



UNIVERSITY OF  
**DELAWARE**

MAGAZINE

Volume 33 • Number 1

*Love at  
first light*

ILLUMINATING THE HISTORY AND CHARM OF  
UD'S ICONIC SPACES



# CHEERS!

A hand in a blue glove holds a large, shiny gold pom-pom. The background is a vibrant blue with a pattern of lighter blue circles and scattered yellow and blue square confetti. The word 'CHEERS!' is written in large, white, bold letters across the top left.

Who's the greatest mascot in all the land? No surprise here. YoUDee took top honors at the 2025 UCA/UDA College National Championship, placing first in the Open Mascot category, with Baby Blue placing second in its first-ever attempt. The championship marks the 19th year in a row that Delaware has won at least one national title. YoUDee has now won 10 national titles and is one of 10 college mascots to be inducted into the Mascot Hall of Fame.







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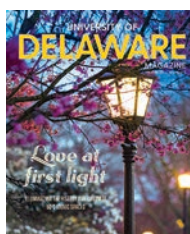
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COURTESY OF UD ATHLETICS

The UD Mascot team celebrates after claiming first and second place at the 2025 national championship. Pictured above, from left: Baby Blue; Regan Whitaker, AS25; Aidan Keener, AS25; Shaia Ben-David, HS28; Andrew Cagliostro, EG28; Tony Goldston, assistant athletic director for recreation programs; Brody Martin, AS27; and YoUDee. Not pictured: Katie Murphy, BSPA25; Lucien LaCasse, AS28; and AJ Rega, AS26.



### ON THE COVER

UD's motto—Knowledge is the light of the mind (*Scientia sol mentis est*)—served as fitting inspiration for this image. Read on for more shining examples of campus architecture.

Photo by Evan Krape



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## UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE MAGAZINE

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FROM OUR

# PRESIDENT

## FINDING UD'S GREATNESS EVERYWHERE WE LOOK

Where is your favorite place on the University of Delaware campus? It is a great question—one that I am often asked and one that I often pose to the students, faculty, staff and alumni I encounter.

Certainly, the beautiful and historic brick buildings on The Green are on the list; they give UD an unmatched charm and connection with our heritage. In addition, our high-tech laboratories and classrooms—like those in our interdisciplinary buildings on the Main and STAR Campuses—are enabling innovative modalities of education, research and collaboration that will propel us into a bright future. Our other facilities in Newark, Wilmington, Dover, Georgetown and Lewes are also full of hands-on learning opportunities and partnerships that are making a difference in communities throughout the state. I am inspired everywhere I watch our student-athletes train and compete with Blue Hen pride. And, of course, no favorite-places list is complete without the UDairy Creamery, where my wife, Eleni, and I frequently enjoy a scoop—or two—of the best ice cream in the world!

What makes a place truly outstanding, though, are the people. Wherever I go, I find a thriving UD culture of creators, teachers, collaborators, leaders, entrepreneurs and innovators. This is a place where great minds share their deep knowledge,

unique perspectives and fresh ideas with one another. UD is a place for explorers, where curious students and faculty can ask any question and pursue the truth wherever it leads. Sometimes those answers are found here on campus, other times in a different country, deep in the ocean or far in outer space. UD is everywhere.

From the arts and humanities to science and engineering to business, education, public policy, agriculture, human services, medicine and so much more ... UD is a place of bold thinkers and problem solvers. It is where connections are forged and lasting memories are made with mentors, teammates, colleagues, lifelong friends and many Double Del alumni marriages. Even decades later, UD's relevance endures for every Blue Hen. And every new generation reinvents itself to make its mark on our ever-evolving world.

So, what is my favorite UD place? Ultimately, it is anywhere the University of Delaware community gathers to learn, grow and work together to build a better future for us all. And that is a place that always lives in our hearts and minds, wherever we go.

Dennis Assanis, President



# ON THE GREEN

News  
from campus  
and beyond



Blue Hen benefactors Robert L. Siegfried, Jr., BE81, and Kathleen (Horgan) Siegfried, AS85

EVAN KRAPE

## \$71.5 MILLION GIFT TO TRANSFORM BUSINESS EDUCATION

It is the largest donation in UD history. In March, Double Dels Robert L. Siegfried, Jr., BE81, and Kathleen Marie (Horgan) Siegfried, AS85, along with The Siegfried Group, LLP, announced a \$71.5 million commitment to establish the newest campus addition: Siegfried Hall, a state-of-the-art, student-centric learning space for the Lerner College of Business and Economics.


As a hub of activity for business students, Siegfried Hall will include modern classrooms, immersive learning labs, a student-run café and auditorium. The University will commission the design process this spring, with a goal of breaking ground within the next four years. The campus location will be announced at a later date.

Siegfried Hall will also be the host site of the new Siegfried Institute for Leadership and Free Enterprise, an “idea lab” to strengthen the capabilities and characteristics of effective leadership while advancing the role of limited government, rule of law and free enterprise.

“My time at UD—my incredible professors, the many unique experiences inside and outside the classroom, my vibrant

network of friends and colleagues—helped to make me who I am today,” says Rob. “To be able to share our success with the business students of tomorrow is an incredible honor.”

To spur additional investment in the project, the Siegfrieds’ gift will serve as matching funds for future Siegfried Hall contributions. “Kathy and I hope to share a vision and establish a mission that others will feel compelled to both support and follow,” says Rob.

As proud alumni and passionate advocates for leadership education, the Siegfrieds have already committed more than \$6 million to Lerner College, Horn Entrepreneurship and the Center for Economic Education and Entrepreneurship. Their philanthropy created the Siegfried Youth Leadership Initiative, a unique program for Delaware students in grades 8 through 12, and the Siegfried Fellows program, a highly selective, cohort-based, 10-month immersive program for undergraduate student leaders. Their dedication to UD has been evident since their earliest days as alumni—their first gift was a contribution of \$25 in 1985. 



## NEW ENGINEERING DEAN



WILLIAM ATKINS

Pamela Norris, professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering and former vice provost of research at George Washington University, is the new dean of UD's College of Engineering, effective March 1, 2025.

Norris is the first woman to lead the UD college and a renowned expert in nanoscale heat transfer. At GWU, she worked to strengthen external communications, grow sponsored research, promote diversity

and enhance research compliance. She previously spent 27 years at the University of Virginia and has led more than 45 research projects, totaling over \$26 million in funding. A recognized leader in nanotechnology, she is committed to strengthening the nation's position in global leadership, mentoring the next generation of engineers and advancing inclusive education.

The College of Engineering is home to 183 full-time faculty members, research staff and technical and administrative staff members. The 2025 *U.S. News & World Report* Best Graduate Engineering Programs ranked UD 38th overall. Four graduate engineering specialty disciplines rank in the top 50 nationally, including chemical engineering at number 7. 🐦

## NEW ARTS AND SCIENCES DEAN



UNIVERSITY OF MIAMI

Caleb Everett, professor of anthropology and psychology at the University of Miami, is the new dean of UD's College of Arts and Sciences (CAS), effective March 1, 2025.

Everett is an expert in linguistic, cognitive and cultural diversity. He is the author of award-winning books on language and culture, including *A Myriad of Tongues: How Languages Reveal Differences in How We Think*, selected as one of the top 10 science books of fall 2023 by *Publishers Weekly*, and *Numbers and the Making of Us*:

*Counting and the Course of Human Cultures*, named one of the 10 best science books by *Smithsonian* in 2017.

He also brings significant administrative experience, having served as senior associate dean for faculty affairs and college diversity and chair of the anthropology department. His leadership is characterized by a focus on faculty and student success, along with a commitment to enhancing the college's impact.

As UD's largest college, CAS is nationally recognized for exceptional educational experiences and for integrating instruction, research and public engagement. With 24 academic departments and more than 25 centers, programs and institutes, CAS serves over 7,500 students, supported by more than 400 staff and 600 faculty members. 🐦

## PROGRAM TO ADDRESS WORKFORCE SHORTAGE



This fall, UD will offer a new Master of Science in Clinical Psychological Science program, addressing the growing need for skilled mental health professionals.

This innovative degree combines cutting-edge research with practical clinical training, offering students a comprehensive understanding of psychological treatment. Offered through UD's Institute for Community Mental Health, the degree program emphasizes short-term, evidence-based interventions and the application of clinical research.

Unlike other clinical psychological science programs at Research 1 universities (classified by the Carnegie Foundation as having the highest level of research activity), UD's program will be the first to integrate clinical training that meets state licensing board requirements. This unique model aims to produce clinicians who think like scientists, using research to inform and enhance clinical practice.

The graduate-level program is the latest of several new academic offerings from the University of Delaware aimed at addressing the health needs of Delawareans and beyond, including a graduate certificate in epidemiology and a master's of social work. 🐦

—Chris Vito





WENBO FAN

# UD CONTINUES TO SHINE IN NATIONAL RANKINGS


The University of Delaware continues to gain national recognition for its exceptional academic programs and ability to prepare leaders and entrepreneurs in a rapidly evolving world. Several recent rankings highlight these strengths, bolstering UD's reputation as a top-tier institution.

In 2025, UD's online graduate programs were ranked among the best in the nation by *U.S. News & World Report*, with five programs earning top spots. Notably, the University's online Master of Business Administration and Master's in Education both ranked 20 out of 355 and 315, respectively. UD's online Master's in Computer Information Technology also saw significant improvement, jumping from 50 to 41 in just its second year of inclusion. These rankings reflect the University's dedication to providing high-quality, accessible education to learners across the world.

Further cementing its global stature, the University of Delaware was named one of *Time's* "Best Colleges for Future Leaders 2025." UD was selected from a pool of 4,000 institutions based on the analysis of résumés from top leaders across diverse fields. This recognition underscores UD's commitment to developing well-rounded leaders equipped with the skills and mindset to tackle complex international challenges. Central to this mission are initiatives like the Blue Hen Leadership Program, MBA in Strategic Leadership,

Women's Leadership Initiative, Siegfried Youth Leadership Program for high school students, and the Mandela Washington Fellows program, hosted annually by UD to help train young leaders from Africa.

UD's reputation for fostering innovation is also evident in its top-ranked Horn Entrepreneurship program. For the sixth consecutive year, the University ranked among the nation's best entrepreneurship schools, moving up to 27 in the 2025 *Princeton Review* and *Entrepreneur Magazine* rankings. The Horn program offers a wide range of interdisciplinary opportunities, including majors, minors and certificates across seven colleges. More than 1,700 students from diverse academic backgrounds engage with Horn's programs annually, learning how to think creatively and solve real-world problems through new ventures.

"Through our outstanding educational programs, UD continues to provide rewarding opportunities for those seeking to advance their careers through higher education, as well as meeting the evolving needs of our society," says President Dennis Assanis. "Our faculty and staff are committed to fostering learning environments that empower students to unleash their potential, sharpen their leadership skills and discover the areas where they can make a difference in the world." 

# THE HIDDEN TOLL OF CARING FOR CANCER PATIENTS

For over a decade, UD Professor Jean-Philippe Laurenceau has studied couples coping with breast cancer and found that when patients or their loved ones feel unable to express their worries about cancer—what’s called “disclosure inhibition”—they also experience increased fear of recurrence and a loss of intimacy.

Now, new research by Laurenceau and colleagues has found that the emotional toll of caregiving isn’t just mental—it may also manifest physically.

The study measured cortisol levels (the body’s stress hormone) in hair samples taken at two points—right after cancer treatment ended and six months later—finding that partners with greater fears of recurrence also showed increased cortisol levels over time.

Alyssa Fenech, AS23M, a clinical psychology doctoral student at UD and lead author of the research paper published in the *Journal of Cancer Survivorship*, notes that partners often suffer worse long-term health outcomes, including a higher risk of cardiovascular disease. Understanding why this increased vulnerability occurs is important.

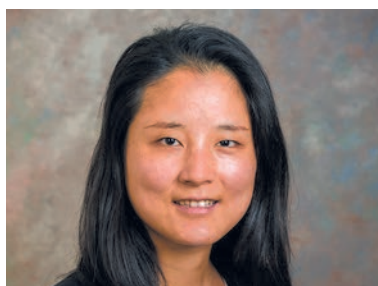
Just as infants turn to caregivers for comfort, couples often lean on each other to cope with life’s challenges.

“Part of finding a new equilibrium, both as individuals and as a couple, is figuring out how to talk about things that can feel scary and threatening,” says Laurenceau. “When you feel like you can’t talk about those concerns, it’s associated with more fear of cancer occurrence, because you’re not processing it together.”

—Karen Roberts, AS90, 21M



JEFF CHASE



## PRESIDENTIAL HONORS

Two UD researchers, Tingyi Gu and Kevin Solomon, and an alumna, Kristin Gagnier, AS10PhD, have received the Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers (PECASE), the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. government on outstanding scientists and engineers early in their careers.

Gu, an associate professor of electrical and computer engineering, is pioneering next-generation optical communications designed to enable message exchange at the speed of light. Her research focuses on developing integrated photonic devices, which use tiny chips to process and transmit light particles. Faster, smaller and more energy-efficient than traditional electronic circuits, they could develop more reliable and sustainable computer memory, more precise biomedical imaging, improved navigation for space exploration, and more.

Solomon, the Thomas and Kipp Gutshall Career Development Associate Professor of Biomolecular Engineering, draws inspiration from nature—specifically microorganisms, which he regards as “the most innovative chemists.” His work aims to harness the organisms’ unique capabilities to tackle challenges in sustainability, human health and food safety, with applications spanning drug development to biofuel production.

Gagnier earned her doctorate from UD in cognitive psychology and now serves as senior research scientist at AnLar in Arlington, Virginia, where she oversees large-scale educational programs that connect research to practice, particularly in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics). One such project is SPACE-IT, which utilizes workshops and coaching to strengthen 5th-grade science instruction.

—Tracey Bryant

(Top to bottom) Tingyi Gu, Kevin Solomon and Kristin Gagnier





## TRANSFORMATIVE GIFT FOR MARINE SCIENCE EDUCATION

During a dinner early in her graduate career, Danielle Haulsee, now chief science officer at the Hubbs-SeaWorld Research Institute, regaled Patricia Robertson, AS72M, with stories from the Delaware Bay.

As Haulsee, EOE17PhD, spoke about tracking the migration pattern of sand tiger sharks, Patricia, herself a scientific trailblazer, reflected on how such hands-on field experiences were once rare for women.

Marine science opportunities at UD look much different today, in large part because of Patricia and Charles Robertson. Last fall, the couple made a \$5 million gift to create an endowment that will support up to 10 marine science graduate students annually in perpetuity.

“This fund will have a profound impact,” says President Dennis Assanis. “From stipends to research fellowships, it will enhance our graduate researchers’ ability to tackle global challenges like climate change.”

Patricia, who earned her master’s in biological sciences from UD, and Charles have long been champions of scientific research, contributing nearly \$7 million over the years.

“From supporting the Apex float in Antarctica to pioneering shark tagging efforts in Delaware Bay ... [the Robertsons] have directly benefited the careers of 14 graduate students, many of whom are now making waves in their fields,” adds Matthew Oliver, who holds the Patricia and Charles Robertson Distinguished Professorship of Marine Science and Policy.

Haulsee, one of those former graduate students, delivered a keynote speech at a November event to celebrate the Robertsons’ landmark gift.

“Every day, UD graduate students and faculty are driving vital research into the most urgent problems our planet faces,” says Charles. “Stories like Danielle’s are a reminder that all our bright young researchers need is the opportunity to make a difference.”

In recognition of their profound contributions, Assanis and the Board of Trustees awarded the Robertsons the Medal of Distinction, UD’s highest non-academic honor. 🐦

—Jack Truschel, AS20M, 23PhD

Above: Yuleny Gomez Rodriguez, EOE30PhD; Katherine Gallagher, EOE22PhD; Danielle Haulsee, EOE17PhD; Charles and Patricia Robertson, AS72M; and Matt Oliver.

## SUPPORTING BLUE HEN PARENTS

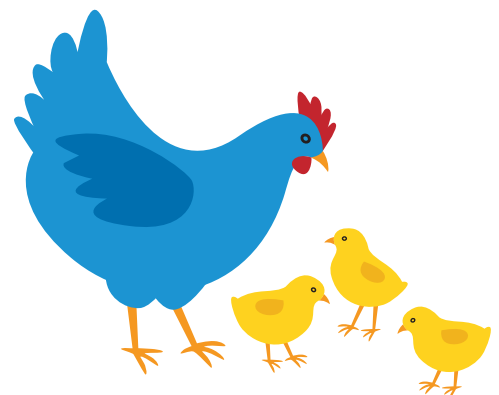
A lack of affordable, high-quality childcare often prevents parents of young children from pursuing higher education. At UD, however, a new initiative offers hope. Through the federal Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program, UD’s Early Learning Center (ELC) now provides free, campus-based childcare to Pell Grant-eligible undergraduate and graduate student-parents.

“Student-parents often face significant challenges in finding and financing childcare,” says Rena Hallam, interim dean for the College of Education and Human Development, which houses the ELC. “Research shows that access to childcare increases both student well-being and graduation rates.”

The ELC offers play-focused care for children from infancy through second grade. Located on UD’s main campus, the center provides a full-day program, weekday mentoring and family support. Kosiso Madu, a UD student-parent, calls the ELC “the best early education center in Newark,” adding, “I never worry when I leave my child there.”

The CCAMPIS program is part of a broader institutional strategy to support approximately 400 student-parents at UD. 🐦

—Jessica Henderson, AS11





# QUOTED IN THE NEWS

“THIS IS A REALLY CRITICAL MOLECULE INVOLVED IN METABOLISM ... (AND) MAKING ENERGY, WHICH IS NEEDED FOR EVERY FUNCTION OF THE BODY.”

**Christopher Martens**, associate professor of kinesiology and applied physiology, explaining the science behind anti-aging supplements on *The Today Show*



“People are entitled to decorate their house any way they like—pink, blue, beige. There is no way in which this is going to harm a kid, no way, because the kid sees all kinds of color outside ... organically.”

**Roberta Golinkoff**, the Unidel H. Rodney Sharp Professor of Education, to CNN about the importance—or lack thereof—of the colors of children's rooms and toys

“AI has wide applications in the fashion industry. It's not necessarily that AI is bad. The problem is the essence of Shein's particular business model.”

**Sheng Lu**, professor of fashion and apparel studies, in *Yahoo News* discussing the environmental impacts of the fast fashion retailer



“THE WORK CONTEXT AND THE FRIENDSHIP CONTEXT ARE OFTEN AT ODDS. THE NORMS THAT GUIDE HOW YOU BEHAVE AT WORK, THINGS LIKE FORMALITY AND PROFESSIONALISM, ARE VERY DIFFERENT FROM THE INFORMALITY, THE AUTHENTICITY THAT YOU HAVE TO HAVE WITH FRIENDS.”

**Beth Schinoff**, assistant professor of management, in *Time* on workplace friendships



“IF YOU WERE TO SHRINK THE SUN TO THE SIZE OF A SAND GRAIN, THE DISTANCE TO THE NEAREST STAR WOULD BE MEASURED IN MILES.”

**Sally Dodson-Robinson**, assistant professor of physics and astronomy, in *Mashable* on footage captured from a spacecraft

“[Despite] the very rough circumstances in which these people are living, they still manage to find the time and effort to have companion animals with them.”

**Steven Sidebotham**, professor of history, on *MSN.com* about a 2,000-year-old pet cemetery discovered in Egypt







KATHY F. ATKINSON

## WORTH A THOUSAND WORDS

The University of Delaware boasts a great deal of art—murals, sculptures and installations. Much of it has been inspired, naturally, by the beauty and character of the state. But in at least one campus wing, it is artwork created more than 4,000 miles away that contributes to a sense of home.

Every other winter, undergraduates from across disciplines have the option to spend one month studying abroad in Brazil, floating along the Amazon River, touring local villages and—crucially important for aspiring landscape architects in the group—sketching the country’s dramatic topography, as well as plants and other objects. These drawings are then hung in a wing of Townsend Hall where they serve as a tangible reminder: Blue Hens are adventurous, creative, globally minded and pathologically curious about the world around them.

Consider Morgan Oliver, ANR25. She was so taken by the liquid energy of South America, that she created a montage that seamlessly connects a Caiman crocodile in the Amazon River, bottled water the students drank each day, the Atlantic Ocean and rain. The center of the drawing is a self portrait with sweat dripping down Oliver’s face, a nod to her hike up Rio de Janeiro’s iconic Sugarloaf Mountain.

“Art has always been an outlet to help figure out who I am, what I like to do, and how I see other people,” she says.

While there are practical reasons for the display—it livens up an otherwise drab thoroughfare and serves as a marketing tool for future study abroad programs—the sketches also reinforce a lesson critical to the Blue Hen experience: Getting out of one’s comfort zone helps a person better understand their own place in Newark—and the world.

“Students talk about the connection between their sense of place in South America, and then how that relates to their home spaces,” says Ornamental Horticulture Professor Susan Barton, co-leader of the trip. “They’re viewing [Brazil] through the lens of the familiar—and growing in their understanding of each.”

If nothing else, the sketches are one heck of a souvenir. “It definitely takes me back,” Oliver says. “It makes me nostalgic for all of these experiences.” 🐦

—Katie Piekess

*Above: Morgan Oliver, ANR25, hangs her sketch of the Amazon in Townsend Hall.*



# Building Character

CELEBRATING THE  
SPACES THAT SHAPE THE  
BLUE HEN EXPERIENCE,  
PAST, PRESENT AND  
FUTURE

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BY DIANE STOPYRA

When UD's Dickinson and Rodney residence halls were demolished in 2019, *UD Magazine* ran a campaign offering bricks to readers—and the response was overwhelming. Alumni from around the country clambered for a piece of their former dorm. Now, these sentimental slabs grace fireplace mantels and nightstands, proudly displayed next to cherished family heirlooms.

It may be difficult to understand the desire for construction debris. But at UD, buildings are never just buildings. The structures of campus are sacred spaces, tied to a rich history that connects thousands of Blue Hens.

The University, which traces its roots to 1743, began as just one building on Main Street, the beloved Old College (see page 21). A major expansion in 1915 happened during a national conversation about urban planning, as a novel idea spread across America: Cities should be aesthetically pleasing municipalities, not merely industrial hubs. Some took the notion a step further, believing the university—a city of knowledge—deserved its own central planning and charm.

It was in this spirit that UD hired the cutting-edge Day and Klauder architecture firm to lay out its growing footprint. Influenced by Delaware's historic landmarks, the team decided on a colonial revival building style, a nod to the University's colonial past. According to *The Princeton Review*, the end result was a campus that is "absolutely the most gorgeous anywhere."

But the spaces of UD aren't simply pretty. Inside these hallowed brick walls, Blue Hens meet dear friends, nurture passions and uncover their purpose. From the libraries to the lecture halls, students learn, stumble, persist, laugh, grow, bond and, ultimately, become the best versions of themselves.

We could never mention them all, but allow us to explore some of these iconic buildings: timeless reminders that wherever Blue Hens go in the world, they will always have a safe, welcoming place to land.





## Sealed with a Kiss

*Before the men's and women's colleges combined in 1945, lovebirds would steal one final smooch under UD's so-called "Kissing Arches," pictured on the right and located adjacent to Hullihen Hall, above, before parting ways to meet curfew.*

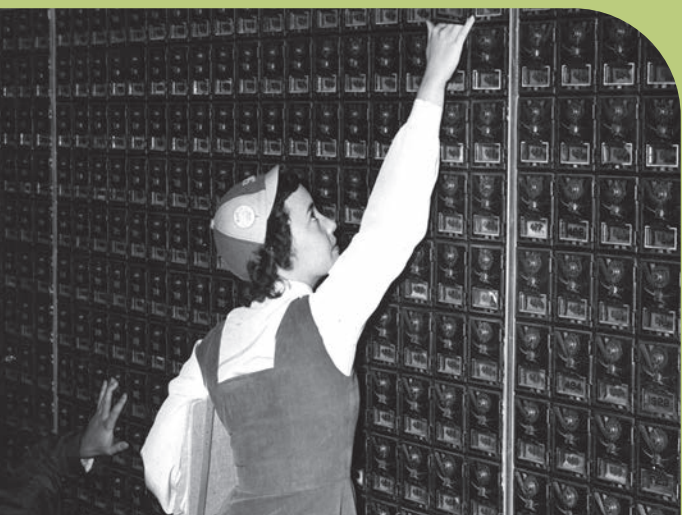






# Memorial Hall

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It has not been the center of campus for many years—at least not geographically. But symbolically, 100-year-old Memorial Hall remains the heart of UD, an architectural focal point that dewy-eyed Blue Hens conjure when they picture their alma mater. Stately and dignified, with a gabled roof and classic white columns, the storied building evokes scholarship and solemnity. Even seasoned members of faculty acknowledge a sense of gravitas when approaching Memorial Hall, located in the middle of the University Green.

“Walking up the steps, I *feel* like a professor,” says Philip Gable of the psychology department. “When I teach classes here, I notice a difference in the presence of my students, too—they sit just a little bit straighter.”



Yet, for all its august energy, Memorial Hall's story is one of humble beginnings. In the early 1920s, UD desperately needed a library—the student body was 600 undergraduates strong and quickly growing—but money was tight. So Rodney H. Sharp, then a University trustee, concocted a plan: The state was searching for a memorial to Delaware servicemen who'd been killed during World War I, and a new library could serve that purpose.

Thus began an unprecedented, state-wide fundraising campaign. Throughout the fall of 1922, donations poured in from Delaware's biggest and most affluent names (read: the du Ponts), but also from schoolchildren who canvassed their neighborhoods for spare change. The campaign generated \$300,000 (or \$5.5 million in today's money). And, in short order, shovel-wielding students and members of the faculty were excavating a foundation.

"Undergraduates happily slopped around in the dirt," says University archivist Lisa Gensel. "The effort was very of its time period: Boys dug the basement, while girls provided sandwiches and moral support."

On May 23, 1925, a dedication ceremony involving politicians, members of the campus community, and representatives from the U.S. Army took place, and participants marched a Book of the Dead 270 names strong into Memorial Hall's main lobby. (In recent years, as part of their English curriculum, Blue Hens have researched the life histories behind these names. And, every day at 8 a.m., a member of UD ROTC ceremoniously turns a page, revealing a new name and opportunity for reflection.)

Over the years, Memorial Hall has served many purposes. As a library, the building survived a devastating 1937 flood that left a small group of intrepid staffers lugging 10,000 books to higher ground while dodging toads in the stacks. The building has also housed the University's original Scrounge coffee shop, a post office and book store. Today, it's home to the Department of English and the University Writing Center, meaning nearly every student moves through the venerable halls of Memorial at some point during their UD career.

While the building's interior has undergone many renovations, the structure has provided a steadfast backdrop to tens of thousands of educational journeys (and also a reliable soundtrack—the carillon that plays the University's alma mater is housed within Memorial Hall). In the past, Commencement events were held on The Green in front of the building. Now, each incoming class is welcomed to UD with a beloved tradition, an evening Twilight Ceremony that happens in the literal and figurative shadow of the landmark.

Whether students know its full history or not, Memorial Hall remains a source of pride, nostalgia and—yes—improved posture for generations of Blue Hens.



3,880

## TREES PROVIDE SHADE AND BEAUTY ACROSS UD'S NEWARK CAMPUS

*Have you met Lucinda and Chloe? The bronze statues near Alison Hall were created by famed Delaware sculptor Andre Harvey in memory of Peter and Graham Jefferson, sons of trustee emeritus Edward Jefferson. Why goats? According to Harvey, they represent friendship, delightful individualism and even some peculiarities.*

*Historic photos courtesy of University of Delaware Archives.*





Before an exam, students either hit the books—or petition a higher power for divine intervention. So it's fitting that UD's most distinctive study space, a hidden gem more than 150 years old, is a converted church.

Located on the west end of Main Street, the city's most intricate example of Victorian Gothic revival architecture (think flying buttresses and artful stained glass) once belonged to the First Presbyterian Church of Newark. UD purchased the captivating space in 1967, renaming it Daugherty Hall after Physics Professor John Daugherty (pronounced dough-ter-tee). He's the former dean of men who once evicted 104 students for a months-long firework caper, but that's a story for another day.

Initially repurposed as a student center, the space housed the Rathskeller bar, known to regulars as "The Rat." ("Lines to get in. Beer on the floor. Always a good time," says Donald Otto, AS75.) The gathering space also became a place of sanctuary and community for the gay student population, who hosted weekly meetings under pointed arches.

In the '80s and early '90s, the church became The Abbey, a dining hall with a fanatical following. Alumni regularly evangelize over Friday night calzones or those Orangina and chocolate muffins that made 8 a.m. classes a bit more palatable. Jennifer K. Scott, AS92, recalls lunches with friends while 'Roam' by the B-52s played on a jukebox loop. "I still think about the nacho bar," she adds. "I'm not proud, but I sometimes chose those nachos over class."

In a controversial move, UD decided in 1994 to demolish the rear wing of the building, a 1920s addition, to build the Trabant University Center around Daugherty Hall. But in-the-know Blue Hens still access the storied space, now a dedicated study area, through an unassuming door on Trabant's second floor. For many, the tranquil lounge takes late-night cramming to another—almost spiritual—level.

"I can't think of any word but 'cool,'" says Nadya Ellerhorst, AS24. "The stained glass windows, the plush couches, the soft green light... it all contributes to a cozy environment, especially on a rainy evening, perfect for focusing on the task at hand."



# Daugherty Hall



# Star Campus

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Experts across UD's STAR campus are tackling everything from climate change to cancer. But the 10 buildings on this next-generation site share one mission: improving lives. "STAR will make people healthier—physically, environmentally, financially," says Tracey Shickel, associate vice president of corporate engagement. "That's without a doubt." The 272-acre campus off of South College Avenue, formerly a Chrysler assembly plant, is an innovation community where expert Blue Hens partner with government officials, nonprofits and corporations to solve major problems in state-of-the-art facilities. The campus is home to a Chemours Discovery Hub, a biopharmaceutical innovation center and, most recently, a FinTech Innovation Hub addressing wealth inequality in America. While the site has already proven a boon for the state by driving Delaware's economic engine and supporting more than 3,000 jobs, STAR is not done rising. Says Shickel: "It makes Delaware the best place to live, work and learn."



## Building X

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After McKinly Laboratory burned down in 2017, UD could have rebuilt the same way: individual workspaces for individual departments. But for the Blue Hen community—and the future of science—this wasn't good enough. Enter Building X\*, a recently opened landmark along East Delaware Avenue. Unlike traditional laboratories, the new space isn't meant to accommodate a specific field, like psychology or biology. Rather, all 131,000 square feet have been organized around promising research themes: disease, quantum technology and the intersection between brain, mind and behavior. Custom-built for next-generation experimentation (those electron microscopes require humidity control), Building X facilitates collaboration—imagine open-concept laboratories and lounges for interdisciplinary brainstorming. The ultimate goal is a better understanding of everything from Alzheimer's to infertility to osteoarthritis. "Discovery," says Velia Fowler, chair of the Department of Biological Sciences, "is a team sport."

*\*Official name forthcoming*

## Whitney Athletic Center

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The Whitney Athletic Center ensures the success, naturally, of Blue Hen student-athletes. But this state-of-the-art facility is about so much more than scoring points. Since opening in 2021, the \$64 million structure has served as a one-stop shop for 700 student-athletes. There are, of course, resources dedicated to physical health—a nutrition center, sports medicine clinic and a strength-and-conditioning room courtesy of Super Bowl MVP Joe Flacco, BE08. But the Whitney's approach is holistic—hello, leadership programming and career counseling. Consider shortstop Chloe Blantz, ANR25. When she dove for a ball on the softball field last April and tore the labrum tissue in her glove arm, Whitney experts helped her meet an athletic goal (finishing the season), but they also safeguarded her career dream—a personalized rehabilitation program allowed Blantz to raise a 600-pound pig, a requirement of her pre-veterinary medicine major. The center, she says, offers something invaluable: "This is peace of mind."



# Morris Library

Club Morris may feel like an odd choice for a library nickname. It conjures techno and tequila—not stern-faced librarians shushing patrons over stacks of dusty periodicals. But UD’s Hugh M. Morris Library bucks the stuffy stereotype. While you’ll be hard-pressed to find any DJs or drinks, this is very much a social space.

“The library is a great connector,” says neuroscience major Paige Elsner, AS25. “Students gather here to study but also to feel a sense of camaraderie. It’s easy to be yourself in this building.”

Morris was built in 1963 when it became clear UD needed more space than Memorial Hall, which housed the University’s original library, could provide. (A makeshift conveyor belt was erected to transport books from one building to the other.) The new space was named for Hugh M. Morris, an 1898 alumnus, football player and prominent U.S. district judge from Wilmington.

Today, the four-story hub includes nearly 3 million books and bound periodicals, as well as 450,000 electronic books. It’s also home to a Special Collections department brimming with especially rare materials (look for a signed copy of Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation). For the Blue Hen’s technological needs, a multimedia design center boasts computers, sound studios, video editing equipment, GoPros and more.

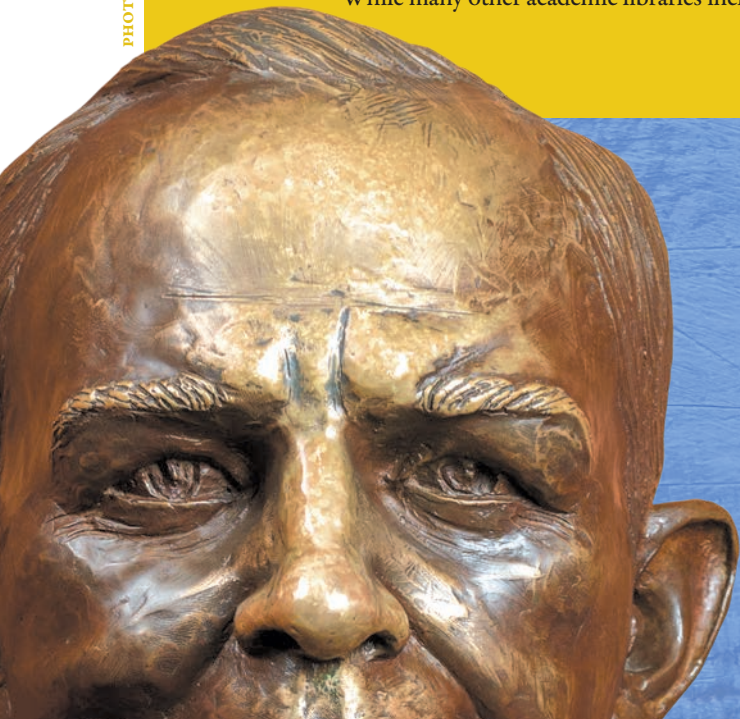
While many other academic libraries include mostly

“rabbit warrens,” or small, dark, cordoned-off areas, the floor plan of Club Morris is largely open, airy and light, according to Shelly McCoy, associate university librarian for public services and space planning. Easy-to-navigate thoroughfares lend themselves to seeing and meeting fellow Blue Hens—in fact, only one reading room is designated as a “quiet” area. Everywhere else you look, student groups are writing on whiteboards, commiserating over a particularly tricky equation, or taking a coffee break in the onsite cafe. Library staff encourage this communal vibe by bringing in pizza, photo booths, and even therapy dogs during especially high-stress periods.

Morris Library works to ensure everyone feels welcome within its doors. A lactation room, a Reflection Room for prayer and meditation and the Open Space study room created by UD’s LGBTQ+ community have all opened since 2017. Most recently, to accommodate caregivers, the library has fundraised for study desks that double as playpens.

But, for all the hype, students do have one complaint about their beloved Club Morris. According to Trevor A. Dawes, vice provost for libraries and museums and May Morris University Librarian, Blue Hens wish the building could be open 24/7. (Yes, even holidays). “This space is absolutely essential to the UD experience,” he says. “The students really do think of Morris as the place to be on campus.”

PHOTOS BY EVAN KRAPE



## Lucky Charm

*Traditional wisdom maintains that, for good luck on exams, students should study, get a good night’s sleep and... rub Hugh’s nose? That last one holds true at UD, where Blue Hens on their way in and out of Morris Library swipe the bronze beak of the building’s namesake, an 1898 alumnus turned federal District Court judge. (The statue is a gift from the Class of 1934.) It may sound like superstitious hogwash, but testimonies—even from the logical, left-brained set—abound. “Not going to lie,” says Evan Lopus, EG24, a biomedical engineer, “it’s pretty effective.”*





576,744  
PEOPLE ENTERED  
MORRIS LIBRARY  
IN 2024

KATHY E. ATKINSON



*In addition to the library, UD also boasts a Mineralogical Museum (bottom photo). The 3,000 rocks, gems, meteorites and crystals in the collection hail from all over the world—and solar system. Some were discovered during biblical times in Egypt; some just six months ago in the Congo. Most are millions or billions of years old. In Penny Hall, 350 of these specimens, from gypsums to aragonites, are on display.*



500

PEOPLE WORK  
HARD TO  
MAINTAIN  
THE  
BUILDINGS  
AND  
GROUNDS  
AT UD EVERY  
YEAR.

## Out of This World

*UD students don't just reach for the stars, they walk amongst them. The scale model solar system begins at Old College (the sun) and includes the moon and planets, denoted as granite markers and placed at an appropriate distance away (the ice dwarf planet Pluto is aptly located in front of the Rust Ice Arena). The project was the brainchild of UD physicist Harry Shipman, former museum director Belena Chapp and sculptor David Meyer.*



# Old College

If these walls could talk, they'd tell of joy, struggle, innovation—even murder.

Old College isn't merely the oldest or most recognizable building on the University of Delaware campus. And it isn't merely a pretty landmark (although that columned entryway has provided the backdrop to many a campus selfie). Old College is an icon, an architectural lodestar with a history as twisty as the balusters of a colonial stairwell (look for those next time you find yourself inside the building).

Alumni wax nostalgic about the space. Faculty speak about her

with deference and gratitude. Most recently, 65 Blue Hens across 10 units came together to celebrate Old College's 290-year history in the "Colors of Old College" exhibition, happening inside the landmark now through May 18.

So why, exactly, does the Old College love run so deep?

According to Nicholas Fandaros, AS23, 24M, who spent a portion of his undergraduate degree studying the architectural evolution of the building, the answer is simple:

"This is the heart of UD."

## EARLY DAYS

At the turn of the 19th century, the University did not yet exist. Rather, the city was home to the Academy of Newark, a preparatory school for teenage boys. The board members there very much wanted to launch a college and, after years of pleading their case, state officials agreed to charter one. In short order, a new board came together and purchased an empty plot of land at the edge of town, now the west end of Main Street. Charles Bullfinch, architect of the U.S. Capitol, submitted a building design, but it proved cost prohibitive for the fledgling institution. So a prolific lighthouse designer by the name of Winslow Lewis stepped in. He conceived of a Greek temple-esque structure that forever altered a countryside landscape. In 1834, Newark College—precursor to UD—was born.

This building, known today as Old College, initially housed everything: classrooms, offices, dining hall and dormitories. While early cohorts were small—the first group of graduates comprised only four young men—they embodied all the academic ambition and youthful moxie of modern-day classes.

"Faculty reports reveal that 18-year-olds are 18-year-olds," says Lisa Gensel, University archivist. "You'll read things like: 'The boys need to not imbibe spirituous liquors,' and: 'The boys must stop bringing swords to their rooms—I do not care if they want to decorate with them.'"

But these early Blue Hens also faced uniquely 19th century



OLD COLLEGE ENTRANCE GATE  
CLASS 1918

UNIVERSITY OF DELAWARE NEW



challenges. Consider a journal entry from Joseph Cleaver, a student during the 1850s. He writes about coming across a young Black man who, having escaped slavery in the South, needed a place to hide. Cleaver and his classmates asked a schoolmaster for permission to take the individual inside Old College. Told no, they snuck him into the building's lumber room anyway and gave him a coat and boots.

"It's a remarkable entry," says Theatre Department Chair Steve Tague. "I find it indicative of the North, of the young, of Blue Hen students, that they gave the man shelter."



11,000  
WINDOWS ON CAMPUS



#### LEGENDS AND LORE

When it comes to stories that reveal the human condition—good, bad and outrageous—Old College is rife.

It was here that a person was murdered in the late 1850s. A campus tradition in which senior students lampooned the presentations of younger peers turned deadly when an undergraduate by the name of John Roach ended up with a knife in his neck. (It's a cold case to this day, and some say the building is still haunted by Roach's ghost.)

And, in the 1870s and '80s, it was here that campus first flirted with co-education. But the experiment was short-lived for a variety of reasons. It didn't do much to increase enrollment and—gasp!—a woman became valedictorian. School officials decided to nix the effort for three more decades.

Old College is also the site of the only "authorized" graffiti on all of UD's campus. In the walls surrounding the entryway, you'll notice names carved into the bricks, including the 1900 marking of H. Rodney Sharp, a 16-year-old student who later became a University trustee. He's the man largely responsible for expansion of campus beyond Old College in the early 1900s and, today, Sharp Residence Hall bears his name.



## PRESERVING AN ICON

For all its significance, Old College nearly met an untimely fate... more than once. In the late 1850s, the building closed its doors due to financial hardship—according to Gensel, the institution had been operating “on \$.14 and some pocket lint.” It wasn’t until the passage of the Morrill Land Grant Act of 1862, which helped fund a system of public universities in the U.S., that Old College became operational once more.

But still it wasn’t safe.

By 1900, Old College had fallen into severe disrepair, and the wrecking ball loomed. At least, that is, until Sharp and his brother-in-law, education philanthropist Pierre S. du Pont, intervened. The latter reportedly said: “...we shall have many more occasions to put up new buildings, but this is the only old one we have.” This bid for preservation proved successful, and Old College was renovated instead of demolished.

Today, that spirit of preservation lives on in the Blue Hen community.

“In so many places, there’s a tendency to just tear everything down,” says Chandra Reedy, director of UD’s Center for Historic Architecture and Design. “When strip malls are going up everywhere, buildings like Old College carry more history and lend more character and uniqueness to a place. It’s important that we identify those places and prioritize them.”

To this end, Reedy recently partnered with Anna Wik, associate professor of landscape architecture, on the creation of an app, a self-guided walking tour of the entire Old College Historic District that she hopes will open people’s eyes to the importance of safeguarding landmarks.

“It’s important to have some places where we’re strongly rooted or connected,” she says. “When things are changing around us all the time, it’s crucial to have a few places that make you feel: I’m home.”

## TIMELESS CONNECTION

Of course, some won’t understand. A building is still just a building, right? And as the current home of the art conservation and art history departments, as well as UD’s museum division, this isn’t even a building a majority of students or faculty interact with directly on a regular basis. So... what gives? For Blue Hens across disciplines, why is Old College treated as the sun in UD’s ever-expanding solar system?

University Architect Peter Krawchyk has spent much time reflecting on this very question. He leads the team responsible for maintenance of UD buildings and, he says, structures like Old College require more of a physical and financial investment than modern additions to campus. But the job is a labor of love, bigger than any one Blue Hen.

“It’s important for students to recognize they are connected to past and future generations,” he says. “This is not a transitory experience—you are connected to an institution that’s been here for hundreds of years and will be here for hundreds of years more. This building is a physical representation of our collective history.”



# Story Time


*As part of the Colors of Old College exhibition, spearheaded by Art History Professor Vimalin Rujivacharakul, Blue Hens from Academic Technology Services and the Student Multimedia Design Center have spent three years collecting 1- to 3-minute oral histories and reflections on the building from alumni in the form of audio recordings. Anyone looking to contribute their own reflection should reach to out to [OldCollegeProject@udel.edu](mailto:OldCollegeProject@udel.edu). Learn more at [udel.edu/alumni-friends/connect/blue-hen-voices/alumni-voices-of-old-college/](http://udel.edu/alumni-friends/connect/blue-hen-voices/alumni-voices-of-old-college/)*



# Ode to The Green

BY DIANE STOPYRA





**S**tudents rarely cut across it as they make their way to class.  
They stroll with deference past every tree and blade of grass.  
On sunny days they picnic here, some play hacky sack,  
A lovely place to read a book—or join a scholar’s chat.

Alumni of a certain time will know it as The Mall.  
Call this space “The Green” instead, and arguments befall.  
But no matter how they name it, Blue Hens can all agree:  
This dappled stretch below Main Street truly defines UD.

More than just a grove or quad, The Green is UD’s core.  
It wasn’t born of happenstance; there’s legend here, for sure.  
Way back in 1915, before campus grew to size,  
Architects were hired to make UD look a prize.

The team stared down a stretch of land, a no-man’s marshy plot.  
They wondered what to make of it; they pondered and they thought.  
At last it was decided: “A central lawn on this expanse!”  
But now another question: Who should wear the pants?

To implement the vision, to create a sense of place,  
UD would need a wizard for this half-a-mile of space.  
A choice was made so bold and fresh—a turning point indeed.  
For a task of this importance, Marian Coffin took the lead.

In a world of landscape architecture and environment design,  
It was men who ran the show since, well, the very dawn of time.  
But Coffin learned her plants and shrubs at world-class MIT.  
(She was able to attend but, for a woman, no degree.)

Her family was quite classy and ran with elite crowds,  
So wealthy UD donors knew: Coffin’s work could surely wow.  
She proposed ideas that, sadly, never made it though:  
An amphitheater, fountain and frat house gardens, too.

But the space that she created has stood the test of time.  
It’s fluid and romantic—a grand, symmetrical design.  
It even linked two colleges, then cordoned off by sex.  
She seamlessly converged them, a horticultural flex.

Coffin connected the two spaces—the ladies’ and the boys’—  
With storytelling in her plans and symbols to enjoy.  
For the women’s parcel, pretty honey locusts flowered.  
But hidden thorns became a sign: They really were empowered.

And for the guys: some U.S. elms, broad-canopied and strong.  
(Students assisted in their planting, turning up in throngs.)  
When a tree disease wreaked havoc, UD needed something new.  
Zelkovas and then Princeton elms helped enhance the view.

Now The Green is lined with buildings, dignified and stately.  
Dorms and labs and lecture halls—and renovations, lately.  
But no matter how the years go by or how much campus grows,  
Coffin’s work has set the bar for how this campus flows.

The next time you are on The Green or, okay, sure, The Mall,  
Take a moment to enjoy the look, from winter through the fall.  
This landmark parcel at UD, in all her peaceful glory,  
Is more than just a plot of grass; it’s every Blue Hen’s story.





*The Green has been a gathering place for Blue Hens across the decades. Have another favorite space on campus? We'd love to hear it. Share your story with us at [magazine@udel.edu](mailto:magazine@udel.edu) for a chance to be included in a future issue.*





# Novel Ideas

*The Wings of Thought statue is, perhaps, the most recognizable sculpture on UD's campus. An 8-foot-by-10-foot open book in the middle of Mentors' Circle, the white granite installation was created in 2012 to celebrate the promise of Blue Hens when it comes to writing their own futures. Dedicated to UD's founder, the Rev. Francis Alison, and to faculty members who reflect the 18th century educator's "scholar-schoolmaster" ideal, the left side of the book depicts Alison's intellectual interests and the Heck Reaction in honor of the late UD professor and Nobel Laureate Richard Heck. Its right side is a blank page on which Blue Hens can envision their own story.*



MARIA ERICO







# TURTLE POWER

STORY & ART BY MOLLY SCHAFER

Long before humans walked the moon, a box turtle known as L2 walked the campus.

L2 lived in UD's Ecology Woods, a 35-acre active research site preserved in 1965, with sections more than 150 years old.

The novel classroom has no walls. Instead, students like Kenneth Geisert, ANR24, use it to learn about such topics as habitat fragmentation, which occurs when development or deforestation splits forests into isolated patches, thus hindering the movement and survival of animals.

It was during such a lesson that Geisert stumbled upon the shell of a *Terrapene carolina ssp. carolina*, otherwise known as an eastern box turtle, a subspecies of the common box turtle.

But common is a misnomer. Fragmentation has had a profound impact on the genus, which only occurs in North America and is already extinct in Canada. The six remaining subspecies found in the United States and Mexico are considered vulnerable by the International Union for Conservation Red List. Translation: The risk of extinction is high.

Geisert knew as much and thought it best to leave the shell where he found it. He snapped a photo and uploaded it to iNaturalist, a popular app for recording nature observations.

He had no idea that his discovery would unveil a tapestry of UD connections dating back more than half a century.



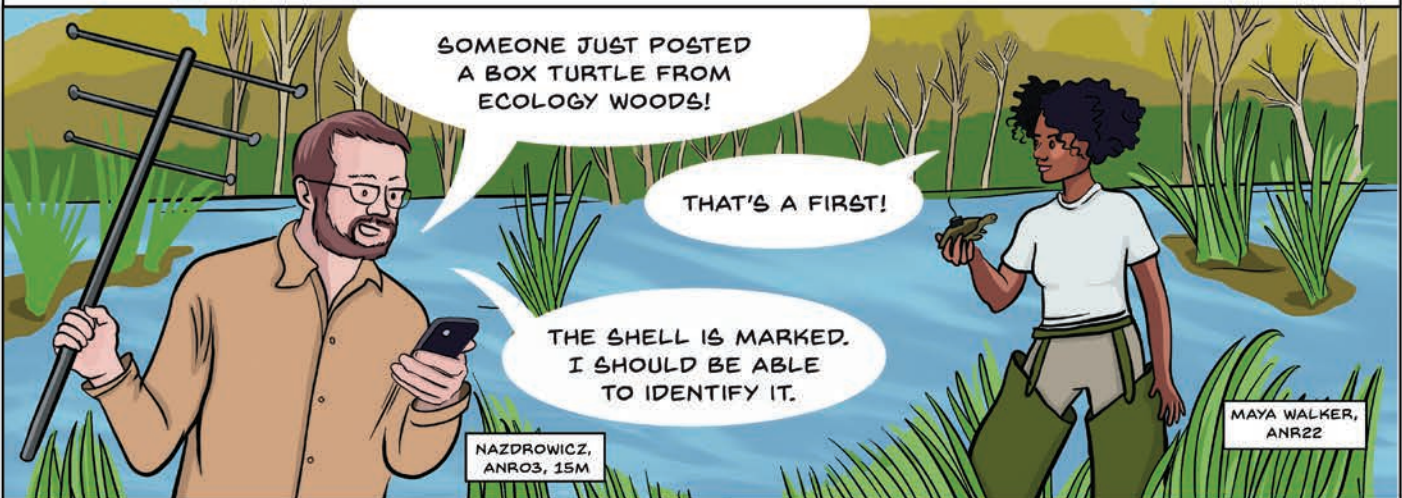
WHEN KENNETH GEISERT STUMBLED UPON A BOX TURTLE SHELL DURING HIS WILDLIFE TECHNIQUES CLASS...



THE DISCOVERY LINKED HIM TO A HALF-CENTURY OF BLUE HENS WORKING TO CONSERVE THE SPECIES.



GEISERT'S POST WAS SEEN BY NATE NAZDROWICZ, DELAWARE'S STATE HERPETOLOGIST WITHIN THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL'S (DNREC) DIVISION OF FISH AND WILDLIFE. NAZDROWICZ, A UD ALUMNUS, ALSO TEACHES HERPETOLOGY (THE STUDY OF AMPHIBIANS AND REPTILES) AT UD.



IN 2002, NAZDROWICZ ENCOUNTERED THE WILD BOX TURTLE WHILE WORKING ON HIS MASTER'S THESIS.



THE TURTLE WAS NAMED L2, A NOD TO THE UNIQUE NOTCH PLACED ON THE LEFT SIDE OF HIS SHELL.

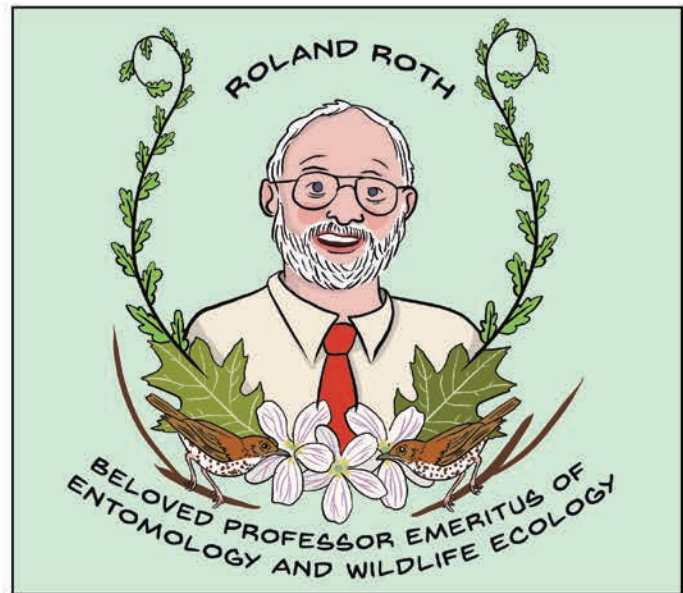




WHEN NAZDROWICZ SENT GEISERT A COPY OF HIS RESEARCH, THE STUDENT IMMEDIATELY RECOGNIZED A FAMILIAR NAME.



THIS TURTLE WAS PART OF A GROUP RESEARCH PROJECT THAT BEGAN AT UD IN 1965 AND CONTINUED WITH ROLAND ROTH.



ROTH TOOK OVER THE WORK IN 1970. HE CONTINUED IT FOR 30 YEARS BEFORE PASSING THE PROJECT ON TO BOWMAN IN 2000.

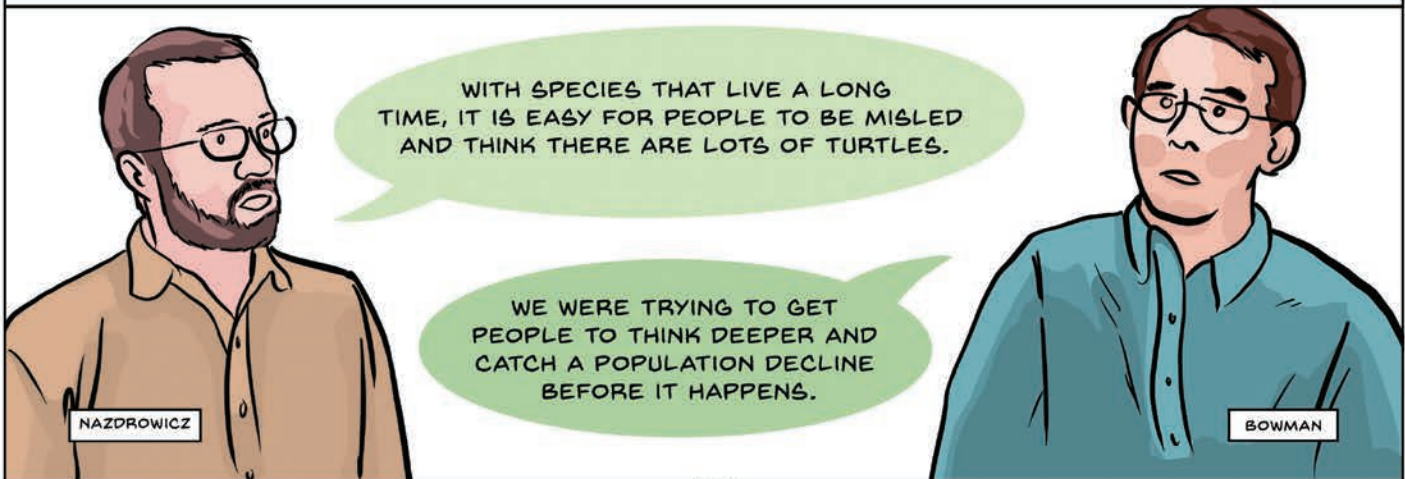




TIME EXISTS ON A DIFFERENT, ALMOST UNIMAGINABLE SCALE IN UD'S ECOLOGY WOODS. A REMNANT OF A LARGER FOREST, THE WESTERN AND NORTHERN SECTIONS HAVE EXISTED AS WOODLAND FOR OVER 150 YEARS.



BOX TURTLES THEMSELVES CAN LIVE FOR 35 TO 60 YEARS, SOME EVEN UP TO 100.



WITH SPECIES THAT LIVE A LONG TIME, IT IS EASY FOR PEOPLE TO BE MISLED AND THINK THERE ARE LOTS OF TURTLES.

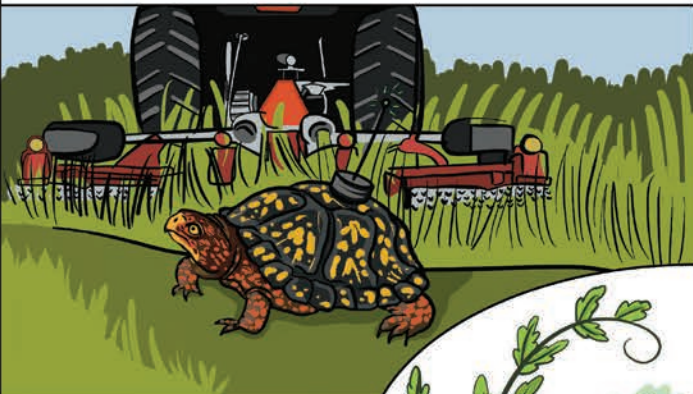
WE WERE TRYING TO GET PEOPLE TO THINK DEEPER AND CATCH A POPULATION DECLINE BEFORE IT HAPPENS.

NAZDROWICZ

BOWMAN

THE TEAM FOUND THE POPULATION DECREASED NEARLY 75% SINCE 1965. MORTALITY FROM AGRICULTURAL MOWING WAS LARGELY THE CULPRIT. FEMALES—WHO TRAVEL INTO FIELDS TO LAY THEIR EGGS—WERE DISPROPORTIONALLY AFFECTED.

TO HELP THE TURTLES, RESEARCHERS SUGGESTED LOCAL FARMS AND PARKS KEEP MOWERS AT LEAST 6 INCHES ABOVE THE GROUND.



IT WORKED.

OVER THE DECADES, MANY PEOPLE CONTRIBUTED TO UD'S UNIQUE AND ENORMOUS DATABASE ON BOX TURTLES.



ALTHOUGH DEPARTED, L2'S STORY & LEGACY INSPIRE BLUE HENS PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE TO CONTINUE THE VITAL WORK OF WILDLIFE CONSERVATION.



# ALUMNI NEWS



KATHY F. ATKINSON

## FORGING BONDS

In chemistry, a covalent bond occurs when two atoms share an electron, merging to produce a stronger, more permanent structure.

At UD, another bond has been created—this one spanning decades but retaining the fundamental element connecting all chemical engineering students: an exceptional education (consistently top-ranked in the nation) that stems from academic heft.

“We’ve become a family through class trauma and late-night projects,” says senior Max Curello, EG25. “I don’t think there’s a fellow ChemE major I haven’t met.”

“Most buildings close at 11 p.m., but sometimes we’re up until 2, 3 a.m.,” adds Charlotte Gotilla, EG25. “It’s great to have a place where we can all study together.”

That hub is located in the heart of Colburn Lab, where alumni from the Class of 1973 have funded a renovation to transform a former computer lab into an open-area lounge, complete with modular furniture, whiteboards, televisions, laptop hookups and, most importantly, throngs of undergraduates huddled together over textbooks and coffee.


A gift to commemorate their 50th reunion, the Blue Hens wanted to make a lasting contribution to students, present and

future, while serving as a model for fellow alumni.

“I wouldn’t be where I am today without UD. The education was rigorous—back-breaking, at times—but it gave me confidence,” says Bill Dreshfield, EG73, who, along with fellow classmate Paul Schipper, EG73, helped spearhead the philanthropic efforts among his classmates. Of their 31 fellow graduates, 13 contributed to the gift.

Schipper recalled the wisdom of the late Professor Fraser Russell, who often promoted the values of fortitude and foresight.

“He would tell us that it’s a tough course, but if you get through this, you can do anything you want,” says Schipper, who enjoyed a 34-year career at ExxonMobil and now serves as an adjunct professor at UD.

When the room opened last fall, Department Chair Millicent (Millie) Sullivan viewed it as a fitting metaphor for the field of chemical engineering itself, finding inspiration in “the community, collaboration and creativity that I see here. My favorite thing about this discipline is working together to solve problems.” 

—Artika Rangan Casini, AS05

*Above, from left: Department Chair Millie Sullivan with Class of 1973 alumni Craig Matthiessen, Doug Johnson, Jim Tibbitt, Bill Dreshfield and Paul Schipper.*





1



6



2



7



3



8



4



9



5



10



11



1. Vineyards, flamenco performances and architecture—alumni experienced this and more on their trip to Andalucia, Spain, hosted by the UD Alumni Association in September.

2. Denver Blue Hens explore the Wild Things exhibition celebrating the art of Maurice Sendak at the Denver Art Museum.

3. Boston Blue Hens wander the scenic trails of Blue Hills before grabbing a bite to eat at Trillium Brewery.

4. Eagles fans in Scottsdale, Arizona, cheer on the birds at a watch party.

5. Blue Hens get hands-on during a pottery workshop at Centered Clay Studio in Kennett Square, Pa.

6. Phillies and Nationals fans come together for a baseball game at Nationals Park.

7. Before seeing the musical performance “Mystic Pizza,” South Florida Blue Hens gathered at the Orchid Lobby bar at Riverside Theatre.

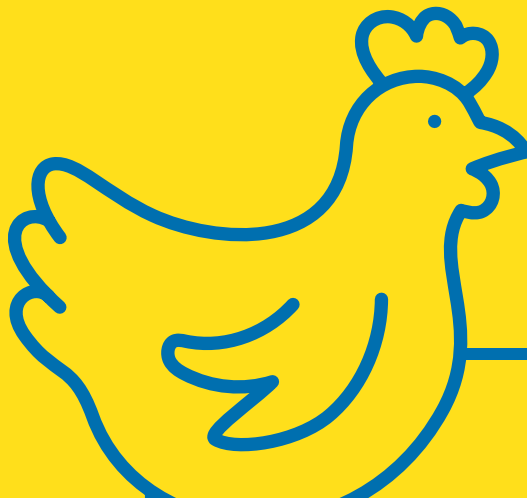
8. Blue Hens volunteer at St. Mary’s Food Bank in Phoenix.

9. Los Angeles Blue Hens take a guided tour of an exhibit at the Hammer Museum.

10. Alumni attend Trivia Night at Boomerang Bar and Grill in Harrisburg, Pa.

11. Alumni sail the Delaware River aboard the historic Kalmar Nyckel.

See more about Blue Hen Regional Networks at [udel.edu/alumni-friends/blue-hen-networks](http://udel.edu/alumni-friends/blue-hen-networks)





# Save the Dates!

June

Members of the Classes of 2000, 2005, 2015 and 2020 will also celebrate their reunion years.  
[udel.edu/reunion](http://udel.edu/reunion)

6

## ALUMNI WEEKEND

JUNE 6-8

Return to campus to reminisce, reconnect and re-experience the glory days! This year's events include the signature "Party on the Green," brunch with YoUDee and Baby Blue, a drag show and much more.

[udel.edu/alumniweekend](http://udel.edu/alumniweekend)

November

12

## EXPLORE THE AMALFI COAST

NOV. 12-20

Imagine a land where rugged coastlines melt into butter-soft sands and cobblestones lead to dreamy vistas.

[udel.edu/alumni-friends/travel](http://udel.edu/alumni-friends/travel)

Volunteer



## WITH YOUR BLUE HEN NETWORK

Help plan reunions or alumni events in your area. Or judge a student competition. Or assist students on Move-In Day. If you want to reconnect with your alma mater, there are plenty of ways to do so.

[udel.edu/alumni-friends/volunteer](http://udel.edu/alumni-friends/volunteer)

From your base in Vietri sul Mare, fall into a relaxed rhythm, filling your days with archeological treasures, authentic Italian cuisine and the region's unforgettable wonders.



# Fall Fun



## CHEER THERE AND EVERYWHERE

As Delaware Football launches into its first season in Conference USA, expect fun, festive tailgates at our opponents' stadiums. (Psst, definitely look out for ones at Boulder on Sept. 6 and Wake Forest on Nov. 22!)

[bluehens.com/sports/football/schedule/2025](http://bluehens.com/sports/football/schedule/2025)

# September

# 19

## PASSPORT TO PORTUGAL

SEPT. 19-27

Explore Portugal's endless charm: cities perched on peaceful riverbanks, old towns laced with cobblestone lanes, sparkling coastlines, opulent churches, palaces and more. From Porto to Lisbon to the sunny Algarve, this tiny European country might just have it all.

[udel.edu/alumni-friends/travel](http://udel.edu/alumni-friends/travel)

# November

# 8

## HOMECOMING

There's no place like home, right? Return to campus for a weekend of friendship, fun and football as the Hens take on Louisiana Tech for the first time since 1982 (we won, 17-0).

[udel.edu/homecoming](http://udel.edu/homecoming)

# December

# 2

## GIVING TUESDAY REMINDER

You can make a meaningful impact on the Blue Hen community with a gift of any size.

[udel.edu/GivingTuesday](http://udel.edu/GivingTuesday)

# 2026

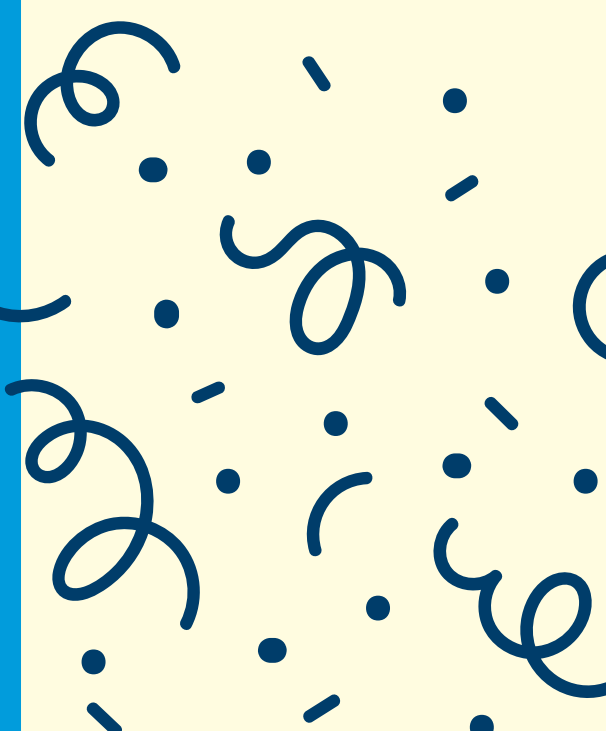


## MORE GLOBAL ADVENTURES AWAIT

In 2026, the UD Alumni Association is planning international trips through the Grand Danube Passage and the Emerald Isle, with more destinations to be added!

[udel.edu/alumni-friends/travel](http://udel.edu/alumni-friends/travel)

Calling all members of the Classes of 1975, 1980, 1985, 1990, 1995: Don't forget to celebrate your milestone reunion at Homecoming!  
[udel.edu/reunions](http://udel.edu/reunions)







AUCIA SEELEY

# BLUE HEN AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT

Start with the fundamentals. That's how renaissance man Mark O'Neill, BE83, has approached every job of his eclectic career. There was the time he left a corporate gig to design board games ("If you want to understand the market, look at what's selling"). Or the Italian water ice stores he franchised across New Jersey in the mid-'90s ("I learned about royalty streams from working in toys").

Now, after a 20-year run at Pfizer, the recently retired O'Neill has again morphed careers. His new novel, *To Catch A Spy*, the sequel to the 1952 book, *To Catch A Thief*, comes out this spring.

Popularized in 1954 by the Alfred Hitchcock film starring Cary Grant as retired jewel thief John Robie and Grace Kelly as socialite Francie Stevens, O'Neill's story takes place one year later, with Robie stumbling upon an espionage ring in the French Riviera that may just involve the mysterious Stevens.

"I've always loved this story, and I always knew I wanted to write thrillers," says O'Neill. "I also knew my odds of getting an agent were 1-in-1,000, so I thought back to the toy business and wondered, 'What if I tapped into something I loved that was already in existence?'"

He began with the fundamentals, reading everything he could find and learning how to develop a plot, theme, story structure, conflict and character arc. Then he wrote, wrote and rewrote.

The method worked. Now with a two-book deal under his belt, O'Neill finds joy in the literary process itself. "I love every minute of writing," he says. 🐦

—Artika Rangan Casini, AS05

## HIT YOUR HIGH NOTE LIVE LIFE IN FULL HARMONY



  
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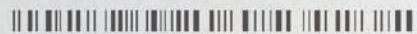
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## Alumni Benefits Program

Did you know that the UD Alumni Association now sponsors an Alumni Benefits Program as a service to our graduates? The program offers a variety of attractively priced products, most of which are available to alumni, spouses, domestic partners, children, parents, and siblings.

For more information visit [UD.MeyerAndAssoc.com](http://UD.MeyerAndAssoc.com) or contact Meyer and Associates, the Program Administrator, at 800-635-7801.

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# CLASS NOTES



## Grand Slam Fam: Each year, a group of "Doc" Rylander's tennis alumni gather at the U.S. Open.

From left to right: Chuck Herak, EG85; Mike Ehrenberg, EHD82; Mike Epstein, BE85; Ron Kerdasha, BE84; and Randy Cerce, BE83. Not pictured: Jaime Ferriero, BE86; Dave Gonzalez, EG88; Mark Quigley, HS85; Jim Kelly, BE87; and Ken Dill, HS82.

## 1970s

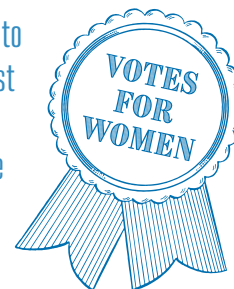
**PAUL OCHS BE74, 76**, of Kennett Square, Pa., celebrated Father's Day with great-grandson and future Blue Hen, Beau Ochs; grandson Christopher Ochs, ANR13; and son, Wayne Warner, AS51.

## 1980s

**MICHAEL EHRENBERG, EHD82**, of Pennington, N.J., was inducted into the Mercer County Tennis Hall of Fame in June 2024. Ehrenberg played three years of varsity tennis under



**Lasting Legacy:** The Ochs-Warner family connection to UD dates back to Emalea Pusey Warner, one of the most influential women in Blue Hen history. As an educator and suffragist, she helped create the Women's College (1914-1945) and is the namesake of both the building and annual award for outstanding senior.



the late UD Hall of Fame coach, Dr. C. Roy "Doc" Rylander. More recently, Ehrenberg returned to campus to watch his daughter, **SARAH EHRENBERG, EHD17**, play club tennis.

**CHRIS GOLDBERG, AS83**, of Blue Bell, Pa., was invited to a dedication ceremony for the Gladys West Elementary School in Fredericksburg, Va. A Black STEM pioneer, Dr. West's calculations contributed to the development of the modern GPS System, and she served as the inspiration for a children's book Goldberg published in November 2022, *Aliyah and the STEMsational Problem Solvers: What's Cooking?*



**LON WAGNER, AS86**, of Roanoke, Va., has published his first book, *The Fever: The Most Fatal Plague in American History*, which tells the true story of a yellow fever epidemic that devastated the port of Norfolk and

Portsmouth, Va., in 1855. Dubbed a best seller by his publisher, it has been a top-seller in several categories on Amazon.

**DANIEL SHERIDAN, EG87**, of Xenia, Ohio, earned his doctor of strategic leadership degree from Liberty University in January 2024. Sheridan serves as a principal engineer and program manager with the Air Force Research Laboratory at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton.

**KAREN (ROTH) MOLINE, AS88, EHD92M**, of Newark, Del., married Mark Moline on Sept. 28, 2024, with numerous Blue Hen alumni, faculty, staff, retirees and students in attendance.







**Blue Hens Forever:** In 1994, Karen Moline, then-assistant dean of student services in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, established the Ag Ambassadors program to connect current and prospective students. She is now the college's associate dean for strategic initiatives and planning. Mark Moline is a professor in UD's School of Marine Science and Policy and an expert in underwater robotics.



**DAN BRITTON, BE89**, of Overland Park, Kan., published his ninth book, *Daily Wisdom for Men: A 365-Day Devotional*.



**SEVA RASKIN, AS89**, of Newport, N.C., married, retired from corporate America and launched *Living Salty Concierge*, a hospitality services company to help homeowners and renters in the beach area of Emerald Isle, N.C.

### 1990s



**MICHAEL K. CHONG, AS91**, of Hoboken, N.J., has been inducted into *Marquis Who's Who* as an honored listee in the *America's Who's Who* biographical listings.

**MICHAEL HALFON, BE91**, of New York, N.Y., has been promoted to executive director of investments at J.P. Morgan.

**SHARA MERVIS ALPERT, AS92**, of Ellicott City, Md., has been appointed principal counsel for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources' Office of the Attorney General.

From top to bottom: Lon Wagner, AS86; Daniel Sheridan, EG87; and Seva Raskin, AS89, pictured with her husband, Jamie Lee

## DIPLOMACY THROUGH ART

Art is a universal language, and **JOE ANGEMI, AS97**, speaks it across the globe.

As a senior curator for the U.S. Department of State, the Blue Hen manages a collection of over 17,000 objects—spanning prehistoric to contemporary pieces—that reflect the breadth of global cultures and the evolution of America's place in the world.

His most recent exhibit featured masks created by veterans in the United Kingdom. The exteriors represented how the world saw them; the interior depicted how they saw themselves.

"They had raw, genuine power," Angemi recalls. "People's emotions were on display."

He has since expanded the project, working with British veterans' groups and King's College to bring the exhibit to various locations in London. He hopes that in 2025 he can bring American veterans to the United Kingdom, fostering deeper cultural connections.

"Diplomacy is the business of friendships," he says, "and artists make those connections easily." 🐦



Angemi at a Paris exhibit celebrating the Frano-American legacy





**TERESKA E. JAMES, AS92**, of Boston, Mass., wrote and self-published a book about her mother, Joan G. Mitchell, entitled *Celebrating Life Is My Religion*. “From the challenges of teenage pregnancy and domestic abuse to the heartbreaking loss of her daughter, Joan’s story is one of bravery and conviction,” her daughter writes. “She reassures us that while life is full of sorrow and loss, there is still joy and reason to celebrate.”

**MATTHEW D. SMITH, BSPA93**, of El Paso, Texas, has retired as a two-star major general from the U.S. Army, following 31 years of service.



**Major Lessons:** As an undergraduate ROTC cadet, Smith trained under Vietnam War veterans at UD. “A combat veteran myself, I see the passion they brought and the attention to detail they taught,” he says now. Having commanded thousands of officers over his career, Smith’s primary advice for leading at a macro level is to treat everybody with dignity and respect. “Focus on the problem; never attack the person.” And invest time in others, he adds. “It pays back so much more than you give—thus the choice of the word ‘invest.’”

**CHRISTINA KELLEY, AS94**, of Wilmington, Del., has been named business development manager for GGA Construction, a Delaware-based construction company with recent Newark projects that include Hyatt Place Main Street, Main Street Movies and The Continental apartments, coming fall 2026.



“I was in an accident when I was young, which left me with severe muscle pain, disc issues and arthritis many years later. Getting no relief from prescription drugs or over-the-counter medications, I decided to go on a quest for natural alternatives for pain relief.”

—Susie Conley, AS95

**SUSIE CONLEY, AS95**, of Landenberg, Pa., celebrated the first anniversary of her retail store, Sacksy Thyme, a Newark-based small business that specializes in all-natural, plant-based beauty and wellness products. While the shop opened in November, 2023, Conley launched Sacksy Thyme as a home-based venture in 2014, becoming one of the leading manufacturers of premium microwavable herbal heating pads online.

## 2000s

**RADELL PEISCHLER, BE02**, of Millsboro, Del., has self-published *How to Decide if Egg Freezing is Right for You*. She has received her coaching certification to help women through the challenges of using a fertility center.

**MERISSA COURTRIGHT, AS03M**, of Newark, Del., has been appointed the first chief development officer for Winterthur Museum, Garden and Library.

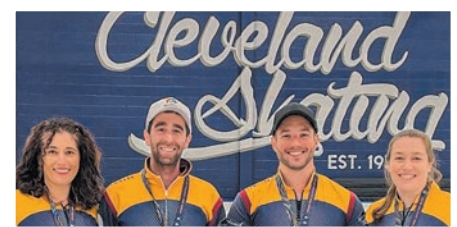
**CANDACE HOLMES, AS04**, of Dover, Del., has been appointed Family Court commissioner in Kent County. Holmes practices family law with Schmittinger and Rodriguez, where she represents clients in divorce and related matters.

**JOY DEIBERT, AS06**, of Yardley, Pa., married Brian Williford in Kiawah Island, S.C., during an extended celebration from Oct. 10-13, 2024.

**SHAUN SAVAGE, AS06**, of San Diego, Calif., and **JOHN “TUCKER” LITTLETON, BE06**, of Westwood, N.J., celebrated a milestone in their business, GoShare, recognized in 2024 as one of the top-100 small businesses in America (out of more than 14,000 applicants) by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Savage is founder and CEO, and Littleton serves as vice president of customer success for GoShare, which provides same-day delivery and moving services for businesses and individuals.

**JENNIFER FROMME, EHD08**, of Middletown, Del., was named to the *Delaware Business Times*’ “Top-40 under 40” list. She is director of Delaware211, the state’s largest, toll-free helpline connecting residents to essential resources.

**MICHAEL MANN, BE09**, of Beachwood, Ohio, won gold in mixed curling at the Pan-American Masters Games in July 2024. He followed the week-long curling competition with two days of pickleball, winning gold in men’s and bronze in mixed doubles.



Michael Mann, BE09, second from left, and teammates





"I attribute my success as a world traveler to my study abroad experiences at UD."

— Soleil Sabalja, AS09



**SOLEIL SABALJA, AS09**, of New York, N.Y., traveled to Antarctica in December 2024 as part of the Grosvenor Teacher Fellowship, a collaboration between Lindblad Expeditions and the National Geographic Society to support pre-K–12 educators and promote geography education. Sabalja is a special education science teacher at East Side Community High School in New York City.

## 2010s

**TARA RHOADES, AS10**, of Dallas, Texas, has started her own career and wellness coaching business, The Sanity Plea, which specializes in professional development, communication, productivity, continuing legal education, health and wellness, and ADHD/neurodiversity. She launched the business after graduating from Yale Law School and making partner at a "Big Law" firm in New York City.

**JOEL SAVARY, AS11**, of Washington, D.C., appeared on *The Kelly Clarkson Show* in January to discuss Diversity Ice, the organization he founded in 2017 to make figure skating more "colorful and accepting."

**CHANEL GAITHER, BSPA13M, EHD24PHD**, of Houston, Texas, has opened a new residential facility for Ascend Legacy Academy, the first Black international boarding school in Delaware, which Gaither founded in 2023 to center education on experiential learning and cultural empowerment. The new building is a repurposed historic Underground Railroad property, enabling students to "connect with the spirit of resilience and liberation that aligns with the academy's values."



**Making History On Ice:** In 2024, Savary returned to UD to the Blue Hen Ice Classic, a student-run figure skating tournament that brought 213 skaters from 21 universities to Newark. Among the competitors: Howard University, the nation's first figure skating team at a Historically Black College and University—and where Savary serves as coach.



From left to right: Chanel Gaither, BSPA13M, EHD24PHD, and Tara Rhoades, AS10



**SHELBY BORST, AS16**, of Middletown, Del., was named 2025 Delaware Teacher of the Year. Borst is a social studies teacher at William Penn High School.

**ADAM BITAR, EG17**, and **LAURA RAMIREZ, AS17**, of Philadelphia, Pa., met as undergraduates in UD's Philosophy Club and were married years later, on Aug. 8, 2024, with fellow Double Dels **KATE VANDAL, EG17**, and **FAZAL VANDAL, EG17**, in attendance.

**KATHLEEN M. SAUL, BSPA17PHD**, of Olympia, Wash., presented a paper at the Indian Ecological Society meeting in Ludhiana, Punjab, in November 2024. She then met up with friends, including

**SANJAY MANGALA GOPAL, BSPA13PHD**, of Thane, India, to tour Amritsar, Agra, Jaipur and Delhi.

**MITCHELL TAPPAN, BE18**, of Wolfeboro, N.H., and **MARIAH MARSTON, BE20**, of Barnstead, N.H., were married on Sept. 6, 2024.

**JENNIFER CLEMONS, EHD19EDD**, of Smyrna, Del., has received a 2024 Clean Energy Education and Empowerment (C3E) Award for her outstanding leadership and accomplishments in clean energy. Clemons is an associate teaching professor of energy and mineral engineering at Penn State. The C3E initiative is led by the U.S. Department of Energy to close the gender gap in clean energy fields.

**ALEXANDRA KLEMER, AS19**, of Washington, D.C., recently earned her master's degree in international affairs: U.S. foreign policy and national security from American University. She is currently a fellow at a strategic national security and defense consulting firm.

**SHASWOT SHARMA, EG19**, of Bethesda, Md., and **JILLIAN VOYSTOCK, HS19**, of Lancaster, Pa., were married on Dec. 14, 2024.

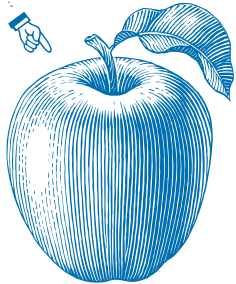
**Busy Blue Hen:** Since graduating from UD, Klemer has taught English in Spain, joined AmeriCorps, become a fellow in the NYC Office of the Mayor, studied in Geneva and interned with the U.S. Department of State, The White House, U.S. Sen. Chris Coons and the United Nations Development Programme.



"Studying philosophy taught me foundational skills for compiling good research, conducting interviews and, on a personal note, understanding my own core values."

—Ari Kantor, AS22

**Mentorship Matters:** Borst credits Hannah Kim, associate professor and coordinator of UD's social studies education program, with encouraging her to pursue a career in education. "And here I am," the Delaware Teacher of the Year says now.





## LIVING THE DREAM

When you land your dream job at age 29, it's hard to think about what's next. For **DANIELLE OLNEY EGAN, HS18DPT**, that means appreciating the moment.

"I look forward to going to work every day," says the Blue Hen, a physical therapist at a private practice clinic in Dublin, Ireland, where she helps young athletes and people with hypermobility.

Egan credits her UD education with preparing her for success. While a student in the University's top-ranked physical therapy program, she worked at an outpatient clinic in a small town in eastern Tennessee, assisting high school football and basketball athletes. She even completed rotations in New Mexico and Idaho.

But one of the biggest highlights? Participating in UD's figure skating program, where she competed in nationals her first year.

"As I travel around Europe, I still have my skates," she says. "And as for UD, I couldn't have asked for a better education. It's how I landed my dream job." 🐦

—Amy Cherry

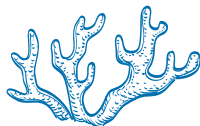


## 2020s

**ARI KANTOR, AS22**, of Voorhees, N.J., helped produce a documentary on the Yazidi Genocide, in which ISIS killed an estimated 5,000 Yazidis, a small religious and ethnic minority in Northern Iraq, and trafficked more than another 10,000. Kantor's documentary, *Mediha*, follows a teenage Yazidi girl, who turns her camera on herself to process her trauma after surviving ISIS captivity. Through *Mediha*'s personal video-diaries, she confronts her pain while also initiating investigations into her captors. *Mediha* premiered at the NYC Film Forum on Oct. 11, 2024, and won the DOC NYC Grand Jury award before garnering accolades across 14 other international festivals.

**KELLY LOGAN, EOE24**, of Shoreham, N.Y., has joined the MOTE Marine Lab as field biologist in coral restoration in the Florida Keys. 🐦

**Dive In:** As a student, Logan beat hundreds of applicants to earn one of only two paid internships in dive operations at the Georgia Aquarium.



## 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](mailto:magazine@udel.edu). Please include your hometown, graduation year and college or major.

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# IN MEMORIAM

## ALUMNI

**BEVERLY STARTT GENETTA, AS51**, Sept. 16, 2024

**RODMAN I. GREGG, EG51**, May 19, 2024

**WILLIAM C. SCOTT, AS55**, May 16, 2023

**GILBERT P. MAHLA, AS60**, May 23, 2024

**BARBARA (STEWART) BLANKENSHIP, HS72**, May 5, 2024

**PATRICIA WILLETT FREY, EHD62, HS75M**, Sept. 3, 2024

**LYNN RUTTER WILCOX, EHD63, EHD67M**, Nov. 22, 2024

**ROBERTA PARRY ROUNTREE, EHD65**, Nov. 16, 2024

**ORLANDO J. GEORGE JR., AS67, EHD70M, 90EDD**, May 27, 2024

**CHRISTINE BONNETT CROSSAN, EHD71**, April 26, 2024

**JOSEPH A. WALKOWSKI JR., EG71**, June 13, 2023

**REBECCA WITTMAYER VYE, AS72**, Oct. 11, 2024

**KATHLEEN GLIWA EVERETT, AS74M**, Sept. 3, 2023

**GAIL SIENA PIAZZA, AS78**, Dec. 8, 2023

**MITCHELL M. POTE, AS79**, June 12, 2024

**JANICE HORAN, BE86**, June 1, 2023

**IRENE JESTER ANNOS, AS88**, Oct. 14, 2022

**DAVID E. WEAVER, AS95**, March 27, 2024

**WILLIAM L. MCCOLLEY, AS08**, July 7, 2024

**SARA BELLE HARTY, AS25**, Nov. 18, 2024

**RAYMOND (RAY) PATT, CEHD25PHD**, Sept. 6, 2024

**THANYA SHEMI, EG26**, Aug. 1, 2024

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## FACULTY AND STAFF

**WILLIAM J. BENTON, ANR66PHD**, retired professor of animal sciences, Dec. 10, 2024

**MARK CAMPBELL, BE81**, photographer for Delaware Athletics, Oct. 21, 2024

**GEORGE CONRADE**, retired assistant professor of hotel, restaurant management, Jan. 13, 2025

**VINCENT DILEONARDO**, retired internal auditor, Sept. 27, 2024

**BERNARD DWORSKY**, retired senior policy adviser in the Institute for Public Administration, Jan. 30, 2025

**JEAN FUTRELL**, Willis F. Harrington Professor Emeritus of Physical and Analytical Chemistry, Nov. 13, 2024

**ROGER GEERTZ GONZALEZ**, assistant professor of business, Dec. 1, 2023

**BERNARD HERMAN**, professor emeritus of American material culture and co-founder of the Center for Historic Architecture and Design and the Center for American Material Culture Studies, Dec. 30, 2024.

**PETER HILL**, retired associate professor of music, Oct. 12, 2024

**KATHLEEN HOLLOWELL**, assistant professor and founding director of UD's Mathematics and Science Education Resource Center, Oct. 20, 2024

**DEREK HUNSBERGER**, adjunct business professor, Oct. 18, 2024

**VIRGINIA "GINNY" JOHNSON**, longtime nurse in Student Health Services, Oct. 13, 2024

**JOHN KELLY**, first director of the criminal justice program and longtime faculty member, Jan. 31, 2025

**PETER KOLCHIN**, Henry Clay Reed Professor Emeritus of History, Jan. 13, 2025

**LOUISE LITTLE**, associate professor emeritus of nutrition and dietetics, Nov. 12, 2024

**CYNTHIA PARIS**, professor emeritus of human development and family sciences and former director of the Lab School, Sept. 27, 2024

**ROBERT RIEMAN**, senior business officer in Professional and Continuing Studies, Sept. 28, 2024

## UD MOURNS TRAGIC LOSS

Five people with connections to the University's figure skating community were among those tragically killed in a plane crash in Washington, D.C., on Wednesday, Jan. 29, when a commercial airplane collided with a military helicopter. The loss sent shockwaves through the close-knit world of figure skating, especially at UD, where many of those affected had trained and competed.

Alexandr "Sasha" Kirsanov, a coach with the UD Figure Skating Club, was aboard the aircraft, along with two young skaters, Sean Kay and Angela Yang, and their mothers, Julia Kay and Lili Li. Although Kay and Yang were not UD students, their connection to the University's figure skating program left a deep impact on the campus community.

The young skaters had trained under Kirsanov at the University's High Performance Training Center, a facility known for producing world-class skaters. This center utilizes UD's ice rink facilities and has long been a hub for athletes aiming to reach the highest levels of competitive figure skating.

Kirsanov came to UD in the mid-'90s as a Russian junior champion. He was part of a group of Russian skaters who followed their coaches to train at UD's storied program, which has seen many of its skaters have success at the highest levels.

Melissa Maldonado, president of UD's club figure skating team, called Kirsanov a mentor and inspiration.

"He brought so much love and energy to our team, filling every practice, every competition and every moment in between with passion and encouragement," she said to the *Newark Post*. "He wasn't just invested in our skating. He was invested in us as people."

A memorial service was held Feb. 2 at UD's Fred Rust Arena in honor of the five victims, with more than 1,000 in attendance. 🕊️





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# Q+A

## BETH SCHINOFF

It all comes down to people. In any sector, any environment, when you work with people you like, work improves all around. Now, new research by UD Professor **Beth Schinoff** suggests that contrary to conventional wisdom and return-to-office mandates, virtual work environments can actually strengthen interpersonal relationships. The assistant management professor examined thousands of social media comments to explore the impact of remote work and found that it offers a more relaxed, unfiltered way to learn about colleagues' personal lives.

### What inspired this research?

When I was in my Ph.D. program, many of my friends and coauthors were scattered all over the country. The literature basically said that working remotely is bad for your relationships. This study questioned that assumption.

### Your findings show that working from home and virtually connecting with co-workers improved relationships more than being in the office. Isn't that counterintuitive?

In this study, we're saying that the magic that comes from being in person is not as impactful when it comes to learning non-work information about your

co-workers. When you work remotely, you can learn this information in a less curated way (for example, a dog runs into a video meeting). When you're at work in an office, all that information is likely more filtered out. You have to bring it into the conversation. It isn't as natural as it would be if your dog ran into the room on Zoom, right?

### But some people are annoyed when Fido jumps onto their screen. How is this a good thing?

Because it humanizes your co-worker. Our findings show that non-work information is fundamentally good for work relationships.

### Many companies believe that remote work was simply a COVID necessity that hindered connection. Is there research to back this up?

The narrative that remote work is largely detrimental for work relationships tends to rely on social psychology literature from the 1970s and '80s. I don't think our theories have kept pace with the changing nature of technology and the way that people's lives and relationships have changed. Our social structures have fundamentally changed over the last two decades, especially since COVID.

### How can leaders leverage technology to strengthen relationships?

My previous work on virtual coworker friendship shows that just carving out space in a team meeting to talk about non-work related stuff is a huge stage-setting mechanism for fostering relationships. 🐕

*"There is this magic to being in person that you cannot recreate on Zoom, but you don't need it five times a week."*



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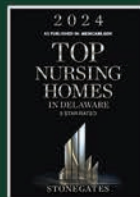
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