

#### Carolina **Strong**

ur fall semester started out in joyous normalcy, with students repopulating the campus after a summer away, filling our classrooms, labs and libraries with their energy and drive. Week two turned dark with a



 Speaking at a candlelight vigil for nanoscience researcher Zijie Yan at the Dean E. Smith Center.

tragedy that made national headlines: Carolina spent three hours in lockdown with the report of an active shooter on campus; one of our faculty members was killed. Barely two weeks later, the campus endured another lockdown when someone brandished a gun in the Student Union; that incident ended without violence.

We mourn the loss of Zijie Yan, an associate professor of applied physical sciences, and extend our sympathies to his family. His legacy and contributions are remembered in a story on page 31. I also want to acknowledge the fear and uncertainty our faculty and staff went through during both episodes. The news headlines have unfortunately conditioned us to brace for the worst in such

In the days that followed both events, I took comfort in witnessing how Tar Heels were looking after one another. That includes you, our alumni and friends. I was gratified that so many of you reached out. That was a source of strength I don't want to underestimate.

In the weeks since, campus operations and our teaching, research and service have resumed. Recovery takes time, and everyone is on a different path. But we are resilient. We are Carolina Strong.

Sincerely, Jim White



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### 2 A monumental synagogue, magnificent mosaics

An archaeological dig at Huqoq in Israel has revolutionized our understanding of ancient Jewish religious and cultural life.

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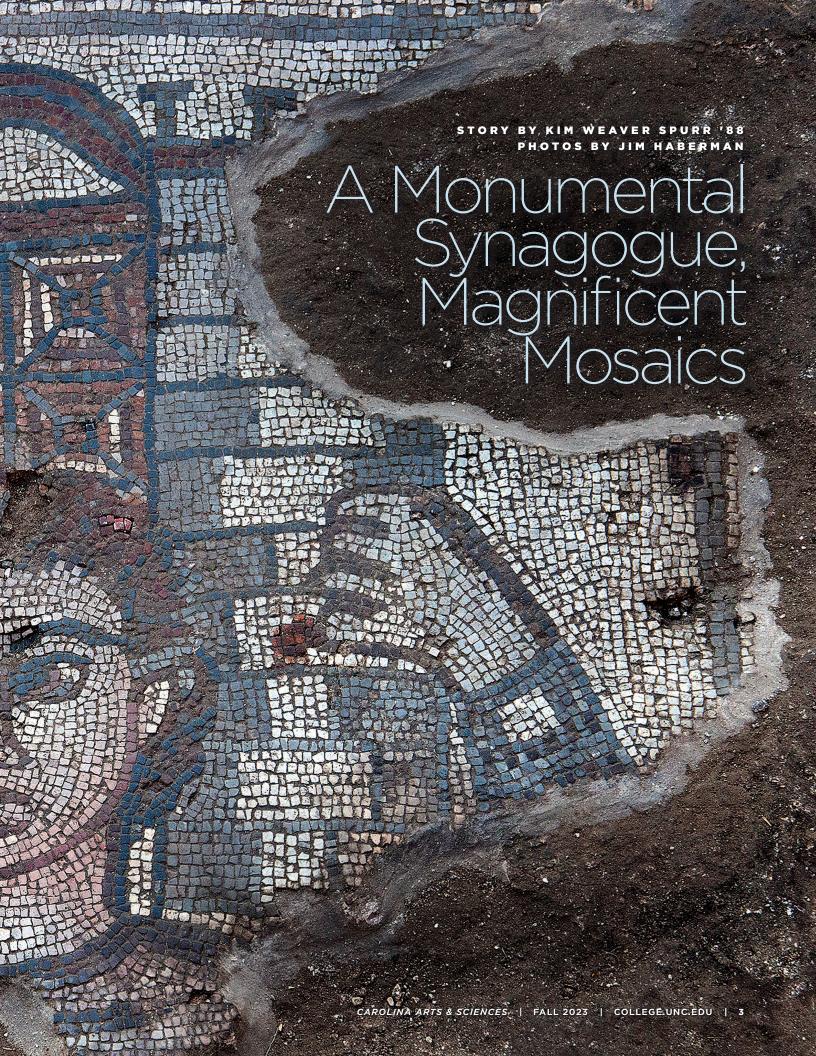
#### **Cover Photo:**

A UNC-led archaeological team in Israel's Lower Galilee has uncovered stunning biblical mosaics at an ancient synagogue, like this one of Samson carrying the gate of Gaza on his shoulders from Judges 16:3.

(PHOTO BY JIM HABERMAN)

Check out our redesigned magazine website at magazine.college.unc.edu, where you will find expanded content.





The email Carolina archaeologist Jodi Magness sent her colleague Karen Britt in the summer of 2012 read: "Mosaics 911 Emergency. Need You Here."

Magness, Kenan Distinguished Professor for Teaching Excellence in Early Judaism, was in the second season of her dig at Huqoq, an ancient Jewish village in Israel's Lower Galilee.

Britt, today an assistant professor at Northwest Missouri State University and a mosaics expert, was on a research fellowship in Jordan but immediately agreed to help. Magness met her at the northern border crossing and briefed her on the drive to the site, which is about four miles northwest of the Sea of Galilee, atop a rocky hill.

The surprise find — a colorful mosaic made up of tiny limestone cubes called tesserae — showed two female faces flanking a circular medallion with a Hebrew inscription. Another key find that same summer, both part of a synagogue floor: a mosaic depicting the biblical story of Samson placing torches between the tails of foxes.

The next year, a mosaic showing
Samson carrying the gate of Gaza on his
shoulders was uncovered, then in 2023
— the last summer of the dig — a slain
Philistine soldier. The three scenes from
Judges 15-16 complete what scholars are
calling a "Samson cycle."

During their years at Huqoq, Magness, a host of international specialists and hundreds of field school students from multiple consortium schools would continue to uncover myriad amazing finds, including the first non-biblical story ever discovered in an ancient synagogue [see sidebar, page 9]. Britt has stayed with

the project and collaborates with a historian of Judaism in researching the mosaics. The discoveries are transforming what we know about Jewish life in ancient Palestine.

Magness began digging at Huqoq in 2011 because of big research questions she was hoping to answer. There is nothing in early rabbinic literature that would have prepared her for a synagogue







CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Archaeologist Jodi Magness' ninth-grade yearbook photo. • Magness (left) with mosaic specialist Karen Britt of Northwest Missouri State University. • The landscape atop a rocky hill before excavation began at Huqoq.







CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Magness (left) and colleagues discuss the Tower of Babel mosaic panel. • A closeup of one of the first mosaics, a female face flanking a Hebrew inscription. • UNC senior Chrissy Stamey says working on a dig is "very hard, physical work. And I love it so much."

like Huqoq, she said, and that's where archaeology is helping to fill in the gaps and illuminate the dynamism and complexity of Jewish life 1,600 years ago.

"Most Galilean-type synagogues have been dated to the second and third centuries, but we have evidence of a late fourth-early fifth century synagogue at Huqoq," said Magness, who is a professor in the department of religious studies and a faculty member in the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies and the curriculum in archaeology. "This is significant because if these buildings were built in the earlier period, they were built in a pagan Roman context. Our synagogue was built when the Roman Empire was under Christian rule, a period that scholars believed was oppressive to Jews and during which Jewish settlements were declining. Yet clearly this village was flourishing and prospering."

#### AMBITION: ARCHAEOLOGIST

Magness knew she wanted to be an archaeologist at age 12, sparked by the fossils she was finding at Girl Scout camp and a seventh-grade history teacher who introduced her to ancient Greece. In ninth grade, her yearbook photo caption read: "Ambition: Archaeologist."

After falling in love with Israel during a tour in summer 1972, Magness left Miami to finish high school at Midreshet Sde Boker in the Negev desert, then completed her undergraduate degree at Hebrew University of Jerusalem. For a brief period, she thought she would go to law school — she was accepted

continued

into the University of Florida and the University of Miami — but a standing-room-only lecture at an Israeli institute about the discovery of the Roman Cardo in Jerusalem — the ancient city's main thoroughfare — affirmed her original passion. She did not return to the United States.

Instead, she decided to work at the Ein Gedi field school for a while as a tour guide and naturalist — "that phone call to my parents was not a great call," she said with a laugh — and after four years, she enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania for her doctorate.

Magness joined the Carolina faculty in 2002 from Tufts University. She is known as a worldwide expert on Masada (she co-directed the 1995 excavations in the Roman siege works there), Qumran and the Dead Sea Scrolls and ancient Palestine. Over the last 30 years, she has published 13 books and numerous articles and book chapters, been inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and has participated in over 20 excavations in Israel and Greece. Her forthcoming book, Jerusalem Through the Ages: From its Beginnings to the Crusades (Oxford University Press), a detailed account of one of the world's holiest and most contested cities, will be published in the spring. The awardwinning teacher and scholar is also past president of the Archaeological Institute of America.

Her work resonates with both academics and popular audiences. She was featured in a *National Geographic* IMAX film titled *Jerusalem* and was a consultant and an on-camera expert in the *Nat Geo* series *The Story of God with Morgan Freeman*.

"There's a never-ending stream of interesting questions about this region. From an archaeological point of view, Israel is the most extensively explored country on Earth," she said.



#### HOOKED ON HUQOQ

At the kibbutz where the field school participants stay, the alarms go off around 4 a.m. Time for a quick cup of coffee or tea, then students sleepily board the bus for a 15-minute ride to Huqoq. After drop-off, there's a brief hike to the site, illuminated by flashlights, then they unload the water jugs and breakfast items off a supply truck and put up shade cloths to shield everyone from the glare of the sun.

Life on a dig is a hot and dirty job, a lot of it done with pickaxes and hoes.

"I think the general consensus is that archaeology is a library, bookish job, but it's more like construction, honestly," said Chrissy Stamey, a UNC senior anthropology and archaeology major who returned for her second season to Huqoq last summer. "You really get to know people through very hard, physical work. And I love it so much."



TOP: A mosaic depicting the Israelite commander Barak was unearthed in 2022.

BOTTOM: Jada Enoch '23 is one of many UNC students who have returned for multiple seasons at Hugog.





TOP: Jocelyn Burney (Ph.D. '23) has been with the Huqoq project since the beginning; Magness was her dissertation adviser. BOTTOM: Magness' husband, Jim Haberman, captured this shot of her standing on the synagogue's east wall on the last day of excavations.

For her initial trip in 2022 — her first time out of the country — Stamey received private support from the Lori and Eric Sklut Undergraduate Experiential Learning Fund. "The experience opened so many doors in my life and changed the trajectory of my education," she said.

A couple of hours into the dig morning, the smells of breakfast — cheesy eggs, French toast, omelets, fruit, salads, pita bread — begin to waft over the site.

"The most glorious sound that you'll ever hear on a site is Jodi's voice at approximately 8 a.m. yelling 'breakfast' at the top of her lungs," said Jada Enoch.
"It still makes me smile to this day."

Enoch, a 2023 graduate who majored in peace, war and defense and religious studies, was also a Huqoq returner. She and Stamey were given extra responsibilities during their second season, including assisting the project's ceramics specialist.

There's another break around 11 a.m. — fondly called "elevensies" — featuring watermelon for hydration. By noon, students have worked a full day. But their work is not over yet. Pottery sherds are delivered to pottery expert and UNC M.A./Ph.D. classics alumnus Dan Schindler for washing and cataloguing, coins and other artifacts are registered in the database, and students participate in lectures and field trips throughout their time in Israel.

"I've had an opportunity to network through this program and to strengthen my academic relationships with incredible faculty members I never would have had the opportunity to meet," said Enoch, who also received scholarship support for her study abroad experience and is taking a gap year before applying to graduate school.

Jocelyn Burney may take the prize, though, as the ultimate Huqoq alumna. She got hooked at age 19 as a Carolina undergraduate, participated in the first excavation season, and has continued ever since, through completing her Ph.D. under Magness' guidance last May. It was her final summer as an area supervisor on the dig; she began her academic career this fall as an assistant professor of ancient Mediterranean religion at the University of Missouri. She'll be bringing her experience at Huqoq into her classes on "The World of the New Testament" and "Christianity and Paganism."

The experience has made a huge impression on Burney as a scholar — but it has impacted her personal life, too.

continued

"I actually met my future husband on the dig; we met in the UNC field school in 2013," she said.

#### AN INTRIGUING PUZZLE

In 2021, *Nat Geo* named the Huqoq mosaics among its list of "100 Archaeological Treasures of the Past." Every year, the finds have made headlines in national and international media.

Britt said for her, Huqoq is "the project of a lifetime."

"There are people who dream of the opportunity to work on material that is this groundbreaking," she said. "I will work on other digs, but I can't imagine I will have an opportunity to work on something that is poised to make such an important contribution to our understanding of art and archaeology of the late Roman period."

Scholars say the range of motifs depicted in the mosaics is unparalleled in any other ancient synagogue, but the building itself is quite extraordinary, too, with colorful painted plaster adhering to some of the columns.

"I like to say it was the world's kitschiest synagogue," Magness said.

In fact, the team has discovered *two* synagogue buildings at Huqoq — one built during the medieval period about 1,000 years later on top of the original one. That 14th century C.E. building appears to be the first Mamluk period synagogue ever discovered in Israel.

It is Martin Wells' job to figure out how to reconstruct those two synagogue buildings. He's been the architectural specialist at the site for six seasons and is an associate professor at Austin College in Texas. Wells has also brought his students to the field school as part of the Huqoq consortium.





TOP: Capricorn is part of a mosaic depicting the Greco-Roman sun god Helios along with other signs of the Zodiac; it was found in 2017. BOTTOM: From left, Matthew Grey (Ph.D. '11), Magness and Burney. Grey and Burney were both area supervisors at Hugog.

That second building reused many of the features of the first, and the floor in the later synagogue helped to preserve the mosaic floor of the earlier one underneath.

"We have evidence of these supporting buttresses where they had to cut through the mosaic floor, but only where they needed to. They preserved what they could, which is amazing," said Wells. The 2022 and 2023 excavations also brought to light an enormous paved courtyard surrounded by a row of columns known as a colonnade to the east of the synagogue.

"It has left us a very intriguing puzzle to solve, to figure out where all of the pieces go," he added. "Archaeological discovery and understanding come with the trowel and the brush, the literal moving away



ABOVE: Magness (front row, left) with current and former UNC students who proudly wore Carolina blue for the camera as the Hugog excavations concluded in summer 2023.

of dirt to uncover things. But there's also the intellectual 'brushing away,' when you discover how things fit together. And that's the best."

#### EXCAVATION AND PUBLICATION

The site was backfilled for preservation in summer 2023 and turned over to the Israel Antiquities Authority and the Jewish National Fund for future tourism development.

On that last day, Magness' husband, photographer Jim Haberman, took a photo of her on the east wall where he had also snapped a shot during the first dig season in 2011.

Burney, Magness' former Ph.D. student, remembers that moment.

"Initially, that first year, there was just a little bit of wall — and dirt. This year, you saw that entire [65-by-50 foot] building behind her. It was really special."

Magness' colleagues also presented her with a surprise offering, an academic publication called a *festschrift*. The word, borrowed from German, is a celebratory volume of essays honoring an esteemed scholar.

Matthew Grey, a former Ph.D. student of Magness' who is a professor at Brigham Young University, was one of the editors of the publication, "Pushing Sacred Boundaries in Early Judaism and the Ancient Mediterranean."

Grey has been with Huqoq from the beginning — he became an area supervisor at the site after finishing his UNC Ph.D., and BYU is a consortium member. He has also brought his students to the field school.

"Jodi has a contagious enthusiasm for her work," Grey said. "She's been extremely influential to me as a scholar and a teacher. Her work captured my imagination about things I wanted to explore even further."

As she reflected on her 11 years at Huqoq (there was a brief pause during the COVID-19 pandemic), Magness said that even though excavation has wrapped up, the real work is just beginning.

"The goal of archaeology is not excavation, it's publication," she said. "I have two shipping containers of excavated materials that need to be analyzed. My team and I will be coming back for years in the summers to Jerusalem to work on that material for publication."

#### **EXTRAORDINARY FINDS**

The Huqoq mosaics depict many ancient biblical and non-biblical stories, including:

- The Samson cycle: Samson and the foxes, a slain Philistine soldier, Samson carrying the gate of Gaza. (Judges 15-16)
- The earliest known depictions of female biblical heroines Deborah and Jael. (Judges 4)
- A Hebrew inscription surrounded by human figures, animals and mythological creatures including putti, or cupids.
- The first non-biblical story ever found decorating an ancient synagogue (also featuring battle elephants) perhaps the legendary meeting between Alexander the Great and the Jewish high priest.
- Two of the spies sent by Moses to explore Canaan carrying a pole with a cluster of grapes. (Numbers 13:23)
- A man leading an animal on a rope accompanied by the inscription "a small child shall lead them." (Isaiah 11:6)
- Figures of animals identified by an Aramaic inscription as the four beasts representing four kingdoms. (Daniel 7)
- Elim, the spot where the Israelites camped by 12 springs and 70 date palms after departing Egypt and wandering in the wilderness without water. (Exodus 15:27)
- A portrayal of Noah's Ark.
   (Genesis 6-8)
- The parting of the Red Sea. (Exodus 14-15)
- · A Helios-zodiac cycle.
- Jonah being swallowed by three successive fish. (Jonah 1)
- The building of the Tower of Babel. (Genesis 11: 1-9)
- A decorated border showing animals of prey pursuing other animals, including a tiger chasing an ibex (wild goat).

# ALL THE WATER

In April 2023, three Carolina researchers traveled to New Zealand to work on a

The Waimakariri River spans 90 miles across the South Island of New Zealand — from the Southern Alps to the Pacific Ocean — and is the main field site for Tamlin Pavelsky and his team. 10 | CAROLINA ARTS & SCIENCES | FALL 2023 | COLLEGE.UNC.EDU Story and photos by Alyssa LaFaro

# INTHE WORLD

first-of-its-kind NASA satellite project that will measure the planet's entire water supply.









ABOVE: Tamlin Pavelsky is the freshwater science lead for the SWOT project. LEFT: Pavelsky attaches a global navigation satellite system (GNSS) receiver to an antenna on top of a tripod to collect GPS points from various satellites.

#### "BRACE!"

Tamlin Pavelsky and Marissa Dudek plant their feet and grab onto support beams as their jetboat driver, Steve Terry, makes a hard, 90-degree turn upriver — and floors it. Glacial blue water launches into the wake as gravel from the riverbed grates against the bottom of the boat. When the channel widens, Terry slows to navigate the best path forward.

Composed of multiple streams that weave back and forth, the Waimakariri River ("Waimak," for short) is a braided river. It stretches about 90 miles across the South Island of New Zealand, from the Southern Alps to the Pacific Ocean. And it's a major field site for a new NASA project.

A collaboration between NASA and the French space agency CNES, the Surface Water and Ocean Topography (SWOT) satellite will produce the first global survey of Earth's surface water with unprecedented accuracy. Pavelsky — a professor of earth, marine and environmental sciences

at UNC-Chapel Hill — is the freshwater science lead on the team.

In April, Pavelsky spent six weeks in New Zealand with Dudek, a Carolina Ph.D. student, and research specialist Camryn Kluetmeier to verify the satellite's data. To do so, they traveled up and down the river in boats and helicopters, using a GPS system to measure the elevation and a remote sensing device called LiDAR to create a high-resolution map of the landscape. They also installed water-level loggers to monitor changes in water height over time.

The data SWOT collects can inform how floodplains and wetlands change over time and the coastal processes related to fisheries, ship navigation, shoreline erosion and pollutants. More simply, it will track changes in water movement and volume across the planet — critical information for areas hit hard by drought or flooding — and will improve how we manage our water resources.



**ABOVE**: Camryn Kluetmeier and Tamlin Pavelsky install a waterlevel logger in the Waimakariri River. RIGHT: Marissa Dudek collects GPS coordinates for a GNSS survey and documents times for a water-level logger installation.





"This is a game-changer for our ability to understand how much water is flowing through rivers, how much water is stored in lakes and reservoirs, and how ocean circulation works," Pavelsky said.

#### THE NATURAL-BORN HYDROLOGIST Tamlin Pavelsky, professor

Studying glacial rivers makes Pavelsky feel at home. The hydrologist grew up in the backcountry of Alaska in the 1980s, hiking alongside pristine waterways like the Sanctuary and Teklanika with his dad.

"The water there is just this beautiful blue mass rushing out of the mountains to the south," Pavelsky described. "As the two rivers merged, one clear and the other turbid, I wondered why they looked the way they do."

Pavelsky began working on the SWOT mission in 2004 as part of a NASA fellowship when he was a Ph.D. student at the

University of California, Los Angeles. He joined the Carolina faculty in 2009 and became the freshwater science lead on the project in 2013.

His expertise in remote sensing — using sensors on aircraft or satellites to gather data over water and land and his experience working on complex rivers in the Arctic and Subarctic regions of the planet make him an ideal leader for this project.

After nearly 20 years of waiting to see what SWOT can do, Pavelsky feels like a kid in a candy shop.

"SWOT is like a piñata we've wacked with a baseball bat and now all this candy is pouring out," he said. "There are so many things we want to understand about Earth's water that SWOT is going to enable — and scientists will be grabbing that candy for the next five years to figure out what it all means."

continued







ABOVE: Camryn Kluetmeier looks out over the Waimak to determine the best location for a water-level logger install. LEFT: Kluetmeier uses a rotary hammer to drill a bolt hole into a rock for securing the pipe that holds the water-level logger. She and the team also conduct shoreline surveys — more data to compare with the SWOT satellite's measurements.

#### THE SWISS ARMY KNIFE Camryn Kluetmeier, research specialist

At 24, Wisconsin native Kluetmeier has already conducted research across the globe — from Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts to the icefields of Alaska.

"I've been drawn to water my entire life, from just mucking around in lakes and streams as a kid," she shared.

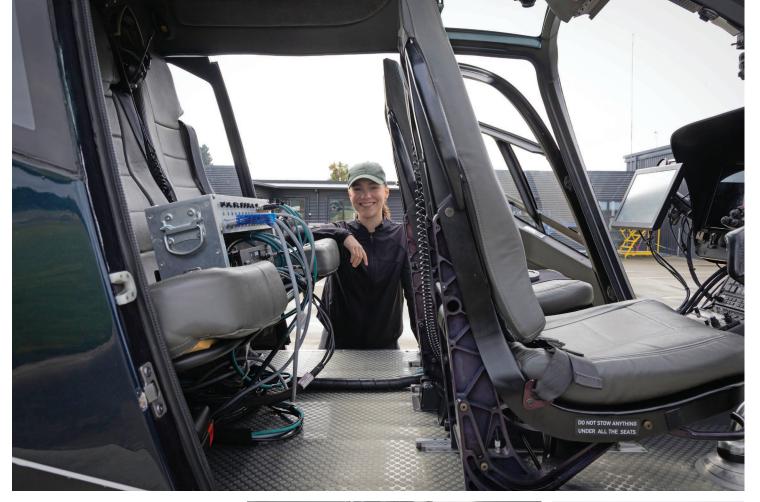
When she was 11, she became a volunteer stream monitor through a program with the University of Wisconsin-Madison. She'd visit the same stream each month to measure clarity and discharge.

She participated in the program for eight years before heading to Middlebury College, where she majored in environmental studies and geology. During her junior year, she studied abroad at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand — and when the borders began to close at the onset of the pandemic in spring 2020, she decided to stay put.

She spent the next year and a half attending classes at the university and exploring the island. That experience, alongside the numerous research studies she had worked on, made her the perfect candidate for the SWOT research specialist position.

Now, Kluetmeier is Pavelsky's right hand for SWOT. She purchases gear and supplies, coordinates field days and to-do lists, and is often the first to don a pair of waders and hop into the river when something goes wrong and needs to be fixed. On top of spending three months in New Zealand, she oversaw the bulk of data collection at the Alaska and California field sites last summer. In total, she spent nearly six months traveling for the project.

"The fact that we're able to see global water around the world is absolutely mind-boggling to me," she said. "We're getting data from remote places we've never been able to gauge or see before and across international boundaries in different countries."



**ABOVE:** Marissa Dudek oversaw much of the LiDAR collection by helicopter for the project. RIGHT: Dudek guides a helicopter pilot along precise GPS points to capture LiDAR data. After a rain. the Waimakariri's channels become turbid as sediment settles along the riverbed.





#### THE CO-PILOT Marissa Dudek, Ph.D. student

In 2020, Dudek spent six months working on projects at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, using satellite data to monitor groundwater resources in California and the effect of permafrost thaw on infrastructure in Alaska.

That fall, she came to Carolina to pursue her master's studies on the asteroids and meteors that impacted Earth, Venus and Mars across geological history. She'd heard Pavelsky was an expert in remote sensing, something she needed to learn more about for her research. In the process, she learned about the SWOT mission in New Zealand. Now a year into a UNC Ph.D. in geological sciences, she's interested in studying the amount of water moving through the Waimak.

Dudek has a knack for modeling, writing code and analyzing data — and flying in helicopters for hours on

end. She took the lead on most of the project's helicopter data collection, where a LiDAR was attached to the front of a helicopter to generate a high-resolution map of the landscape. Such work is tedious and involves about seven hours of flight time in one day, which can cause dehydration and nausea.

For Dudek, motion sickness is well worth the data and the views.

"The LiDAR collection is the most exciting part of the project," she said. "It's going to be able to tell us the water surface elevation of the entire channel. Plus, seeing the Waimak from a helicopter is amazing."

> Read an expanded story and watch a video at endeavors.unc.edu.

# Carolina to the "Silicon Revolution" Maymester water students with The Students with The Students with The Students with The Students with Stu

In the "Silicon Revolution" Maymester course, undergraduate students with a passion for entrepreneurship visit and learn from Carolina alumni who have made their mark in the Bay Area.

n a breezy May morning in downtown Palo Alto, California, 16 Tar Heels climbed onto a shuttle bus to begin a whirlwind tour through a global hub of technology and innovation: Silicon Valley.

Despite some lingering jet lag from the flight out of Raleigh-Durham International, the students chatted excitedly about the week's schedule, an itinerary with the power to turn heads.

The class, "Silicon Revolution," is an Honors Carolina Maymester course an intensive three-week seminar offered in collaboration with the College's Shuford Program in Entrepreneurship. Led by Jim Leloudis, professor of history, the class begins in Chapel Hill with extensive readings about Silicon Valley's ties to the rise of the modern research university.

"We examine the post-war years and the emergence of the federal government as a primary funder of research," said Leloudis, who is also the Peter T. Grauer Associate Dean for Honors Carolina, "All of that sets the stage for the emergence of Silicon Valley as a distinctive ecosystem of innovation."

The students then travel to the Bay Area for site visits and conversations with alumni and other friends of UNC in San Francisco, Palo Alto, Berkeley, Oakland and San Jose. This year's hosts included Tar Heels at Google, Morgan Stanley, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art and private equity firm Parthenon Capital, to name just a few of the 17 destinations over seven days.

Many of the hosts have been



The Bay Area provides an unmatched locale for the "Silicon Revolution" course. Here. students Zavion Woldu (left) and Siri Dronavalli capture the sights of Baker Beach and South Bav in San Francisco.

invested in the course since Leloudis and Anne Collins, senior associate dean for development in the College, conceived it in 2015.

The goal of "Silicon Revolution," Leloudis and Collins said, is threefold: to strengthen relationships with UNC alumni in the Bay Area, to build a network for students seeking to move to the West Coast after graduation and to introduce students to the Bay Area and a wide range of career paths.

"Alumni in the Bay Area — like Carolina alumni anywhere in the world - are so generous with their time and their counsel," Leloudis said. "We are deeply grateful for their willingness to

lend a hand to the next generation of Tar Heels." That is also true for alumni who support Honors Carolina and the Shuford program. Their gifts fund scholarships that make the Maymester experience affordable for students who otherwise could not participate.

Chuck Robbins '87, chief executive officer of Cisco, has been a longtime host of Silicon Valley site visits.

This year, after an in-depth tour of Cisco's San Jose headquarters, students joined Robbins in the boardroom, which was adorned in



Carolina blue for the occasion. The class asked questions about Robbins' time at UNC, his philosophy as a leader of a Fortune 500 company, his best and most challenging days at work and more.

T'nya Savage, a junior studying management and society in the sociology department, said the Cisco visit was her favorite of the week.

"It's so cool knowing that [Robbins] is a Carolina alumnus," said Savage.

"He was very down-to-earth, and to see that he upholds that while leading over 80,000 employees — and still makes the time to meet with 16 students — was inspiring."

The class experience has solidified her goal to start her own business one day, ideally in the health care industry.

"I want to be a leader. I want to go after my own entrepreneurial efforts," said Savage, who also is

access to entrepreneurial leaders across industries. Savage (center) named the experience as integral to supporting her goal to start a business after graduating.

pursuing minors in commercial real estate and entrepreneurship.

Entrepreneurship is a key element of the

class. Through the close partnership with the Shuford Program, students with a special interest in startups and business innovation make up nearly half of the course's enrollment.

"Entrepreneurship is where IQ meets EQ — emotional intelligence," said Bernard Bell, the Shuford Program's executive director. Bell is passionate about introducing students to the skills that

continued



ABOVE: Erik Moore (front center) welcomed students to his venture capital firm, Base Ventures, in Berkeley. He and co-founder Kirby Harris (back row, far left) shared that they are far more interested in entrepreneurs' ability to fail, learn and grow than their ability to succeed the first time. RIGHT: Throughout the week, lectures took place in cafés, on a soccer field, in museums and in boardrooms — like this one at private equity firm Welsh Carson Anderson & Stowe with alumna Caroline Boneparth Dechert.

are essential to creating a successful business. He has joined the Bay Area excursion every year since 2017.

"It is a life-changing experience" for these students, said Bell, especially for those who have never traveled outside North Carolina or been exposed to ventures on the scale of those in Silicon Valley.

"We understand that if you can meet the individual who is doing what you'd like to do, it normalizes what you previously thought was out of reach," he added.

Startups, private equity and venture capital are in many instances still white, male-dominated spaces. To help inspire the next generation of diverse innovators, Bell emphasized the importance of meeting with UNC alumni who have broken through this barrier.

These lessons resonated deeply with students.

"My favorite visit was with Robin

Richards Donohoe," said Xavier Crump, a history and economics double major with a minor in entrepreneurship.

Richards Donohoe '87 was a founder and managing director of the Draper International and Draper Richards Funds before turning her sights to philanthropy. In addition to supporting early-stage, highimpact social enterprises through the Draper Richards Kaplan Foundation,



LEFT: Robin Richards Donohoe shared her perspective as a woman in Silicon Valley's venture capital market and emphasized the importance of developing skills like learning how to build a network and creating meaningful relationships, in business and in life. BOTTOM: UNC alumna Michelle Barger, head of conservation at the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, contextualizes the wallto-wall mural "Pan American Unity" by Diego Rivera during a class visit.



she also supports the intersection of entrepreneurship and social impact at Carolina through the Richards Donohoe Social Entrepreneur-in-Residence Fund. Established in 2012, the fund supports faculty with industry experience working with nonprofit organizations.

Richards Donohoe invited the students to her home for her talk on the importance of using a Carolina education to make positive change in the world.

"She possessed such a breadth of

knowledge," said Crump. "Her 'never give up' attitude — it was amazing."

Throughout the week, students enjoyed breakfasts and dinners with alumni across industries, walked Stanford's campus, visited museums and experienced a final day of sightseeing around San Francisco before they returned to North Carolina. The course concluded with tours of Research Triangle Park and Innovate Carolina, full-circle experiences that brought

lessons from the West Coast back to Chapel Hill.

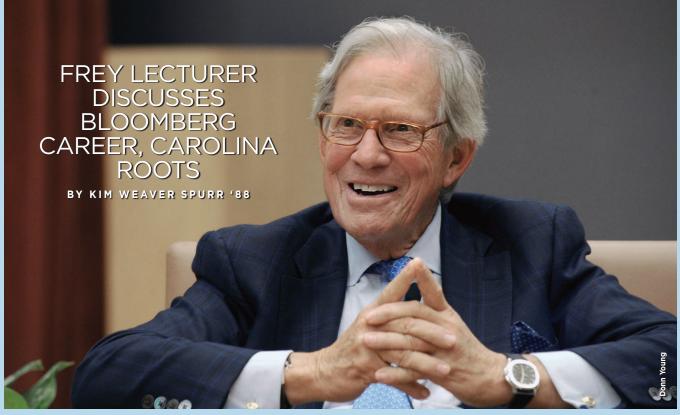
"One of the things that really resonated with me is the value of networking," said Nolan Welch, a rising junior and chief operating officer of Chapel Thrill Escapes, a UNC studentrun nonprofit that creates escape room experiences.

A computer science and Spanish double major, Welch originally enrolled in the course with an interest in learning more about the technology industry. Now, after reflecting on the class, he said it was the opportunity to meet with professionals and learn the value of entrepreneurial skills that will stay with him.

"This course has influenced me. I think that I'd like to come back for an MBA," he said of his postgraduation plans, adding that he hopes to integrate his passion for natural language processing with his newfound perspective on entrepreneurship and business leadership.

For Leloudis, Collins and Bell, this kind of feedback from students and Silicon Valley alumni is what invigorates them to return to "Silicon Revolution" year after year.

"Being on this trip, it's the spark," said Bell of witnessing the students' growth during the week. "It is just spectacular to see their transformation."



• Bloomberg chair Peter Grauer fielded questions from Dean Jim White and the audience in his talk, "It Goes So Fast."

Bloomberg Chairman Peter T. Grauer stressed the personal and professional value of relationships and the critical thinking skills he gained in his Carolina liberal arts education at the Frey Lecture on Sept. 12.

The Frey Foundation Distinguished Visiting Professorship Lecture, established in 1989, brings to campus renowned leaders in a variety of fields, including government, public policy, international affairs and the arts. Alumnus David Frey (B.A. '64, J.D. '67), who chaired the foundation for many years, died in June. Frey knew before his death that Grauer had been selected as this year's speaker and was pleased at the choice.

Grauer spoke to an engaged audience at the FedEx Global Education Center in a fireside-chatstyle conversation with Dean Jim White. The 1968 alumnus majored in English at Carolina and graduated from Harvard Business School's Program for Management Development. He said his time at UNC-Chapel Hill "has been seminal in my life."

"My liberal arts background as an English major has enhanced my communication skills and my ability to engage with other people," Grauer said. "I think it has made me a better thinker, and that ability to communicate successfully with other people and to build relationships has been critical to my personal and professional life."

Grauer has been a member of the Bloomberg board of directors since 1996 and was named chairman of the board of the global financial technology, data and media company in March 2001, succeeding Michael R. Bloomberg. He joined Bloomberg full time as chairman, president and CEO in March 2002.

Grauer said one of the most rewarding things about working for Bloomberg has been the company's focus on having a charitable impact worldwide. The vast majority of profits from Bloomberg LP goes to support the work of Bloomberg Philanthropies, which invests in 700 cities and 150 countries around the world.

In 2022, Bloomberg distributed \$1.7 billion globally, and "to date we have given away \$14.4 billion," Grauer said to a round of applause. "That's the higher purpose we serve."

Grauer said one of the most challenging but meaningful moments in his career was when an earthquake and tsunami hit Japan in March 2011; at the time, Bloomberg had 600 employees in Tokyo.

"I was on an airplane coming back from the Middle East when I got a message from my colleagues in New York that this had happened. I made a quick decision when I got back home that I was going to get a fresh change of clothes and fly back to Tokyo," he said. "I spent the next few days [in our Tokyo offices] going desk to desk assuring our people that we were going to get through this and that we would protect them and their families."

White asked Grauer about his role with the 30% Club, a group of chairs and CEOs committed to working toward more equitable gender balance at all levels of their organizations and to improving diverse representation in senior leadership roles. Grauer was founding U.S. chair of the group, which started in London.

"At Bloomberg, our goal is to attract the best and the brightest people with different backgrounds and abilities," he said. "For us it's a business imperative. It's not just the right thing to do; it makes for a better [work] environment."

Grauer has been a loyal supporter of UNC. He is a past member of the Board of Trustees and former longtime chair of the advisory board of Honors Carolina; Grauer's philanthropic gift to Honors endowed the associate dean position currently held by Jim Leloudis. He is a recipient of the University's William Richardson Davie Award and the College's Dean's Distinguished Service Award and was also inducted into the North Carolina Media and Journalism Hall of Fame.

# UNC Writing and Learning Center

The academic coaches, writing coaches and peer tutors have helped me become a stronger student and achieve a sustainable work-life balance that I can take with me after graduation."

JENEVIÈVE SURKIN '24

An Honors biomedical engineering major with minors in chemistry and Chinese

Every student — regardless of academic level — benefits from the resources at the UNC Writing and Learning Center. With over 500 individual appointments each week, the Writing and Learning Center has outgrown its current space. A move to the Robert B. House Undergraduate Library will provide room for it to grow and guide even more students to success.



Learn how you can support the relocation at writingandlearningcenter.unc.edu/donate

#### A thrilling debut

Victoria Wlosok signed a book deal for her young adult thriller with a "big five" publisher when she was still a first-year student. On Sept. 19, her work hit the shelves.

BY JESS ABEL '19

Victoria Wlosok had an extra reason to anticipate the start of her junior year at Carolina.

Her debut novel, How to Find a Missing Girl, published by Little,

Brown of Hatchette Book Group, hit the shelves in mid-September.

Wlosok, of Sylva, North Carolina, is a double major in English and comparative literature in the College of Arts and Sciences and business administration in the Kenan-Flagler Business School. She calls the combination of studies "the best of both worlds."

"I'm standing on the shoulders of literary giants at UNC," said Wlosok. "I

think I'm too passionate about reading and writing to not be majoring in English and comparative literature in an attempt to follow in their footsteps."

Carolina's literary luminaries include authors Tracy Deonn (Legendborn), Jenny Han (To All the Boys I've Loved Before and The Summer I Turned Pretty), Mary Pope Osborne (Magic Tree House), Zayika Dalia Harris (The Other Black Girl) and Sarah Dessen (Along for the Ride), all of whom Wlosok named as writing inspirations, among others.

Wlosok also drew inspiration for her novel How to Find a Missing Girl a young adult thriller — from her UNC coursework.

The class "Mystery Fiction," taught by Henry Veggian, associate teaching professor, expanded how she reads and



• "It was honestly one of the best days of my life," said Wlosok, remembering the phone call when she learned she would be a published author.

thinks about thrillers, she said. "Being able to read and

analyze mystery fiction — and trace the genre from Edgar Allan Poe's nameless narrators to Arthur Conan Doyle's detectives — impacted how I read and think about thrillers."

That class is the source of a favorite character detail in her own book, which follows 17-year-old amateur detective Iris Blackthorn as she attempts to investigate the disappearance of her cheerleader ex-girlfriend.

"One of my favorite details in the book is that my main character, Iris, has a collection of plants named after famous fictional detectives," she said. "After English 147 ended, I went in and added some names from the course text."

Beyond class, Wlosok is involved in UNC S.O.U.L. — the Student Organization for Undergraduate Literature - where

she meets with friends and book lovers for lively literary discussions.

She also served as the publicity intern for the Jane Austen Summer Program, an annual four-day symposium for "Janeites" co-founded by Inger Brodey, associate professor in the department of English and comparative literature. Wlosok names Brodey who has received multiple NEH grants for her research on Austen — as a close mentor, along with Ross White, director of creative writing and teaching associate professor.

With the publication of her book, Wlosok is thrilled to join the community of young adult authors and is proud to contribute to LGBTQ+ representation in young adult fiction. She said the novel "is meant for fans of young adult thrillers who, like me, weren't always able to see themselves reflected in the genre's pages, and I hope it resonates with readers for that reason upon its release."

#### 'Root shock'

Graduate student Ari Green is studying the experiences of Black people being displaced from their homes and communities in three urban areas.

BY CLAIRE CUSICK (M.A. '21)

When Ari Green returned to her hometown of Sacramento, California, in 2015 after studying abroad in Montreal for a year, she noticed big changes happening. The city had begun to pursue massive economic development projects, including building a \$500 million NBA arena in an effort to revive the city. Swift gentrification followed, and communities of color were displaced.

After graduating with a B.A. in history from California State University, Sacramento, Green decided to explore what had set gentrification in motion, as well as its legacy, by continuing her master's studies in public history there. She examined the phenomenon of "root shock," a term coined by social psychiatrist and author Mindy Thompson Fullilove to describe the traumatic experience of Black people being displaced from their homes and communities. She is now expanding on that research as a doctoral student in American studies at Carolina.

"I saw in real time how my city was changing, but also saw how my peers, their families and just Black residents in general were unable to even voice their opinions about these changes because the changes were happening so quickly," Green said.

Green said her experiences with gentrification have made her a more empathetic researcher. Affordable quality housing was a challenge for her, a single working professional in her 20s.

"For me to move from my parents' house to my own space was very difficult in California, even making decent money as a single person with no children," she said. "I can't imagine what that would look like if I had a family to care for. That will definitely inform the Sacramento chapter of my dissertation."

Green said she experienced a bit of root shock herself when, during the COVID-19 pandemic, she moved across the country to begin her Ph.D. in public history at NC State University. "When I moved to Raleigh, everything was closed because of the pandemic," she said. "I didn't get to experience the city at its full capacity. It seemed so empty. I almost thought



 Ari Green, pictured in the Northside neighborhood in Chapel Hill, studies gentrification and the traumatic experiences of Black people being displaced from their communities.

traffic didn't exist here because it was so dead."

Green chose NC State in part to work with historian Blair L.M. Kelley, who recently joined Carolina from the university down the road as the Joel R. Williamson Distinguished Professor of Southern Studies and the director of the Center for the Study of the American South. Kelley said she is proud to have Green continue her Ph.D. research at UNC.

"Ari's doctoral dissertation is an innovative look at the processes of migration, gentrification and displacement in Sacramento, Raleigh and New Orleans," Kelley said. "Rather than viewing the displacement of Black communities as a dispassionate result of the 2008 housing crisis and rising costs of living near city centers, Ari looks closely at the meaning of these changes within Black communities, tracing the lives of those who have been displaced."

Green said although public history and American studies use different methods, her work is interdisciplinary, and the transition was seamless. "I'm already borrowing from multiple fields," she said. "I'm using archival research, oral tradition, GIS mapping, newspapers and geography."

Green received a 2023 Thomas F. Ferdinand Research Fellowship from The Graduate School to support her summer dissertation work. She recently returned to Sacramento to conduct archival research into public policies and to connect with young people who may agree to provide oral histories in the future. Their stories are often left out of the historical record.

"I'm hoping that they will open up and allow me to interview them the next time I return to Sacramento," she said.

#### Precarious workers in unprecedented times

Alexandrea Ravenelle's latest book explores how COVID-19 affected the most vulnerable wage-earners. BY PATTY COURTRIGHT (B.A. '75, M.A. '83)

The COVID pandemic upended the traditional work environment, fundamentally transforming how many people work. For some, the pandemic was an opportunity to recalibrate a career path, sometimes testing the entrepreneurial waters. Others, particularly lower wage earners, survived by stringing together multiple part-time or gig jobs.

People in freelance, contract and gig jobs, such as Uber drivers and Instacart shoppers — also known as 1099 workers — have acutely felt the repercussions of this economic instability. Alexandrea Ravenelle, an assistant professor of sociology, is examining the impact of the pandemic on these workers' lives. She has recently published her second book on gig workers, this time with a focus on the experience of gig workers during the pandemic.

It was while conducting research for her dissertation and ultimately her first book, *Hustle and Gig: Struggling and Surviving in the Sharing Economy*, published in 2019, that Ravenelle realized the gig economy was much more complex than a chance to "be your own boss."

"I interviewed just short of 80
New York City gig workers in various platforms such as Uber, DoorDash and TaskRabbit," she said. "And I found that the gig economy is a movement forward to the past, to an age where workplace protections are virtually nonexistent and where workers are incredibly vulnerable to a number of risks including on-the-job injuries, sexual harassment and economic harms."

With the COVID pandemic ramping

up in early 2020 just as she began teaching at Carolina, Ravenelle shifted gears from a plan to focus on elite gig workers (those earning around \$1,000 per day) to examine the vulnerability of these low-wage workers during a once-in-a-lifetime pandemic.

A National Science Foundation RAPID grant funded her work to interview 199 gig

and "precarious workers"— people who are underemployed or who are in unstable jobs with little advancement opportunity. The interviews encompassed three groups: gig workers, low-wage W-2 workers and creative freelancers (such as dancers, models, photographers).

Those interviews led to her new book, Side Hustle Safety Net: How Vulnerable Workers Survive Precarious Times, recently published by the University of California Press. It highlights the consequences of pandemic-fueled economic instability on these workers.

On a broader scale, Ravenelle said, these stories shed light on the larger issues of inequality in society, namely the disparity in outcomes for people who receive unemployment assistance — the "officially unemployed" — and the "forgotten jobless" who have to struggle on their own.

Surprisingly, she found that some people who qualified for unemployment through the CARES Act chose to not apply — they believed they didn't qualify or they thought it was stigmatizing — and missed a valuable opportunity.

People who applied for unemployment assistance often found



Alexandrea Ravenelle in Stuyvesant Square in New York City.

far-reaching benefits, she said: "The benefits allowed them to rest, reflect and reset. Some workers ultimately changed careers, such as the longtime Uber driver who took a job as a community habilitation specialist."

In fact, by the fall of 2021, one worker had created a lucrative dogboarding business in Brooklyn and already had five employees on the payroll. "It's amazing what a relatively small investment in these workers can yield!" Ravenelle said.

Interviewing people multiple times not only created a rapport with them, she explained, it also shed light on how the pandemic affected their lives during various surges.

This fall Ravenelle is in New York
City as a Russell Sage Foundation
Visiting Scholar and will work on her
next book, which examines the impact
of ending pandemic-era supports even
as the pandemic itself continued. Thanks
to a second NSF grant, Ravenelle will
also be following up with these workers
one more time.

"The COVID pandemic might be a fleeting moment in time, but examining the long-term impact on people's lives provides insight into helping the most vulnerable among us," she said.

#### Optimizing optics

Nicolas Pégard's lab helps neuroscientists tackle research challenges with customdesigned optical technology.

BY M.L. PARKER '10

#### Optical engineering. Neuroscience. Computer programming.

Identify the point where these research areas converge, and you'll find the work of Nicolas Pégard, an assistant professor of applied physical sciences. With joint appointments in the department of biomedical engineering and the UNC Neuroscience Center, Pégard specializes in designing optical instruments to reverse-engineer how the brain works.

How did he arrive at this distinct intersection of scientific fields? For Pégard, the answer is simple: Follow your curiosity.

Growing up in France, Pégard fell in love with experimental physics at the Palais de la Découverte, or "Discovery Palace," a science museum in Paris. His father, a computer scientist, and a few attentive teachers fortified his interest.

"I had several teachers who noticed I was curious and absorbed information fast," he said. "They invested a little extra time and energy in my education — like giving me books to read."

Books on semiconductors led him to study materials science during his undergraduate career at École Polytechnique in France, before heading to Princeton to begin his Ph.D. Pégard applied to the department of electrical engineering, but the microelectronics lab he was initially hoping to join never responded to his inquiries. Meanwhile, Pégard learned about another lab that was doing research in optics and that group responded to him immediately.

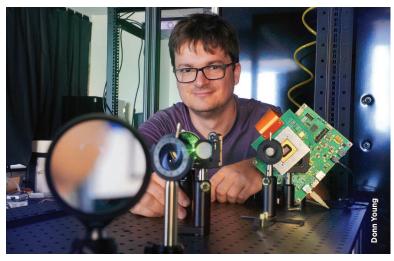
"That's where I discovered computational imaging — the art of developing hardware and software together to capture better images," he said.

After finishing his Ph.D., Pégard landed a postdoctoral position at the University of California, Berkeley to design custom microscopes for a neuroscience lab.

"Neuroscientists are really creative experimentalists who like to tinker," Pégard said. "They saw the benefits of being connected to an engineer."

When Pégard joined the UNC faculty in 2019, he received a Career Award from the Burroughs Welcome Fund to build an interdisciplinary lab at the intersection of neuroscience, engineering and computer science. Pégard's research team develops automated microscopes that track and modulate the activity of neurons in 3D to reverse-engineer brain functions.

"We observed that many of our neuroscientist colleagues



 Nicolas Pégard's lab develops automated microscopes that track and modulate the activity of neurons in 3D to reverse-engineer brain functions.

were unable to pursue their dream experiments due to lack of adequate technology, so we create custom optical instruments that are tailored to their exact experimental needs," Pégard said.

To construct their custom microscopes, Pégard and his team sometimes use parts scavenged from video projectors and cellphones. They also make some parts from scratch at one of UNC's BeAM makerspaces.

Pégard recently received two prestigious awards — the Beckman Young Investigator Award and the Sloan Fellowship to expand his work and to create new partnerships.

His latest collaboration, with Jose Rodríguez-Romaguera and Rebecca Grzadzinski in the department of psychiatry in the UNC School of Medicine, involves developing a non-invasive optical device that could help in the diagnosis and management of neuropsychiatric disorders. The device is a pair of glasses that uses infrared light and sensors to track eye movement, pupil size, breathing rate and heart rate.

"In many psychiatric disorders, the arousal response is dysfunctional," Pégard said. "For example, a patient with PTSD may react very strongly to a neutral stimulus like the sound of a car passing by."

Pégard compares the device to a Fitbit for mental health: "It monitors the patient's biometric markers of arousal and alerts them whenever arousal responses are observed outside of their expected range. With it, we can implement new strategies to manage the underlying disorder and intervene as soon as signs and symptoms are detected. Our goal is to provide patients with a new effective option for mental care, between counseling and medication."

Pégard enjoys the interdisciplinary nature of his work.

"I thrive working with neuroscientists who have technological needs," he said. "My colleagues simply don't have the bandwidth to invent new technology, but that's what I have spent my career developing. We have a very symbiotic relationship."

#### Borders and boundaries

Political geographer Banu Gökarıksel directs Carolina's popular curriculum in global studies while exploring her own research about global and local belonging.

BY MICHELE LYNN

Growing up in Turkey during an era of vast social and economic policy shifts, Banu Gökariksel became fascinated by the impact of these changes.

After majoring in economics as an undergraduate at Istanbul's Boğaziçi University and earning a master's degree in sociology/cultural anthropology from the same institution, she became interested in borders and boundaries — beginning with how public spaces, such as shopping malls, affect people's lives and sense of belonging.

"I've always been interested in big questions about identity and politics, particularly in terms of how policy impacts individuals — who gets marginalized and how ordinary people contribute to those tensions," said Gökarıksel, a professor of geography and global studies. Her passion for these topics led her to the University of Washington, where she earned a doctorate in political and cultural geography. Since joining the Carolina faculty in 2005, she has been lauded for her work, including receiving a Chapman Family Teaching Award from UNC and an Enhancing Diversity Award from the American Association of Geographers.

Gökarıksel's research has focused on feminist political and cultural geographies in her home country, where she has examined how being a Muslim woman and wearing a hijab have been "a highly contested geopolitical issue."

Gökarıksel has explored politics through relationships between neighbors and how tensions can come to a head when people with different beliefs live close to one another, an issue that resonates globally and locally. "That work is grounded in Turkey, but whenever I speak about my project about homes and neighborhoods as the location of political tensions, it resonates with people in the United States, too," she said.

Her wide range of inquiry includes a new project in the Tar Heel State. She recently embarked on "Refugee Resettlement in North Carolina," which examines the role of volunteering and community sponsorship as Afghans, Syrians, Ukrainians and other refugees arrive in the state. The project explores what motivates people to work with refugees and how they navigate differences in religion, race, culture and gender.

As chair of the **curriculum in global studies**, Gökarıksel also leads the only Carolina degree program with an explicitly global focus. She describes the nearly 400 undergraduates in the popular major as highly motivated and diverse students. The graduate program, launched in 2014, has about 30 students each year. The global studies alumni network includes more



• In her work, geographer Banu Gökarıksel emphasizes building connections "across borders of race, gender and class."

than 4,000 people across a wide range of careers.

"UNC global studies students learn about the critical and comparative insights offered through contact with other people and places," she said. "I'm excited to help generate spaces for interdisciplinary conversation and collaboration with my global studies colleagues, who come from more than 10 departments."

Gökarıksel advocates for global studies to engage in the most recent scholarship and research.

"We are thinking about the history of global studies and its roots, which are very much in asymmetric hierarchies of colonialism," she said. "We are engaging in anti-racist and decolonial theories and the works of feminists so we can expand the intellectual borders of the field."

She added that global studies is a crucial field in the political interventions that define the current moment.

"Many of the issues affecting the world today, such as climate change and migration, can only be understood and addressed from a global perspective," Gökarıksel said. "It is necessary for us to learn from one another and create connections instead of treating problems in a limited, nationalistic way."

Gökarıksel said she views her work in academia as a community-building endeavor.

"What I really emphasize is being open and building a network of colleagues and students who value connections across borders of race, gender and class," she said.

#### The Hollywood storyteller

Alumna Rayna McClendon found her love of screenwriting through classes in the department of communication at UNC.

BY CLAIRE CUSICK (M.A. '21)

Growing up in Atlanta, even in a family of classic movie watchers, Rayna McClendon thought her writerly ambitions would take form on paper, not on screen.

"I pretty quickly knew that I wanted to be a writer," said McClendon (communication studies '09), who today is a Hollywood writer and producer. "Writing poems and short

stories was a way for me to express some of the things that I wasn't able to vocalize as a teenager. Telling stories gave me the opportunity to grapple with all those emotional things that were going on in my life."

McClendon chose Carolina for its creative writing program, and came in knowing that would be her minor, but she needed a major. She briefly considered journalism, but a media theory class helped her discover the department of communication. After that, she poured her storytelling into screenwriting.

"I always knew what I was meant to do, and I'm very grateful that I was given the opportunity specifically at Carolina to explore that," said McClendon, who returned to campus last spring for a talk on "Navigating the Film Industry." "I still had to learn a ton. That's what I was able to receive at Carolina."

McClendon participated in the UNC Hollywood Internship Program, a prestigious industry immersion experience that has been offered by the department each summer since 1992. She was assigned to Mosaic Media Group, a talent management company. There she was asked to help process the ever-growing pile of scripts submitted by hopeful writers. Reading a script and providing a synopsis and an opinion on its viability is called "doing coverage."

"Doing coverage was probably the most valuable thing for me as a writer," she said. "I could read scripts that were already in production, too."

McClendon's first official job in Hollywood was in Mosaic's mailroom. "Best job ever, I loved it," she said. In 2009, the job was responsible for incoming and outgoing media, which meant handling CDs or DVDs of people's work, including burning highlight reels of performers the agency represented. Having learned to edit video in the UNC Multimedia Lab from Mark Robinson helped McClendon; she once edited a reel for a young Jessica Chastain. She continued reading scripts and began to be hired to write them.



• ABOVE: Rayna McClendon is an alumna of the UNC Hollywood Internship Program. • LEFT: McClendon participates in the

Writers Guild of America (WGA) strike.

She wrote for "Awkward," a series that ran for five seasons on MTV, and then "Finding Carter," "Briarpatch" and "Deadly Class." She served as a writer and producer of "The Walking Dead: World Beyond" and is a co-executive producer for Marvel Studios.

In 2021, LucasFilm came calling with a super-secret project that ended up being "Obi-Wan Kenobi,"

a Disney+ mini-series that was an expansion of the Star Wars cinematic universe. "I grew up on Star Wars," she said.

McClendon was hired to help flesh out the female characters in "Obi-Wan Kenobi," which dramatized the early relationship between the title character and Darth Vader. She wrote 15 pages full of recommendations. She found herself especially drawn to Reva, a new character.

"Reva had never been seen before, and she was going to be played by a Black woman," McClendon said. "She was also going to be a villain. I was excited about the trailblazing element, but also, I felt super-protective of her."

An early draft had Reva giving a speech revealing her motivations. "This is the biggest thing with storytelling — you always have to figure out, what does the character want?" McClendon said.

Another character asks Reva what she wants, and McClendon had her respond simply, "What I'm owed." That line made it into the show.

"When I saw it on screen, I got goosepimples," she said. "I knew that I had figured out that character, and that felt great."

#### **McNaughton Family Fund** supports Program for Public Discourse

#### BY ANDY BERNER

hen asked why he supports UNC's Program for Public Discourse, J. Flint McNaughton '86 had a ready reply.

"Candidly, I think we should be teaching our kids how to think - not what to think. We should teach and provide encouraging educational environments that promote open dialogue, truth-seeking and understanding with those who disagree with us."

McNaughton added, "I think we all need to listen, learn and engage others of opposite viewpoints in a civil manner. UNC's Program for **Public Discourse** is showing our kids the way on this."

Last year, McNaughton and his wife, Julie Wells McNaughton, established the McNaughton Family Fund in the Program for Public Discourse to

provide for the program's most urgent needs. This might include course development grants, faculty workshops, salary support and student and public programming.

For the 2023-2024 academic year, the McNaughton Fund is supporting the program's Agora Fellows program. Some of the funds will also support a First Year Seminar, "Elements of Politics," taught by Larry Goldberg, a lecturer in the program, and UNC Clinical Associate Professor of Law Rachel Gurvich.

"The McNaughton Family Fund assures that the Program for Public Discourse continues to lead the way in offering exceptional, thought-provoking courses and opportunities for students to engage across differences and practice constructive discourse," said the program's faculty director, Sarah Treul Roberts.

#### **GIVING BACK**

"I was 11 when my father passed away," McNaughton explained. "I had quite a few father figures in my life that stepped in and helped me along the way. They invested in me, loved me and held me accountable. I'm so grateful for that and learned that investing in and helping others is one of the greatest joys in life. I've been so blessed that giving back is something I've felt I had a responsibility to do."

The Agora Fellows program provides undergraduate students a space to experiment with public discourse in a



ABOVE: Three of the 2022-2023 Agora Fellows who attended the Abbey Speaker Series event, "A Conversation with Cal Cunningham and Thom Tillis," (from left to right): Sarah Crow, Willow Yang and Maddux Vernon. LEFT: Julie and Flint McNaughton.

collaborative environment with their peers. Under the tutelage of Kevin Marinelli, executive director of the program, students meet regularly throughout the year to explore a variety of timely and timeless issues through a range of discursive modes, such as debate and critical reflection.

"During my time as an Agora Fellow, there has been an unwavering emphasis on 'listening to listen rather than to respond," said Willow Yang '25. "Listening allows some semblance of understanding between those with different opinions without the polarizing pressure of being 'right' or 'wrong,' a phenomenon that I think the Agora curriculum and programming not only understands very well but enables it to make real, tangible impact."

#### THE CAROLINA CONNECTION

As a native of Miami, McNaughton knew he wanted an "out-of-state" experience for college. "A buddy of mine and I visited six schools over spring break," he remembered. "The weather was cold and wet for most of the visits — but when I got to Chapel Hill in the afternoon, the weather turned sunny. The azaleas were blooming, everyone was so welcoming, and the campus was glorious. I knew that if they'd let me in, I was coming to Chapel Hill."

"I loved every minute of my time there. UNC is a pretty idyllic college experience - rigorous academics, great reputation, fantastic sporting venues and a fun social atmosphere."

In 1994, when the McNaughtons decided to move from Miami to Charlotte, they knew they had friends in North Carolina that made for a natural and smooth transition back to the Tar Heel state. "I've never looked back," said McNaughton. "There is something special about Carolina alums. You always feel at home around them."

#### Majoring in a 'life of meaning and purpose'

#### BY ERIN WADSWORTH '22

oming to Carolina was an easy decision for Bill Farthing '70 (J.D. '74). Almost 60 years later, it was another easy decision to give back to the place where he spent his first four years at UNC: the department of religious studies.

Farthing, a Morehead-Cain Scholar from Charlotte, knew he wanted to study religion when he arrived in Chapel Hill. His upbringing in the Methodist church and involvement in the ministry Young Life at Myers Park High School piqued his interest in the subject.

"Both of those experiences ignited an interest in studying religion in its various forms and were the impetus for being involved in religious studies in Chapel Hill," Farthing said.

Farthing learned from professors he refers to as his "triumvirate" of religious studies faculty at UNC: Bernard Boyd, Samuel Hill and William Peck.

They were already icons in their field, and their legacy lives on, Farthing said.

He credits Boyd's brilliant lectures and invaluable mentorship for cementing his interest in religious studies. Hill and Peck were equally captivating as instructors, Farthing said, inspiring him to always dig deeper and learn more.

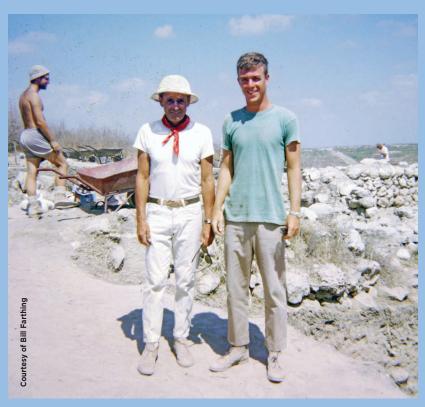
"Being a lifelong student of religion and theology has helped me as a leader." - BILL FARTHING

"They expanded my horizons in ways that I still appreciate," Farthing said. "When you're exposed to such genuine insights and such advanced academics, if it doesn't change you, then you're not paying attention."

Farthing says the department taught him to look for a deeper meaning in everything he experiences, and he wanted to give more students the same opportunity. He and his wife, Linda, established the Bill and Linda Farthing Excellence Fund in Religious Studies in 2022.

"We are so deeply honored by the generosity of Bill and Linda Farthing and their support for the mission of our department," said Randall Styers, professor and interim chair of religious studies. "We work daily to help our students recognize the richness of human history, the astounding diversity of global cultures and the many ways that human communities seek to make meaning."

The Farthings wanted their fund to be unrestricted to provide the department with the most flexibility. The endowment will allow the chair to support a range of activities,



· Bernard Boyd (left) and Bill Farthing on an archaeological dig in Israel in 1968. Farthing credits Boyd's lectures and mentorship for cementing his interest in religious studies.

including undergraduate education, graduate student and faculty support, and curricular development.

"I want the department of religious studies to thrive," Farthing said. "I want it to continue to be recognized as a critical component of a liberal arts education — not in an evangelical way, but in a way that enhances the importance in growing one's spirituality in the midst of a culture that offers such diverse lifestyles and religious choices. It is one of the most valuable experiences that a college student can have: to be exposed to the life issues you're confronted with when you're in a religious studies class. What can be more fruitful or more valuable in determining what kind of life you want to lead?"

The Farthings' love of Carolina extends beyond the department of religious studies. He and his wife also established the Bill and Linda Farthing Diversity Scholarship in the School of Law, and he is a former member of UNC's Board of Visitors. He's also a 35-year member of the Ram's Club and a huge fan of Carolina athletics. (He unsuccessfully tried out for the lacrosse team as a first-year student.)

Farthing is now a retired attorney after a 40-year career at the Parker Poe Law Firm, a father of two (including a double Carolina alumna) and a grandfather of five. He continues to value what he learned from the discipline.

"Being a lifelong student of religion and theology has helped me as a leader involved in numerous nonprofits and as managing partner of my law firm. It's helped me as a parent and grandparent, and I hope it's helped me as a husband in my effort to pursue a life of meaning and purpose."



#### A NEW LOOK FOR **THE OLD WELL**

Chancellor Kevin Guskiewicz speaks during a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the reopening of the Old Well as a new academic year begins. Renovations to the beloved UNC-Chapel Hill landmark, which was closed during the summer, included installing a sloped pathway and lowering the drinking fountain to improve accessibility for all visitors. During the project's construction, Summer School students in the Field School in North American Archaeology were able to excavate the area for historic artifacts.



For Blanche Armfield, who earned her master's degree in English from UNC in 1928, it was poetry. A lifelong reader and writer of poetry, she was also a published poet. When she died in 2000, Blanche left more than \$500,000 to the

creative writing program in the department of English and

comparative literature to enhance interest in poetry and to encourage poetry writing.

Over the last 20 years, the Blanche B. Armfield Poetry Fund has more than doubled in value while also cultivating a new generation of poets. More than 50 prominent American poets have visited campus to give readings to students through the Blanche Armfield Poetry Series, and more than 17 undergraduates, including Lila Richardson '23, have been awarded the Blanche B. Armfield Prize in Poetry.

Contact us today to learn about making a planned gift to the College of Arts and Sciences.

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#### THE SCOOP

## 'One of the kindest persons I've ever met'

Tar Heel community mourns the tragic loss of nanoscience researcher Zijie Yan.

As Carolina students, faculty and staff raised candles glowing with firelight, their fitting tribute honored the life of a brilliant scientist whose light was extinguished all too soon.

Zijie Yan, an associate professor of applied physical sciences, was shot and killed on Aug. 28 in his Caudill Labs office on campus.

A few days later, the community came together for a memorial chiming of the Bell Tower and a moment of silence, and mourners left behind flowers and cards in tribute to Yan. That night, more than 5,000 Tar Heels attended a candlelight vigil at the Dean E. Smith Center.

People from across the country also shared messages of support and solidarity for UNC-Chapel Hill.

Yan, who joined the UNC faculty in 2019, was working to transcend the boundary between photonics and materials science by developing new techniques to study light-matter interactions at the nanometer scale. He received a Ph.D. in materials engineering in 2011 from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute.

Speaking at the vigil, College Dean Jim White said one reason the grief and sorrow are so intense is because the community feels so connected to one another.

"The College of Arts and Sciences is a big place, and the University is even bigger, but these cherished connections that we have with colleagues, co-workers, classmates and friends are what make it feel small and special," he said. "This bond, this looking out for one another, is perhaps our greatest strength."

Theo Dingemans, professor and







**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT:** • Zijie Yan was an associate professor of applied physical sciences. • Mourners left flowers and cards at the Bell Tower. • A candlelight vigil drew more than 5,000 Tar Heels to the Dean E. Smith Center.

chair of the department of applied physical sciences, said Yan was "pushing the boundaries of nanoscience with his research program."

But Dingemans added that what he truly wanted the community to remember was that Yan was a dedicated, teacher, mentor, colleague, son and father to two young daughters.

"Zijie was one of the kindest persons I've ever met. He was soft spoken — a great listener — and he had a wonderful sense of humor," Dingemans said.

On Sept. 8, the Faculty Council passed a resolution in honor of Yan, which states that "his legacy will live on through all of us, the scholarship of his students and his significant contributions to science."

It will be a long process of healing. General Alumni Association President and College alumna Veronica Flaspoehler '08 acknowledged that and shared a message with alumni, writing: "At times like these, the term Carolina Family becomes evident and real. We are in mourning, but we will find our way ahead, together."

Dingemans closed his remarks at the vigil by saying that even though department colleagues will dearly miss Yan, there is one thing he is 100 percent sure of:

"Zijie would want us to move forward. He would want us to keep educating students at this magical place. He would want us to keep doing research that will change the world. And that is exactly what we're going to do."



#### **LEIBFARTH NAMED INSTITUTE FOR CONVERGENT SCIENCE FELLOW**

hemist Frank Leibfarth has been named the inaugural Institute for Convergent Science faculty fellow.

Leibfarth's research tests molecules to turn plastic waste into useful materials — a potential method of recycling that could reshape the industry and prevent recyclable materials from ending up in landfills, incinerators or as environmental pollutants. It's the type of interdisciplinary, translational research that the Institute for Convergent Science was created to support.

The institute is a pan-campus unit working to expand the scale and scope of Carolina's impact on society by translating discovery into solutions through invention, innovation and enterprise.

Fellowships place the investment on researchers instead of specific projects. Leibfarth, an associate professor in the department of chemistry, can choose from his full scope of research, including how to make PFAS-contaminated water safe to drink, when deciding which issues to tackle in the coming years.

"Being named as the inaugural ICS faculty fellow is not only a great honor, but also an exciting opportunity to more intimately connect our innovations in the lab with stakeholders outside of the chemistry department," Leibfarth said. "My goal is for this opportunity to enable us to think through how our science can make an impact beyond our fundamental discoveries and ultimately contribute to the thriving innovation infrastructure at UNC-Chapel Hill."





 Hugo Méndez and Nina Martin received awards from the world's only institute dedicated to advanced study in the humanities.

#### **NATIONAL HUMANITIES CENTER TAPS TWO FOR SUMMER RESIDENCIES**

ugo Méndez in religious studies and Nina Martin in geography were recently selected for summer residencies at the National Humanities Center — a four-week program that gives humanities scholars an opportunity to make progress on a current research project or jump-start a new one.

Méndez, an assistant professor in ancient Mediterranean religions, worked on Gospel Truth: The Biblical Books of John as a Chain of Pseudo-Historical Texts, a manuscript under contract with Oxford University Press.

"My work calls attention to the messy historical reality from which we received some of the most inspiring artifacts of global culture — books that have shaped how billions pray, paint, think and live," he said.

During her residency, Martin, an associate professor of geography, worked on *Pretentious Urbanism: How* Progressive Cities Recreate Racial and Economic Inequities. Her book explores a seeming paradox: Why do the most progressive and tolerant cities in the United States also have some of the highest rates of racial and economic inequality?

"Both long-standing and novel approaches to urban development in cities fail to reckon with historical injustices and therefore recreate many of the inequalities they seek to dismantle," she said.

The National Humanities Center is the world's only independent institute dedicated exclusively to advanced study in all areas of the humanities.

#### **GRADUATE STUDENTS ENHANCE CAREER SKILLS WITH KING'S COLLEGE PARTNERS**

More than 30 Carolina graduate students advanced their research and gained valuable career skills by organizing and participating in academic workshops with graduate students at one of Carolina's strategic partners, King's College London, this past summer.

Participating UNC departments included geography, global studies, history, music, philosophy and religious studies, and 14 Carolina faculty members joined the students for the workshops in London.

Students from each institution work together to organize the workshops and contribute their scholarship. presenting research papers and offering feedback alongside faculty experts.

Noreen McDonald, senior associate dean for social sciences and global programs in the College, said the workshops are a valuable opportunity for graduate students to develop the necessary skills and experiences to become global leaders.

"The exchange of knowledge, perspectives and ideas with an international audience fosters a deeper understanding of topics they're covering and enhances their ability to navigate complex global challenges," she said.

Elizabeth Olsen, department chair and professor of



 The curriculum in global studies hosted its first graduate workshop at King's College London.

geography, organized a joint workshop on feminist, decolonial and critical methodological approaches to the study of the Global South with UNC graduate students Ingrid Diaz Moreno and Andreina Malki. Olsen said organizing and participating in the workshops creates career and academic opportunities for students.

"Developing a proposal, working out the challenges of travel and coordination and then traveling to London to meet with students and faculty around a shared topic of interest opens so many doors for them," she said.



• Students in Jim Hirschfield's sculpture course learn about Carolina Tree Heritage.

#### **STUDENTS TURN DOWNED TREES INTO ART**

Since the fall of 2021, the Carolina Tree Heritage program and Jim Hirschfield's wood sculpture class have given downed trees on UNC's campus new life.

Hirschfield is a professor in the

department of art and art history in the

Carolina Tree Heritage provides students in Hirschfield's introductory wood sculpting course with wood from trees that are taken down on campus, preventing the wood from ending up in landfills.

"These old big, beautiful trees have

been around on campus since before there was a campus in many cases, so we're really excited to do things with those trees when they come down," said Susan Cohen, associate director at the UNC Institute for the Environment. Cohen and her colleague Tom Bythell, the university arborist, manage the heritage program.

Before receiving the wood, Hirschfield's students tour the laydown yard where the program stores its wood supply and learn about the mission of giving downed trees a new legacy. After the visit, students are given a piece of wood to create their sculptures.

Using music as inspiration for the course, Hirschfield titled the project "Étude," which is a musical composition focused on improving one's technical skills.

"There's a connection there between a project that's a work of art but that is also designed to teach people wood processes, wood fabrication and the tools in the shop," Hirschfield said.

#### DIGITAL RESOURCE HELPS PLANNERS PREP FOR NATURAL DISASTERS

NC's Coastal Resilience Center has launched a website to help communities plan for and evaluate hazards like hurricanes and wildfires.

Natural hazards take a toll on infrastructure, the environment, the economy and the people living there. It's not easy to rebuild or relocate a family or business. And when it comes to community planning, collaboration and communication aren't always top of mind.

"Local governments tend to act in siloed capacities," said Phil Berke, research professor in the department of city and regional planning in the College and a member of the center. "Planning, recovery and prevention of recurring damage require all the different parts of local government to work together."

Berke and colleagues at Texas A&M University created the Plan Integration for Resilience Scorecard nearly 10 years ago to show gaps or conflicting efforts



• City and regional planning professor Phil Berke and colleagues developed a tool and website to help communities plan for natural disasters.

in a municipality's departmental planning — like when an economic development team wants to build a new shopping center in a seemingly viable area of town that actually has a documented history of flooding.

The latest advancements to the scorecard, called PIRS, happened this

past spring. With funding from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, the Coastal Resilience Center and a partnership with the American Planning Association, PIRS got its own website. The tool, along with educational resources on how to use it, is online at planintegration.com.

#### SLAVIC CENTER RECEIVES NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER DESIGNATION

he Center for Slavic, Eastern European and Eurasian Studies at UNC has been designated as a National Resource Center for language and area studies by the U.S. Department of Education's International and Foreign Language Education office.

With this designation, all six of UNC-Chapel Hill's area studies centers are NRCs, more than any other university in the U.S. Southeast.

The center will receive \$642,000 in funding over the next three years to support language and area studies coursework, programming and events, and outreach across North Carolina and institutions beyond the state, including minority-serving institutions and community colleges. As an NRC, the center has a substantial K-12 education mission as well. In fall 2022, the center received \$904,132 through the Foreign Language and Area Studies fellowships program.

FedEx GLOBAL EDUCATION CENTER

• The Center for Slavic, Eastern European and Eurasian Studies is housed in the FedEx Global Education Center.

"We are thrilled to receive this prestigious designation from

the U.S. Department of Education," said Graeme Robertson, director of the center and a professor of political science. "With this funding, we are poised to enhance our efforts in equipping students and scholars across the state and beyond with the knowledge and skills necessary to foster a deeper understanding of Russia, East Europe and Eurasia. We look forward to continuing our mission of promoting global awareness, cultural exchange and preparing a new, diverse generation of leaders."



#### **GIOVANELLO NAMED ASSOCIATE DEAN** FOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

elly Giovanello is the College's new associate dean for research and innovation.

Giovanello is the Bowman and Gordon Gray Distinguished Term Professor in the department of psychology and neuroscience and has been a member of the Carolina faculty since 2006.

A neuroscientist whose research uses behavioral, patient-based and functional neuroimaging approaches to investigate the neural basis of human memory, Giovanello has used several research cores at the UNC Biomedical Research Imaging Center, including human MRI, radiochemistry and radiopharmacy. She has collaborated with faculty from the schools of medicine, pharmacy and public health as well as across the College. She previously served as co-associate director of the imaging center, where she gained valuable experience on how research cores operate, the challenges research cores face, and creative solutions and opportunities for resolving those challenges.

In her home department, Giovanello was instrumental in developing and launching both a neuroscience minor (2015) and interdisciplinary neuroscience major (2018); these innovative programs now serve as a model for peer institutions.

The associate dean for research and innovation is a member of the dean's senior leadership team and works closely with the senior associate deans in the College and with the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research, Innovate Carolina, the UNC Institute for Convergent Science and other units throughout the

Giovanello succeeds Greg Copenhaver, who was named director of the Institute for Convergent Science.



• Kathleen Mullan Harris and colleagues received a grant to study Alzheimer's disease and related dementias.

#### \$25.3 MILLION TO STUDY **ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE RISKS**

A team led by Kathleen Mullan Harris and Krista M. Perreira at UNC-Chapel Hill and Joseph Hotz and Naomi Duke at Duke University has received a five-year, \$25.3 million National Institute of Aging award. The award will help address gaps in our understanding of potential risks for Alzheimer's disease and Alzheimer's disease-related dementias.

Alzheimer's is currently ranked as the seventh leading cause of death in the United States and is the most common cause of dementia among older adults. But there are gaps in our understanding of risk and protective factors across racial and ethnic groups and socioeconomic status.

The new grant builds upon the Add Health Parent Study, an ongoing study of social, behavioral and biological factors influencing healthy aging in a national sample of the baby boom generation, now moving through their late 60s and 70s. Parent study sample members are parents of adult children in the Add Health study who have been followed for 25+ years since adolescence.

"Having longitudinal data on two generations will provide unprecedented research opportunities to understand how intergenerational processes in social conditions, behavior and lifestyle and genomic factors affect cognition and health, "said Harris, the James E. Haar Distinguished Professor of Sociology in the College.

Add Health is the largest, most comprehensive, nationally representative and longitudinal study of the health of adolescents who have now aged into midlife ever undertaken in the United States. The parents of Add Health respondents were first interviewed in midlife when their adolescents were in middle or high school.

#### Rewriting the narrative

In a new book spanning 200 years of history, award-winning scholar Blair L.M. Kelley shines a spotlight on the often-overlooked contributions of everyday Black workers through the lens of her own family's story.

#### Q: Can you give us a brief synopsis of your book?

A: Beginning with the stories of my own ancestors and combining that with archival research, Black Folk: The Roots of the Black Working Class (W.W. Norton) is a human exploration of Black working-class history. Beginning with the history of my ancestor, Henry, a blacksmith, then continuing using family stories and oral histories, my book explores the collective power present within the Black community. The book investigates professions — sharecroppers, washerwomen, Pullman porters, postal workers, household workers — but with an eye toward people's everyday lives. Black Folk asks: What does it mean to be a Black working person? How do Black workers survive subjugation in order to create community? In the book I find some incredible stories — some devastating, some uplifting — but all of them have something to teach us about our past, our present and what's possible in America's future.

#### **Q:** How does this fit in with your research interests and passions?

A: I consider myself to be a historian of the Black experience, but I've never thought of myself as a labor historian or a union historian. So, when I was approached about the possibility of writing about the Black working class, I wondered if I was the right person. My editor asked me to think about framing the book from my own perspective as a scholar and a writer. I love the challenge of trying to figure out what happened in the past and what that past can teach us, so *Black Folk* was my answer to a challenging question.

#### Q: What surprised you when researching/writing this book?

A: The most surprising things were all the connections that I made, the threads that I could pull when telling the story. I started the writing process in what is now the middle of the book, with the chapter on maids and a focus on Philadelphia, and I was looking for an oral history that would dovetail with the kind of story I wanted to tell. I discovered an interview with a woman named Minnie Savage, which had been recorded decades ago. I realized that she was from the same place that my father's family was from, on the Eastern Shore of Virginia in Accomack County. And then I realized that she probably migrated within a year or two of my own grandfather. It was such a gift to have insight into her experience, and by extension, to know more about my grandfather's experience. Then when I was looking for an oral history with a washerwoman, I discovered Sarah Hill, and then I



• Historian Blair L.M. Kelley received a John Hope Franklin Fellowship through the National Humanities Center to work on her book, Black Folk: The Roots of the Black Working Class.

figured out that Sarah was from the same small county, Elbert County, Georgia, as Henry, my three-times great-grandfather that I write about in the opening chapter. This started to go beyond coincidence and started to feel purposeful.

#### Q: Where's your go-to writing spot, and how do you deal with writer's block?

**A:** I wrote much of *Black Folk* during the pandemic, and I started out writing it in my kitchen at night. Then I realized: Who needs a dining room in the middle of the pandemic? So I turned it into my new office!

I don't really get what I would call writer's block. My major limitation is that I do not write during the day. My brain is much freer during late-night hours, 11 p.m. to about 3 a.m. Being kind of punchy and sleepy at night helps me relax, and the words flow.

Blair L.M. Kelley is the Joel R. Williamson Distinguished Professor of Southern Studies and director of the Center for the Study of the American South.

Read more books by College faculty and alumni at magazine.college.unc.edu.

Check out our "Bookmark This" feature at college.unc.edu.



#### CAROLINA ROLLING BY

Carolina alumni (from left) Wood Robinson, Joseph Terrell, Libby Rodenbough and Jacob Sharp of the band Mipso have been captivating audiences with their sweet harmonies for over a decade. The band is currently on tour promoting its sixth album, Book of Fools. Terrell shared with Carolina Arts & Sciences the handwritten lyrics to "Carolina Rolling By," the first track released, and it's a song that Tar Heels will likely be singing on repeat.

The Bluegrass Situation, which recently tapped Mipso as its "Artist of the Month," wrote, "There is a kinetic energy in this collaboration that is only achieved from years of hard-won work and the evolution of four people who choose each other."

Follow the band on Instagram @mipsomusic, and check out the "Carolina Rolling By" video on YouTube. Scan the QR code to listen to the album on Spotify.

Carolina rolling by
The undows down
And the sun's up high
Can you feel it?
I can feel it.

Sometimes I natch the trees And I number at leaves All reaching toward the light They can sleep at night They know to do whatir right

when I'm out at dann
on an open road
And the sun climbs up the branches
I know I'm not alone
It's just the long way home



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