

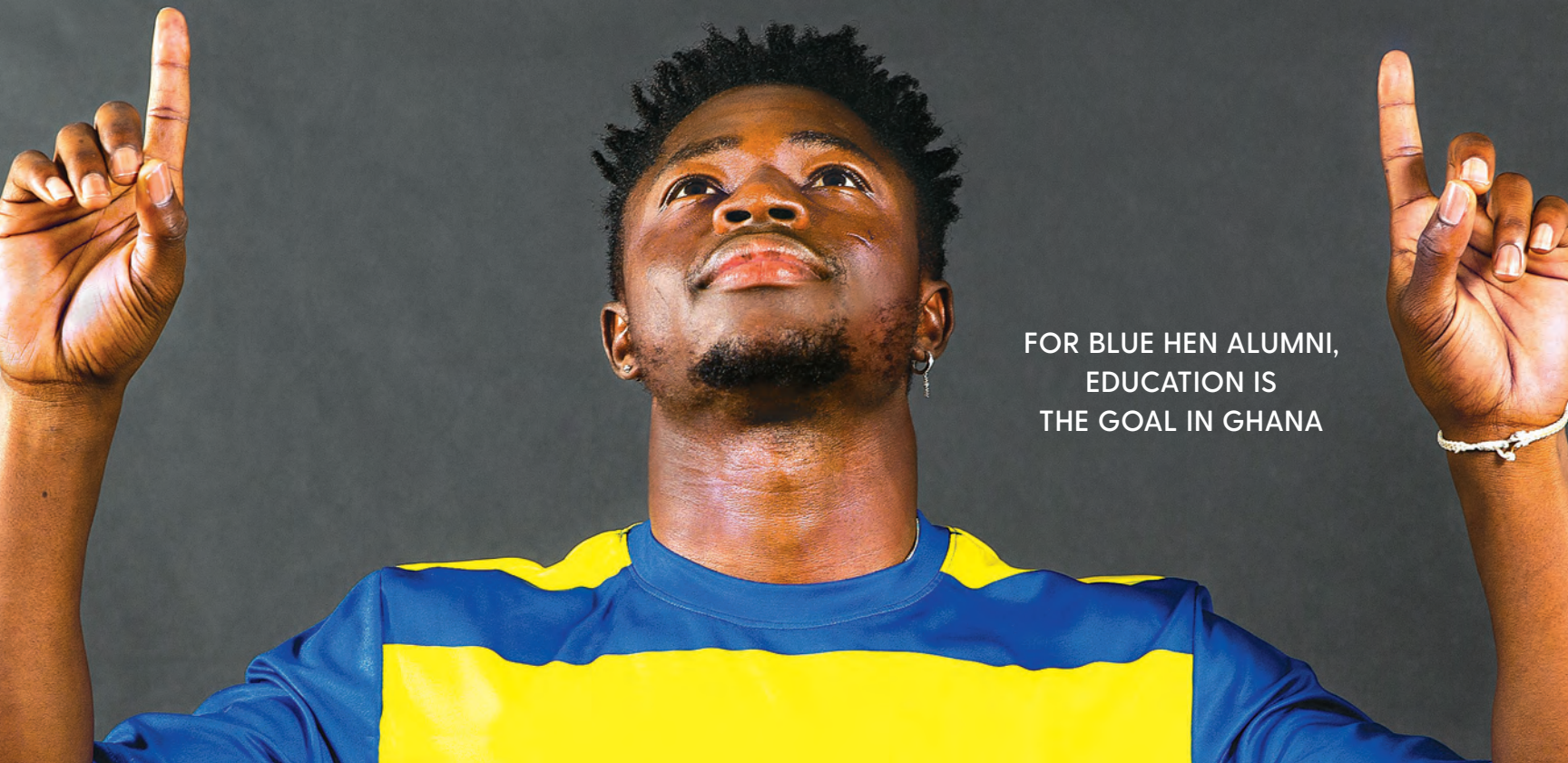
UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE



MAGAZINE

Volume 32 · Number 3

PLAYING IT FORWARD



FOR BLUE HEN ALUMNI,
EDUCATION IS
THE GOAL IN GHANA



MISSION POSSIBLE

Blue Hens Sibyl Roosen, EG24, and Evan McArdle, EOE22, 25M, spent their summer under the sea, working with Project Recover to search, locate, document, recover and repatriate American service members missing in action. Turn the page to learn more.

Photo by Mark Moline

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WILLIAM K. CLARK

MISSION POSSIBLE

In February 1944, amid the battles of World War II, the United States Navy conducted Operation Hailstone, targeting Japanese forces in the Chuuk Lagoon. Eighty years later, UD students visited the South Pacific island nations to work with Project Recover as part of a summer study abroad program.

Project Recover is the nation’s foremost citizen-led, nonprofit organization to search, locate, document, recover and repatriate the more than 81,500 American service members missing in action.

“In a very big ocean, our technology and persistence are enabling us to find these heroes and change the lives of generations of their relatives across the U.S.,” says Mark Moline, co-founder of Project Recover and director of UD’s School of Marine Science and Policy.

Moline and the work of Project Recover have recently been featured on *Discovery’s* show, *Expedition Unknown*.



ON THE COVER

The image of Saviour Anyagri, EHD22, BE24M, was taken by Sarah Boekholder, AS24, BE24. As a student photographer for Delaware Athletics, Boekholder learned “how to work under pressure and think on your feet.” She is now an IT auditor for PwC and freelance photographer (@sarahboekphotos).

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FROM OUR

PRESIDENT

EVOLVING TOGETHER

Everyone who comes to the University of Delaware campus can feel its energy, its vibrant and dynamic rhythm of living, learning and growing. Such activity inevitably compels change, a quest for new experiences and ideas, and a bold curiosity to discover what's next.

Change and challenge have always been integral to the UD story; our students, alumni and faculty have quite literally made history multiple times since 1743. Yet, our Blue Hens today find themselves in a world where the future is coming at them at lightning speed. How can the University help students manage this whirlwind and, perhaps more importantly, help them persevere today so they can thrive tomorrow?

UD is always evolving to meet the changing needs of each generation of Blue Hens. We continually expand access to higher education, reimagine our academic programs and offerings, and enhance our campus culture to maintain pace with the contemporary imperative for health and wellbeing for all.

We know the transformative power of the UD experience, and we want as many students as possible to experience it, too. By keeping tuition affordable, providing financial aid options and enabling customized pathways to achieve academic excellence, we are opening channels for flexibility, diversity and creativity. Blue Hens from all over the world are discovering that, just like

their personal and academic aspirations, the campus is evolving.

As partners in lifelong learning, everyone at the University of Delaware continues to explore and innovate new ways to help students develop the skills and readiness they will need to engage with society and lead in the workplace and their communities. Award-winning faculty and dedicated staff provide the knowledge and experiences, the cultivation of inquisitive minds, and the cultural immersion students need to be successful, here on campus and everywhere they go in the world.

Of course, we know that progress is only possible with a healthy UD community. That is why we embed wellbeing into all aspects of campus life. We are committed to offering our students, as well as our faculty and staff, access to the empathetic people, the supportive programs and the restorative places that are so vital to good mental health.

The year ahead promises to be full of exciting challenges and opportunities. Whatever changes it brings, the University of Delaware will also evolve to meet the moment and shape our future together.

Dennis Assanis, President

ON THE GREEN

News
from campus
and beyond



EVAN KRADE

GRADUATION OUTCOMES, STARTING SALARIES SPUR TOP NATIONAL RANKINGS

The University of Delaware ranks 26 out of the 500 best colleges and universities nationwide and 10 out of 235 best public universities, according to *The Wall Street Journal's* 2025 rankings. This year's WSJ/College Pulse Best Colleges in the U.S. rankings reflect immense growth in UD's accomplishments and reputation, rising 60 spots from an overall ranking of 86 in 2024.

"This prominent recognition is a testament to the hard work and dedication of our outstanding faculty and staff to prepare our students for success in their careers and throughout their lives," says President Dennis Assanis. "Student success has always been—and will always be—a critical focus for the University."

According to *The Wall Street Journal*, the ranking "measures how well each college sets graduates up for financial success. We look at how much a school improves students' chances of graduating and their future earnings, balancing these outcomes with feedback from students on college life."

Over the past two years, the WSJ/College Pulse survey has adjusted its methodology to increase its focus on student outcomes, primarily graduation rates and graduates' salaries. The survey puts greater emphasis on the value added by colleges and universities—not only students' success but also the contribution the institution makes to that success.

Assanis noted that these survey metrics align with institutional priorities and investments, which include "strengthening our faculty ranks, providing accessible pathways for students to achieve their educational goals, expanding our research

enterprise to propel discovery and innovation in so many critical fields, and engaging with people here in Delaware and around the world to help solve our most complex challenges."

In the WSJ/College Pulse survey, UD also ranked 48 for best salaries and 86 for best value.

The University boasts a four-year graduation rate of 73%, which is among the best in the nation, according to the National Center for Education Statistics. Additionally, 94% of students are employed or continuing their education within six months of their graduation from UD.

In August, UD made *The Princeton Review's* Best 390 Colleges list for 2025. UD was also listed among the Best Mid-Atlantic Colleges. *The Princeton Review* has also recognized UD as one of the Best Value Colleges 2024 and UD's excellent undergraduate entrepreneurship program was recognized as 3 in the Mid-Atlantic and in the top 50 nationally in the 2024 Entrepreneurship Rankings.

In September, UD's undergraduate academic programs were recognized among the top 100 in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report*.

Especially impressive was the nursing program, which jumped 38 spots to rank 74 out of 686. The chemical engineering program continues to be recognized for its academic excellence, remaining among the top 10 nationally and ranking 4 out of 26.

U.S. News ranked UD 86 among 434 national universities and 44 among the top 225 public schools.



The STEMSisters learn about solar panel evolution from Professor Steven Hegedus.

EVAN KRAPE

INTERNATIONAL GRADS

UD's newest alumni hail from across the globe.

On June 19, 2024, the Southwestern University of Finance and Economics (SWUFE) in Chengdu, China, hosted the inaugural 2024 SWUFE-UD Institute of Data Science graduation ceremony.

The 166 graduates are the first cohort to complete the joint educational initiative, which offers three undergraduate degree options in management information systems, finance and operations management. Administered at UD by the Alfred Lerner College of Business and Economics, the program launched in 2020 and has grown to more than 700 students. It also includes 17 UD faculty who travel to Chengdu to teach throughout the year.

More than half of the 2024 graduates will leave China to continue their education overseas, including Yuhang Huang, who earned a bachelor's degree in finance from UD and is now pursuing a master of science in business analytics and information management at UD's Lerner College.

"I feel that my perspective has broadened," says Huang, BE24, 26M. "My four years at SWUFE-UD taught me to view things and people with a diverse set of evaluation standards. Additionally, I made great friends who will be spread all over the world, and I feel that they have given me inner strength." 🐦

—Jen Hendrickson



ENCOURAGING GLOBAL STEM EDUCATION

If education is a path to individual empowerment and societal gain, then the 27 Pakistani women who participated in UD's STEMSisters exchange program are headed for success.

Historically, most Pakistani women have been prepared to be homemakers, though times are changing. In 2020, nearly one-quarter of Pakistani women were in the workforce, an 11% increase since 1991.

The goal of the STEMSisters program is to encourage the women's educational and career goals in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering and math) while teaching about climate change and sustainability. The three-week institute—co-hosted by UD and the American Institute of Pakistan Studies and supported by the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad—gave the women, none of whom had ever visited the United States, a firsthand view of Blue Hen life.

For two weeks this summer, they lived and dined on campus, attended daily lectures and visited campus landmarks like the Institute of Energy Conversion (the oldest solar research facility in the world) and the Mineralogical Museum, which features specimens from Pakistan. They also toured the state and region, and spent their final week of the program in Washington, D.C.

Many of the STEMSisters wanted to set an example for their children. "As a mother, you have to be literate to pass information to younger generations," says Tooba Khan, who is studying economics with an interest in climate change policies.

Computer science student Faryal Kehkashan and pharmacy student Pari Saroosh found it surprising—and inspiring—to learn that UD professors are also researchers.

Duaa Aamir is studying cybersecurity to create awareness and help women targeted by cybercrimes. She also learned about the possibility of cleaning river water with plant life and hopes to clean the river that runs through her hometown so that her community can access even more clean water.

Amanda Bullough, professor of management specializing in global and women's leadership and co-founder and research director of the Women's Leadership Initiative at UD, says opportunities like this often help women realize that they face similar challenges, such as bias.

"Their eyes are opened to a lot of information," Bullough adds. "These women are not only taking home a broader perspective but also an increased skill set and more confidence to accomplish their goals, effect change and be an example." 🐦

—Jamie Washington



UD LEADS NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY CHARGE

Cyber threats continue to rise, with over 2,365 attacks affecting 343 million victims in 2023, according to *Forbes*. Small businesses, a vital part of the American economy, are particularly vulnerable. The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) reports that cyberattacks cost the economy billions each year.

To address this, the Delaware Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at UD has developed a national cyber certification program. Supported by a \$350,000 SBA cyber prize, this program aims to train SBDC counselors and resource partners across the country to help small businesses improve their cybersecurity.

Delaware SBDC's North Star Cybersecurity Program, launched in 2021, has already made significant strides in assisting businesses with cyber readiness. The program, which operates in over 20 states, will now expand nationwide.

"Eighty-six percent of small businesses are not prepared for cyber incidents," says Delaware SBDC Director Mike Bowman. This new initiative will help equip SBDC advisers to guide small businesses toward greater cyber resilience, ensuring a more secure digital future for entrepreneurs across the U.S.

America's SBDC network comprises over 1,200 centers, including Delaware SBDC. The network includes more than 3,000 advisers who serve more than 1 million small business clients each year nationwide. 🐦

—Karen Roberts, AS90, 21M



ISTOCK PHOTO

A BOLD APPROACH TO SUSTAINABLE MANUFACTURING

The world is waking up to the idea of a circular economy, where products and materials are continually transformed, reused and recycled. This includes carbon dioxide, the greenhouse gas that's a big driver of extreme weather and climate change.

Now, UD is part of a new powerhouse collaboration of academic institutions and industries working to convert carbon dioxide into environmentally friendly chemicals and products. Done right, the work has the potential to transform manufacturing toward zero (or negative) emissions.

The Carbon Utilization Redesign for Biomanufacturing-Empowered Decarbonization (CURB) Engineering Research Center, led by Washington University in St. Louis, has received a five-year, \$26 million grant from the National Science



From left, the UD research team of Wilfred Chen, E. Terry Papoutsakis, Kevin Solomon and Yushan Yan.

Foundation for this bold initiative. In UD's top-ranked College of Engineering (among the best in the nation for chemical engineering according to *U.S. News & World Report*), faculty members and their teams will design new electrocatalysis and biological processes to turn waste carbon dioxide into intermediate substances like ethanol, acetate and propionate, which can eventually be converted into a range of environmentally friendly products and materials.

"Our UD team has a track record of success in sustainability, and this new center will further expand our efforts toward achieving a carbon-neutral economy," says Wilfred Chen, Gore Professor of Chemical Engineering and interim associate dean for research and entrepreneurship in the college.

UD experts will contribute to the project on multiple fronts, from optimizing single-celled bacteria that are known for their ability to transform a variety of substances into valuable chemicals, including biodegradable plastics, to integrating renewable energy sources into the biomanufacturing process, and advancing education and workforce development efforts.

UD is one of eight universities involved in the center, which also has more than 30 corporate, innovation and education partners.

—Tracey Bryant

FROM TRASH TO TREASURE

Creating electronic devices from plastic waste? There's a UD project for that.

A new study by UD and Argonne National Laboratory has found a new method for converting Styrofoam into a high-value polymer called PEDOT:PSS. Published in *JACS Au*, an open access journal from the American Chemical Society, the research shows how this upgraded plastic waste can be used in electronic devices like hybrid solar cells and organic electrochemical transistors.

"For the electronic devices community, the key takeaway is that you can make electronic materials from trash, and they perform just as well as what you would purchase commercially," says UD Professor Laure Kayser.

She led the research team, which tested whether PEDOT:PSS could be synthesized from sulfonating polystyrene, a plastic found in many disposable containers. Sulfonation, a chemical reaction that replaces hydrogen atoms with sulfonic acid, is commonly used in producing dyes, drugs and resins. The researchers aimed to find a sulfonating agent that was both efficient and mild.

Using a method from a previous study, they experimented with various conditions, identifying those that resulted in high degrees of polymer sulfonation, minimal defects and high efficiency, all while using waste Styrofoam as a starting material.

—Erica Brockmeier

ONE WORD: PLASTICS

It's worse than you think. The majority of plastic items from disposable diapers to Styrofoam cups, take around 500 years to decompose. Meanwhile, more than 400 million tons of plastic are produced globally each year, with 8 million tons ending up in the ocean. Experts predict that by 2050, the weight of plastic in the sea could exceed that of fish.

The Center for Plastics Innovation (CPI) at UD is working to address this problem. Led by LaShanda Korley and deputy director Thomas H. Epps, III, the CPI was established as an Energy Frontier Research Center by the U.S. Department of Energy. Recently, it received \$14.5 million in renewed funding to develop new scientific methods to deconstruct and upgrade plastic waste, transforming it into valuable materials and creating new recyclable polymers.

The CPI takes a comprehensive approach to plastics and brings together experts from several institutions, including the University of Chicago, University of Florida, University of Pennsylvania, Oak Ridge National Laboratory and University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

One of the CPI's unique strengths is its focus on practical, real-world solutions. So far, the center's researchers have published in top scientific journals and patented eight innovations, such as converting plastic waste into lubricants and using microwave technology to transform polyethylene into olefins, key raw materials for manufacturing.

Beyond scientific research, CPI promotes education and outreach, offering training to numerous postdoctoral researchers, graduate students and undergraduates. It has also launched initiatives like the "Polymers in our World" exhibit and hosted events such as a Polymer Sustainability Workshop for K-12 students. With a global reach, CPI fosters international collaborations and engages with diverse audiences to tackle plastic pollution on multiple fronts.

"Great science starts with a great team," Korley says. "I am very blessed to work with each and every member of CPI, all striving to achieve the center's vision."

—Tracey Bryant



REVOLUTIONIZING PROSTHETICS

As a high school freshman, John Horne lost his right leg to bone cancer. This intense experience spawned his career and passion for advocating for those with limb loss.

As president of Independence Prosthetics-Orthotics on UD's Science, Technology, and Advanced Research (STAR) Campus, Horne, AS94, has witnessed profound advancements in prosthetics technology since his undergraduate days at UD, when he interned at Nemours Children's Health and poured prosthetic molds.

Today, Horne is part of pioneering research led by Professors Jill Higginson (mechanical engineering), Elisa Arch (kinesiology and applied physiology) and Meg Sions (physical therapy) to use fabric-based sensors to monitor load in individuals with lower limb amputation.

These innovative sensors were developed by Professors Erik Thostenson (mechanical engineering), Sagar Doshi (associate scientist in UD's Center for Composite Materials) and Higginson.

"The conversation, clinically with patients, has always been tough to translate what the patient is feeling," says Horne. "A device like this gives us hardcore data so clinicians can directly understand what's happening and make changes."

As director of UD's Institute for Engineering Driven Health, Higginson sees broad application for this technology, possibly even in assisting elite athletes, such as helping to determine whether a figure skater is using the right push-off force for various jumps or whether golfers are loading their limbs properly during their swing.

"This is why we do this," she says. "As engineers, pivoting and applying our skills to address novel problems drew me to this field, and impacting human health remains my primary goal." 🐦

—Amy Cherry



(Left to right) Theophilus Annan, EG28PhD; Hanna Armstrong, EG24; John Horne, AS94, president of Independence Prosthetics-Orthotics; and Mechanical Engineering Professor Jill Higginson.



BUYER BEWARE

Global tuna consumption increases human exposure to toxic mercury, according to new UD research.

Methylmercury, the most toxic form of mercury, is formed from inorganic mercury released by fossil fuel combustion, industrial processes and gold mining—and it's accumulating in big fish like tuna, which can be upwards of 15 feet and 1,500 pounds.

A new study led by UD Professor Mi-Ling Li has found that tropical and subtropical fisheries account for over 70% of methylmercury in fish due to pollution and high microbial activity. She has also found that these regions receive half of the mercury deposited from the atmosphere, and that fish there tend to have higher methylmercury concentrations and lower levels of nutrients like selenium and omega-3 fatty acids.

Tuna generally provides many beneficial nutrients—from protein to B-vitamins and iron—but high levels of methylmercury could have far-reaching implications for the future public health of fish consumers. In the United States alone, Americans consume around 1 billion pounds of canned and pouched tuna each year.

"Our study shows that the current fishing pattern is amplifying human exposure," says Li, who also found that 97% of global subsistence fishing communities (those who rely on self-caught seafood as a major protein source) likely exceed the U.S. EPA limit for human mercury exposure.

Despite lower nutrient levels in tropical tuna, these fisheries are expanding due to market demand. 🐦

—Adam Thomas, AS23M

MENTORS IN MUSIC

The four musicians who make up the internationally acclaimed Calidore String Quartet—Jeremy Berry, Estelle Choi, Ryan Meehan and Jeffrey Myers—have grown accustomed to fans of their music, which the *Los Angeles Times* described as having the "kind of sublimity other quartets spend a lifetime searching." More surprising, though, was hearing a booming "Go Blue Hens" at the Reykjavik airport.

Myers recounted this story in between rehearsals for a performance schedule that includes 80-plus concerts a year. On the day of their Icelandic shout-out, he was wearing UD gear, swag that President Dennis Assanis gifted the group in 2017, when the quartet first became artists-in-residence at UD. Four years later, that relationship was strengthened when they joined the School of Music faculty.

The 2024-2025 academic year marks the newest milestone and partnership, as the ensemble assumes its status as UD's Distinguished String Quartet in Residence. In this role, the quartet will continue to represent the University on international and campus stages while increasing opportunities to mentor and teach students.

The quartet members will also remain as artistic directors of UD's Graduate String Quartet Fellowship Residency, a two-year, highly competitive program that culminates in a master's degree in musical performance. The current graduate cohort

includes the Trellis String Quartet.

"[The Calidores] possess the sought-after combo of being incredible performers and deeply inspiring teachers," says Trellis member Zach Levin, AS25M.

"I pretty much always come out of lessons with them feeling like my violin techniques have taken a leap in progress," adds the Trellis' Dallas Noble, AS25M.

The meaningful student feedback is music to the ears of the Calidores.

"We love playing with each other," says Myers. "But over the 14 years that we've been together, we've also grown equally passionate about our teaching."

Three of the NYC-based quartet members have moved closer to campus, and all are eager to strengthen their interactions with undergraduates.

And although the musicians continue globe-trotting, they spent the past fall performing all 16 Beethoven string quartets over six, on-campus concerts.

The experience of going from the Lincoln Center to Gore Recital Hall?

"A joy," according to the quartet's Jeremy Berry.

"It's amazing," he says. "We've played all around the world, and there are very few halls with better acoustics." 🐦

—Margo McDonough, AS86, 95M



Calidore String Quartet members (from left to right): Estelle Choi, Jeffrey Myers, Jeremy Berry and Ryan Meehan.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF HANNA ARMSTRONG



BLUE HENS REIGNITE ENGINEERING SOCIETY

With Black Americans comprising a mere 8% of the science and engineering workforce, organizations like the National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) play a vital role in strengthening representation, mentorship and professional development opportunities. Since its founding in 1974, NSBE has grown to include more than 24,000 active members at 600-plus chapters across the country, including one at UD.

But two years ago, UD's chapter had just eight members. It was only after Hanna Armstrong, EG24, Joshua Artis, EG24, and Neil Jean-Baptiste, EG24, attended the NSBE annual convention in 2022 and saw 13,000 Black engineering students united for a common cause that the Blue Hens felt inspired to replicate a similar community at UD.

"The national conference is an eye-opening experience," says Armstrong, a biomedical engineering graduate. "I went from being one of few [Black engineers] to seeing Black excellence everywhere."

To grow membership, she, Artis and Jean-Baptiste shared their conference experiences with prospective members. The chapter also engaged at the regional level, holding positions on the Region Two executive board. Their efforts earned them the Small Chapter of the Year award in 2023.

For additional support, the trio turned to fellow alumnus and former dean Levi Thompson, EG80, who helped the chapter secure over \$30,000 in funding, which sent 31 UD students to the 50th annual NSBE national convention this year. He also became a mentor to the chapter's executive board,

guiding them in fundraising and strategy.

"My interest is professional and personal," says Thompson, who has been an NSBE member since his undergraduate days. "The work that NSBE does fosters inclusivity and collaboration in labs and workplaces." Thompson has also started a new tradition for the UD chapter: alumni dinners to strengthen connections between current students and graduates.

Today, UD's chapter has over 80 members—and counting. [🐦](#)
—Jess Gardner, AS24



Photo at top: Members of the University of Delaware chapter of NSBE posed for a photo during the 50th annual NSBE National Convention. Above: (From left) Executive board members Joshua Artis, Hanna Armstrong and Neil Jean-Baptiste at the 2024 Commencement ceremony.

CHANGING LIVES

Luke Stuchlik, HS23, wanted a career where he could "make a difference in a lot of people's lives." He chose nursing and never looked back.

Under the mentorship of Professors Kathleen Schell and Christine Hoch, Stuchlik participated in an externship at Christiana Care, working in the emergency department, stroke step-down unit and even a virtual reality patient room.

"You look down and see different hands, but they're my own hands," Stuchlik recalls of the simulation, which mimicked the stressors and stimuli of an actual hospital room. "In this situation, I was stepping into my future career."

Stuchlik is also a scholarship recipient who attributes much of his academic success to the support he received along the way.

"I appreciate all the University of Delaware donors who give students like me the opportunity to get the most out of college, in the classroom and outside of the classroom," he says.

To ensure all Blue Hens have access to an education as transformative as Stuchlik's, the University has launched a Scholarship Match program, providing 1:1 matching contributions for every gift to establish a new named scholarship.

Scholarships can be named after individual donors, family members or loved ones, helping to create meaningful, personal connections with students now and in the many years to come.

To learn more about UD scholarships, including how to establish a named scholarship fund, visit udel.edu/giving. [🐦](#)

—Jack Truschel, AS20M, 23PhD



PHOTO COURTESY OF LUKE STUCLIK

90 YEARS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EXCELLENCE

In 1934, UD's Lab School was established as a rich laboratory serving undergraduate students studying early childhood education while demonstrating excellence in care for children. Later, it also became a research site for experts interested in child development. Over the past 90 years, the school has taught 5,600 children, trained 1,500 student teachers and supported more than 25,000 UD undergraduates across disciplines.

For the last decade, the Lab School has also established itself as a leader in mindfulness and nature-based education, creating an expansive outdoor classroom of trails, creeks and wooded areas that integrate activities in science, math, literacy and the arts. In February, the school received the Delaware Association for Environmental Education's 2023 Exemplary Partnership Award for Excellence.

"Relationships are the foundation for everything we do here," says Lab School Director Dorit Radnai-Griffin. "Our goal is to always be a place where UD students and children feel welcomed and supported and a place that families trust."

The Lab School celebrated its anniversary in September with a community event that welcomed nearly 200 hundred parents, teachers, alumni and friends and honored Alice Eyman, a retired CEHD assistant professor, who served as the Lab School's director from 1982 to 2005. [🐦](#)

—Jessica Henderson, AS11

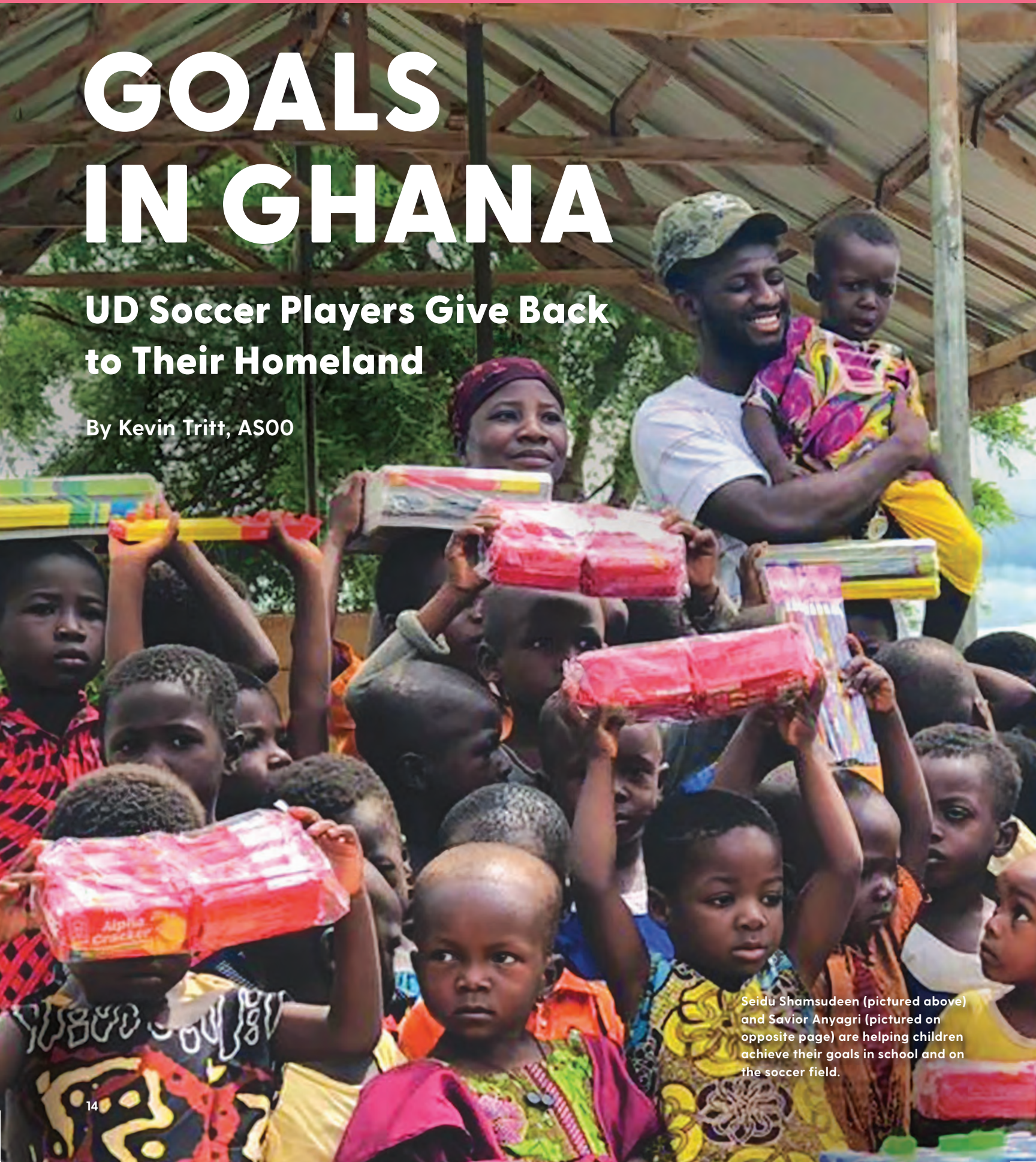


KATHY F. ATKINSON

GOALS IN GHANA

UD Soccer Players Give Back to Their Hometown

By Kevin Tritt, ASOO



Seidu Shamsudeen (pictured above) and Saviour Anyagri (pictured on opposite page) are helping children achieve their goals in school and on the soccer field.

For Saviour Anyagri, earning UD degrees in education and business represented more than mere academic achievements—it meant a step forward in his mission to create equitable educational opportunities for children in underserved communities around the globe, especially in his homeland of Ghana.

Growing up in Yabrigo, the small, rural community in Garu, Upper East Ghana, Anyagri, EHD22, BE24M, knew from an early age that education was a privilege for some, not a reality for all. His parents, Nicholas and Vida, instilled in him and his three older brothers the importance of learning, despite the countless challenges they faced.

At just 5 years old, Anyagri's educational journey began with a grueling daily trek. The nearest school was miles away from their home, so Nicholas, a farmer, would wake his youngest son at 5:30 a.m. Together, they would make the hour-long journey by bicycle. Nicholas would then pedal back to their farm to work, only to repeat the trip in reverse to collect Anyagri at the end of the school day.

"There wasn't infrastructure or resources allocated to people in communities like where I was from, so if you wanted to go to school, either your parents could take you, or you had to wait until you were old enough to walk the distance," Anyagri recalls.

Determined to provide their son with an education, Nicholas and Vida made the difficult decision to send him to live with a family closer to the school. It was there that his passion for soccer emerged. At just 11, Anyagri's talent on the field earned him a spot representing his region, and eventually, a scholarship to a soccer academy far from his home.

His dedication and hard work landed him a scholarship that brought him to America, where he met Seidu Shamsudeen. The two had known each other from rival soccer clubs in Ghana and shared a similar dream of giving back to their homeland.

They would also become Blue Hens and student-athletes on UD's soccer team, Anyagri as a defender and Shamsudeen as a forward.

Between school, practices and games, they returned to Ghana to host soccer tournaments and engage with local children.

It was a sobering experience for Anyagri. "A lot of kids weren't even going to school," he says. "That's when I realized the sacrifices my parents made for me." Determined to turn their vision into reality, Anyagri and Shamsudeen began outlining their goals in 2022.

"It's about giving them hope, showing them that no matter where they are, they can achieve something that can change their lives."

—Saviour Anyagri



PHOTOS COURTESY OF SAVIOUR ANYAGRI

They knew they needed help—financially, strategically, operationally. They started by reaching out to parents in Yabrigo to understand the community's needs. From those conversations, they realized they could "bring the school to the kids" rather than the other way around.

Utilizing a plot of land donated by Anyagri's family in northern Ghana and pooling their limited resources, they erected a simple tent to serve as a school. By March 2023, the Saviour Organization officially opened, with 50 children enrolled and two teachers on staff.

"When we started, kids just kept coming," Saviour says. "We soon realized we had to expand. We needed to build a better structure, separate classes and hire more teachers."

Today, the school serves 53 students between the ages of 5 and 6, who learn at kindergarten-to-second-grade levels. It boasts an operational budget to sustain itself for the next year, and the founders are looking ahead to future growth.

After benefiting from UD's Summer Founders Program in 2023, which provided mentorship and strategic guidance, Anyagri and Shamsudeen, BSPA25M, have also received support from the community. Recently, village elders donated five additional plots of land to expand the school. Parents have

started providing food for lunches, and there are plans to build schools in other communities facing similar challenges.

"For us, this is just the beginning," says Anyagri. "We want to build schools, community by community, and create opportunities for these children that they could never have imagined. It's about giving them hope, showing them that no matter where they are, they can achieve something that can change their lives." 🐦



HOW TO SURVIVE A ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE AND OTHER DISASTERS

BY DIANE STOPYRA

The undead are alive and well.

Reanimated corpses are taking over classrooms—and no, that’s not a metaphor for sleep-deprived undergraduates. At UD, professors and alumni are leveraging zombie media to teach disaster preparedness and response.

“People assume these are frivolous exercises,” says A.R. Siders, professor of public policy and an expert on gamifying problems. “While they are fun, they’re also valid and important.”

Thanks to UD’s globally recognized Disaster Research Center (see page 20), the University already has a storied legacy within the world of disaster research. With this foray into zombie lore, Blue Hen experts are employing a well-trodden engagement strategy—the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention once issued a guide for surviving a zombie apocalypse, and the Pentagon released CONOP 8888, a battle plan for coping with flesh-eating invaders.

Leveraging pop-culture appeal draws the public into the topic of disaster preparedness. Once there, people receive actionable advice—strategies for

surviving cannibalistic night walkers are transferable to real-world catastrophes. It’s the reason the Maryland Department of Emergency Management recently tweeted their must-have items for zombie armageddon. (“Chainsaws. Like a lot of chainsaws.”) Marcia Deppen, AS98, OOM, director of consequence management for this department and a former emergency preparedness coordinator at UD, is a proponent: “I once themed a presentation around the rules of *Zombieland*, the Woody Harrelson movie,” she says, adding: “I love zombie everything.”

Now, UD professors are incorporating zombie films into the curriculum—including Brad Pitt’s *World War Z*—to critically examine myths surrounding societal response to disaster. (Contrary to pop-culture portrayal, mass hysteria is rare.) And, in a class taught by Anthropology Professor Jennifer Trivedi, aspiring emergency managers and other students participate in a role-playing game she invented, requiring them to work in groups in order to survive an unfolding zombie apocalypse. As players succumb to a fictional virus, pressure mounts. The experience thrusts undergraduates into greater identification with the fast-paced nature of decision making in an emergent situation. It also “brings a little joy,” into a discipline that, Trivedi says, can feel “relentlessly heavy.”

The game raises important ethical questions: Are zombies perpetrators—or victims? Can you experiment on them to develop a vaccine? Who do we consider fully human? This sparks critical thought about which communities deserve and receive help during a (nonfiction) catastrophe since research reveals systemic inequality permeates disaster response.

“When we talk about discrimination against mutants, we’re not talking about a particular form of racial or religious or gender discrimination, which people may have really personal feelings about,” Siders says. “This opens up dialogue in a safe way.”

If nothing else, contemplating the zombie apocalypse forces students to confront the unexpected—a crucial skill for disaster response professionals of the future.

“This is about cultivating a playful mindset,” Siders says. “It unlocks creativity and allows students to experiment with new ideas in a low-stakes, no-judgment way.”

Which is comforting to hear, because if the zombies ever do invade, we’ll need all the ideas we can get.

DEAD SERIOUS



If you’ve ever watched decomposing ghouls shuffle across your screen and thought: “This could never happen in real life”... think again. “A zombie outbreak is possible,” says Jennifer Horney, core faculty member at the Disaster Research Center and the founding director of UD’s epidemiology program. “It’s the kernel of truth that makes these movies so appealing.” No, brain-eating corpses aren’t a real thing—yet. But there are conditions that cause zombie-like symptoms. (Consider mad cow disease, which pairs psychotic episodes with poor coordination.) Many viruses already have the power to alter a genetic code or cause brain inflammation—and further mutations are possible. According to the National Library of Medicine, “the transformation of rabies into a ‘zombie virus’ will always remain a tangible threat surrounding human future.” Parasitic fungi that typically hijack insect bodies could develop the ability to infect people. And, thanks to melting polar ice caps, epidemiologists are bracing for the release of ancient microbes—so-called “zombie viruses”—set to affect human bodies in ways still unknown.

PORTRAITS BY KATHY F. ATKINSON

BELOW, PICTURED ON THE LEFT: JENNIFER TRIVEDI
PICTURED ON THE RIGHT: JENNIFER HORNEY



MASTERS OF DISASTER

It's not looking good.

As the country recently witnessed with back-to-back hurricanes Milton and Helene, storms are growing more intense. Cyberattacks are increasingly malicious. And, according to the experts, future pandemics are a given. No longer is it a niche set of doomsday preppers who are stockpiling canned beans or investing in so-called bug-out bags. We're all bracing for catastrophe.

But before you retreat to the nearest bunker, take heart. A growing field is dedicated to improving society's disaster resilience and response. And UD's globally renowned Disaster Research Center (DRC)—the first unit of its kind in the world—leads these efforts.

"There's a misperception that people get into this work for the adrenaline of storm chasing," says Tricia Wachtendorf, ASO0M, O4PhD, professor of sociology and co-director of the DRC. "But people are drawn to disaster research because they want to change lives for the better. That's what this enterprise is all about."

Sixty years ago, in the midst of the Cold War, governments wanted to know how people might behave in the event of a nuclear showdown. The U.S. Office of Civil Defense tasked three sociologists at Ohio State University with researching this topic, but their purview quickly expanded to include hazards of all kinds: storms, wildfires, industrial accidents, epidemics and more. In 1985, the center moved to UD, and Blue Hen researchers have been

helping communities refine disaster mitigation and response strategies ever since. (The reputation is so stellar, Josh Kelly, AS10, UD's associate director of emergency management, once landed a disaster-research job in Texas simply because he wore a University of Delaware T-shirt.)

DRC experts also devote much energy to nurturing a new generation of disaster science scholars and practitioners—the University offers an undergraduate concentration in emergency and environmental management as well as a graduate degree in disaster science and management. Hundreds of alumni have moved through these and related programs to impactful careers. Consider Megan Hewitt, AS16, who serves the U.S. Navy's nuclear deterrence mission (no pressure), or Spencer Schargorodski, AS11, who advises the director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). The latter recently met with the pope about about the perils of climate change.

"Because of DRC's all-star team, the information at major emergency management organizations is never stale, and we're able to help as many community members as possible," he says. (Indeed, FEMA policy documents cite DRC research.)

There is much that sets the center apart, including boots-on-the-ground work. Researchers have conducted more than 700 field studies in disaster zones around the world, from 9/11 to the Indian Ocean tsunamis, and they've collected data about, say, the important role of citizen responders or the coordination of relief agencies.

"Actually smell the smoke from a Canadian wildfire, and you get a better idea of the trauma people experience—just breathing," says Sarah DeYoung, professor of sociology and criminal justice. "It adds empathy and paints a more in-depth picture."

This human-centered approach is key to DRC philosophy—experts here examine disasters through a social science lens. This

means they're focused not merely on the behavior of a given tsunami or hurricane, but on the behavior of communities affected. They're interested in how disasters expose values and vulnerabilities, how they exacerbate inequalities, and how factors like race, gender and class impact decision making during emergent situations. Consider that affordable housing units are not typically built to the same codes as storm-resilient structures, or that evacuation planning doesn't always account for those with mobility issues.

"People think of disasters as the great equalizer, but this isn't true," says Angela Gladwell, BSPA98M, a senior director at FEMA. "To reduce suffering, we need to understand a variety of perspectives, and that's what the DRC does so well."

Success is due largely to the center's interdisciplinary and collaborative nature. DRC brings together engineers, public policy researchers, economists, sociologists and others to tackle society's greatest challenges. One example is the DRC project CHEER, or the Coastal Hazards, Equity, Economic prosperity and Resilience hub. With \$16.5 million in funding from the National Science Foundation, the project is developing a software tool to help coastal communities navigate a complex question: How do you reduce climate change risk while continuing to prosper financially in a way that's fair for every resident—from mansion to mobile home. "It's pretty ambitious," acknowledges project lead Rachel Davidson, professor of civil and environmental engineering. "But I believe DRC is one of the best places in the world to tackle this."

Still, the road ahead will be stormy, and lay individuals may be forgiven for questioning whether even the most skilled of disaster professionals are up for the challenge. Is it realistic to believe society can handle the crises coming our way? Maybe we'll all succumb to disaster—or disaster fatigue—and retreat to those bunkers after all. Or maybe not.

"One thing you learn doing this work is that, despite calamity and chaos, people thrive," says James Kendra, professor of public policy and administration and co-director of the DRC. "The human capacity for ingenuity in the face of crisis—the human capacity for hope—is inspirational."

“PEOPLE ARE DRAWN TO DISASTER RESEARCH BECAUSE THEY WANT TO CHANGE LIVES FOR THE BETTER”

LEFT PAGE (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT): DRC TEAM MEMBERS A.R. SIDERS, JAMES KENDRA, TRICIA WACHTENDORF, SHANGJIA DONG. THIS PAGE: MATT CREASY



LOOK FOR THE HELPERS

Some college kids need flip flops for spring break. Others? Power tools. For the thousands of Blue Hens who've participated in a UD Alternative Break (UDAB), getting a tan takes a backseat to serving communities in need. Participants in this program, nationally known for being student-led, have deployed to a variety of disaster zones (think Puerto Rico after Hurricane Maria, New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina and Houston, Texas, after Hurricane Harvey) to repair rooftops, clean up trash or power wash homes—sometimes in 100-degree heat. But rest assured: They're getting just as much as they're giving. "We're not going into these places to save people or to save the day; we strongly believe in reciprocal service," says Matthew Creasy, UDAB adviser and associate director of leadership development. "Our students learn so much about themselves, about interacting with people across differences and about engaging ethically within a community." Just be careful how you refer to their experiences in the field, Creasy adds. "The students are staunch about one thing: These are programs and not 'trips.' They're not going on vacation—they're doing life-changing work."

PHOTOS BY KATHY F. ATKINSON



SAFEKEEPING

BLUE HEN ADVICE FOR DISASTER SURVIVAL

1

PLAN, PLAN, PLAN: Get ahead of the next storm, power outage or zombie herd by knowing your risks. “If it rains, it can flood,” says Angela Gladwell, BSPA98M, a senior executive with FEMA. Pack a to-go bag with enough supplies for 72 hours (food and water, sure, but don’t forget games to occupy the kids—or yourself).



2

GET AWKWARD: Build out a social network. Meet your neighbors, and ask them to discuss potential disaster scenarios with you. Loop in Great Uncle Bert if your evacuation plan involves his apartment. These conversations can be uncomfortable, but “having that awkwardness now can save you trouble down the road,” says Anthropology Professor Jennifer Trivedi.



3

SKILL UP: Josh Kelly, AS10, UD’s associate director of emergency management, recommends taking a lifesaving class: “In emergencies, the first people on scene are everyday citizens.” At UD, members of the community can learn basic fire and safety skills from the Office of Environmental Health and Safety. Check out UD’s safety or emergency management pages for more.



4

BE INFORMED: Resist the urge to turn off the emergency alert feature on your iPhone. And register for notices from your local emergency management office. (At the University, sign up for UD Alert and download the LiveSafe app.) If you’re getting your news from social media, “read but verify,” advises Spencer Schargorodski, AS11, of FEMA.



5

GO OLD SCHOOL: Have printed copies of all your important documents: passports, birth certificates, prescriptions, insurance paperwork, proof of mortgage. And never be caught without some actual, paper cash. In other words, “the exact things society tells you not to bother with anymore are key for a disaster setting,” says James Kendra of the DRC.



6

ROLE PLAY: At least annually, practice putting your plans into place. “Muscle memory is key,” says Austin Barlow, AS12, an emergency consultant for Hagerty. Come up with a disaster scenario and act it out to discover any weak points—does that flashlight actually work? Do the kids remember your post-hazard meeting place?



7

PREP THE PETS: Notice where your dog or cat hides when scared of the mailman, in case you need to locate them in an emergency. Keep your to-go crate off the ground in case of flooding, and have an updated picture on hand for reunification purposes, advises Sarah DeYoung, sociology professor who co-authored a book on pets in disasters.



8

KEEP PACE: Justin Kates, AS10, the man responsible for keeping the Wawa brand up and running during any crisis situation, recommends backup communication systems. Remember the acronym PACE, which may play out something like this: Primary (say, your cell phone); Alternate (a friend’s cell with a different carrier); Contingency (landline); Emergency (ham radio).



9

EMBRACE THE APOCALYPSE: Sure, consuming zombie—or any end-of-world—entertainment is good for a thrill. But did you know it’s also productive? Research published in the *Personality and Individual Differences* journal confirms: These movies, books and video games bolster mental fortitude when actual disaster strikes. Safe streaming!



BRAVING THE STORM

“ I HAD TO GROW UP AT A MUCH FASTER RATE THAN THE NORMAL KID ”
 —MICHAEL BAQUET III

THIS PAGE: DESTRUCTION CAUSED BY HURRICANE IRMA IN ST. THOMAS. FACING PAGE: THE AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE KATRINA IN THE NINTH WARD OF NEW ORLEANS.



BACK-TO-BACK TRAUMA



Rats the size of puppies. This is what Kendell Daughtry, EHD14 17M 21PHD, remembers about his experience post-Irma, the category-5 hurricane that ravaged his St. Thomas home in the U.S. Virgin Islands. It was September of 2017, and all around him were uprooted coconut trees and displaced rooftops. Then, about two weeks later, a compounding disaster: Category-5 Hurricane Maria touched down. Daughtry, his wife and their toddler went 122 days with no electricity, save for a generator they used sparingly. The family lived mostly by candlelight and showered out of buckets. “The experience raised new research questions,” says the Blue Hen who’d already completed two degrees from UD. He decided to go back for his PhD to study the effects of academic disruptions on Virgin Island youth. Today, he works as a professor and researcher committed to “brown and Black children like myself, who’ve faced persistent structural violence, such as under-resourced schooling. We’re using education as a form of resistance.” He trusted UD for this third degree, he adds, because of the immense support he’s felt from faculty within the Department of Human Development and Family Services: “They’re my family.”

UNDERWATER



Life in the Pakistani city of Quetta isn’t easy. It sits within an arid, largely desert province that borders Iran and Afghanistan, and militant insurgencies are common. Adding to the danger, natural hazards are a constant threat. In 2008, Gulrukh Kakar, BSPA26PhD, and her family were inside their Quetta home when they heard a “horrible noise that sounded like it was coming from the land itself.” A 6.5-magnitude earthquake killed hundreds of people, leveled much infrastructure and led to contaminated water supplies. “I remember shivering and praying: ‘Please, God, help us,’” says Kakar. “It was such a helpless moment.” The city is also prone to flash flooding



that displaces families—in 2022, Kakar witnessed victims living on the roadside: “It definitely takes an emotional toll.” Now, the Blue Hen is working toward her doctoral degree in Disaster Science and Management at UD, with the aim of improving emergency response in Pakistan and other vulnerable areas. Along with her husband, she’s already established the Institute for International Disaster Diplomacy to encourage more collaboration between countries.

THE CITY THAT CARE FORGOT



Four-year-old Michael Baquet III, BSPA26M, had just visited his new pre-K, and he was excited for the start of school. But the following Sunday, with a few Elmo T-shirts in tow, he and his mother evacuated New Orleans. They bounced around Baton Rouge and Jackson, Mississippi, for a couple of weeks, and Baquet’s most vivid memory is his mother repeating to herself: “Don’t worry—God never sleeps.” (He realizes now: This is the moment that Hurricane Katrina broke through the levees nearest their home.) They relocated to Atlanta, where they lived first in a hotel (“I’m sure employees wondered about the kid always trying to run on the treadmill”), then a temporary rental. School would have to wait another year—the local district didn’t offer pre-K. While Baquet and his mother did find their way back to New Orleans after 18 months, “housing was never again stable,” he says. “I can’t count how many times I moved.” Today, the Blue Hen is channeling that trauma into his UD master’s program, for which he’s studying disasters and transportation. “We couldn’t swim. If we hadn’t gotten out, we could have died,” he says. “I want to ensure people have mobility.”

KNOCKED CONSCIOUS



In 2015, Allen Gula, ASO9, had just reached Mount Everest base camp during a 30-day hike through Nepal when the ground shook. A 7.8-magnitude earthquake killed nearly 9,000 people in 90 seconds. Days later, once he could finally communicate with the outside world, Gula called off the U.S. Embassy (they’d been searching for him), and he went to work. The Blue Hen stayed in Nepal for two years in order to establish a nonprofit that would help the Nepalese rebuild. He slept in a tent, blew through his life savings and contracted dysentery—twice. But he succeeded in launching Conscious Impact, which to date has built 80 structures (houses, schools, orphanages) as well as full-scale water systems that service 200 homes. “People have the ability to make things better in a disaster simply by being present and doing the best they can,” he says, adding that his 15 study abroad trips with UD (he started at age 8, thanks to a professor mom) helped immensely: “They empowered me.”

PHOTO COURTESY OF ALLEN GULA

MEMOIRS OF A MENTOR-PRENEUR

WHY NEIL BOOK LOVES TO MENTOR AND HIRE SELF-STARTERS FROM UD

BY ARTIKA CASINI, AS05



Neil Book, AS99, is pictured here with Bella Rimton, BE20, and on the opposite page with Blue Hen mentees Derek Mihalecsko, BE24, (far left), Zach Jones, BE17, and Rimton.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF NEIL BOOK

When the White House embedded security software on its mobile devices in 2007, the Bush Administration turned to a Blue Hen.

It was a surreal experience for Neil Book, AS99, then-president of SMobile Systems, who sat in the West Wing lobby alongside the president of Italy and former Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, waiting to make the biggest sales pitch of his career.

“I’m not an engineer,” says Book, a political science alumnus. “I was afraid I wouldn’t be able to answer the technical questions.”

But the antivirus mobile phone software created by his small cybersecurity firm already included an impressive roster of satisfied clients: Vodafone, British Telecom, the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency. The White House was next, lending a prestige that would ultimately find Book selling SMobile to a new buyer.

“My career has never been about the industry or product,” he says. “It’s been about the opportunity and people.”

An entrepreneur and mentor in near-equal measure, Book is president and CEO of Jet Support Services Inc. (JSSI), which offers a range of client-centric services in the niche world of business aviation.

When Book assumed leadership of the company in 2012, he worked to expand its singular focus on private jet maintenance to include parts supply, leasing, software, advising, financial solutions and more. This multidimensional approach would grow the company from less than 100 employees at the start of his tenure to more than 600 today.

As someone who strives to know each member of his team on a first-name basis, Book has had an admittedly difficult time keeping track of everyone’s lives and families. Yet when he thinks about the best part of his job, he points straight to the people.

“Bella’s a great example of what makes this job so special,” he says of fellow Blue Hen Isabella Rimton, BE20. “I love watching someone come into the company, blossom, grow and achieve their professional goals.”

The two alumni first met in 2017, when Rimton presented her idea for a phone wallet—handsewn from old leggings and jeans at the student Design Studio—to board members of Horn Entrepreneurship, UD’s esteemed training ground for the next generation of problem solvers.

Book, a longtime member of the board, approached Rimton afterward, suggesting she reach out to his industry contacts. Although a fashion career never materialized, the two stayed in touch, and Rimton interned at JSSI during her senior year.

“I was more interested in what Neil had built than in the aviation industry itself,” she says now. In fact, the thought of working for an established company had never crossed Rimton’s mind. “I wanted to find a little start-up and do



“MY CAREER HAS NEVER BEEN ABOUT THE INDUSTRY OR PRODUCT; IT’S BEEN ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITY AND PEOPLE.”

—NEIL BOOK

my own thing. But at JSSI, I learned that even in a bigger company, you can find ways to be creative.”

Open-mindedness and innovation have long been among her greatest assets. A golfer from Malmö, Sweden, Rimton spent her youth competing across Europe as a member of the Swedish Future National Team. She had no intention of ever coming to the United States, but a chance encounter with Women’s Golf Coach Patty Post left her intrigued.

“Just visit,” Post told her. “Once you see the campus, once you meet the team, you’re going to want to do this.”

“And I was sold on the idea of going to med school,” Rimton recalls. “That all changed when I came here.”

She instantly fell in love with UD—just as Book had done two decades before—and decided to spend one year in America. A member of the “amazing” international golf team (“There were 10 players, and only two were American”), Rimton devoted herself to every possible campus activity, including the Entrepreneurship Club.

“There was a thriving, unifying culture of people who wanted to solve problems,” she says of the organization that pushed students like her beyond their comfort zone. “I was



“WHEN YOU HAVE SOMEONE WHO’S MOTIVATED, WHO’S ALL IN, MENTORSHIP IS ALMOST A SELFISH ACT. YOU WANT TO INVEST YOUR TIME IN THOSE PEOPLE BECAUSE THEY’LL HAVE THE BIGGEST IMPACT ON YOUR BUSINESS.”

very uncomfortable with public speaking in English. All these things were tested through pitch competitions.”

After Rimton was admitted to the highly competitive entrepreneurship major, which accepts only 30 students a year, she launched two companies: an app to connect with locals while traveling and the phone wallet that introduced her to Book.

At JSSI, she was immediately awed by the organizational culture. “I had seen other companies that were all about process and hierarchy,” she says. “This was not that. If you wanted to make an impact, you could do that on day one.”

As Book puts it, “I want everyone who works at JSSI to think of it as their business. To think, ‘What can I do to make this place better?’”

Today, Rimton serves as vice president of marketing, overseeing public relations, web development, digital and social media, investor presentation materials, sales collateral and more. Her growth, from a student-athlete who spoke English as a second language to a global communications director, exemplifies Book’s belief in the power of finding and cultivating talent.

“When you have someone who’s motivated, who’s all in, mentorship is almost a selfish act,” he says. “You want to invest your time in those people because they’ll have the biggest impact on your business. Spending time with Bella was an easy choice.”

Book’s other rules of leadership: “Try not to have an ego.

That’s where I’ve seen others get into trouble—by putting their ego in front of what’s best for the company.”

He also believes in the concept of failing fast. “Trying new things has helped our business succeed and scale. And when they don’t work, we fail quickly and move on.”

Finally, Book isn’t afraid to laugh at himself. “We’re selling maintenance programs to the owners of private jets, not solving world hunger,” he jokes. “Our real passion lies with driving growth, innovation, creating new jobs and opportunities for people. That’s where the magic is.”

To that end, Book has applied his entrepreneurial sorcery to support multiple student companies over the years, including LIGHTGLASS, a simulated windows and skylights business where Ben Rapkin, AS15, serves as director of growth.

“I wasn’t investing in the company,” says Book, “I was investing in Ben. I watched his passion, energy and thoughtfulness as a student, and I saw that translate to his career.”

Earlier this year, Book and Rimton returned to campus for an internship fair, looking to find the entrepreneurial spirit inherent in so many Blue Hens, from Ben to Bella and beyond. Indeed, of the 10 interns JSSI hires each year, at least two come from Book’s alma mater and, overwhelmingly, from Horn Entrepreneurship.

“The idea that, as a student, you could have a program focused on innovation; on how to identify problems, create solutions and shape an idea into something material,” Book marvels. “That, to me, is the most exciting thing in the world.”

BLUE HENS ARE DIVERSE AND MULTIFACETED—AND SO ARE THEIR MENTORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES. SAMPLE SOME WAYS TO GET ENGAGED BELOW.

LERNER EXECUTIVE MENTORING

This program matches Lerner Business and Economics students with successful executives. Mentors come with at least 10 years of career experience—and passion—to help undergraduate and graduate Blue Hens succeed. The pairs spend at least one hour per month connecting (either in-person or virtually). To sign up or learn more, visit lerner.udel.edu/lerner-executive-mentoring-program/.

ACCELERATE WINTER INTERNSHIP

Launched in 2024 through Delaware Athletics, the new internship program connects student-athletes with Delaware businesses. Companies interested in participating can contact Steven Caulfield at scaulfie@udel.edu to learn more.

HIRE A HEN

Alumni employers wanting to connect with students for internship and job opportunities in Delaware and beyond need to look no further than the Hire a Hen program. To post an opportunity, visit udel.edu/HireAHen.

JOB SHADOWING

Touring a workplace. Meeting with key members of an organization. Receiving invaluable advice. These are some of the things Blue Hen students can expect when they shadow an alumnus for a day. The program, facilitated by the UD Career Center, allows students to reflect on ways their education has prepared them for life after college. To participate or learn more, email jobshadow@udel.edu.

RESOURCES TO INSPIRE SUCCESSFUL ENGINEERS (RISE)

Historically, engineering has been a white male-dominated field. But through peer support, mentorship and networking opportunities, RISE is working to change that. Nearly 100 undergraduate students participate each academic year, receiving access to everything from scholarships to professional development workshops. To learn more about the program and opportunities to support it, visit enr.udel.edu/undergraduate-education/rise/.

WEDNESDAY TECH FORUM

WTF has a whole new meaning. At these events, undergraduate students in electrical and computer engineering hear from alumni, faculty and other professionals in industry about their experiences, words of wisdom and more. Students connect with local companies looking for interns or full-time employees, and they strengthen their professional networks. Alumni looking to mentor, hire or speak to current students in electrical and computer engineering can email Heather Dunlap (hdunlap@udel.edu) to learn more.

ACADEMIC SUPPORT PROGRAM INSPIRING RENAISSANCE EDUCATORS (ASPIRE)

This student-centered organization supports students from diverse backgrounds as they prepare for careers in education and human service. It offers opportunities for networking, leadership and academic support, and the capstone event each year is an “Alumni Roundtable” where ASPIRE alumni speak with current students about their careers and life experiences after UD. To sign up or learn more, email aspire-info@udel.edu.

HENLAW MENTORING PROGRAM

The HenLaw Mentoring Program connects alumni working in the legal profession with students interested in legal careers. It is part of UD’s Legal Professional Preparatory Program (LP3), which provides resources, networking events and an internship program. To get involved, email pre-law@udel.edu.



Mentors and mentees from UD’s RISE program

MARIA ERRICO

RAISING RESEARCH ROCK STARS

ACROSS UD, STUDENTS PURSUE CURIOSITY BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

by Beth Miller

If questions had easy answers, there would be no need for research. But easy stuff isn't what draws the sharpest minds and the biggest hearts.

They want to go where the challenges are, where problems have not been solved, where they might make a real difference. That's why about 500 undergraduates participate in research projects under the guidance of a faculty mentor each year.

As a nationally recognized research university, UD offers scores of internal and external opportunities that introduce young scholars to new fields of interest, perhaps even future career paths.

UD's Summer Scholars Program is among the most popular. Launched in 1983, the 10-week program provides each student a \$4,000 stipend and allows them to continue their work in the next academic year. Over the years, more than 5,000 students have learned how to conduct original research, talk about their discoveries and develop their ability to think critically, work independently and become meaningful contributors to a broader field of knowledge.

Undergraduate research isn't limited to the Summer Scholars Program—and it isn't limited to the summer. Other programs that support undergraduate research include the McNair Scholars Program, the Community Engagement Summer Scholars, the Unique Strengths internship program in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, UD Envision, Summer Fellows and more.

This spirit of inquiry and intellectual engagement is at the heart of the University mission.

"Under the direction of faculty mentors, and often in collaboration with graduate students, industry or community partners, students learn how to conduct original research and creative projects and how to communicate their process and findings to a variety of audiences," says Rosalie Rolón-Dow, faculty director of UD's Undergraduate Research Program. "Numerous studies have demonstrated that participation in undergraduate research can powerfully shape students' interest and engagement in learning, and open new career pathways."

Read on to learn more about some of the most recent Summer Scholars and their projects.



A Sharper Look at Shark Teeth



Sand tiger sharks, with their menacing appearance and rows of sharp teeth, fascinate marine enthusiasts. Despite their fearsome look, these sharks are not aggressive toward humans; instead, humans are their primary threat. Federally protected in U.S. Atlantic waters, sand tiger sharks are critically endangered in some regions.

Caitlin Bailey, EOE25, is exploring the unique teeth of these sharks. Her research, guided by Jennifer Wyffels from UD's Center for Bioinformatics and Computational Biology, investigates the species' in-utero sibling cannibalism, a rare reproductive strategy where the first-born embryo consumes its siblings.

"Once I learned about this unique and extreme mode," she says, "I was enthralled."

At UD, Bailey is using microtomography to image the teeth in 3D and study changes in tooth morphology throughout the shark's life. Her findings, such as the prominence of lateral cusplets in older sharks, reveal insights into their dietary adaptations and growth.

"The research was so intriguing, and the results are vital to understanding more about the various functions of these teeth throughout the sand tiger's life," says Bailey, a marine science major who hopes to continue working with aquatic species.

—Tracey Bryant

Speaking of Social Anxiety

Tiffany Lynch-Faulkner, AS25, wants to help develop treatments for children who suffer from speech-motivated anxiety.

That begins with a research question: How does the brain handle interruptions, which affect the ability to communicate fluently?

To answer, Lynch-Faulkner analyzed electroencephalograms (EEG) and event-related potentials and explored neurological responses. This included learning how to read an EEG—knowing what an eye movement looks like or recognizing sweat gland activation by looking at squiggly lines.

As a psychology major with a neuroscience minor, Lynch-Faulkner studied under Evan Usler in the Interpersonal Neurophysiology Lab at UD's STAR Campus.

"I have learned that my desire to do research as my career is a passion that will never die," she says. "I've learned that I genuinely enjoy learning, and this project is just the beginning."

—Beth Miller



Hair, there and everywhere



EVAN KRAPE

For Black women, maintaining natural hair can be challenging, often requiring long salon visits or harsh chemical treatments. This issue sparked Joycelyn Brown, AS26, to investigate the natural hair experiences of Black women.

A fine arts and visual communications major, Brown surveyed Black women to understand their hair care practices and preferences, focusing on product safety and branding. Her research aims to improve how hair care products are depicted and communicated, a timely topic given recent lawsuits over health risks associated with hair relaxers.

Under the guidance of Katie Leech, assistant professor of art and design, Brown visited local stores and salons to analyze how brands present their products. Her goal is to create effective visual communications that inform Black women about hair care and product safety.

"I love being able to combine my two passions: graphic design and hair care," she says. "I would love for young teenage girls who, like me, may not have been taught what is good or bad for their hair to learn how to properly maintain it."

—Karen Roberts, AS90, 21M

Digging discovery



COURTESY OF MARCUS BEARDSLEY

To truly understand archaeology, set aside the *Indiana Jones* movies and roll up your sleeves. That's how junior Marcus Beardsley, AS26, spent his summer. For five weeks, Beardsley, a double major in history and ancient Greek and Roman studies, worked at the Santa Susana Archaeological Project in Portugal, excavating the site of an ancient Roman villa.

"My first excavation was last summer in Türkiye, where I studied Roman bronze coins," he says. "When Emma Ljung, director of the Santa Susana Project, proposed that I study the methodology and theory used at the site, I jumped at the chance to broaden my research experience."

The project confirmed Beardsley's desire to incorporate fieldwork into his future career in academia. "Archeology requires repeated trial, error and correction," he says. "And all the while, archaeologists are challenged with the tough, hot, back- and knee-breaking nature of fieldwork that demands an uncommon level of endurance."

"I've grown to appreciate these extra challenges. It reminds me to never become complacent, but to always strive for growth."

—Tracey Bryant



Uncovering Aquatic Mysteries

It's a flat, ray-like fish—and one of Delaware's most abundant aquatic creatures.

The clearnose skate was also a topic of exploration for four students: UD's Trinity Clifford and Hunter Christensen, both EOE26; Kristin Lewis, a junior studying biology at Howard University; and Ahmad Crawford, a marine science major at Eckerd College in Florida.

Over 10 weeks this summer, the students worked at UD's Hugh R. Sharp Campus in Lewes, performing respirometry experiments that compared how much oxygen the fish used while in the tanks against the skates' metabolic rates. Lewis examined the "couch potato effect," hypothesizing that captive skates would have lower metabolic rates than wild ones. Crawford investigated the impact of body size and sex on metabolic rates; Christensen examined digestion; and Clifford searched for evidence of a circadian rhythm.

Throughout the summer, the four students bonded through their shared experience.

"There's not a lot of research on skates and respirometry so we were kind of learning how to do it ourselves," says Lewis. "We gained an incredible amount of knowledge."

—Adam Thomas, AS23M



COURTESY OF AUDREY TONG



A PASSION FOR PIPING PLOVERS

You've probably seen the piping plover at low tide: Small, gray and white shorebirds with orange legs and a distinctive black ring around their necks, they are often found foraging for breakfast as waves ebb and flow.

But habitat loss, climate change and predators threaten the birds' survival. Wildlife ecology major Lauren Pollock, ANR26, is hoping to change that. She spent her summer studying factors affecting their survival at Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge, focusing on nesting site selection.

She soon found that the location of a nest matters. The amount of vegetation, proximity to water or the nearest dune, and distance to other plovers all make a difference. Moreover, these preferences are unique to each bird and can impact the survival of the chicks.

"Not everyone gets a chance to make an impact with a vulnerable species," says Pollock. "Each day brings new surprises, and it is fascinating to watch [the piping plovers] grow up so fast."

—Karen Roberts, AS90, 21M



EVAN KRAPE



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ALUMNI NEWS

OPA! UDAA HOSTS ALUMNI TRIP IN GREECE

From the coastal city of Kalamata to the Parthenon of Athens, Blue Hens experienced the rich history, beauty, cuisine and culture of Greece earlier this year.

Hosted by the UD Alumni Association (UDAA) from June 21–30, 2024, the trip was led by tour guides who were either practicing archaeologists or local professors, and who adapted their discussions to Blue Hen interests (such as locating all the hens in the floor mosaics of the Temple of Apollo).

The group braved 103-degree heat while touring the ruins of ancient Sparta and Mystras, then learned about olives and the production of olive oil. And mere weeks before the summer 2024 Olympics, they spent a day in Ancient Olympia, the site of the ancient Olympic Games that began in 776 B.C.

To learn more about upcoming UDAA travel opportunities or to suggest a possible future destination, visit udel.edu/alumni-friends/connect/udaa/#travel.

—Megan Maccherone

PHOTOS BY LINDSAY THRASHER-YODER, EHD07, AND NANCY LOMAX, AS71



NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR ALUMNI AWARDS

Each year, the University of Delaware Alumni Association (UDAA) honors alumni through two distinguished awards: the Alumni Wall of Fame for outstanding professional and public service achievements and the Outstanding Alumni Awards for exemplary volunteer work on behalf of UD and/or the UDAA.

If you know of any potential candidates (including yourself!), please share achievements and submit a nomination before Feb. 28, 2025.

To learn more about the awards and access nomination materials, visit udel.edu/alumni-friends/resources/scholarships-awards/. For questions, email alumni-association@udel.edu.

COAST TO COAST BLUE HEN NETWORK EVENTS BRING ALUMNI TOGETHER

UD alumni continue to flock together for fun-filled moments across the country. From savoring ice cream scoops to cheering at ballgames, striking out at bowling alleys, raising a glass at happy hours and exploring the great outdoors by boat, the Blue Hen spirit is in full swing. Enjoy these snapshots of our vibrant community connecting, celebrating and memory-making wherever we go.



LEARN MORE ABOUT ALUMNI EVENTS AND OTHER WAYS TO ENGAGE WITH UD AND FELLOW BLUE HENS AT [UDEL.EDU/ALUMNI-FRIENDS/CONNECT](https://udel.edu/alumni-friends/connect)



1. Blue Hens in Florida attend a Miami Dolphins game.
2. Blue Hens and families experienced the wonder of Delaware's inland waterways and wetlands on an eco tour down the Lewes-Rehoboth Canal in June.
3. Blue Hens gathered in UD's "backyard" for a Wilmington Blue Rocks baseball game in August.
4. From May to September 2024, UD alumni in the South Central Pennsylvania Blue Hen Network met biweekly at different ice cream shops in the region. They're pictured here at Sarah's Creamery in Dover, Pennsylvania.
5. Blue Hens hit the lanes at Bowlero in North Scottsdale, Arizona.
6. TJ Banks, a bartender at the Wooden Robot Brewery, in Charlotte, N.C., is also a UD alumnus.
7. Before the Baltimore Orioles took on the Philadelphia Phillies at Camden Yards, Blue Hens enjoyed an all-you-can-eat buffet in the B&O Warehouse overlooking the field.

AND HEN TO HEN

ACROSS THE COUNTRY, ALUMNI CREATE REUNIONS OF THEIR OWN



1. 2024 was a milestone year for Maureen McGuigan Kamischke, AS84, Maureen Ellis Maynard, AS84, Lori Berson Eppel, BE84, and Lisa O'Hare Mulhern, EHD84. The Blue Hens celebrated their 40-year college graduation and 60th birthdays with a weekend that began, naturally, at the Deer Park* and continued at the Sea Isle, New Jersey, shore—with Delaware gear rocked and repped throughout.
2. Twenty years ago, friends and former roommates of the late David "Mike" Harman, AS80, began a get-together in his memory. Pictured from left to right: Kathi Hetrick Foltyn, HS81, Ted Foltyn, BE81, Margie Francescone Slenn, BE80, Paul Lynch, BE80, Sue Lyons, BE80, Kurt Slenn, BE80, Bob Bader, BE80, Roger DeLucia, BE81, and Roy Dunphey, EOE80.
3. In the early 1970s, you could find them walking to football games in skirted suits and leather boots, sometimes with a big mum corsage. They shared one payphone among 32 women, partied on Halloween and sunbathed outside of Russell D.
In 1980, Betsy Douglas Baumeister, BE71, Diane Hynson Ogorek, EHD73, Mary Cormany Flaherty, HS72, Nancy Cormany Bellis, HS72, Betsy Jones Stein, EHD71, Sheri Giordano Borrin, BE72, and Joan Winchester, AS73, pictured clockwise from left in 2024, began an annual reunion tradition that continues to this day.

*Read more about the college bar that has been named one of the country's best on page 43.



ART ON THE MOVE

Andrew Zolty, ASO2, is on a quest to make modern-day Eiffel Towers.

Towering, dynamic pieces are hallmarks of his Brooklyn-based art studio, BREAKFAST, which creates kinetic art—pieces that move and often incorporate the movements of people who view and interact with them.

The results are striking and have caught the attention of renowned auction house Christie's (where BREAKFAST had its debut showing five years ago), various art fairs and individual buyers who want unique pieces for their collections.

Last summer, a curator from the Caribbean island of Grenada reached out to BREAKFAST with an opportunity to showcase their work on an international stage for the 2024 Venice Biennale, a show where curators select elite artists to create pieces that represent their countries. The studio was asked to develop a piece symbolizing Grenada's diverse origins and interconnected nature.

The resulting work, "Interwoven Existence," captures the movements of people approaching it and incorporates

those movements into a section of colorful flip discs. The piece records everyone who interacts with it and randomly places them into one of the sections, along with all those who came before.

"Their entire country is a true melting pot," says Zolty. "The art itself is about people from all over the world becoming part of something together."

The same can be said for his studio, which Zolty describes as a single artist comprising "a 17-person orchestra." From circuit boards to motors to pieces of metal, BREAKFAST makes it all. For the pieces to function as intended, there's no room for error.

Attention to detail was especially important for "The Pearl," the recently installed centerpiece of the Royal Caribbean cruise line's Icon of the Seas, which is structurally part of the ship and took more than four years to complete.

At 45 feet tall and 53 feet wide, "The Pearl" is the world's largest kinetic sculpture and uses real-time Caribbean tidal and wind data to mimic its environmental conditions.

"There were people on our team that literally were living in Finland [where the

ship was assembled] for about three months at a time, just because it was so new, so different," says Zolty. "We just had to be precise. That's 9,000 motors moving 24 hours a day."

The Blue Hen was initially apprehensive when he was asked to design the piece in November 2019. He worried the project would feel wrong given BREAKFAST's focus on sustainability, but he decided to move forward after learning about the steps taken to make the ship more eco-friendly, like capturing and repurposing engine waste heat and developing a system to reduce drag in the water.

Many of BREAKFAST's other pieces are commentaries on social issues, particularly climate change. The artwork uses data to showcase things like real-time ice melt and air quality. The pieces

are eye-catching and interactive, which is exactly what Zolty wants: to catch someone's attention and tell a deeper story once they're hooked.

Zolty learned the art of visual storytelling at UD. He spent his first semester in Newark as a computer science major, but the lack of creativity in his day-to-day life was taking a toll. Art had always been one of his biggest interests growing up, and when he walked into the art building at UD, he instantly felt at home.

In UD's visual communications program, students work closely with professors in a challenging, creative studio environment. At the end of his first year, Zolty was one of around 150 students who applied to the program, which accepts only 30

students. After their sophomore year, that group was culled down to 17.

Vying for a spot meant every aspect of every project had to be perfect. The work was demanding, designed to set students up for success in ultra-competitive creative fields after graduation.

"They were teaching us how to present," Zolty says now. "If you're going to be a professional, if you're going to do this and do it really, really well, you have to go for perfection." 🐦

—Christy Selagy

PICTURED ABOVE: At 45 feet tall and 53 feet wide, "The Pearl" is the world's largest kinetic sculpture and uses real-time Caribbean tidal and wind data to mimic its environmental conditions.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF ANDREW ZOLTY/BREAKFAST

TUITION BENEFITS FOR ALUMNI

You already know that Blue Hens are lifelong learners. (You're reading *UD Magazine*, after all.) But you might not know that labor market trends and UD alumni feedback show a demonstrable need for more support in areas of project management, leadership and strategic communication—all areas of UD expertise.

"UD is proud to support our alumni in an ever-changing job market," says Kim Isett, vice provost for academic programs and University initiatives. "We are committed to empowering Blue Hens with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed throughout their lives and careers."

For example, UD's Online MBA program, ranked among the top in the nation, can be completed in just 18 months.

The University also offers more than 100 upskilling and re-skilling courses in such areas as digital marketing, social media marketing, nonprofit management and leadership, advanced Microsoft Excel, instructional design, healthcare trial management, refresher courses for RNs—and the Project Management Certificate, which leads to the Project Management Professional credential and enhances marketability across industries. Alumni can also register for test preparation programs for the GRE, GMAT and LSAT.

To learn more, visit udel.edu/alumni-friends/. 🐦

CLASS NOTES

1940s

ELIZABETH (ABRAMS) DRENNEN, AS44, of

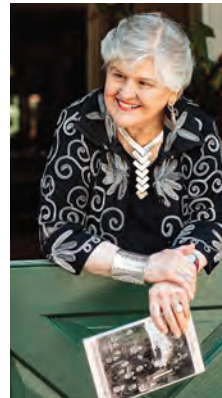
Wilmington, Del., celebrated her 101st birthday on June 17, 2024, with family and friends. Her secret to longevity? "Keeping a positive mindset regardless of the situation."



Elizabeth (Abrams) Drennen, AS44

1960s

MARGARET DUDA, AS63, of State College, Pa., was a finalist in the 2024 International Book Awards for her book of poetry, *I Come from Immigrants*. It is Duda's sixth book but first volume of poetry. The poems were previously published in literary journals that were nominated for a Pushcart Prize and Best of Net award.



Margaret Duda, AS63

ROBERT T. MILLER JR., BE65, 71M, of Newark, Del., was inducted into the Delaware Rock and Roll Society Hall of Fame in 2023. A self-taught musician and guitarist, he spent a lifelong career as a financial executive until his retirement.



Constance Monaco Hastings, AS75, 89M

1970s

CONSTANCE MONACO HASTINGS, AS75, 89M, of Wilmington, Del., and Jacksonville, Fla., has published *The Trouble with Jesus: Considerations Before You Walk Away*. After a 25-year career in English



Helen Widder Flood, EHD7, and Don Flood, AS79

education, Hastings was ordained as a Methodist deacon and served 18 years as a mental health counselor in a faith-based private counseling practice. Retired from active ministry, she blogs at constancehastings.com and continues to assist congregations in making connections between the church and the world.

HELEN WIDDER FLOOD, EHD79 and **DON FLOOD, AS79**, of Lewes, Del., celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary on July 1, 2024.

1980s

MARIE MICHELE CARON, AS80, AS24, of Hockessin, Del., returned to UD after 38 years to earn a second degree in music (guitar) with a minor in jazz studies. Her first dual degrees were in art and communication.



Music Memories: Before there was WVUD, there was WXDR, and in 1976, Caron was one of the original founders. "We started on the third floor of the Perkins Student Center and battled with broken turntables (all albums back then!) and duct-taped cables. I often did a 5 a.m. or midnight on-air shift, and the only way in was to pull a string that was tossed out the third-floor window, which manually rang a cowbell inside the on-air studio."



KEVIN TRESOLINI, AS80, of Newark, Del., was inducted into the Delaware Sports Hall of Fame. A sports reporter for *The News Journal/Delawareonline.com*, Tresolini has been voted Delaware's Sportswriter of the Year 14 times by the National Sports Media Association and won

six Associated Press Sports Editors national writing awards. He covers UD sports, Delaware high school sports and Philadelphia pro teams and has served on the USA Today Network staff at six Olympic Games.

JAMES MARTIN BOOTH, ANR81, of Florence, S.C., was posthumously inducted to the Sussex Central High School Hall of Fame. He hailed from a family of Blue Hens, including his mother, **IVA (SHORT) BOOTH, EHD46**, and brothers **WILLIAM BOOTH JR., ANR75**, **JOHN BOOTH, BE77**, **GEORGE BOOTH, ANR79**, and twin **JOE BOOTH, ANR81**.

JOE BOOTH, ANR81, of Ocean View, Del., retired from the Indian River School District in December 2023 as supervisor of building

TO THE TOP

It was a most unusual birthday celebration.

To commemorate their 60th birthdays, **PAUL LUONGO, AS85**, **INGRID (BROMMER) LUONGO, EHD86**, and **RUSSELL BOUGHTON, AS07**, summited Mount Kilimanjaro, the highest peak in Africa at 19,341 feet above sea level, on Aug. 10, 2023.

As it turns out, their UD days came in handy.

A former javelin thrower for UD's track team, Paul recalls a "stairs" drill—running up and down the UD stadium 20-plus times a day. "When things got tough on Kilimanjaro," he says, "all I had to do was think of 'stairs,' and it made climbing 19,000-plus feet seem relatively easy!"

His wife, Ingrid, dusted off the five-pound weights she once used in her Warner Hall residence hall and carried two of them in a backpack for six months to train for Kilimanjaro.

Their friend, Russell, who joined UD in the 80s before pausing his education, "climbed all the way back to finally receive his degree in 2007," says Paul. "Once you climb that mountain, Kilimanjaro is cake!"



and grounds. He previously represented District 19 in the State Senate.

GARY J. NESTLER, BE83, of New York, N.Y., and Boca Raton, Fla., retired from Morgan Stanley after running the estate and wealth planning group in New York for more than two decades. Nestler recently passed the Level 1 sommelier examination. His other hobbies include golf, fitness and travel.

ADAM ZUCKER, AS85, of Blue Bell, Pa., was elected president of the Lawyer Pilots Bar Association, a national aviation law association dedicated to aviation safety.

1990s

MICHAEL K. CHONG, AS91, of Hoboken, N.J., has completed the Crew Rowing program at BC Rowing Academy, certified by US Rowing, which qualifies him to row competitively with a crew team or in solo competitions.

LISA CRISTOFICH, BE91, of Wilmington, Del., has published *Kittens, Kisses and Cousins*, a compilation of stories from family, friends, neighbors, co-workers and traveling companions from 2001 to 2011. "I hope they inspire you to collect your own stories," she says.

DAWN (SCHULTHEIS) BASKIN, BE92

of Chicago, has been promoted to the role of director, industry lead for enterprise technology at Meta, where she oversees sales teams with a focus on innovation, AI and digital transformation. She is also a certified yoga instructor who has launched Daily Dose Wellness (dailydosewellnessco.com).

DAVE CHAMBERS, AS92, of Smyrna, Del., launched his first art exhibition, "Paintings from Memory," at Painted Stave Distilling in Smyrna, selling eight of the original 18 paintings on opening night. The show ran from June to September and featured work inspired by the New York abstract expressionists of the 1940s and '50s.

LORI (TORRY) MCDOWELL, EG93PHD, of Humble, Texas, published *The Reinvention Mindset*. She has also given a TedX talk, "A simple shift to reinvent your reality," and



Gary J. Nestler, BE83



Michael K. Chong, AS91



Dawn (Schultheis) Baskin, BE92



Dave Chambers, AS92

Lifelong connections: At UD, Zucker was president of the Alpha Epsilon Pi Fraternity, where he currently serves as an adviser.



Community leaders: As a student, Dohl competed on the men's swimming and diving team. He is now president of The Alias Group, based in Newark. Gulli, a two-time Delaware graduate, is owner of Kendall James Advisors, an investment firm.

launched a website, reimagineu.net, to help "make the world a more joyful place."

MARK TRIBBITT, BE93, of Williamstown, N.J., has helped establish Altos Bank, a business-oriented community bank in Silicon Valley. Tribbitt also works as an associate professor of business strategy for Pepperdine University in Malibu.

CHRIS DOHL, BE95, of Newark, Del., and **J.P. GULLI, EG96, BE97M**, of Hockessin, Del., have launched the 302 Collective (302collective.com), in partnership with Delaware Athletics, to provide Name, Image, Likeness (NIL) opportunities to UD student-athletes. Through interactive events, personalized messages and social media partnerships, the 302 Collective helps students build their athletic brand while engaging with the broader statewide community.

JENNI FLECK JONES, BE95, of Landenberg, Pa., is the recipient of the 2024 Brad Scott Excellence in Mentoring Award from UD's Lerner College. Given in honor of Brad Scott, who played a vital role in growing the Lerner Executive Mentoring Program, the award recognizes an individual who goes above and beyond in mentoring Lerner students. Jones is the marketing and college recruiting manager for Belfint Lyons & Shuman, one of the largest certified public accounting firms in Delaware.



"I'm the lucky one as I get to learn just as much from my mentees as they do from me. The students I have worked with over the years constantly show perseverance, dedication and enthusiasm, which inspires me."

—Jenni Fleck Jones, BE95

DANA BURL, AS97, of Annapolis, Md., was appointed deputy secretary of military policy and programs for the Maryland Department of Veterans and Military Families.



Valli and the Four Seasons. The performers, including longtime former member **CHAD MOROZ, AS97**, of Downingtown, Pa., met at UD in 1998 and now play more than 80 shows a year.

NIKKI A. GREENE, AS03M, O9PHD, of Sudbury, Mass., has published *Grime, Glitter and Glass: The Body and the Sonic in Contemporary Black Art*.

PEPPER STETLER, AS03M, O9PHD, of Oxford, Ohio, published *A Measure of Intelligence: One Mother's Reckoning with the IQ Test*. She researched and wrote the book after learning that her daughter, Louisa, who has Down syndrome, would be required to take periodic IQ tests to secure school support.

CURTIS BERGESEN, AS04, of Bethesda, Md., is celebrating seven years as an artist at Collage The World (curtisbergesen.com) and five years at Denver Reggae.

JENNIFER FAWCETT, ANR04, of Raleigh, N.C., received the Prescribed Burner of the Year Award from the North Carolina Prescribed Fire Council. In her role as extension specialist at North Carolina State University, Fawcett helps train students in prescribed fire and has worked to bring more women into wildland fire leadership roles. She also co-authored the 2023 *Guidebook for Prescribed Burning in the Southern Region*.

EDWARD COHEN, EHD05, and **KARA (WADE) COHEN, HS06**, of Bridgewater, N.J., welcomed daughter Hope Minnie on Nov. 3, 2023.

RYAN PETRILLO, AS05, of Haddon Heights, N.J., and **DAN LISOWSKI, AS06**, of Philadelphia, have created a bizarre little DIY anthology movie, *Weird Visions Society*, which premiered in October 2024 and combines the low-budget effects with the otherworldly audio characteristics of '70s and '80s Italian horror.

JAMES ANTHONY PICARRO, BE08, and **LAUREN LAVORERIO PICARRO, BE09**, of Philadelphia, welcomed their second child, Isla James, on Aug. 27, 2023.

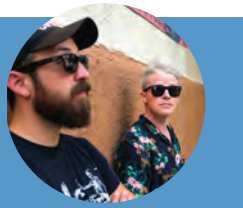
2010s

ANDREW G. VEIT, AS10, of Egg Harbor Township, N.J., earned his doctorate in musical arts from the University of Iowa and is a lecturer and director of percussion studies at the University of Texas Permian Basin.

ELIZABETH BOOTH ILLIAN, AS09A, EHD11, of Ocean View, Del., has been appointed principal of Georgetown Elementary School in the Indian River School District.

DAMEIA BOYER, BE12, of New Castle, Del., has been promoted to staff II accountant at Belfint, Lyons and Shuman.

LAURA (BLOEMEKE) TODARO, HS13, and **BENJAMIN TODARO, AS14**, of West Chester, Pa., welcomed baby boy, Liam, on Feb. 20, 2024.



"UD was always a creative and collaborative environment with a nice dose of healthy competition."
—Ryan Petrillo, AS05



Dameia Boyer, BE12

"I'm bursting with Blue Henergy!"



SHE'S WITH THE BAND

BROOKE JOHNSON, AS09, is still pinching herself. Years after her trumpet blared through Delaware Stadium, the 2015 alumna has returned to the University of Delaware Marching Band (UDMB) as the sixth director in the program's storied history.

Taking the reins from Heidi Sarver, who retired this spring after 29 years at the UDMB helm, Johnson hopes to continue "Sarv's" student-centric legacy.

"We want everyone to feel welcomed, included and supported," says Johnson. "This is a place for people to be themselves, a home to so many."

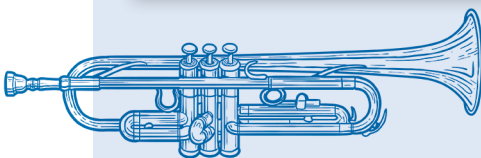
Johnson discovered this home in 2001, at the annual UD Band Day event where high school students play alongside their college counterparts during a Delaware Football game. The 9/11 attacks had occurred only a few weeks prior, and as the joint bands of UD and UMass played "God Bless the USA," with thousands in the stands chanting along, Johnson knew then: "I am part of something special."

Her time at UD was filled with the traditions that endure to this day: the clandestine welcome ceremony for new members, the playing of "Bozo" at the end of every pregame—"all those little things that mean so much."

"My focus is on the students and giving them the same experiences that are so meaningful to me," she says. "I am so grateful and honored to be the one who gets to continue this legacy."



KATHY F. ATKINSON



WELCOME BACK, BROOKE!

KAT LOCKE-JONES, AS13, of Timonium, Md., was named 2025 Maryland Teacher of the Year following her previous honor of Baltimore City Public Schools' Teacher of the Year. She is also a co-founder of Sean's House in Newark, Del.

ALEXIS BIGELOW, EHD15M, of Brooklyn, N.Y., received a Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction from the University of Texas at Austin in May 2024 and now works as a research associate for Rockman et al Cooperative, an education and evaluation company.

NAFISSATOU DICKO, AS15, of Middletown, Del., has joined the Swartz Campbell LLC as an associate in the firm's professional liability group.

MATTHEW HAMDAN, AS15, of Massapequa, N.Y., and **CARA KUPPERSMITH, AS15**, of Stamford, Conn., married on Sept. 15, 2023, in Hopewell Junction, N.Y., with 19 alumni in attendance, including four Double Dels.

RYAN LAVORERIO, EG15, and **HANNAH BOLOGNA, AS16**, of Millington, N.J., wed in New York City on April 13, 2024,

with numerous Blue Hens in attendance.

My future's so bright I've gotta wear shades



MARK BAMUNDO, EG16, and **REBECCA (WEINSCHENK) BAMUNDO, EG16**, of Columbia, Md., welcomed daughter Reese Everly on Dec. 2, 2023.

EMMA K. GREY, HS16, and **JOHN ALEXANDER THATCHER, BE16**, of Philadelphia, were married on June 7, 2024.

KYLE LYNCH, AS16, and **MORGAN MISKOVITZ, BE18**, of Philadelphia, were married on July 6, 2024.

LEXI PECK, HS16, and **BRADLEY PECK, BE15**, of Jersey City, N.J., welcomed their first child, Avery Jewel Peck, on Feb. 2, 2024.

VYBAV HIRASAVE, EG16, and **DHRUVI SHAH, AS17**, of Philadelphia, were married in Mexico's Riviera Maya during an extended celebration from Aug. 7-10, 2024.

CONNOR RUSH, BE16, of Elmsford, N.Y., and **SAMANTHA (GAMBINO) RUSH, BE16**, of West Hempstead, N.Y., were married on Oct. 28, 2023. They met and started dating after freshman year when they both lived on the second floor of Dickinson D.

STEPHANIE VELARDO, AS17PHD, and **GABRIEL ANDRADE, AS17PHD**, of Los Alamos, N.M., welcomed daughter Giada on Feb. 6, 2024.

EMMA CHARLTON, ANR18, of Frankford, Del., married Kees Elling in May 2024.

RICHARD HAHN, EG18, and **LINDSEY FOWLER, BE18**, of Morristown, N.J., were married on March 24, 2024.

JOHN SCHMIDT, AS19, and **CYDNI JOHN, AS21**, of Bear, Del., were married on Sept. 7, 2024.



Photos top to bottom

Emma K. Grey, HS16, and John Alexander Thatcher, BE16 were married June 7, 2024

Avery Jewel Peck with parents Lexi Peck, HS16, and Bradley Peck, BE15

Emily Alonzo, HS20, and Carter Lynch, BE20, 21M, met as students and were married May 4, 2024

Photo at left: Kyle Lynch, AS16, and Morgan Miskovitz, BE18, were married July 6, 2024

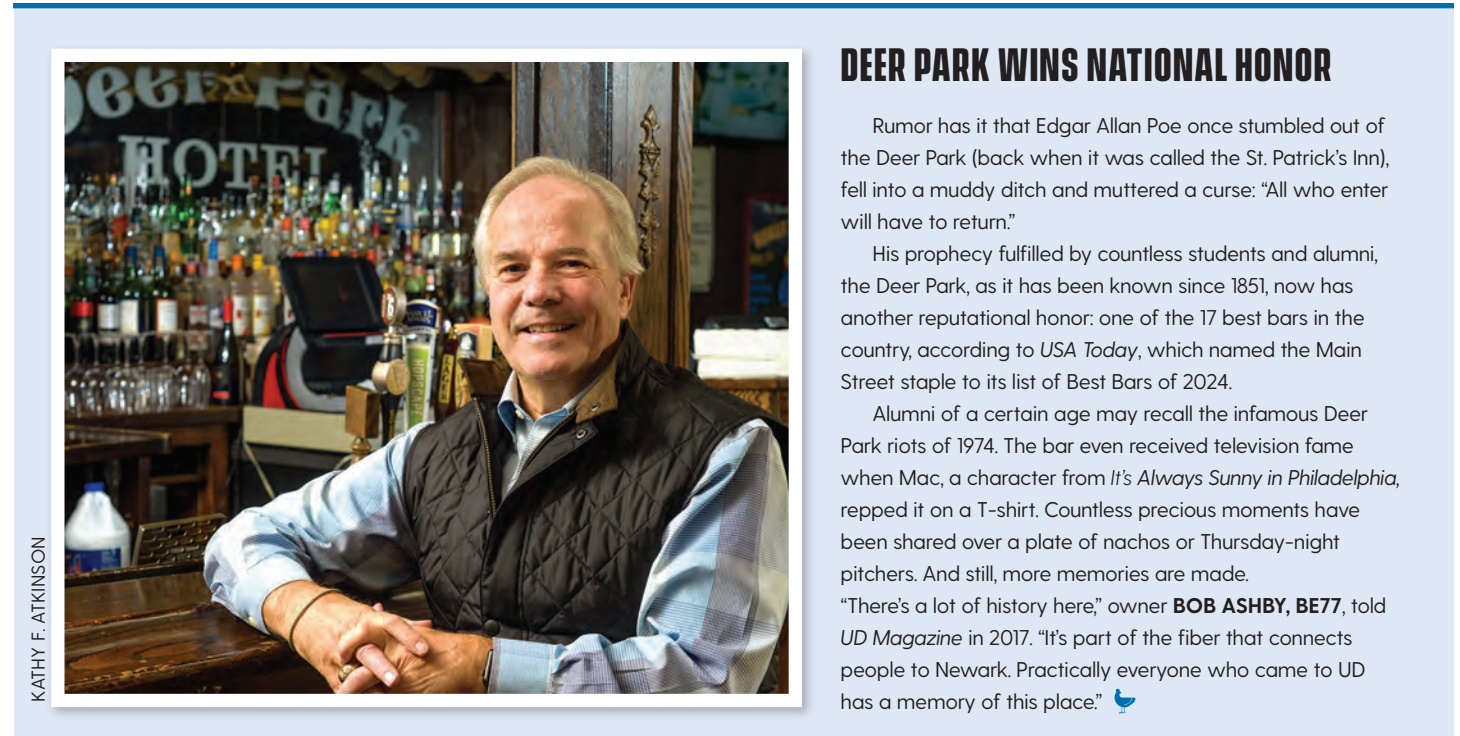
2020s

EMILY ALONZO, HS20, and **CARTER LYNCH, BE20, 21M**, of North East, Md., were married on May 4, 2024.

EMMA BLANCHARD, EG20, of Baltimore, Md., and **ERIC ROWE, ANR19**, of Newark, Del., were married on June 22, 2024, with plenty of UDairy ice cream and Blue Hens in attendance.



Nafissatou Dicko, AS15



KATHY F. ATKINSON

DEER PARK WINS NATIONAL HONOR

Rumor has it that Edgar Allan Poe once stumbled out of the Deer Park (back when it was called the St. Patrick's Inn), fell into a muddy ditch and muttered a curse: "All who enter will have to return."

His prophecy fulfilled by countless students and alumni, the Deer Park, as it has been known since 1851, now has another reputational honor: one of the 17 best bars in the country, according to *USA Today*, which named the Main Street staple to its list of Best Bars of 2024.

Alumni of a certain age may recall the infamous Deer Park riots of 1974. The bar even received television fame when Mac, a character from *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia*, repped it on a T-shirt. Countless precious moments have been shared over a plate of nachos or Thursday-night pitchers. And still, more memories are made. "There's a lot of history here," owner **BOB ASHBY, BE77**, told *UD Magazine* in 2017. "It's part of the fiber that connects people to Newark. Practically everyone who came to UD has a memory of this place."



SHARE YOUR NEWS

The Magazine encourages alumni to send us news to share with your fellow Blue Hens. A new job, a promotion, a personal or professional award ... they're all accomplishments we want to announce. Email a note or a press release to magazine@udel.edu. Please include your hometown, graduation year and college or major.

SYDNEY BERKEY, HS21, of Bear, Del., earned her doctor of pharmacy degree from Thomas Jefferson University in May and began her one-year residency at TidalHealth Peninsula Regional Hospital in Salisbury, Md., in June.



Photo above: Emma Blanchard, EG20, of Baltimore, Md., married Eric Rowe, ANR19, on June 22, 2024

At left: Sydney Berkey, HS21

NADYA ELLERHORST, AS24, of Cincinnati, Ohio, was nominated for the 2024 Mid-Atlantic College Production Awards for "A World Inside Another," a student documentary she produced on the Women's Group at UD's English Language Institute. Ellerhorst filmed, edited and produced the 20-minute video on her iPhone as part of an independent study with Professor **NANCY KARIBJANIAN, AS80**.

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**Orthopaedic Surgeon for the UD Athletic Department

DELAWARE ORTHOPAEDIC SPECIALISTS

IN MEMORIAM

ALUMNI

MARILYN CHAPPELL POSTLES, EHD56, June 24, 2024

ARKAN SAY, EG61M, Feb. 12, 2024

LEE J. STETSON, BE63, July 31, 2024

DANIEL S. HODGINS, AS66PHD, June 19, 2024

NANCY MURRAY CARNEY, HS70, EHD75M, June 18, 2024

PATRICIA SCHOENLY FOLK, AS71, July 18, 2024

BARBARA M. BLANKENSHIP, HS72, May 5, 2024

JAMES SHERRILL, BE75, March 12, 2024

THOMAS F. DREWS, AS77, July 30, 2024

SAMUEL E. AMER, AS15, April 2, 2023

CONOR PATRICK NEYLON, BE24, June 30, 2024

ALBERT OSTER, AS24, March 4, 2024

THANYA SHEMI, EG24, Aug. 1, 2024

NOELIA GOMEZ, BE28, Aug. 27, 2024

FACULTY AND STAFF

YAROSLAV BILINSKY, professor emeritus of political science and international relations, Sept. 16, 2024

ROBERT BROWN, professor emeritus of philosophy, May 18, 2024

STAVROS CARATZOULAS, associate director of Computational Chemistry, Catalysis Center for Energy Innovation, Aug. 27, 2024

WILLIAM NICHOL, retired assistant professor of bioresources engineering, June 20, 2024

DANIEL RICHARDSON, retired research associate IV, civil and environmental engineering

MARIE SENFF, senior human resources generalist, Office of the Dean, College of Education and Human Development, Sept. 2, 2024

CONRAD TRUMBORE, associate professor emeritus of chemistry and biochemistry, July 14, 2024

Please share news of a loved one's passing with us at inmemoriam.udel.edu

STEVEN J. STANHOPE

STEVEN J. STANHOPE, a pioneering biomechanics researcher and retired professor and administrator, passed away Aug. 2, 2024, at home with his family, after a brief but intense battle with a rare form of lung cancer. Dr. Stanhope, who was 66, had previously survived an aggressive battle with prostate cancer.

At UD, Dr. Stanhope served as professor of kinesiology and applied physiology in the College of Health Sciences and associate vice president for research.

His research in the areas of biomechanics and rehabilitation sciences focused on helping people reach their optimal level of function when an injury, disease or other health related condition results in physical disability. His interests centered on rehabilitation biomechanics and the clinical application of human motion capture, analysis and simulation methodologies.

This work led to the development of a minimally invasive skeletal tracking method, a method for calibrating instrumented treadmills in situ, a novel body weight support system and several commercially available products. He had a particular interest in working with amputees to optimize prosthetic performance.



After serving as director of biomechanics and motion analysis at the National Institutes of Health (NIH), Dr. Stanhope joined the Delaware faculty in 2007 to lead efforts to grow the region's biomedical research enterprise through multidisciplinary partnerships and the establishment of foundational research capabilities.

At UD, he held joint academic appointments in the Department of Kinesiology and Applied Physiology, Department of Mechanical Engineering, Biomedical Engineering and the Biomechanics and Movement Science Interdisciplinary Graduate Program.

In 2010, he was named program coordinator and chair of the Delaware IDeA Network of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE), a statewide, multi-institutional program funded by the NIH and the National Center for Research

Resources, and administered by UD. That program directly engaged 869 undergraduate students in mentored research experiences, supported 79 graduate students, provided research funds for 95 junior faculty, research support for over 1,000 Delaware investigators and generated over \$455 million in downstream awards.

Dr. Stanhope was the principal investigator and BADER Consortium director for a five-year, \$19.5 million grant awarded in 2011 by the Department of Defense to establish evidence-based orthopedic rehabilitation care optimizing the ability of soldiers with musculoskeletal injuries to function in everyday life. He served as the principal investigator on more than \$90 million in sponsored research funds.

As part of the University's research leadership team, Dr. Stanhope served as associate deputy provost for research and scholarship from 2013-17 and as associate vice president for research from 2017 until his retirement.

According to his family, Dr. Stanhope "was always happiest with salt water around him, a fishing pole in his hand, and a family member or a dear friend by his side." To honor his memory, the family notes, "Steven would want those that cared about him to go after their dreams!" 🐟



EVAN KRAPE

Q+A CHRIS CHRISTIE

Character takes courage, and **Chris Christie, AS84**, fears the nation is losing its grip on both. Staff from *UD Magazine* recently attended UD's annual James R. Soles Lecture on the Constitution and Citizenship, where the former New Jersey governor and recipient of the University's Medal of Distinction shared his perspective on a subject that is top of mind in 2024: the state of character.

What is character? Knowing the right thing to do and having the courage to do it. It's indispensable—and divisible. Knowing is often easier than doing.

Do you see it in American politics today? No.

How does that play out globally? Whether it's in Russia, the Gaza Strip, Venezuela, Iran, North Korea, [dictators and autocrats] have made the calculus that America no longer has the character to identify violence as wrong and do something about it. And why should they think differently? They have seen in our leaders the willingness to put self-interest before public interest.

When has your own character been tested? Oct. 29, 2012. Hurricane Sandy destroyed 346,000 homes, shuttered schools, battered hospitals, closed water treatment plants, obstructed every major highway and left 6 million state residents without power. The next morning, President Obama called and asked to see the damage.

What went through your mind? That it was not politically advantageous to me and that there was no answer but yes. I didn't take an oath of party; I took an oath of office to the people of New Jersey.

What was the impact? It was the last moment of real bipartisanship on the national stage. To this day, I'm asked about the hug on the tarmac (which never happened). But people saw me get punished politically and thought, "I don't want that to happen to me."

At the Soles Lecture, the governor also fielded questions from political science students.

LILIAN CLOYD, AS25: What causes political polarization, and how can we combat it? You must be willing to take risks and reach across the aisle. Compromise is not a dirty word. I've been married to **Mary Pat [BE85]** for 38 great years. If you're in any kind of decent marriage, you know "my way or the highway" doesn't make things any better; it makes things worse.

ERICA WRAY, AS25: What are your thoughts on the skyrocketing national deficit? Obscene. \$35 trillion and growing because no one has the courage to say no to more spending.

ANNIE MCTAGGART, AS26: What do you consider the most pressing foreign policy issue facing the U.S., and what would you like to see the next presidential administration do about it? Show some spine. When I was advocating for more aggressive aid to Ukraine, a woman in New Hampshire asked, "Why is this our problem?" I said, "That's the price you pay for being the richest and strongest country in the world."

MIRANDA BECHER, AS26: What would you like the future of the Republican party to look like? A little gray, overweight and outspoken. [laughs] I'd like the party to become conservative again and stand for less spending, lower taxes, economic growth and strong foreign policy that defends freedom and liberty around the world.

The annual James R. Soles Lecture honors the lasting impact of the late UD political science professor. This Q&A has been excerpted and edited from the event. For a longer version of the story, visit udel.edu/chris-christie

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