting and groundbreaking ceremonies, the University is planning additional facilities across Grounds to provide new educational and cultural experiences for our community and will enable the latest in research space, sustainable architecture and landscapes, and student resilience.

Long-term strategies for developing capital projects include a focus on creating critical connections between previously disconnected areas of the University. The future on Grounds is shaping up as one in which cross-disciplinary opportunities will thrive as UVA continues to create a forward-looking learning environment.

Campaign support has been essential to all these remarkable transformations on Grounds—and those to come.

EMMET IVY CORRIDOR

The Emmet Ivy Corridor not only creates a welcoming entrance to the University but also improves the pedestrian connectivity between North and Central Grounds through the development of this new district. The Emmet Ivy Corridor includes the recently opened School of Data Science, while the Karsh Institute of Democracy and the Virginia Guesthouse—a hotel and conference center—are both under construction. Design is also underway for the Tessa and Richard Ader Performing Arts Center—a key component of the future Center for the Arts. A restored stream will thread through the landscape, which will also include ample exterior community spaces to complement the buildings.

CONTEMPLATIVE COMMONS

Thanks to a lead gift from **Paul Tudor Jones (Col '76)** and **Sonia M. Jones**, the Contemplative Commons, a new 57,000-square-foot building, has been constructed alongside the Dell Pond in the heart of the UVA Grounds to serve the pan-University Contemplative Sciences Center. The building's light-filled structure incorporates both indoor and outdoor spaces, including a tree-lined courtyard with a reflecting pool overlooking the Dell, a large Convergence Hall, the largest flat-floor classroom on Grounds, and adaptable classrooms and studios designed to provide an environment for the teaching and research of contemplative practices while promoting a sense of community and belonging.

ATHLETICS MASTER PLAN

The recently opened new home for Virginia Football, the Molly and Robert Hardie Football Operations Center, provides student-athletes with state-of-the-art amenities, including a strength and conditioning room and a team locker room as well as other spaces for training, recovery, and dining and nutrition.

The new Harrison Family Olympic Sports Center, scheduled to open next summer, will include spaces for seven Olympic sports teams, including locker rooms, team meeting rooms, a multi-sport indoor training center, and tutoring and academic support spaces. A new Center for Citizen Leadership and Sports Ethics, located in the renovated McCue Center, will also be part of the project.

SCHOOL OF DATA SCIENCE

The first School of Data Science in the country held the public opening of its new building in April 2024 and looks forward to welcoming students, including the inaugural bachelor's degree in data science cohort arriving in fall 2024. The new building, anchoring a prominent position in the Emmet Ivy Corridor district, reflects Data Science's aim to be "a school without walls," featuring open spaces that transcend traditional boundaries and invite innovation and collaboration. The four-story facility made possible by the Quantitative Foundation includes adaptive classrooms, faculty offices, collaborative meeting spaces, and research areas—as well as public spaces open to the University and broader communities.

LOOKING AHEAD


PAUL & DIANE MANNING INSTITUTE OF BIOTECHNOLOGY

Ground was broken in December 2023 for the new institute located in Fontaine Research Park. The five-story, 350,000-square-foot building will include laboratory space, expanded research facilities, core facilities, and an area for researchers and biotechnology industries to partner on emerging technologies. The facility will also provide amenities that include a café and a conference center to encourage collaboration among researchers within the park and across Grounds.

BREEDEN COMMERCE GROUNDS

The expansion of the McIntire School of Commerce not only creates an identifiable campus for the school but also enhances a historic gateway to Grounds at the southeast corner of the Lawn. The project includes the construction of Shumway Hall and a comprehensive renovation of historic Cobb Hall to create a civic presence and identity along Jefferson Park Avenue and Hospital Drive. A new, and accessible, landscaped walk provides pedestrian entry to Grounds. Shumway and Cobb Halls and the Breeden Commerce Grounds are scheduled for completion in April 2025.

DARDEN GROUNDS MASTER PLAN

Following the completion of the Forum Hotel last year, the next phase of the master plan will be the construction of two student residential buildings to strengthen Darden's on-Grounds student experience. When completed, the project will add approximately 350 beds in the two new buildings. Units will be primarily one- and two-bedroom apartments along with studios and three-bedroom apartments. The master plan also includes future projects, such as the renovation of the Faculty Office and Research buildings and the Batten Global Innovation Nexus. 

BEST WISHES FOR THE FUTURE

Family, friendships—and good health. **Dr. Ken Botsford (Col '75, Med '79)** and **Nina Botsford** hold these values in highest regard along with the Honor System and the University of Virginia, which they are drawn to.

Their family's ties to UVA run deep. Two of their three children are Virginia graduates (one married an alumnus), as was Nina's father. Nina's three sisters married alumni, too, and now, three of their children are alumni with alumni spouses. Ken's brother is an alumnus, and his children also graduated from the University. These connections go on even further, perhaps perpetually, with generations of UVA alumni threading throughout their family. Also—important to note—quite a few lived on the Lawn, including Ken.

“We wanted to make a significant contribution to this campaign. Our interest is driven by personal experience. We felt it was important to invest in something that would impact health in ways that would have helped us with our parents.”

— KEN BOTSFORD

Extensive, too, are the many positions their family members have held and currently hold on boards and committees related to areas across Grounds: the Jefferson Scholars Foundation, Alumni Association, College Foundation, UVA Health Foundation, McIntire School of Commerce, Reunions, and more.

Ken Botsford, co-founder of and chief medical advisor for NaviHealth, most recently accepted the position of ex officio member of the UVA Health Foundation Board and is vice chair for health for the Honor the Future Campaign. He was also involved in the two previous University of Virginia campaigns. He is a trustee emeritus of the College Foundation and emeritus board member of the Arts & Sciences Benefactor Society. He currently serves on the Health System Board for UVA Health. Ken and Nina are members of many giving societies, including Lawn, Cornerstone, and Rotunda Societies as well as the Benefactors Society, Compass Rose Society, Jefferson Circle, and School of Architecture Dean's Forum. Ken has been a Reunions volunteer five times, and fortunately he and Nina do love to come back to Charlottesville.



Ken and Nina Botsford at their home in Birmingham, Alabama.

“The impact of being a student at UVA on our lives, to see that carry forward, that’s great. The University changes lives and continues to change lives.”

— KEN BOTSFORD

The Lawn is special to them. “I’ll always let the family know when I visit Charlottesville,” Ken said. “I call them and tell them ‘I’ve got my fix. I’m walking down the Lawn.’ Nina’s father lived on the Lawn when he was a student. My brother lived on the Lawn. It’s a go-to.”

ASPIRATIONS FOR HEALTH

The Botsfords have long supported many areas of the University, including Lawn room restoration, but Ken and Nina made a significant family mark at UVA years ago, when they created the Alan and Muriel Botsford and Crawford and Virginia Johnson Jefferson Scholarship in memory of their parents. They recently took it a step closer, personally, when they created the Nina and Ken Botsford Bicentennial Professorship in Neurology.

Nina’s father developed dementia in his 60s and died at age 78. “It was a tough time, hard on him and the entire family,” Ken said. Ken’s mother, a diabetic, most likely suffered from multiple mild strokes, which affected her ability to communicate.

“We wanted to make a significant contribution to this campaign. Our interest is driven by personal experience. We felt it was important to invest in something that would impact health in ways that would have helped us with our parents.”

They considered creating an endowed professorship focused on dementia, but when presented with the opportunity to create an endowed professorship for a new chair of the Department of Neurology, they opted in. “We liked it,” both agreed. “It fits in with the Paul and Diane Manning Institute of Biotechnology research (a significant part of the research is neurological) and with the Harrison family’s gift for Alzheimer’s and neurodegenerative diseases.”

Their strategic philanthropy promises to lead to life-changing advances in neurosciences and neurology. They hope their story encourages others to support efforts in the area—efforts being driven by health care leaders such as Dr. Xuemei Huang, a renowned Parkinson’s disease expert who was recently named the inaugural Nina and Ken Botsford Bicentennial Professor and chair of the Department of Neurology.

Before joining the UVA faculty, Dr. Huang was associate dean for physician-scientist development and chief of the Division of Movement Disorders at Pennsylvania State University’s College of Medicine. She was also the founding director of Penn State’s Translational Brain Research Center, which pursues translational research on neurodegeneration related to aging and diseases.

The Botsfords will also create the Nina and Ken Botsford Research Fund in Neurology through their estate to support research in Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, and other neurodegenerative disorders.

What are their highest hopes for this research? “The Manning Institute has potential to be life-changing for the central Virginia area, considering the employment and research



Above: Ken served on the Honor Committee as an undergraduate.

Left: A Lawn resident during his time at UVA, Ken returns often with his family.

that could result,” said Ken. “I know it’s important to Paul [Manning] that it’s not research that goes onto the shelf but can be put into use and change lives. I think that will be a very important thing for UVA and Virginia.”

Nina affirmed the intention: “Ken and I talked about really wanting to track what’s going on there and to see how mental health and neurodegenerative diseases are being impacted,” she said. “The opportunity to have the chair named and appointed was a pivot, but it assured me that there will be experts in these diseases.”

FRIENDSHIPS

For the Botsfords, the people are what is best about the University. Ken cited professors and classmates who stood out for him—too many to mention, he said. However, “There were Ken Elzinga, still a friend, and **Ernest ‘Boots’ Mead (Col ’40)**, who was chair of the music department,” said Ken. “I got to know him because I was in his fourth-year seminar. One of our children took that as well. We would meet in my Lawn room, and if the weather was nice, we took a walk on the Lawn and talked about various topics.”

Friendships and honor go together, Ken explained. “I think it’s the friendships. The kind of people I got to know and became friends with, and stayed friends with, are not the kind of people you meet every day in life. The Honor System played a big part in that; it’s student-run, and that made a difference. It’s a very different responsibility for everyone in the community.”

Nina, who is a closely engaged alumna of Chatham Hall in Chatham, Virginia, compared the two schools’ commitment to honor codes and noted the overlap in friendships. “**Whitt Clement (Col ’70, Law ’74)**, who was the chair of the Honor Committee, came to Chatham Hall to speak when I was a student and drove home the importance of the Honor System at UVA. It resonated because the Honor Code was, and still is, so important at Chatham. Years later, Whitt came to our wedding! The essence of UVA is things like the Honor System, which sets it apart. This is important now more than ever to our society. We are launching children into society with a strong sense of honor. It’s important for them and for the communities that they impact.”

Other friends, classmates, and special people at UVA they mentioned are too numerous to include. Now, the Botsfords have UVA friends across the country, many of whom they have traveled with internationally, and a close group in Birmingham, Alabama (home to the Botsfords), who came together to fund the Andrew P. Selfridge Bicentennial Scholarship.

“I think I am a different person after having gone to UVA,” said Ken. “Ask our children who graduated from Virginia, and they’d say the same thing about themselves. In a couple of weeks, our daughter is having some of her UVA friends and their alumni spouses down to a lake for the weekend, so it’s lasting. The impact of being a student at UVA on our lives, to see that carry forward, that’s great. The University changes lives and continues to change lives.”

VIRGINIA VISION

With the opening of the Molly and Robert Hardie Football Operations Center, Phase II of the Virginia Athletics Master Plan is complete.

“Molly and I love all UVA sports, and in particular, we recognize the value of a strong football program,” said **Robert Hardie (Col '87, Darden '95 '99)**, University rector and supporter of the center, at the opening ceremony. “We believe in the young men who come to the University to honor us by wearing the orange and blue. With this facility, we’re giving our staff and athletes the resources they need.” The event also marked a milestone in Phase III of the Master Plan with the topping out of the Harrison Family Olympic Sports Center.



“I am so excited to welcome our student-athletes, coaches, and staff into this amazing Football Operations Center. It’s been a long time coming, and it has taken the work of a lot of people.”

— CARLA WILLIAMS

“I am so excited to welcome our student-athletes, coaches, and staff into this amazing Football Operations Center,” said Director of Athletics Carla Williams. “It’s been a long time coming and it has taken the work of a lot of people. I’m so thankful to everyone who made this a reality. This facility will give our football student-athletes an opportunity to maximize their UVA experience, and it gives our football program a chance to compete at the highest level.”

Players saw the interior of the space for the first time on the morning of the grand opening. “The weight room is huge,” said safety **Antonio Clary (Col ’22, Ed ’23)**. “I’m a big extra work guy, so I’m going to be in that weight room all day.”

“When you have a facility to show off like this to recruits, families, and transfers, I think it shows a level of commitment, a level of seriousness to the program ... it’s how we’re going to get everyone’s goals accomplished,” said defensive end **Ben Smiley III (Col ’23)**.

“Coach Elliott talks about how it symbolizes our growth as a program,” said quarterback **Tony Muskett (Col ’24)**. “We had to lay the foundations first year and second year. Now the thing is built ... just like in the fall, [when] we’re going to put that finished product on the field.”

“In our program we talk about applying an equation for excellence. This equation consists of intentional preparation, passionate engagement, and precise effort. We also have a vision for our players and what their future could look like,” said Fralin Family Head Football Coach Tony Elliott. “To bring this vision to life we must provide our scholar-athletes with the best resources possible. It’s important that we show them that we support them fully in everything that they do. This new facility gives us the space and resources we need to pour into these young men holistically, helping us create the model program.”

The Football Operations Center also provides room to reflect and remember. The jerseys of **Lavel Davis Jr. (Col ’22)**, **Devin Chandler (Col ’22)**, and **D’Sean Perry (Col ’22)**, who were shot and killed in November 2022, are displayed on the first floor and in their respective position rooms. The running backs’ room is named for **Mike Hollins (Col ’22, Ed ’24)**, who was wounded in the shooting. Hollins recovered and returned to play the 2023 season.

“In my view, one of the things that makes UVA special is that it offers a one-of-a-kind, exceptional student experience, and our athletics programs are absolutely critical to all of that,” said President Jim Ryan. “Our teams bring joy, excitement, vibrancy, connection, and inspiration to students, alumni, and the broader community.”



For two years, the Virginia Football team could see the construction progress on the Molly and Robert Hardie Football Operations Center from their practice fields. They didn’t see inside until the grand opening day on June 6, 2024. The 93,000-square-foot space includes a team locker room, a weight room, a recovery room, coaches’ offices, and meeting rooms.





CREATING *a* NEW DYNAMIC *for* CORAL REEFS

The world's coral reefs—crucial habitats for sustaining life in the ocean—are experiencing an alarming decline.

Among the manifold threats are rising water temperatures, ocean acidification, and an excess of nutrients caused by urban and coastal development. Nowhere is safe—even corals in pristine habitats, such as Australia's Great Barrier Reef, are starting to bleach and die.

The scale of the problem can seem overwhelming. Coral reefs, which consist of myriad living creatures, grow very slowly. Much of their reproductive process remains a mystery. The threats aren't going away. But for Matthew Reidenbach, an environmental sciences professor in UVA's College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences, the goal is to figure out the best way to grow self-sustaining populations of coral in the lab, and out in the field.

"The historical way that people have been doing coral restoration is what's called fragmentation," he said. "They take corals, break off a branch, and then try to grow it as a new fragment they can transplant out into the reef system. That works well, but the downside is that all those transplants are genetically identical."

Reidenbach's research focuses on understanding the dynamics of corals' sexual reproduction and how larvae released into the water find the conditions that are most beneficial for their growth.

"We're trying to perform coral reproduction in the lab, where we can get them to grow and figure out the best ways to move them into the field," he said. "It's a two-pronged project of lab work to enhance sexual reproduction and actual placement in the field, where they can be self-sustaining, so that when they start to grow and reproduce themselves, there's as much natural recruitment of the larvae in the water column as possible."

An expert in the restoration of marine ecosystems, Reidenbach has had success in efforts to restore eelgrass beds along Virginia's Eastern Shore. His current project, which involves three undergraduate researchers and an annual summer field trip to Bermuda, has attracted much-needed support from the Fairfax Marine Research Fund, created by UVA alumnus **Pete Ten Eyck (Col '82, Darden '89)**.

The Fairfax Fund serves as seed capital for up-and-coming research projects that can be leveraged into larger federal grants. It first helped support a joint effort between The Nature Conservancy and the Department of Environmental Sciences to restore oysters in the coastal zone of Virginia, particularly on the ocean side of the Eastern Shore. Reefs close to the shore can reduce the force of storm waves and help slow erosion rates along marsh edges. In 2017, The Nature Conservancy launched a joint project with UVA to build eight experimental oyster reefs with a goal of measuring the reefs' ability to reduce wave action.





GOING WITH THE FLOW

Rebuilding coral reefs is similar in concept but far more complex in practice. “There are direct parallels where the larvae get released into the water column, they land on surfaces, and they grow,” said Reidenbach. “Within a year or year and a half, you have these beautiful adult oysters that look like healthy, functioning oyster reefs, whereas corals might take a decade, two decades to even get to the start of that kind of restoration.”

Working in the lab and in the waters off Bermuda, Reidenbach and his student researchers are building a framework for a better understanding of which coral species are the most likely to survive in a changing environment. Bermuda is a good candidate for fieldwork because the coral reefs there have long been impacted by human development.

“It’s one of these places where humans have been interacting with the coastal system for a long time and they’ve had a lot of coral decline,” Reidenbach said. “The idea is to try to bring these coral species back. In Bermuda, we’re trying to figure out how to do sexual reproduction using coral larvae that get released into the water column, how they settle and grow.”

In the lab, Reidenbach’s team uses measurements from the field to analyze water surface topographies and flow dynamics to better understand what conditions are optimal for larval settlement. “We have models to look at the circulation patterns of the water around the islands of Bermuda to try to isolate places where there might be good site selection for restoration,” he said. “You don’t want to put restoration sites in places that would have high wave conditions during hurricane events. I have one student doing large-scale flow dynamics around Bermuda and another student doing very small-scale flow dynamics around individual corals. And then, I’m doing lab work on the reproduction side of things.”

BACK TO BERMUDA

Reidenbach came to the environmental sciences with a background in civil engineering, so his research has a practical aspect to it. “I really like the idea of coastal restoration, where you can actually go in and build structures that then help the ecosystem,” he said. “We have a 20-year record of successful sea grass restoration, a 10-year record of successful oyster restoration. Now, we’re trying to do this with coral restoration.”

From Ten Eyck’s perspective, providing the vital initial support for research that has an immediate, transparent impact on the marine environment was precisely what he was hoping to create with the Fairfax Fund. “The idea was that a fund at UVA would be more efficient than giving to a traditional charity, which is typically 75-85% efficient,” he said. “As the administrative costs are already covered by the University, gifts or contributions are 100% efficient—all going to impact the environment. The activity is transparent; you know exactly what your gift is doing. It results in scaling your charitable giving.”

Ten Eyck recently made a planned gift in the form of a charitable remainder unitrust to the Fairfax Fund. During the summer, Reidenbach’s researchers continued their lab work, and the team returned to Bermuda in August for a second year of field work. The Fairfax Fund’s support is having an impact on his work at a crucial time.

“The initial funding is about supporting students, securing travel funds, and buying instrumentation,” he said. “Pete’s support has been great in that respect. We’re now in the pilot phase of understanding the systems. In the next phase, private philanthropy can help us expand on the idea to build restoration sites that create coral reef systems and start to effect change in coastal systems.”

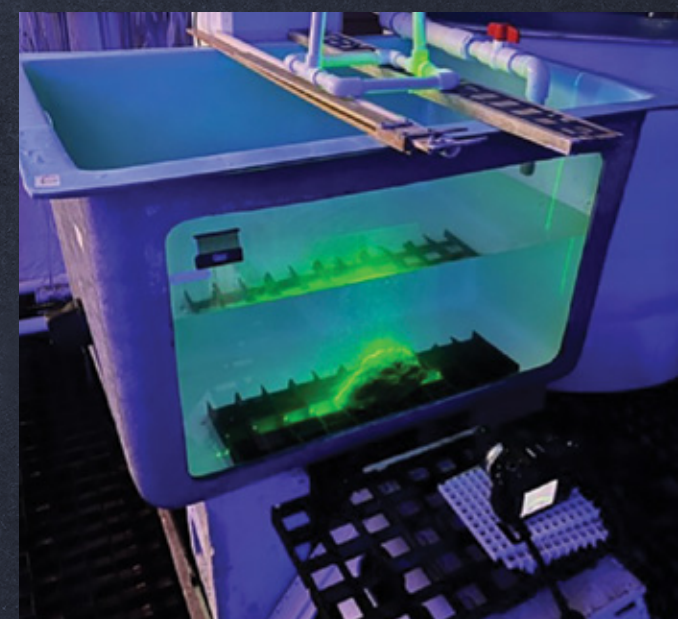


“We have a 20-year record of successful sea grass restoration, a 10-year record of successful oyster restoration. Now, we’re trying to do this with coral restoration.”

— MATTHEW REIDENBACH



Top: In August, Reidenbach’s team returned to the waters off Bermuda to gather measurements of flow dynamics around coral reefs.



Left: Students in the lab conducted particle image velocimetry (PIV) analysis over three coral species in a wavemaker tank.



Right: Samples from the field help with understanding which coral species are the most likely to survive in a changing environment.

CHRISTA ACAMPORA

*Buckner W. Clay Professor
of Philosophy and Dean,
the College and Graduate
School of Arts & Sciences*

Christa Acampora was appointed dean of the College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences in 2022. Born in Virginia, she served as deputy provost and professor of philosophy at Emory University in Atlanta before joining the University of Virginia. She is an acclaimed philosopher and expert in modern European philosophy, moral psychology, and aesthetics.

1 How will private support help you enact your vision for the College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences?

Achieving our vision requires transformation, and we're incredibly lucky and privileged that there is a legacy of transformative giving in the College. Philanthropic impacts have tangibly shaped the College—such as the development of the South Lawn that's now a thriving hub for A&S, including the stunning Nau Hall, which provides an inspirational setting for classes and academic convenings. Alumnus John Nau's donations of his time, talent, and treasure made that building a reality, so it was fitting that he attended the inaugural Investiture Ceremony. There, we honored 125 faculty holding named and endowed chairs to recognize and celebrate the impact they've had on the College and our students.

Private support is essential for creating the exceptional student experience we aim to deliver. It has provided the resources to develop and scale the Engagements curriculum for first-year College students, giving them an extraordinary introduction to liberal arts and sciences. I'm astonished by—and grateful for—this legacy. It's a large part of what drew me to UVA. It has inspired me to think big, to dream bigger, and to set ambitious goals because I know big things are possible here.

Our strategic priorities in A&S include delivering a second-to-none undergraduate experience that is also an unprecedented achievement in public higher education. It's an ambitious goal, and private support is crucial in helping us bring it to life through curricular innovations, academic wayfinding, and experiential learning opportunities, such as internships, study abroad, and intensive research programs. Expanding access to these features of excellence requires transformation that will mean experimenting, innovating, and addressing emerging needs quickly—all things that private support enables—really, it is the key to achieving excellence.

2 You have extensive experience in supporting faculty, advancing graduate students, and improving student advising, all of which align with the 2030 strategic plan goals. What do you see ahead for furthering these initiatives at UVA?

I am truly grateful that we have the University 2030 plan to guide our steps. When I came into my role, I was immediately energized by the opportunity to translate those strategic goals into a vision we can bring to life within A&S. Part of our aspiration in realizing an "unprecedented achievement in public higher education" is transforming the Graduate School by focusing on graduate excellence and the resources to support it, which is why we launched a Campaign for Graduate Excellence. Graduate excellence is the engine of value that enhances everything that we do. This is because exceptional graduate students advance the frontiers of knowledge and discovery, mentor undergraduate students, and serve as thought partners for our faculty. As we make the Graduate School more competitive, we support more students engaged in leading- and cutting-edge research and creative expression, and that fuels the ambitions represented in A&S's overarching research strategy, creating even more opportunities for our undergraduate students to learn among the very best.

I have been amazed and honored by the response so far. In just one year, we secured commitments in excess of \$40 million. That's more than a third of the total amount that the endowment for the Graduate School has realized in more than 130 years. This level of support has been recognized nationally as extraordinary—just what one might expect from determined and committed Wahoos. University leadership has also committed significant resources to co-invest alongside donors to create a legacy of excellence that will be realized for generations to come.

“Our strategic priorities in A&S include delivering a second-to-none undergraduate experience that is also an unprecedented achievement in public higher education.”

— CHRISTA ACAMPORA

A CLEAR COURSE:

Acampora follows a servant leadership philosophy when approaching her role as dean and believes that the pathway for UVA to become the best public university in the nation, and one of the best universities anywhere in the world, runs directly through the College and Graduate School of Arts & Sciences.



3 What do you hear from alumni of the College and Graduate School? What inspires and motivates them?

UVA is legendary in higher education for the devotion, passion, and engagement of our alumni base, and many of the University’s most successful alumni are graduates of the College. Since becoming dean, I’ve enjoyed getting to meet alumni from all over the world, and they have been the key to helping me successfully transition into my new role. That’s because they have taught me so much about the University by helping me see it through their eyes—both what it has been and how they envision it in the future. I have grown to appreciate their attachment to Grounds, including its beauty and source of inspiration. The friendships they have with one another, and with our celebrated faculty, are relationships that last a lifetime. And there is a deep sense of connection to our place in history and our responsibility to cherish and honor that place. This passion motivates me every single day.

I also feel grateful to have College Foundation trustees as my thought partners—their talent and perspective provide a true brain trust for me.

4 You’ve lived in New York City and Atlanta, among other places. What is life like for you now in Charlottesville? Where is your favorite place on Grounds, and why?

As the newest neighbors of the Rotunda, in Pavilion II, my husband, Jesús—and even Henry, our cat—realize what a privilege it is to live on the Lawn and be part of the energy on Grounds. I am often amazed by how our Grounds continue to fulfill Jefferson’s vision of creating a living-learning community, all while adapting to new generations. I see how this also supports a community of connection and genuine affection. As one student said to me, “It is the people that make a place worth remembering,” and I couldn’t agree more.


As we approach the nation’s semiquincentennial—the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence—I feel profound gratitude and pride to be at the University and to get to be a convener for thinking about what democracy might require of us in the future. It was a genuine treat for me to begin this conversation and share reflections with students in my first-year seminar last semester as we met in my living room, the largest of the original classrooms in the Academical Village.

When I do have a moment to spare, I especially enjoy time in the garden of Pavilion VIII, which feels incredibly private and serene. I also love to explore the trails on O-Hill after having a hot cup of coffee on my balcony. However, I think the very best spot on Grounds—and I mean it—is my living room when it’s packed with students. We have the best students in the nation, and to gather them into my home feels like living in a jewel box. There’s nothing in New York City or Atlanta that can hold a candle to that.

5 As we begin a new academic year, what excites you most about what is ahead for UVA?

This is a tough question because it’s a challenge to narrow it down to just one thing. A wonderful feature of the College is that it is large, diverse, and complex—essentially, we are larger than most universities in the country, and we encompass the full spectrum of the liberal arts and sciences. Our size, scale, and complexity in Arts & Sciences can make it challenging to forge shared goals. We’ve spent the better part of the past two years sharpening a collective vision that connects aspirations for a best-in-class undergraduate experience; graduate excellence; top-talent

recruitment and re-recruitment for faculty and staff; and high-impact research, scholarship, and creative activity.

This creates opportunities to innovate within leading- and cutting-edge fields, from astrochemistry to digital media design, and, of course, artificial intelligence. There would be no artificial intelligence without the liberal arts and sciences insofar as AI relies on logic, computational representations of human thought, and a deep understanding of language and meaning. The workforce will undergo significant transformation because of the developments and applications of AI. The proliferation of artificial intelligence will make the cultivation of human intelligence all the more important—and valuable. And that meaning will require us to have a more capacious understanding of what is human, more than human, and humane. So, I see a bright future for the liberal arts and sciences with these challenges and opportunities ahead, and I can think of no place more ready to tackle these head on than UVA. 

Blue Ridge Scholars Program

CELEBRATES TEN YEARS



In 2014, during his tenure as a member of the Board of Visitors, **John Griffin (McIntire '85)** made a visionary contribution to undergraduate education at UVA with a \$4 million challenge grant that created the Blue Ridge Scholars program and supported its endowment. In just nine months, with matching gifts from other supporters to raise \$8 million, the challenge was met, and the first class of Blue Ridge Scholars entered in fall 2014.

Now celebrating its tenth anniversary, the Blue Ridge Scholars Program—with an additional investment made by the University in 2020 that provided 100% matching funds for gifts up to \$100,000—has allocated over \$8.2 million in scholarships that have supported 648 students. These funds have reduced loan amounts in financial aid packages and attracted and enrolled students who otherwise might not have been able to attend UVA.

Featured here are a few of these exceptional Blue Ridge Scholars who have thrived at UVA and in their professional careers after graduation.



RITA ANANE-WAE

Rita Anane-Wae (Engr '21) was born in Ghana in West Africa. Her parents left everything behind so she could attend college in the United States—a dream that was fulfilled when she received the news that she was a Blue Ridge Scholarship recipient and could graduate debt-free. A biomedical engineering major, Anane-Wae spent her time at UVA immersed in undergraduate research, including a summer in Uganda through the highly competitive UVA MHIRT program that offers underrepresented minority students training and professional development experience. Anane-Wae now works as a biomedical engineer for the biopharmaceutical company Merck.

ED RADION

Ed Radion (McIntire '21) is a first-generation American and college graduate who grew up in Arlington, Washington. Radion was thrilled to receive the Blue Ridge Scholarship and be accepted into UVA's McIntire School of Commerce. During an internship, Radion noticed that low-income students, hit hard by the pandemic, were getting lost in an education system that had failed to innovate distance learning technology. This realization led Radion—along with two other students—to found Redwood, an augmented reality, theme-based learning game. After graduation, Radion accepted a full-time job at an investment firm while continuing to run Redwood. He is now a software investor at Five Elms Capital in Kansas City, Missouri.



KRISTEN GRAVES

Kristen Graves (Col '21) knew what her passion was from a young age: government and history. Because of her Blue Ridge Scholarship, Graves was able to deepen her knowledge of these subjects at the University—a school she saw as the perfect place to hone her leadership skills and develop other traits to garner success in her life and career. Graves built rich relationships with her professors and peers and participated in organizations that helped her strengthen those connections, including the Undergraduate Black Law Students Association and the President's Commission on the University in the Age of Segregation. After graduation, she worked as a Summer Policy Fellow for Virginia Delegate Sally Hudson before taking a position as an analyst at Goldman Sachs in Dallas, Texas.





RACKET READY:
 Brian Douglas competing
 at the 2024 Collegiate
 Wheelchair Tennis
 National Championships
 in Lake Nona, Florida.

“The scholarship has changed my life in so many ways. I’ve grown so much as an individual, and I’ve been able to help others on their journeys as well.”

— BRIAN DOUGLAS

Having lived in Florida for most of his life, Brian Douglas cheerfully called the hilly landscape of Charlottesville a “rude awakening.” He hadn’t visited Virginia before arriving for his first semester at UVA, so traversing the Grounds either in a wheelchair or on prosthetic legs was a challenge he wasn’t fully prepared for—though taking on challenges is certainly nothing new to the former Paralympic athlete.

Now a fourth-year student and fully settled at UVA, Douglas is involved in a dizzying number of activities: In addition to being the full-time manager for the varsity swim team, an assistant at the Aquatic Fitness Center, and an assistant front desk manager and exam proctor for the Student Disability Access Center, he’s on the executive board for four UVA Clubs. He’s the president of Club Wrestling, the treasurer for the Student Disability Alliance and the Wheelchair Tennis Club, and an outreach chair for another UVA student organization called SWAP, which provides fashionable and free clothing on Grounds. Most recently, he tacked diversity ambassador for the Career Center onto this long list of responsibilities. He’s also a kinesiology major with a full course load.

The Russell H. and Laura Lee Turner Bicentennial Scholarship that Douglas received made his journey to UVA possible. The scholarship provides need-based aid to undergraduate students enrolled in the School of Education and Human Development. In 2020, the University committed to matching gifts to the Bicentennial Scholars Fund, which has now reached over \$645 million and created over 600 new endowed scholarships like the one that helped pave the way for Douglas.

“I have a video of my mom bursting into tears when I told her about the full scholarship. Definitely a movie moment,” Douglas remembered. “The scholarship has changed my life in so many ways. I’ve grown so much as an individual, and I’ve been able to help others on their journeys as well,” he said.

Brian had a good idea about what he wanted to study at UVA when he arrived, having had three summer internships focused on prosthetics and orthotics. In those internships, he worked as a clinical assistant, helping the practitioners with patient communication, including translating technical jargon, and working one-on-one with patients, adjusting their prosthetics and helping them learn to use their prosthetics on a daily basis. He also worked as a lab technician, leading his own projects and making prosthetics—including his own.

Left: During summer internships in orthotics and prosthetics back at home in Florida, Brian Douglas worked as a clinical assistant and lab technician and was able to construct his own prosthetic legs.

Right: Douglas takes a break from the court with Abby Fines, assistant professor of kinesiology, at UVA's Snyder Tennis Center. The "Wheelchair Takeover: Paralympic Pick-Up" event invited all students to experience the camaraderie and competition of playing Paralympic sports and to raise awareness of sports and physical activities available on Grounds for people with disabilities.



“None of the spaces in the world were created for me to thrive, so I have to adapt myself to those situations or environments.”

— BRIAN DOUGLAS



“It’s really cool to get to walk around on my own work every day. But I know that if something goes wrong, I don’t have anyone else to blame,” he laughed.

Part of Douglas’s desire to study at UVA had to do with the caliber of the kinesiology program as well as its extensive alumni network for students with disabilities. In addition to his own coursework, he’s been able to work closely with Professor **Abby Fines (Ed ’14 ’21)**, who teaches in the Kinesiology for Individuals with Disabilities program. She has helped promote the Wheelchair Tennis Club, founded in 2021, and has invited Brian to speak to students in her classes on more than one occasion.

“As an instructor, I like to invite guest speakers from the disabled population to be guest speakers in my class because they have unique experiences, and I don’t identify as having a disability,” Fines said. “I’m always cautious because I don’t want it to be a burden, but it can be helpful for students to learn directly from them—maybe even more than me,” she joked.

Fines secured funding to acquire 23 sport wheelchairs, designed for greater speed and turning capability, as well as added stability. She uses these in her courses to give students the practical experience of using a wheelchair as a way to consider accessibility. The UVA Wheelchair Tennis Club is able to use them as well.

“That means that students like Brian who want to join the wheelchair tennis team have the equipment to do that—at least as a starting point,” said Fines.

The Wheelchair Tennis Club and the (able-bodied) Wrestling Club have both been an important part of Douglas’s experience at UVA—the competition and the

camaraderie. “Having that outlet where I can compete against other people with disabilities has been so positive for me—not only physically, but also mentally,” he said. “I think it’s so invaluable to have those kinds of programs for people with disabilities.”

Douglas is actively involved in creating and maintaining that support for disabled students at UVA, in part through his work with the Student Disability Alliance. Each semester, the group partners with the Student Disability Access Center to send an email to any student receiving accommodations. The email includes information about the Student Disability Alliance, including their meeting times and available resources. Douglas emphasizes how much it helps to have a community of other students who understand the lived experience of having a disability, in addition to cultivating awareness of those experiences in others.

“My friends tell me I don’t seem like I have a disability sometimes, but whether or not I’m perceived that way, at the end of the day I still have that disability,” he said. “None of the spaces in the world were created for me to thrive, so I have to adapt myself to those situations or environments.”

The Student Disability Alliance also creates maps of UVA that show accessible routes, and their website allows users to report any barriers they find. “We just try to make Grounds a little bit more inclusive and accessible for everyone,” Douglas said. “If I had to pick one thing to leave my mark on at UVA, I’d say it’s definitely helping that program and that initiative continue and grow.”

GIVING SOCIETIES

LEADERS IN PHILANTHROPY

Our three pan-University giving societies—the Lawn Society, Cornerstone Society, and Rotunda Society—recognize different types of giving from UVA's top stakeholders. Society members have created scholarships, funded study-abroad programs, supported public service stipends for students, advanced faculty research, and led preservation efforts for the Academical Village and historic Grounds. These are only a few of the important initiatives, driven by the generosity of our Leaders in Philanthropy, that enhance the student experience and distinguish UVA nationally and globally.



LAWN SOCIETY

The Lawn Society celebrates the University's leading benefactors, defined as those who have made lifetime cumulative gifts of \$500,000 or more in support of UVA. The Pavilion level of the Lawn Society recognizes donors whose lifetime cumulative giving totals \$1 million or more.



CORNERSTONE SOCIETY

The Cornerstone Society welcomes alumni, parents, and friends whose support will benefit the University in the future through estate gifts, beneficiary designations, and gifts that may provide lifetime income.



ROTUNDA SOCIETY

The Rotunda Society recognizes those who make cumulative annual gifts of \$2,500 or more across the University. Alumni who have completed degrees in the last five years are recognized for their cumulative annual giving of \$1,000 or more.



IT TAKES AN ACADEMICAL VILLAGE

RUBEN BASANTES
MEMBER OF THE LAWN SOCIETY



Ruben Basantes (Col '92) puts a spin on a familiar adage: "It takes a village to raise a first-generation college student," he said.

His village includes hardworking family members, supportive friends, generous scholarship donors, encouraging co-workers, and UVA faculty and administrators who guided and believed in him. Collectively, they helped launch a young man from a single-parent household on a fortuitous journey of learning, success, and service.

Now, Basantes is helping others navigate the path to educational and professional achievement through his support of UVA's Bolívar Network, which connects Hispanic and Latinx students and alumni, mentors undergraduates, and provides scholarships.

FINDING DIRECTION

Basantes grew up in a Spanish-speaking, Queens, New York home where his Ecuadorian mother modeled a strong work ethic. She worked custodial jobs in Wall Street buildings by day and pulled shifts in a sewing factory at night. On weekends, young Ruben and his siblings would pile into the family car to help her clean houses.



I became the person I am because of the experiences I had at UVA and the men and women that I met at UVA.

— RUBEN BASANTES



VOICING SUPPORT: Advice from his mother and encouragement from those he met at UVA continue to guide Ruben Basantes.

Eventually the family saved enough money to buy a house of their own in Northern Virginia. Basantes initially struggled in school as he learned English and adapted to his new surroundings, but he persevered with his mother's encouragement. "My mom would say, 'Study, study, study. This is what's going to help you down the road,'" he said.

At age 15, to help support his

or Thomas Jefferson," he said. "I finally found out when I had to write the application essay."

UVA and several other schools accepted him. Scholarships—including one from a local auto parts store and another from the Hispanic Scholarship Fund—combined with grants made the prospect of college a reality.



On a visit to Grounds, Ruben Basantes met current members of the Virginia Gentlemen, one of three choral groups he performed with as an undergraduate.

family, Basantes took a 30-hour-a-week job at a JCPenney store. In school, he immersed himself in drama, student leadership, and math club. He also pursued his passion for music and was named to regional and state choirs. He recalled the school's choral director wondering what prompted him to audition: "I said, 'Because you guys have after-school practice, so I can stay here.' When I explained my situation, she took me under her wing."

As he considered life after high school, Basantes relied on guidance from his choral director and friends. "No one in my family had attended a four-year college or gone away to school. So, I didn't know," he said.

He had never been to Charlottesville, but after reading a book about "Public Ivies," he figured UVA was a good school. "I didn't know anything about the University

WORK, STUDY, SING

When Basantes arrived on Grounds, work and music remained as constants. Work-study jobs; delivering pizza; working in Old Cabell Hall, Newcomb Hall, and the School of Medicine's library—all augmented his financial aid.

In his free time, Basantes volunteered at Madison House and performed with the Virginia Glee Club, University Singers, and Virginia Gentlemen. Members of the Virginia Gentlemen became like brothers, inviting him home during school breaks. Those friendships offered a glimpse into a life he had never known.

When the Virginia Gentlemen performed at alumni events, Basantes engaged attendees at every opportunity. "It instilled in me how involved they were at the University," he said. He coordinated the group's alumni performances

with Wayne Cozart, then president of the Alumni Association. "Wayne had a significant impact on me, helping me to become a strong leader and communicator," Basantes said.

Despite forming many strong bonds, Basantes wasn't sure he belonged at UVA. "My grades were horrible," he said. "I remember coming home and thinking, 'I can't make this.'" In stepped Maruta Ray, dean of the College of Arts & Sciences. "She really helped me work through the insecurities I had about being there."

Another supporter was Steven Nock, professor of sociology. Basantes pursued a sociology major after taking Nock's Sociology 101 class. "Professor Nock was incredible," Basantes said. "Not only was he my major advisor, but he was helpful with some personal issues that I was going through. He believed in me."

As he began to feel more comfortable on Grounds, his financial challenges continued. Following a summer internship, the Charlottesville Omni Hotel hired Basantes full-time when he skipped a semester due to a lack of funds. "I was actually making pretty good money. I almost didn't come back to UVA," he said. Nevertheless, he heeded Dean Ray's advice: "You have three semesters left. Knock it out."

FROM MBA TO FLA

Basantes did return and received numerous job offers after graduating, accepting a position in the General Mills management development program in Charleston, South Carolina. He earned several promotions before a chance encounter at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill led to thoughts of an MBA.

While he was waiting to pick up an application for a friend, an administrator told him about the Consortium of Graduate Studies in Management and invited him back

for a recruiting session. "Grad school was the farthest thing from my mind," he said. "I needed to make money to pay off my student loans."

Basantes was accepted into the program. "I just loved it," he continued. "Because no one in my family had gotten an MBA, no one even talked about going back to school. So when I went there, I was like a kid in a candy store."

After graduation he took a job with Frito-Lay in Dallas. A call from a recruiter led to an opportunity in the liquor business, where he has spent the last 23 years. He is currently the chief operating officer for Bosscal Mezcal Company & Distillery and living in Florida.


GIVING BACK

At each stop in his career, Basantes has joined and served his local UVA alumni chapter to give back to the university that has played such a significant role in his life. He has led the South Florida chapter for two decades. He previously served on the Young Alumni Council and was recently named to the Board of Managers of the UVA Alumni Association.

Recently Basantes made a bequest benefiting the Bolívar Network First-Year Scholarship. While reviewing his estate plan, he reflected on conversations with his mother, who had died a year earlier. "I remembered her telling me, 'Education is the one thing no one can take away from you.' That was a sign to me that this is where my money should go."

He hopes his planned gift will help students like himself by providing the type of support that shaped his life. "Down the road they'll be succeeding at UVA, having a great career, and then passing it along to future generations," he said.

It takes a village to raise a first-generation college student—sometimes an Academical Village.

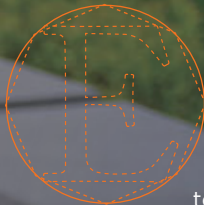
"I became the person I am because of the experiences I had at UVA and the men and women that I met at UVA—students and professors and administration," Basantes said. "They became my family." 





WITH HEART AND RIGOR

MANDY LOZANO
MEMBER OF THE CORNERSTONE SOCIETY



Everyone thinks their background is unique, but mine is quite wild," said **Mandy Lozano (Darden '09)**. "I don't know many other people who have had the path that I've had."

When Lozano was seven, her parents—retired high school art teachers—moved the family to a ranch off the grid in Oregon. She was the only member of her 16-person high school class to attend a four-year university. "It was a very rural upbringing, but my parents were extremely well-educated and well-traveled, and they emphasized that for my sister and me," said Lozano. "There was no question we would go to college and see the world."

Lozano graduated from the University of Puget Sound with a bachelor's degree in studio art. She worked on the business side of two handcrafted jewelry companies in California and Portland, Oregon.

RETURNING TO LEAD:

Mandy Lozano, photographed in Darden's Tahija Arboretum and LaCross Botanical Gardens, is a member of the Darden School Foundation Board of Trustees. "Bob Bruner said the ethos of Darden was to create principled leaders in the world of practical affairs," she said. "That ethos is still there, and it's our job to evolve the school to meet the needs of a very different student body who wants different things from their MBA."

At Darden, there's always a professor who will meet with you or a fellow student who will take you through something you don't understand. It's really just about your willingness to strive for that.

— MANDY LOZANO



Lozano's Portland neighbors were professional bicyclists—she began riding with them and discovered she had the talent and drive for the sport. A move to North Carolina brought her to Burt's Bees, where she managed the brand's healthy skin portfolio. She raced as an amateur cyclist for three years and then as a full-time professional for two years, deferring her acceptance at the Darden School of Business for that final year of competition.

UVA's rich history and Darden's emphasis on business ethics were two reasons Lozano came to Charlottesville for her MBA. She was assigned to a learning team with


After earning her MBA, Lozano continued to work in values-driven brand management. "I've been fortunate to work for some of the best companies in the world," she said. At the Frito-Lay division of PepsiCo, she managed brands such as Lay's, Pepsi, a Hispanic snacks portfolio, and Stacy's Pita Chips. Lozano was responsible for multi-million-dollar budgets and pursued GMO-free and organic certifications for the Stacy's brand.

She moved from PepsiCo to Starbucks. "Starbucks was an amazing place where you could act with empathy," Lozano said. "My bosses at Starbucks were

business challenge and to eliminate extraneous information while determining what was relevant," she said. "Then, being able to frame situations and challenges—to clarify the problem to solve and then go solve it."

Lozano's enthusiasm for inclusion and belonging also began at Darden, where she was the co-chair of Gays, Lesbians and Allies at Darden, now called Pride at Darden. She became head of the several-thousand-member Hispanic employee network Adelanté at PepsiCo and worked to integrate Hispanic insights into product and flavor development. She was also the executive sponsor of DEI initiatives on the leadership team at Nestlé. "I truly believe that different perspectives help make businesses better," she said. "This was seeded in me at Darden and has become a theme for me."

Lozano has created the Mandy Lozano Scholarship to support Darden's goal of promoting a diverse student body. A broad spectrum of factors—such as socioeconomic status, educational background, and life experiences—will be considered when choosing recipients. A gift from her estate will sustain the scholarship.

Lozano hopes recipients of her scholarship remain confident in the contributions they will make at Darden. "Own who you are, and realize you have so much to teach others," she advises. "Be open to learning from them, but also don't forget that you are unique, and you have something to offer the world through your perspective." 

"I truly believe that different perspectives help make businesses better. This was seeded in me at Darden and has become a theme for me."

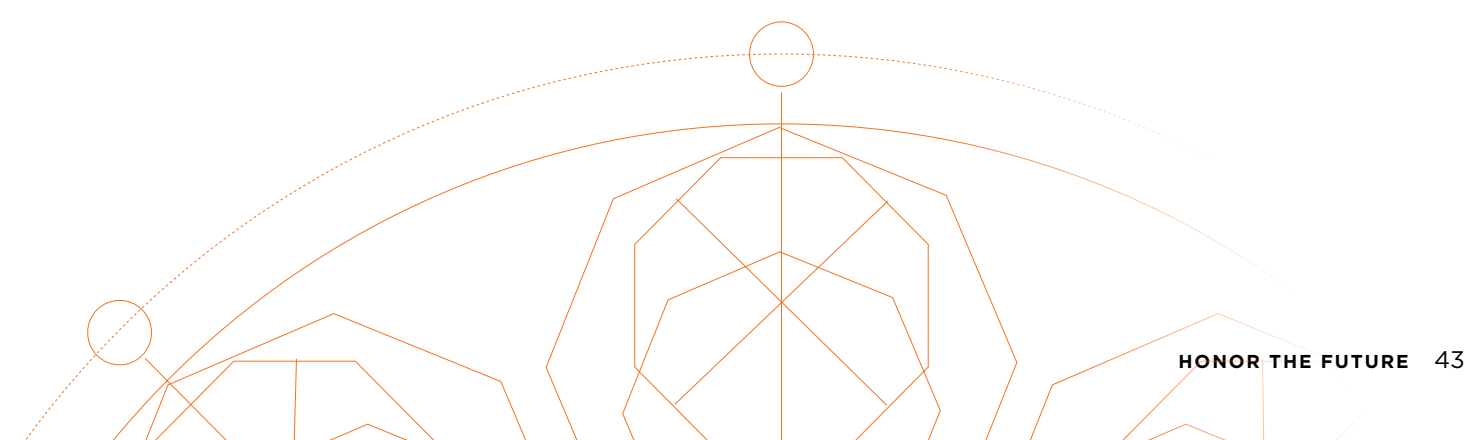
— MANDY LOZANO

students from the U.S., China, and India. "I was so fortunate to have a wonderful section, Section C. It was a really interesting mix of people and skills," said Lozano. "We helped one another a lot. It was kind of magical—the only limit was yourself."

"At Darden, there's always a professor who will meet with you or a fellow student who will take you through something you don't understand," she said. "It's really just about your willingness to strive for that."

phenomenal at modeling how to lead with heart and rigor."

Leadership roles at Nestlé and MiiR, a socially and environmentally focused drinkware company, followed. Lozano credits her unique background and Darden education for preparing her to be successful across brands. "I have a great foundation through the Darden case method and my education as an art major. This all came together as an ability—regardless of the category of product—to understand the





EVERYBODY WINS

JENNIFER MARSH
MEMBER OF THE ROTUNDA SOCIETY



Jennifer Marsh (Arch '93) loves to bring people into the fold. One of the things a successful career in architectural design has given her is perspective—including knowledge about the variety of paths that open up with a degree from UVA's School of Architecture. The Marsh Family Blue Ridge Scholarship that she and her husband, Chad, established will help more architecture students explore those paths.

It was in part UVA's historic setting that drew Jennifer Marsh to Grounds. Initially planning to major in studio art and minor in art history, she was urged to consider taking courses in the Architecture School, where she found herself unexpectedly at home.

"It's not surprising in retrospect," she reflected, "but I would never have thought I'd study architecture when I left for college."

Marsh was able to take part in the A-School's education abroad program in Vincenza and studied with renowned professors Mario di Valmarana, whose family owned the Villa Rotunda, and Clemente di Thiene. Having also lived overseas with her family in England and Japan, she emphasized the importance of those international experiences.

FORWARD DESIGN:

The Marsh Family Blue Ridge Scholarship will broaden opportunities for students to pursue a degree in the School of Architecture. "So few people in high school have any sense of what the career path looks like in architecture," Marsh said. "Just because you study architecture doesn't mean there's only one career path."



I believe in design and what it does for our built environment. Educating people about the necessity of design is so important.

— JENNIFER MARSH



“I think travel really opens your eyes to the way different people live and experience the world,” she said. “Seeing other traditions of creating the built environment helps you realize there are different models—potentially better models—than the ones we have. Being in Japan and seeing the way that even ancient design is quite modern had a lot to do with the things I cherish in design.”

After graduation from UVA, Marsh interned for several large firms in Washington, D.C., including Ayers Saint Gross, where she worked on several buildings familiar to fellow alumni Hoos, including Newcomb Hall and the David A. Harrison III Law Grounds project.

“I had friends in law school at the time, which made it fun,” she recalled. “And a lot of it did come down to feedback from students. It was a modern building, but everyone wants to feel like they’re on the Lawn, right? So one question was how to infuse the building with that feeling of history.”

Ultimately, Marsh was most interested in smaller-scale design. She completed her master’s degree at Harvard University and then signed on as a project designer with Dick Clark Architecture in Austin, Texas, a firm that designed small-scale commercial projects, like offices and restaurants, as well as residential buildings. The autonomy she had during those years led her to start her own firm, DesignHouse, in 2003. She works closely with clients on residential projects and emphasizes how being able to anticipate their needs through design improves their lives—creating intentional spaces for daily use, like a place to do homework or to feed or corral pets.

“I believe in design and what it does for our built environment,” she said. “Educating people about the necessity of design is so important.”

Chad Marsh works in real estate development, where design also plays a big role—particularly when it comes to environmental sustainability. The company spends a significant amount of time and money on design to ensure that buildings stylistically—and literally—weather well.

The couple’s belief in the necessity of thoughtful design was another reason they wanted to create the Marsh Family Blue Ridge Scholarship, which will support exceptional students in the Architecture School.

“Architecture is a very rewarding profession but not necessarily financially,” Marsh laughed. “It’s really a passion, and you get paid in ways that are not financial.”

Marsh has participated in fundraising for her children’s school, working on campaigns for scholarships and financial aid, and has seen firsthand the impact that support has made in expanding the school’s community. She believes that the Marsh Family Scholarship will have the same positive results at the Architecture School and the University.

“Bringing in more people from different socioeconomic backgrounds and different regions of the United States makes it a better place to go to school. It’s breaking down barriers—that’s really what it’s about,” she said. “Literally, everybody wins.”



Bringing in more people from different socioeconomic backgrounds and different regions of the United States makes it a better place to go to school.

— JENNIFER MARSH



A HISTORIC REUNION



FIFTY YEARS AGO, THE CLASS OF 1974 WALKED THE LAWN AS THE FIRST FULLY COEDUCATIONAL CLASS TO GRADUATE FROM UVA.

The 1974 alumni continued to make history this year by committing over \$64.1 million in reunion gifts, breaking the record for reunion giving by a single class. These trailblazers also had the highest rate of giving participation, earned the new “Wahooa Cup” for giving the most since their last Reunion, and were recognized by the Alumni Association for their superb reunion attendance.

“We were thrilled and delighted with the outcome,” said **Ann Brown (Col '74, Law '77)**, who co-chaired the Class of 1974 Reunion Giving Committee with **Stuart Ball, M.D. (Col '74)**; **Mark Friedman (Col '74, Law '77)**; **Gregory Luce (Col '74)**; and **Michael Miller (Col '74, Law '77)**.

It was a record-breaking year for reunion giving overall, with alumni from the 12 returning classes committing over \$125.9 million, exceeding the record \$120.5 million total from 2022. 🏆

OVER
\$125.9
MILLION
RAISED BY 12 REUNION CLASSES

TOMORROW'S TEACHERS

A persistent shortage of qualified teachers combined with a growing number of teaching vacancies has far-reaching implications throughout the education system.

Teachers in strong preparation programs at the School of Education and Human Development gain leading-edge training that provides valuable skills and perspectives needed to succeed in the rapidly evolving classroom environment. A recent graduate of the school and a faculty expert reveal how individual and institutional support factors into both sides of the education equation.



Linh Luong

HONOR THE FUTURE TEACHERS

Linh Luong (Col '22, Ed '24), a math major with a minor in Spanish, is one of tomorrow's K-12 math teachers. She taught in a local high school as part of her Master of Teaching program. We can all respect that. She has her work cut out for her.

But what do tomorrow's teachers know? Quite a bit, actually—and those in the School of Education and Human Development learn a great deal about what works in the classroom, thanks to the school's teacher preparation program.

Luong explains that she's seen firsthand that learning foundational concepts is critical for her students' academic success. Something like $a^2 + b^2 = c^2$ is a key theorem that all geometry students must understand to advance. You cannot skip that fundamental step and expect to go much further.

CLOSING THE GAPS

Luong is dedicated to helping students close such gaps in learning. "I've always been interested in helping those who are struggling in math and in teaching the lower/foundational levels of math, like geometry and precalculus," Luong said. "I want to give students a stronger foundation so they can apply it and succeed in the course."

Luong knew she wanted to teach early on, but it was clear to her that her career path led to being a teacher after she worked at Kumon Math and Learning Center in her hometown of Ashburn, Virginia. "I enjoy progressing and advancing with the students as they learn," she said.

Why math? "Math came easy to me in middle school and high school," Luong said. "But in college, I struggled a bit at first. I felt like I wanted help and didn't know how to ask for it."

She is aware of students who feel the same way. It's the higher concepts in math that can be challenging and where gaps in knowledge become obvious. Gaps are not uncommon—but effectively recognizing and responding to

students early on is critical to helping them overcome these challenges.

Another thing Luong knows is that schools need teachers from all backgrounds. She describes her sense of feeling drawn to teachers who were sensitive to her own experience. "I gravitated toward minority teachers. They were so few and far between. Something about them just struck me differently. I always thought they understood me."

EXCEPTIONAL EXPERIENCES

The Education School's coursework in culturally responsive teaching stood out to Luong and proved valuable. "We were taught to make sure educational experiences and materials are relevant to students—that they matter to them, are appropriate, and avoid cultural bias," she said.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the classroom are still having an impact.

Luong was quick to note problem areas. "The classroom today is definitely different from when I graduated from high school in 2019," she said. "COVID hit during my first year at UVA. I'm recognizing more behavior changes in students than I expected. I think they're still having some trouble socializing, recognizing social cues, and knowing how to act in public. They were at home during some formative years, so it makes sense."

During those years, many students also fell behind in learning the basic algebra that precedes geometry. Luong is helping students cope and catch up.

She sees positives and difficulties. "I'm finding that a lot of my students seem to be performing better in geometry. So many of them are more visual people. They can recognize shapes and compare—that's helpful. But there are a lot of algebra trouble spots or foundational gaps. Sometimes it's even more than a gap, and some students are retaking geometry many times."

Support through the Tomorrow's Teacher Fund at the School of Education and Human Development provides assistance for future teachers like Luong who face obstacles and knowledge gaps of their own: "The fund would help get past that hurdle of paying tuition," said Luong. "Students would be able to pursue higher education without the fear of knowing how to pay for food or gas. It would take a lot of the burden away, emotionally and financially."

In May, Luong walked the Lawn to graduate with her master's degree in teaching. What's been most rewarding about her experience? "I think being able to recognize my own growth," Luong said. "Since I had no formal teaching experience before this program, getting into it was different from what I imagined. My ability to bond with the students is better than I expected."

Her students are fortunate. Luong is the kind of teacher that today's—and tomorrow's—classrooms need.



Frackson Mumba

TRANSFORMING SCIENCE EDUCATION

In response to changing science teaching standards across the U.S.—with funding from the National Science Foundation—Frackson Mumba, associate professor at the Education School, has researched, documented, and implemented strategies for integrating engineering design into K-12 science education. This iterative process of solving problems and creating new processes and products is an innate part of our lives. Exposing young learners to engineering can spark their interest in STEM careers.

Over the past 10 years, more than 100 UVA students preparing to be teachers have been trained in engineering design and placed in high-need schools through a grant from the National Science Foundation's Noyce Scholarship program. With another Noyce Scholarship award, Mumba is recruiting and preparing graduate science engineering students and STEM professionals interested in secondary science teacher training and certification. He has worked closely with colleagues Reid Bailey, professor of systems engineering; Jennifer Chiu, associate professor in the School of Education and Human Development; and Larry G. Richards, professor emeritus of mechanical and aerospace engineering to incorporate engineering design into UVA's science teacher education program.

BUILDING A FRAMEWORK

Mumba has authored several research papers on the UVA approach and its impact on both preservice teachers and the students they ultimately instruct. Based on the success of the model he outlined, Mumba developed a transferable framework for integrating the approach into elementary and high school science curricula to meet the Next Generation Science Standards recently developed through a state-led process.

Mumba's research findings indicate a high level of excitement among students for learning science through engineering design.


This enthusiasm has implications beyond the classroom; it can eventually help address the critical shortage of STEM professionals. "The best way to invest in the future is to train teachers, because teachers are agents of change," he said. "The change can start from the top through educational reforms, but for that information to reach students, we need teachers. And research shows that students who have had good science teachers go into the science discipline."

Another impact of the program is the influence these engineering-educated teachers have outside of the classroom, championing the approach and developing courses. "We train them as leaders as well so that they can go out and lead others in integrating engineering in science education," Mumba said. "Some of our teachers are even serving as expert advisers to educational companies that are producing engineering-design-integrated science curriculum materials."

GLOBAL IMPACT

The evidence pointing to the program's effectiveness is impressive. Not only did participants in Mumba's study incorporate engineering practices into their science lessons, but in many cases, they relied on it more than science practices. And they fully integrated engineering design into their courses rather than approaching it as an afterthought.

This past November, thanks to funding from a 2023-24 Fulbright U.S. Scholar award, Mumba returned to his native Zambia to help revise the country's national science curriculum to include engineering design.

Teaching and researching at Copperbelt University and the University of Zambia, he attempted to implement his proven model. "I'm bringing something new that we should be encouraging teachers to use, but we need to produce evidence," Mumba said. "At the end of it, we want to compare the impact on these two groups. How does this approach impact the students and preservice teachers in Zambia and the preservice teachers and students in the United States? For the United States, we already know the story." 



"Partner support helps build our teacher education programs and offers incentive to the most talented STEM graduates to be trained and certified as teachers."

— FRACKSON MUMBA

Tomorrow's Teachers Fund

Tomorrow's Teachers Fund provides need-based tuition and fees assistance for UVA undergraduate and graduate students pursuing a bachelor's or master's degree in teacher education. This support increases access to high-quality teacher preparation, reduces the cost of becoming a teacher, and improves teacher quality. Current use funding of \$1 million has been secured, and efforts

are underway to raise \$50 million to create an endowment for future teachers.

For more information about Tomorrow's Teachers Fund, contact **Jennifer Cornell**, director of development, School of Education and Human Development, at **804-240-8180** or jgcornell@virginia.edu.

COMMON THREADS *in* NEUROSCIENCE

Studying the brain—how it works, how we can keep it healthy, and what can go wrong when we get sick—is a rapidly expanding area of interest with tremendous relevance to human health and well-being. Two years ago, the University made a Grand Challenges research investment of more than \$75 million in an interdisciplinary endeavor to pioneer life-changing advances in neuroscience while also mapping the workings of the human brain. This effort is already leading to a better understanding of conditions such as Alzheimer’s disease, pain, epilepsy, and autism as well as how the brain functions over a lifespan.

The University of Virginia launched the Brain Institute as a testament to UVA’s commitment to collaborative research in the neurosciences. This is one of the priority research areas outlined in UVA’s 2030 Strategic Plan. The Brain Institute serves as the hub of UVA’s interdisciplinary network, fostering connections across Grounds and uniting the neuroscience-related work of faculty members, students, and staff in various schools, including medicine, engineering, arts & sciences, nursing, data science, leadership and public policy, and education.

Under the visionary leadership of Jaideep Kapur, the Eugene Meyer III Professor of Neuroscience, and Sarah Kucenas, the Owen R. Cheatham Professor of the Sciences and professor of biology, the Brain Institute is at the forefront of pioneering brain and neuroscience research. Its comprehensive programming supports over 250

faculty members in their exploration of brain development and decline, marking a significant leap forward in our understanding of the brain.

The Grand Challenges investment has been a game-changer, propelling our neuroscience community forward. “This is an investment in the UVA neuroscience community writ large,” Kapur said when the Grand Challenge support was announced. He founded the Brain Institute in 2016 and was involved with Kucenas and others on the Grand Challenges proposal process. “All the ideas people gave us, we captured,” Kucenas said. “We had something like a 40- to 50-page document at the end, and we sought to find the common threads throughout.”

Though there are specific areas of emphasis, the Grand Challenges are all about “encouraging wide interdisciplinary connections,” Kucenas said. “In addition



EXPLORING THE BRAIN

The collaborations across Grounds have resulted in many pioneering research initiatives, including the following:

“In addition to fostering collaborative research and clinical care, one of our other core missions is training and empowering the next generation of scientists and clinicians who will make new discoveries about the brain and advance research approaches and techniques for the benefit of patients.”

— SARAH KUCENAS

to fostering collaborative research and clinical care, one of our other core missions is training and empowering the next generation of scientists and clinicians who will make new discoveries about the brain and advance research approaches and techniques for the benefit of patients.”

The University’s investment in this initiative has generated exciting opportunities to support leading-edge neuroscience research that will benefit patients down the road and advance our understanding of neurological disease. Philanthropic support is critical for scientific research, allowing investigators to explore high-risk, high-reward ideas before they are ready for large-scale funding.

Major support has been received from the Harrison family, most recently with the creation of the Harrison Family Translational Research Center in Alzheimer’s and Neurodegenerative Diseases as well as from The Owens Family Foundation and the Rick Sharp Alzheimer’s Foundation. **Dr. Ken Botsford (Col ’75, Med ’79)** and **Nina Botsford** provided generous support for the future of neuroscience research through a provision in their bequest. They also recently created the Nina and Ken Botsford Bicentennial Professorship in Neurology at the School of Medicine.

- **Discovering a molecule in the brain that orchestrates the immune system’s responses to Alzheimer’s and multiple sclerosis, a finding that could allow doctors to supercharge the body’s ability to fight those and other neurological diseases**

John Lukens, director of the Harrison Family Translational Research Center in Alzheimer’s and Neurodegenerative Diseases

- **Furthering the Baby Brain Initiative Project, which tracks premature infants to study their development and assess for autism risk (higher in premature babies)**

Dr. Karen Fairchild, chief of the Division of Neonatology and principal investigator for the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit

- **Defining the treatment of prolonged, life-threatening seizures, called status epilepticus**

Dr. Jaideep Kapur leads the NIH-funded 60-site Phase 3 Established Status Epilepticus Treatment Trial and soon-to-be-launched ketamine add-on therapy for established status epilepticus

- **Novel gene therapies for epilepsies**

Dr. Ed Perez-Reyes, professor of pharmacology, is developing more effective ways to modify genes, and Dr. Manoj Patel, professor of anesthesiology, is developing novel gene editing techniques to cure genetic epilepsies

- **Exploring low-intensity focused ultrasound treatment for drug addiction**

Dr. Nassima Ait-Daoud Tiouririne, director of the Center for Leading Edge Addiction Research and professor of psychiatry

- **Pioneering the use of focused soundwaves to improve treatment of a debilitating brain condition called cerebral cavernous malformations, or CCMs**

Richard J. Price, Nancy and Neal Wade Professor of Engineering and Applied Science and co-director of the Focused Ultrasound Cancer

Immunotherapy Center, and Petr Tvrdik, assistant professor of neurosurgery

- **Testing the viability of a deep brain implant to both study and potentially treat Alzheimer’s disease**

Harald Sontheimer, Harrison Distinguished Teaching Professor of Neuroscience and chair of the Department of Neuroscience

- **Discovering increased inflammation and structural changes by analyzing brains that have been repeatedly exposed to blasts**

Dr. James Stone, vice chairman of clinical research and professor of radiology and medical imaging

- **Learning about autistic gender differences that might help pinpoint the underlying causes of the autism and develop treatments or interventions**

Kevin Pelphrey, Harrison-Wood Jefferson Scholars Foundation Distinguished Professor of Neurology in the School of Medicine

- **Discovering how *Lactobacillus*, a bacterium found in fermented foods and yogurt, helps the body manage stress and may help prevent depression and anxiety**

Alban Gaultier, associate professor of neuroscience

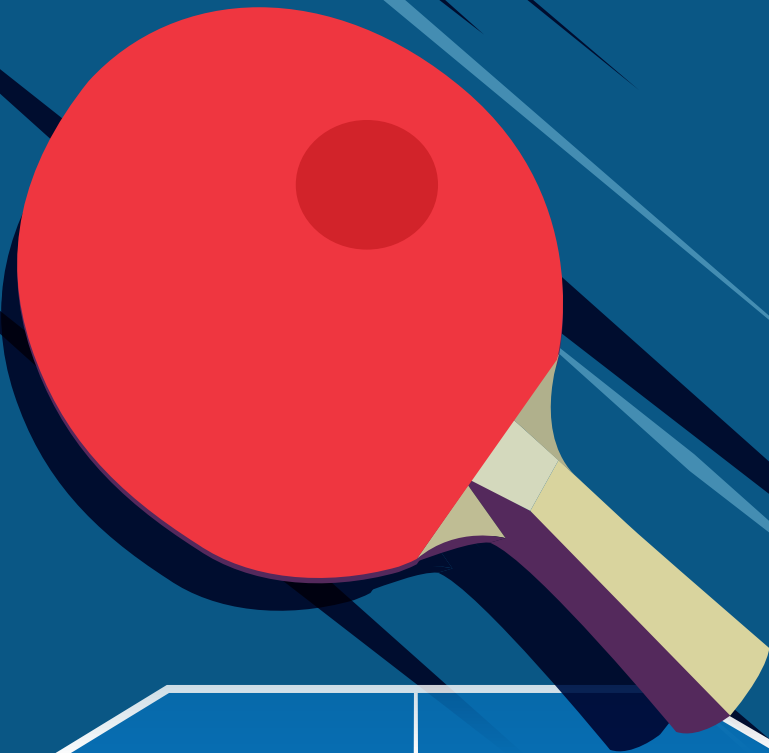
- **Uncovering how harmful tau proteins damage the essential operating instructions for brain cells, a finding that could lead to new treatments for Alzheimer’s and other neurodegenerative conditions**

George Bloom, professor in the Departments of Biology, Cell Biology, and Neuroscience

- **Using focused ultrasound technology to treat chronic pain, such as neuropathic pain that comes from nerve injuries and pain associated with cancer**

Dr. Jeffrey Elias, director of stereotactic and functional neurosurgery department and professor of neurosurgery

TABLETOP DIPLOMACY



American table tennis player Glenn Cowan, right, and three-time world champion Zhuang Zedong of China after meeting on a bus ride in Japan, 1971.

FIFTY-THREE YEARS AGO, IN APRIL 1971, A CHANCE ENCOUNTER BETWEEN A CHINESE AND AN AMERICAN TABLE TENNIS PLAYER BECAME AN INTERNATIONAL SENSATION.

During the 31st World Table Tennis Championships in Japan, an American named Glenn Cowan missed his team's shuttle bus after a practice session. He decided to catch another shuttle for a ride back to his hotel. It turned out to be the bus carting the Chinese national team.

At the time, there were no diplomatic channels of communication between Washington and Beijing and no formal economic relations between the U.S. and China. International tensions were of little concern to the two young players, so Cowan and Chinese champion Zhuang Zedong struck up a friendly conversation and exchanged gifts. When the bus parked at the arena, photographers caught the moment, journalists smelled a good human interest story, and Ping-Pong diplomacy was born.

The idea of this improbable meeting and the fundamental good will between two athletes captured the world's imagination. China invited the U.S. team for an exhibition tour of the country. The media sensation that followed eventually led to President Richard Nixon's historic visit to China, the lifting of travel bans, and the establishment of full diplomatic relations.

In January 2024, 12 UVA students boarded a flight to China as part of a J-Term course called “Game Change: Bridging the U.S.-China Divide Through Sport.” The 12-day trip followed in the footsteps of the 1971 team, giving “our students their own shot at Ping-Pong diplomacy and developing a better understanding of current issues between the United States and China,” said Vice Provost for Global Affairs Stephen Mull. In a nod to history, the students re-created the U.S. team image featured on the cover of TIME Magazine from 1971.



Mull—who served in a broad range of U.S. national security positions, most recently as acting undersecretary for political affairs at the U.S. Department of State—went along to teach the course with Justin O’Jack, director of the UVA China Office. The tour included several destinations visited by the 1971 team, lectures, visits to cultural sites, and friendly exhibition matches with Chinese university students. The UVA students also met alumni and parents from China in events hosted by UVA clubs there.

“China is a very important country for UVA’s global engagement,” said Mull. “The biggest share of our international students, about 40%, come from China. I think it’s important that we, as educators, do the very best job that we can to teach our students about China—to have them become familiar with the Chinese language, politics, culture, and history. It’s the second-largest economy of the world in a major competition with the United States.”

During the trip, which began in Hong Kong and ended in Shanghai, the UVA students made their own version of history—they were the first UVA education abroad group to visit China since the pandemic. Mull helped develop a course and itinerary that made good use of the students’ time.

“We had a lecture on Ping-Pong diplomacy and how that all came about,” he said. “We had a discussion among Chinese students who’ve studied in the United States and Americans who’ve studied in China. We did a session on the roles of Buddhism and Confucianism in Chinese thought and how they shape China’s view of the world. We did a seminar on the big foreign policy problems between the United States and China and how might they be resolved.” Cultural activities included a visit to the Forbidden City in Beijing, a trek to the Great Wall, and a foray to a section of Shanghai that had once been colonized by Europeans.

“But most of all, we played Ping-Pong,” Mull said.

PEOPLE TO PEOPLE, PADDLE TO PADDLE



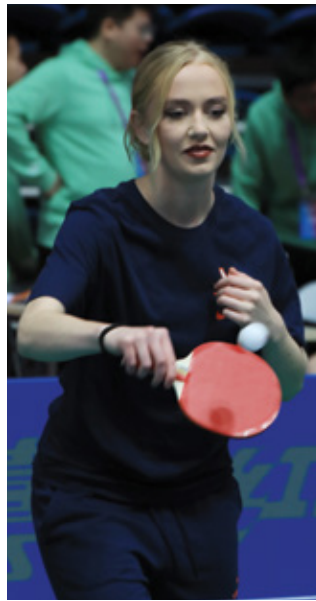
Jie Lu (McIntire '24) certainly came to play. Lu, who was born in China but raised in the U.S., has been playing table tennis since she was eight. At the time, she was the president of Club Table Tennis at UVA.

“I go back to China every two or three years, but because of COVID, I hadn’t been back since high school,” she said. “I know how to speak Mandarin, but a lot of the people on the trip didn’t, so I was really nervous that they weren’t able to communicate with the players or just people in general. However, it was amazing that all the students and players were very welcoming. Everyone was mingling and learning about each other’s cultures. There wasn’t a cultural shock where it’s like, ‘Oh my gosh, we’re so different from each other,’ you know?”



“I think it’s important that we, as educators, do the very best job that we can to teach our students about China—to have them become familiar with the Chinese language, politics, culture, and history. It’s the second-largest economy of the world in a major competition with the United States.”

— STEPHEN MULL



Misa Layne (Col '26) echoed Lu's observations. In a blog maintained by the J-Term participants, she wrote, "People-to-people exchanges serve as the bedrock for higher levels of diplomacy. While not a panacea for international conflicts, such exchanges represent the vital first step toward fostering common understanding. And friendship is enhanced through understanding. What is significant about Ping-Pong itself is its ability to bring people together. Unlike many other sports, Ping-Pong lends itself to conversation because of the proximity and dynamic of players. It is a game anyone can enjoy. Sports diplomacy has the unique ability to mollify relations, occasionally surpassing the ability of traditional diplomatic channels."

OPENING UP THE EDUCATION ABROAD EXPERIENCE

One component of the University's 2030 Strategic Plan is to ensure that all UVA students have the opportunity to embark on an international experience before graduating. During the planning process, Mull sought funding to enable the 12 students—some of whom were visiting a foreign country for the first time—to travel without worry about the cost. He received support from the Van S. Lung Fund, the UVA Parents Committee, gifts from alumni and parents, and a special fund that was created to honor UVA's first international student.

W. W. Yen was the first student from China to earn a degree from UVA and the first international student to earn a bachelor's degree from the University. Arriving on Grounds in 1897, he excelled in disciplines spanning the arts, sciences, humanities, and law. Yen graduated in 1900 and went on to a long diplomatic and political career that included serving as the Premier of the Republic of China, China's first ambassador to the Soviet Union, and a delegate to the League of Nations.

In 2016, to honor Yen's achievements, the University established the Yen Global Initiatives Student Projects Fund to support activities related to student project work for global initiatives.

For Mull, diplomacy, like table tennis, is all about setting up a lively back and forth. He came away from the trip impressed with the way the students handled themselves in a sometimes-challenging environment.

"I watched the students evolve," he said. "They were a little nervous, frankly, because of the political climate, and they were asked some sensitive questions. You had reporters sticking microphones in their faces as we were on our different tours and Ping-Pong matches. They developed, very quickly, the political sophistication to not say anything to insult the host without compromising America's commitment to freedom of speech and democracy. All of them said they can't wait to go back to China."

Lu said the trip was a great way to meet and interact with the Chinese people. "We wanted to understand what they do and learn how the U.S.-China relationship is going right now," she said. "It was very positive. It was hopeful. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity." 🗣️



Top left: In Beijing, Stephen Mull presents a UVA table tennis paddle to Zhang Qian, executive vice president, Beijing People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries.

Top right: After an exhibition match at Tsinghua University in Beijing, Liu Guozhen (right), the university's table tennis coach, former coach of China's national team, and two-time world champion, gives an impromptu lesson on the forehand drive for Tang Zhiwen (left), deputy director general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Middle left: UVA students with their participation medals after the U.S.-China Youth Ping-Pong Exchange in Cao Guangbiao Stadium, Tsinghua University.

Middle right: W. W. Yen was a Chinese politician and diplomat from Shanghai. A fund was established in his honor to support student projects related to global initiatives.

Bottom left: UVA student **Abdallah Aljerjawi (Nurs '25)** competing at Tsinghua University.

Bottom right: UVA students outside the National Stadium (aka Bird's Nest Stadium) in Beijing.

WHERE ARE
THEY NOW

BUILDING ON CHEMISTRY



“

Providing scholarships for students who need financial assistance is an expression of our gratitude to UVA and a way for us to pay forward that good to new generations of students.

— DONA & HENRY OLDFIELD

”



The Oldfields continue to provide major support for students, as reflected by their recent creation of the Henry and Dona Oldfield Blue Ridge Scholars Fund.

Bottom: The benefits live on. James Mullin is now a graduate researcher working on his doctoral degree in chemical engineering.



Maybe you've seen chemical engineers wearing t-shirts with the phrase "I don't argue. I just explain why I'm right." Or maybe not, since most chemical engineers are too busy focusing on getting it right while working diligently in the lab, or even two labs. That would be **James Mullin (Engr '21)**.

When we first featured him in *Envision*, Mullin was a third-year engineering student immersed in research with his second summer internship already behind him. It was the fall after the men's basketball team won the 2019 national championship, and he shared that his favorite UVA memory was when everyone flooded the Corner to celebrate. So, life at the University of Virginia wasn't all work and no play—Mullin had time to celebrate with his friends.

Now, he's in his third year of a doctoral program in chemical engineering at the University of Delaware and expects to graduate with his Ph.D. in 2026.

The Dona and Henry Oldfield Bicentennial Scholarship Mullin received at UVA helped him as he took the first steps

in his undergraduate career. He worked alongside graduate students in the Letteri Lab in the Department of Chemical Engineering, engaging in biomedical research that offered promising opportunities for, among other applications, new therapeutic strategies for treating Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, or Lou Gehrig's disease.

The Oldfields' support of scholarships at UVA dates back to 2014 and continues today. Since creating the Bicentennial Scholarship in 2017, **Dona (Col '77)** and **Henry (Col '77)** have established the Henry and Dona Oldfield Blue Ridge Scholars Fund and increased their bequest to benefit future scholarships.

A UVA education and support from endowed scholarships have enduring value.

"Our UVA experience has been a powerful source of good in our lives and those of our family," said Dona and Henry Oldfield. "Providing scholarships for students who need financial assistance is an expression of our gratitude to UVA and a way for us to pay forward that good to new

generations of students. These scholarships are awarded, without exception, to extraordinary individuals. We are always pleased to learn what scholarship recipients like James accomplish at UVA and beyond."


In 2020, Mullin credited the Oldfield Bicentennial Scholarship for helping him enroll at UVA. He explained then, "There's no way I would have been able to cover the cost without it. I was able to cover all of my tuition expenses and cover my off-Grounds rent, which is one thing that's really nice about these scholarships."

Today, Mullin works in two research groups with his co-advisors at the University of Delaware, Professors Millicent Sullivan and Kristi L. Kiick. His graduate research project involves using hydrogels that mimic natural skin to deliver gene therapy—treatment for chronic or nonhealing skin wounds that may otherwise lead to amputations for diabetic patients. The ultimate goal for the project is to conduct testing in clinical trials.

It's absorbing research and more than full-time. His free time is limited, but Mullin makes good use of it. He gets a couple of weeks off every year and spends them mostly visiting friends and family, with a recent trip to San Antonio, Texas, for a wedding. Conferences in Seattle and the mountains of New Hampshire have taken him out of the lab to travel and get away.

His UVA connections continue. "My core group of friends from undergrad get together once a year, and we usually go to the beach. We're trying to keep that going," he said.

The scholarship was part of Mullin's financial aid package and made everything easier. "I still think about the benefits," he said. "I was able to cut back on student loans—haven't had to start paying those back yet—and that saves money for 'the future me.' I realize how big an impact the scholarship is making, beyond keeping me sane as an undergraduate."

Sounds like James Mullin isn't arguing. He's just explaining how he's right. 



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Deutsch 2,891,000+ Artikel	Français 2,598,000+ articles
Italiano 1,853,000+ voci	中文 1,409,000+ 文章
فارسی 1,415,000+ مقاله	Português 1,409,000+ artigos



DEMOCRATIZING DATA

Lane Rasberry Aims to Change the World One Wikipedia Entry at a Time.

Lane Rasberry is an activist, scientist, dreamer, and true-blue believer in the transformational power of information. As Wikipedia-in-Residence at UVA's School of Data Science, he supports the school as they engage with the sprawling online information site Wikipedia.

His ultimate ambition is to promote a more equitable society by championing the open movement exemplified by Wikipedia, which seeks to address the world's most pressing problems in a spirit of transparency, collaboration, re-use, and free access.

Rasberry's breadth and depth of expertise have drawn attention and funding from major philanthropic institutions, including the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

THE WORLD'S LARGEST ENCYCLOPEDIA

By Rasberry's estimate, 95% of all knowledge isn't on the web; it is scattered about in billions of books, academic papers, and electronic devices. "Can you imagine accessing all the world's knowledge quickly and easily through your device? That's what I'm trying to do," he said.

Rasberry asserts that Wikipedia is the best platform for searching and distributing information, thanks to its tremendous reach combined with its open ethos. According to an article on—where else—Wikipedia, "it is the largest, most comprehensive, and most accessible compilation of knowledge to exist in the history of the human race." Its English version contains more than 6.7 million articles spanning more than 60 million pages.

The open aspect of Wikipedia is especially important to Rasberry. "It's an entire culture where people have tried to be thoughtful about maximizing access to data, protecting the readers who are accessing it, and making information available to as many people on earth as possible," Rasberry said.

SHARING SCHOLARLY KNOWLEDGE

Rasberry's focus is on disseminating academic research, which he says is often trapped at the university level. "We have high quality control of the knowledge in our libraries, but we have poor distribution and dissemination," he explained.

While universities are expanding digital access to their holdings and research findings, most of the data is not web-indexed and FAIR—findable, accessible, interoperable, and reusable. "Suppose I went to any university and said I'd like a list of the research work of their faculty," he said. "Would they be able to provide that? The answer is no."

Nor can likeminded scholars easily find each other. "If two researchers are researching the same thing and they don't even know that the other one exists, and they're spending hundreds of thousands or even millions of dollars researching the same thing—that's absolutely insane," he added.

To address this problem, Rasberry secured two grants to UVA from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. The first funded development of Scholia, a free and open scholarly profiling service on the Wikipedia platform. The crowdsourced tool aims to make academic research more readily accessible. Users can easily generate a list of papers authored by a particular researcher or names of researchers at a particular university.

The second Sloan Foundation grant funded the capability to catalog software in Scholia. Often researchers develop software or compile data sets that could benefit academics in other disciplines. "We index these research resources with the intent of this open philosophy, again, to make them more accessible so that people can collaborate better," Rasberry said.

SPREADING COVID INFORMATION

Another focus of Rasberry's research is providing broad access to reliable health findings, something that he says isn't always easy to find. While major health organizations are excellent repositories of accurate information, Rasberry describes them as "utter failures" when it comes to attracting audiences. "You're competing for eyeball time. You can read their messages, or you can watch TikTok dances," he said, referencing the rapidly growing social media app that reaches an estimated 1 billion users in more than 140 countries.

The key is proper positioning in the media ecosystem. For example, "TikTok and Wikipedia are interconnected," he said. "Information is more likely to travel from Wikipedia to TikTok than from the World Health Organization to TikTok."

This communication challenge came to the fore early in the pandemic. "The question was, 'How do you make sure everyone has access to reliable information and counter misinformation?'" Through a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to UVA, Rasberry led the charge to share accurate COVID-related information via Wikipedia.

ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

Now, about his title. Rasberry estimates that there are only 30 Wikipedians-in-Residence in the entire world, and he knows them all. But when he reveals his distinctive title to most people, "They think I'm crazy."

However, Wikipedian-in-Residence is a designation that's known within the Wikipedia community and one that he held previously at Consumer Reports. It captures the unique relationship between Rasberry and UVA. "The University doesn't force its perspective on Wikipedia and neither can Wikipedia demand that the University do particular things," he said. "So, I'm a Wikipedian-in-Residence, but I don't take orders from anybody."


Rasberry likens his role to that of an artist-in-residence. "You ask for a particular artist to come, but you can't mandate, 'Be creative now.' You put them in a certain space, and you have some idea of their history and what they produce."

CHANGING THE WORLD

Despite his title and deep involvement with Wikipedia, Rasberry's loyalty is to what the platform provides rather than the site itself. "I would abandon Wikipedia immediately if there was another repository for open knowledge," he said. "If I didn't feel this work was alleviating major problems in society, I wouldn't be doing any of it."

But don't count on him stepping away from the keyboard anytime soon. Not with so much yet to be done, so much valuable information languishing on library shelves and obscured by copyright restrictions, and so many global questions still unanswered.

"Are we on the path to eliminate poverty? Does everyone have access to health care? Does everyone have a career where they can advance and sustain a family? Will all politicians tell the truth? Do we have a plan to protect the environment?" Rasberry and his colleagues are convinced that the answers can be found on Wikipedia.

"We have put our minds to this, and we thought, 'What is the most important thing we could be doing to achieve this kind of future?'" he said. "And this is where we've landed, this bit about opening up access to all knowledge at the university level." 



"Can you imagine accessing all the world's knowledge quickly and easily through your device? That's what I'm trying to do."

— LANE RASBERRY

A Human of Edinburgh

A small leather-bound journal encapsulates some of the wisdom **Jake Berton (Col '24)** gained while studying abroad in Edinburgh, Scotland, as a third-year student in the spring of 2023. He kept it with him all the time, jotting down observations about his surroundings, often while he walked or sat in the city's large public parks. "I could live outside the U.S. and not feel out of touch politically, socially, or culturally," reads one of the takeaways he noted in a long list at the back of the book. Another says, "I've come into my own as a person here."

Originally from Quakertown, Pennsylvania, Berton came to UVA knowing he wanted to study overseas, and UVA's robust programs were among the reasons he chose to become a Hoo. Working with education abroad advisors in the International Studies Office, he identified Edinburgh as his destination of choice. The Susan B. and Lee Piepho International Scholarship Fund helped make his semester overseas a reality.

The Piepho Scholarship supports undergraduate students interested in studying abroad, and—like all gifts made to establish a scholarship endowment—the Piephos' gift has been invested for long-term growth, so generated earnings can support future students like Jake Berton. **Susan Brand Piepho (Grad Arts & Sciences '70)** and the late **Lee Piepho (Grad Arts & Sciences '72)** met as rising third-year students in 1962 on a 10-day trip across the north Atlantic as they each embarked on travels around Europe. They were married after graduation and spent their lives exploring the world together. Berton was able to meet Sue Piepho after he returned from his own travels, and he expressed his gratitude for the couple's vision in creating the scholarship.

"Anything that involves actively trying to sustain connection means a lot to me," he said. "We need more of that in the world. It might be small in the grand scheme of things, but it's certainly not small to the people who benefit. I'm incredibly thankful for the experiences that I had as a result of the scholarship. I'm a romantic at heart and would have loved to hear even more tales of their travels."

Berton's own explorations of the world are grounded in open-minded curiosity and a commitment to cultivating human relationships. "The framing that I use when I go through life is connection—wanting to bring people together, wanting to alleviate loneliness," he said. He's a co-president of Humans of UVA, a student group whose mission is to explore UVA's community one story at a time; members interview strangers on Grounds at random, and their unique stories and a photographic portrait are then posted on the group's website and shared on social media.

"You begin to see these common threads among people," Berton explained, "and it really lends itself to thinking about some broader shared humanity and imagining a world where all the people in a hypothetical world could be friends and know each other."

This vision contributed to Berton's contentment in navigating Edinburgh on his own, meeting new people, and learning in a new environment. "I did a lot of solo traveling when I was there, including just walking around and doing things around the city by myself," he said. "I was physically alone, but I never felt alone. I always felt in touch or connected with the people around me. And those were some of the moments I felt most at peace with myself, with my environment, with the way I was operating in the world. It was really the happiest time of my life."

"You begin to see these common threads among people...and it really lends itself to thinking about some broader shared humanity and imagining a world where all the people in a hypothetical world could be friends and know each other."

— JAKE BERTON




Jake Berton enjoying a spring day on Grounds during his final semester.



FOUND ON GROUNDS

An American Studies major, Berton's coursework abroad and experiences in Edinburgh directly related to his desire to become a history teacher—though this career trajectory was set in motion long before that by a high school history teacher who brought the subject alive for his students, making history feel grounded through great storytelling. "I knew right then that was what I wanted to do," Berton said. "It's definitely been the driving force of my life." Directly enrolling in the University of Edinburgh, he chose courses that piqued his interest—including Sociology of Illicit Markets and Criminal Organizations. He found that one to be particularly compelling after taking a class at UVA on the popular television series "Breaking Bad" and co-designing a follow-up class on the show's spinoff, "Better Call Saul," with William Little, associate professor of media studies.

He also had a spot of good luck on that thematic front, running into "Breaking Bad" actor Dean Norris in Edinburgh on the way to a coffee shop after visiting the National Museum of Scotland. "I was the most starstruck I've ever been in my life," he grinned, holding up the photo he snapped on his phone. "And all the ideas I learned about on my trip are still showing up in my classes right now, which is great. That's what college is for!"

Despite his focus on studying and teaching history, Berton's time in Edinburgh also gave him a glimpse of what life after graduation might look like. "It felt like a preview of my twenties—like I was jumping ahead in my life in a really productive way. It was life-changing." 

Top: Now an alumnus, Jake Berton is enrolled in the one-year Master of Teaching program in UVA's School of Education and Human Development, with the goal of becoming a social studies teacher.

Middle: The leather-bound journal where Jake Berton recorded his experiences studying abroad in Scotland.

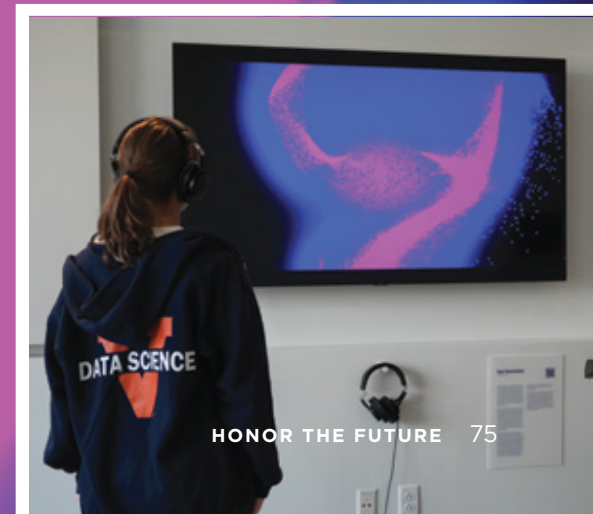
Bottom: The view looking down Princes Street in Edinburgh's city center.

MULTIMEDIA MOLLUSKS

Soon after opening, the new home of the School of Data Science hosted its inaugural art competition, Data is Art. Artists from nine countries submitted more than 130 entries that demonstrate how data can both inform and inspire. One of eight finalists—announced along with the grand prize winner in May at the building's Capital One Hub—is "Reef Generations" by Matthew Burtner, Eleanor Shea Professor of Music.

Burtner's work explores oyster reef restoration on Virginia's Eastern Shore, transforming reef data into computer-generated animation and synthesized music. The piece also uses an underwater recording of the reef habitat, made in collaboration with UVA's Coastal Futures Conservatory.

The multimedia creation offers visitors a new experience of oyster reefs, which are living seawalls that help protect coastlines from wave motion and chemical toxins as well as erosion resulting from sea level rise.



 CONTEMPLATIVE SCIENCES CENTER
UNIVERSITY of VIRGINIA

Construction began on the 57,000-square-foot, four-story Contemplative Commons in 2021. Funded in part by a lead gift from **Paul Tudor Jones (Col '76)** and his wife, **Sonia**, the building welcomed students this fall. By encompassing multipurpose, light-filled interior spaces with strategically placed art installations and an outdoor environment, including a tree-lined courtyard with a walkable reflecting pool, the building will promote contemplation, mindfulness, and an expanded sense of awareness. In honor of **Jeff Walker (McIntire '77)**, a new pedestrian bridge connecting the building to central Grounds was named Walker Bridge.

