

THE MAGAZINE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA TERRY COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

TERRY

SPRING/SUMMER 2021



AT THE MOVIES WITH JOHN ROOKER

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Terry alum helps female-led companies gain opportunities and the financial footing to thrive

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Smoothie operator

Charles Watson, CEO of Tropical Smoothie Café, adapts his chain to the changing times

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Top two

Alumni Award winners Pam Rogers and Maria Taylor are shining stars

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Your Support Means the World

Study abroad experiences are transformative, giving students diverse and meaningful learning opportunities while preparing them for the global marketplace. However, many Terry students face financial barriers that prevent them from taking advantage of such programs.

- More than 2,500 Terry students have demonstrated financial need.
- Terry currently offers only 7 donor-supported study abroad scholarships.
- The average cost of a study abroad experience for a student is \$5,000.

As the world reopens, demand for global learning is higher than ever. Help shape our students' future by supporting study abroad opportunities today.

Contact Senior Director of Development & Alumni Relations
Kathy Ortstadt at ortstadt@uga.edu to learn more.



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UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



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Terry Trailblazers

Dr. Harold Black (BBA '66), the first African-American student to enroll and graduate from the Terry College and only the fourth to attend the University of Georgia, returned to campus in February to discuss the grit, perseverance, and friendships that got him through his years at UGA, shaping his worldview and career path. Black's Terry Leadership Speaker Series talk was part of a larger campuswide observance of UGA's 60th anniversary of desegregation. Black joined three Terry alumni honored as Terry Trailblazers, graduates who achieved career success while making a meaningful impact on their organizations and communities. A professor emeritus at the University of Tennessee, Black challenged audience members to discover their muse and find the courage to follow it. Doing the hard things makes you smarter, stronger and most of all it makes you happy with yourself, he said. After the speech, he gathered with Angela Tolliver (BBA '92, MBA '14), engineering data governance leader for Cox Communications, George Azih (BBA '03), founder and CEO of LeaseQuery, and Kiana Morris (MBA '14), acting director of the CDC's Office of Planning, Budget and Legislation in the National Center for Health Statistics, for an online roundtable discussion with the 2021 Terry Trailblazers inductees. The four spoke of their career pathways and the importance of equity in the workplace, then met individually with Terry students to share their expertise and offer advice to students as they navigate their professional journeys. ■

1. Dr. Harold Black, joined by his family, was the guest speaker for the Terry Leadership Speaker Series in February in observance of UGA's 60th anniversary of desegregation. Dr. Black was also an honoree for the 2021 class of Terry Trailblazers.
2. Terry's Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Director Randy Grooms (from left) joins 2021 class of Terry Trailblazers honorees George Azih, Angela Tolliver and Kiana Morris. They are joined by Terry student Christopher Smith.
3. Christopher Smith, a Terry student double majoring in international business and economics, introduces the Terry Trailblazers during the roundtable discussion.
4. Dr. Harold Black talks about his time as a UGA student during the Terry Leadership Speaker Series.
5. Kiana Morris, acting director of the CDC's Office of Planning, Budget and Legislation, answers a question during the roundtable discussion.

Photos by Jason Thrasher

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Terry magazine is published by the
Terry College of Business Office of
Marketing and Communications
terry.uga.edu/omc

Cover photo by AJ Reynolds



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The way forward

Adaptability is a core principle in business. Lessons in it were both put into practice at the Terry College of Business and highlighted in our students' educational experience this year. As we phase out of the COVID year, we are looking ahead with confidence. Terry has four undergraduate majors ranked nationally, with the college positioned in the top 15 among public business schools. Full-Time MBA and Online Master's in Business and Technology earned lofty rankings as well, with the relatively new specialty ranking for Business Analytics gaining top 15 attention among our peers.

We awarded 11 endowed professorships and chairs in the past year, and our faculty continue to attract national honors and enhance our reputation as a leader in business education. We are building out many strategic initiatives — elevating Terry's role in economic development, promoting a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship, and supporting the diversity, wellness and success of our students and alumni.

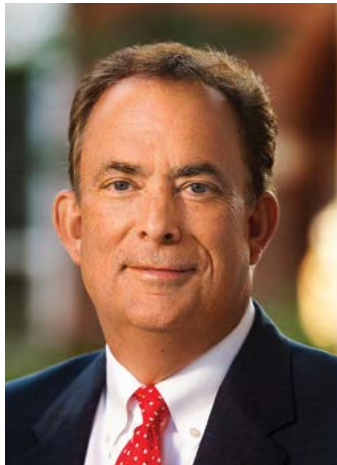
We would not have successfully navigated this year without the generosity of Terry alumni. It makes such a difference in our capacity to be nimble and respond not only to hardships but also capitalize on opportunities. In April, we turned our attention to two of Terry's brightest alumni stars: award winners Pam Rogers and Maria Taylor. We celebrate the personal and professional excellence of these two and other accomplished alumni in this issue of *Terry* magazine. Adrianna Samaniego (page 18) is employing lessons she learned at Terry to help female-founded businesses gain their financial footing, while the work of CEOs John Rooker (page 12) and Charles Watson (page 24) shows how the movie and restaurant business, respectively, are moving swiftly ahead.

And so does the Terry College. As we take steps to resume full operations in the fall, we are focused on equipping the next generation of business leaders with skills in four key areas: Leadership, Analytics, Innovation and Sustainability. The pandemic forced us to be resourceful and solve the next problem in front of us, and these four essential skills will, likewise, prepare our graduates for an ever-changing business environment.

We have some changes in Terry as well. In July, Charlotte Mason is stepping down following 13 years of outstanding service as head of the Marketing Department. John Hulland, who holds the Tanner Chair in Sales Management and serves as graduate coordinator for the marketing Ph.D. program, is the new department head. Charlotte provided steady leadership and an unwavering focus to grow the department's national reputation, and I am confident the Marketing Department will continue to flourish under John's leadership. ■

Sincerely,

Benjamin C. Ayers, *Dean*
Earl Davis Chair in Taxation
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news

Many goals in mind

How does **Zakiyya Ellington** have the time?

She's a senior accounting major working for a master's degree in business analytics from the Terry College while simultaneously earning a bachelor's degree in Arabic with a minor in Spanish from Franklin College. An Honors student, Foundation Fellow and Stamps Scholar, Ellington is also a Terry Ambassador, Sea Island Scholar, Presidential Scholar, member of the Phi Beta Kappa and Beta Gamma Sigma honor societies, Athens Prison Tutorial volunteer tutor, UGA Kickstart Fund partner, LEAD Fellow, Delta Sigma Pi business fraternity co-vice president of professional activities, and treasurer and three-time team MVP of the UGA Women's Rugby Football Club.

That's right — she has time for rugby, too.

“One of my favorite things I have done at UGA has been joining the women's club rugby team,” she says. “Through rugby, I met amazing people from all different parts of campus with whom I had some of my most fun moments. As rugby is such a physical and demanding sport, I learned to be fearless and discovered new strengths and athletic abilities. It is one of the most invigorating and empowering activities I have ever done.”

This fall, the Texas native will pursue a master's degree in global affairs at Tsinghua University in Beijing after being selected for the Schwarzman Scholarship, a graduate fellowship designed to prepare the next generation of leaders with an understanding of China's role in global trends.

“I am so excited to have this opportunity to further my studies, immerse myself in a new country — and hopefully travel throughout China and other countries of East Asia — and meet so many other students from around the world,” she says.

A world traveler who studied abroad at Oxford and visited Tanzania, Morocco, Spain, France and Costa Rica, Ellington is an advanced speaker of modern standard Arabic — specifically in the Moroccan dialect — as well as Spanish.

She intends to apply her talent, experience and passion to advancing social and economic equity through entrepreneurship in under-resourced communities in the Middle East and North Africa. She hopes to work directly with ethnic minorities, refugees and migrants to assist them in growing sustainable startups. ■

Terry names new head of UGA's Department of Marketing

John Hulland, who holds the Emily H. and Charles M. Tanner Jr. Chair in Sales Management at Terry, was appointed to head of the Department of Marketing. The appointment takes effect July 1.

Hulland, who came to the University of Georgia from the University of Pittsburgh in 2011, succeeds Charlotte Mason, who is returning to full-time teaching and research. Mason holds a Terry Chair of Business Administration and has served as department head since joining the UGA faculty from the University of North Carolina in 2008.

"I'm grateful to Charlotte for the outstanding way she has led the Department of Marketing and grown its reputation for teaching, research and professional service," Terry College Dean Benjamin C. Ayers said. "I am absolutely confident that the department will continue to benefit from tremendous support and direction under John's leadership, and I'm pleased he's accepted the appointment."

Hulland served as the department's Ph.D. coordinator since 2015 and mentored dozens of doctoral students during his career. He taught undergraduate and graduate courses in brand management, marketing planning and strategy, statistical research methods, among others.

As a scholar, his research is anchored in marketing strategy, and he's had more than 20 articles published in premier journals. Among his interests, he's co-authored research on social interactions — particularly in online communities — and how they influence consumer behaviors, the marketing-finance interface, and marketing resource management.

In 2018, Hulland was appointed editor-in-chief of the top-tier *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* and was asked to continue as editor for another three-year term. He's also served in editorial roles for the *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of International Marketing* and *Journal of International Business Studies*.

Among his honors, Hulland was chosen for two Terry College faculty awards in the past five years: the Teaching Excellence Award in 2016 and the Distinguished Research Award in 2020.



Terry racks up top rankings

Whether it involves research or specialized programs, the Terry College continues to excel in a variety of rankings. During the spring semester, the college was recognized for the following:

- Terry's Full-Time MBA Program and, for the first time, Business Analytics as a specialization, were both ranked in the top 20 among public business schools in the latest graduate school rankings from *U.S. News & World Report*. The Full-Time MBA Program was ranked No. 39 in the nation and tied for 17th among public business schools — its fourth straight year to be ranked a top 20 public program. Terry was ranked No. 33 overall and 15th among publics for Business Analytics, a relatively new specialty ranking for *U.S. News*. The addition of analytics to the graduate rankings reflects the growing significance of data analytics for careers in business. In addition to Business Analytics, Terry's graduate specialties in Real Estate, Information Systems and Accounting also were ranked among the nation's best by *U.S. News*. In a new ranking of part-time MBA programs, *U.S. News* rated Terry's Professional MBA Program in the top 50 nationally and 29th among public business schools.

- For the second year in a row, Terry's Online Master of Business and Technology degree was ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of the top 5 online specialized master's programs in business. The Online MBT was No. 4 among non-MBA programs in its new survey of the Best Online Programs for college graduates interested in furthering their education. The latest ranking ties the program's No. 4 ranking in last year's *U.S. News* survey. The MBT degree is taught entirely through online courses. Working professionals can complete the part-time program in two years without taking time out from their careers. Students learn graduate-level information systems management and business leadership development.

- The Terry management faculty is ranked first in the nation for its research productivity for the second straight year. The department published the most papers in the field's top research journals in 2019 and again in 2020. The department's five-year publications total ranked fifth nationally. More notable, UGA ranked first for per capita research productivity for the same five-year period.

- Terry's Department of Marketing ranked No. 15 in the United States — and 10th among public universities in the U.S. — for research published in the two premier American Marketing Association journals. DocSIG, the AMA's special interest group for marketing doctoral students, reports the research productivity ranking annually. The new report tracks the schools and individuals who were the top research contributors between 2011-2020. UGA's marketing faculty tied with UCLA and the University of Michigan.

Company led by Terry alum repeats as No. 1 on Bulldog 100

For the second straight year LeaseQuery LLC, an Atlanta-based firm headed by Terry College alumnus **George Azih** (BBA '03) and Chris Ramsey, topped the Bulldog 100 ranking of the fastest-growing businesses owned or operated by UGA alumni.

"For us to now be the first company to [be No. 1] two years in a row is deeply humbling and exciting," said Azih, LeaseQuery's CEO. "I hope it inspires other students out there that they can do it as well."

The company helps accountants and finance professionals eliminate errors through its lease accounting software — the first of its kind built by accountants for accountants. Azih and Ramsey, LeaseQuery's chief revenue officer who earned a bachelor's degree in psychology in 2005, were roommates while at UGA.

"To do this two years in a row means so much," Ramsey said. "We can't wait to share this with the rest of our company because they helped us get here as well."

This year, 51 businesses on the Bulldog 100 list included graduates from the Terry College, including six in the top 10.

"I am proud of each business on this year's list and extend a special congratulations to LeaseQuery for making Bulldog 100 history," said Meredith Gurley Johnson, executive director of the UGA Alumni Association.



LeaseQuery, the company led by Terry alum **George Azih** (above), topped the Bulldog 100 list for the second straight year.

\$1M gift supports funding for Sustainability Initiative

The University of Georgia received a \$1 million pledge to the Terry College to launch the college's new Sustainability Initiative and fund faculty support for the endeavor.

The pledge by the family of **Joanna and Stuart Brown** of Telluride, Colo., will help attract, retain and support a scholar who serves as a champion for sustainable development instruction. The endowment will provide financial resources to launch the environmental initiative and annual funds to support programs at Terry for years to come.

Stuart Brown serves as a director of Brown-Forman Corp., one of the largest American-owned companies in the spirits and wine business. He graduated from UGA in 1992 with a bachelor's



degree in history, and Joanna Brown earned a bachelor's degree in education in 1987. Their son, Stuart Brown Jr., graduated in 2014 with a degree in political science.

"I have been involved with many sustainability and environmental, social and corporate governance initiatives at the company," Stuart Brown said. "It is important to us to be a sustainability leader in the beverage alcohol industry, as well as in corporate America. As Brown-Forman celebrates 150 years of business excellence, we want to encourage Terry students to embrace the vitally important values of sustainability."

Plans for Terry's Sustainability Initiative include hiring faculty, expanding course offerings, launching a new undergraduate area of emphasis in sustainable development and supporting new experiential learning opportunities, said Benjamin C. Ayers, dean of the Terry College. The Terry College is focused on securing additional funding for a sustainability speaker series, research support, faculty-led study away programming and internship opportunities.

New UGA faculty award named for Bennett-Alexander

The work of **Dawn D. Bennett-Alexander**'s life is being honored with the creation of an award that will recognize faculty who promote a more diverse and inclusive community at the University of Georgia.

Bennett-Alexander, an associate professor emeritus, taught employment law and legal studies in the Terry College for 33 years. With more than 50 awards and recognitions for teaching and service, including several awards for outstanding teaching, Bennett-Alexander has devoted much of her career to making diversity and inclusion a priority for students and businesses.

"There have been few professors at this institution who have cared more about student learning and student success than Dawn Bennett-Alexander," said President Jere W. Morehead. "During her long tenure, she made it her mission to ensure all students felt included, both inside and outside of the classroom."

With funding from President Morehead's Task Force on Race, Ethnicity, and Community, the Dawn D. Bennett-Alexander Inclusive Community Award will be given to a faculty member who has contributed extensive efforts to promoting diversity, equity and inclusiveness at UGA.

"[Diversity] is not just something that's on a sheet of paper. It's not just a policy. You feel it when you are in that space. That's what inclusion is about. That's what belonging is about," said Bennett-Alexander. "If diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging is actualized, a person truly feels it rather than it just being a policy pronounced from the top. I work for that every day."





UGA Honors Program to become Morehead Honors College

A \$10 million fundraising campaign, led by the UGA Foundation and its emeriti trustees to strengthen the University of Georgia's Honors Program, will culminate in the naming of the Jere W. Morehead Honors College. Morehead serves as UGA's president, and the naming was approved by the University System of Georgia Board of Regents at its May meeting.

Morehead served as director of the UGA Honors Program from 1999–2004. During his tenure, UGA Honors students earned 23 significant scholarships, including two Rhodes, three Marshall, three Truman and 15 Goldwater scholars. Morehead also oversaw the creation of the Washington Semester Program, through which more than 2,000 students have worked as interns in the nation's capital. He also created the Center for Undergraduate Research Opportunities and laid the groundwork for what is now the Honors International Scholars Program.

"Upon learning of this action, it is difficult for me to adequately express my appreciation to the UGA Foundation Trustees, other donors, the chancellor and the Board of Regents for making this incredible honor possible," said Morehead. "Working with the Honors Program — as its director and continuing as provost and president — has been one of the most rewarding and meaningful experiences of my career. I am humbled and deeply grateful."

Morehead's UGA career began in 1986 when he joined the Terry College of Business legal studies faculty and served as advisor to the School of Law's celebrated moot court program. Before being named UGA's 22nd president in 2013, he served as senior vice president for academic affairs and provost for three years. Earlier, he held several key administrative posts, including vice president for instruction, vice provost for academic affairs, associate provost and director of the UGA Honors Program, and acting executive director of legal affairs.

Chick-fil-A pledges \$10 million to Terry's Institute for Leadership Advancement

The University of Georgia received a record-breaking \$10 million pledge from Chick-fil-A Inc. to expand and enhance UGA's Institute for Leadership Advancement.

Chick-fil-A's pledge is both the largest commitment dedicated to academic support in the history of the Terry College, which houses ILA, and the largest single gift ILA has ever received.

"What we see in the Institute for Leadership Advancement is the chance to make a powerful impact with a one-of-a-kind program," says **Andrew Cathy**, executive vice president of operations at Chick-fil-A. "We know firsthand that ILA produces graduates who are committed to excellence in leadership and in service. And the more of them there are, the better it is for all of us."

The gift will be applied to three distinct areas within ILA. First, the ILA Leadership Fellows program will be expanded to welcome a new cohort of UGA undergraduates each fall and spring semester, instead of each year. Second, ILA will greatly expand leadership class offerings open to all UGA students, beginning next year. Finally, a new professional development symposium will be held annually, offering leadership training to the broader business community beyond the university.

Since its creation in 2001, ILA has graduated nearly 1,500 leaders, many of whom joined Chick-fil-A over the years. ILA centers its programs on the core leadership values of responsibility, stewardship, excellence, integrity and purpose. Two programs — the Leonard Leadership Scholars and ILA Leadership Fellows — operate within ILA, and they have annual cohorts of around 30 and 65 students, respectively, who earn an academic certificate in personal and organizational leadership.

TERRY BITS

- The Terry College hosted the 7th annual **Stock Pitch Competition** in February, an event sponsored by the Finance Department and the Student Managed Investment Fund. This year's virtual format created an opportunity to include more student groups, and a record 25 teams from peer and aspirant universities applied to the contest. A team from the University of Virginia took first place and \$2,500, pitching an investment in the Mexican low-cost airline Volaris. A University of Texas team pitched a short position on GameStop and won \$1,000, with the University of California, Berkeley taking third and \$500 for pitching Berry Global Group. SMIF gives finance students the opportunity to manage a long-only value fund investing in U.S. equities. Students taking FINA 4150 are responsible for managing the \$2.6 million stock portfolio, which is divided into eight industry sectors. The SMIF board is led by Terry Alumni Board member Allison McLeod and advised by faculty members Johannes Kohler, Jeffry Netter and Annette Poulsen.

- **Tina Carpenter**, associate professor of accounting and EY Faculty Fellow, received UGA's Creative Teaching Award. The honor recognizes faculty for excellence in developing and implementing creative teaching methods to improve student learning. Carpenter was honored for her long-running forensic accounting course, where students use what they learn in class to lead a multi-week investigation into a simulated case of fraud. Carpenter also secured a \$25,000 Learning Technologies Grant from the UGA Center for Teaching and Learning to develop an online game to accompany her popular forensic accounting course.

- **Candice Hollenbeck**, a senior lecturer in marketing, received UGA's Service-Learning Teaching Excellence Award. The honor recognizes excellence in developing, implementing and sustaining academic service-learning opportunities. Hollenbeck's course in Integrated Marketing and Brand Communication has connected hundreds of students with nonprofits to help them develop marketing strategies and campaigns.

- Terry marketing doctoral student **Lan Anh Ton** was awarded the William O. Bearden award, given to Ph.D. students judged to have the highest quality research projects at the annual Southeast Marketing Symposium, hosted this year by the University of Mississippi. She continues the ongoing success of Terry marketing Ph.D. students in receiving this award, as marketing doctoral student Youngtak Kim was the Bearden winner last year.

profiles

Photo by Justin J. Wee

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Adrianna Samaniego seeks to provide a more equitable future by creating opportunities for female-founded companies.

The sequel

*John Rooker (BBA '02) sees the big picture
and fast-forwards a family legacy*

By Charles McNair



The Terry College of Business students know the famous name.

In the 1960s, John W. “Jack” Rooker (BBA ’60) entered working life with his father — Terry alum William A. Rooker Sr. (BSC ’33) — at Southern Bonded Warehouse, a third-party logistics company that stored and shipped inventory for businesses in fast-growing Atlanta. In a few years, Jack evolved the family interests, launching an industrial real estate development company.

Working within 50 miles of Atlanta, Jack grew John W. Rooker and Associates through the second half of the 20th century into one of the most successful and respected firms in Georgia.

Students in the beautiful Business Learning Community along Hull Street take classes in Moore-Rooker Hall. The building that would become Moore-Rooker started in a small cardboard box where Jack and his lifelong friend Dudley L. Moore (BBA ’57), a successful independent insurance agent, stuffed \$50 monthly donations. They eventually invested their stash in real estate, and when they sold a valuable Atlanta warehouse property in 2016, Rooker and Moore gifted the proceeds to the Terry College, a key piece of capital funding for the building that now bears their names.

Now a next-generation Rooker, John (BBA ’02), has stepped forward to play the role of a lifetime.

John took over from Jack as Rooker Co. CEO in 2012. In the momentous decade since, the charismatic 41-year-old has successfully grown the firm by adopting a new business model, targeting promising new markets — Sunbelt cities — and developing surprising new ventures with their own famous names — Netflix, Fox, and HBO, among others.

An understudy taking on the Rooker legacy could easily have played it safe and simply coasted.

Not John.

“His biggest decision so far has been to give up the general contractor business and go totally into development,” Jack says.

“I think we were headed that way, and it was natural to switch over. John’s been able to throw a bigger net, and that net has been very rewarding. He did the right thing, and he did it at the right time, and he did it in the right way.”

The reviews are in. And Rooker’s four divisions (industrial development, government development, asset management, and Atlanta Metro Studios) are thriving.



The net asset value of combined Rooker holdings has increased 70 percent from 2017 through 2020. In the past five years, the company has developed 14 office projects with a total value of \$143 million for the federal government. Also, the Rooker Industrial portfolio has kept occupancy at 95 percent in the past five years while developing more than 3 million square feet of new industrial space.

Not bad for an opening scene.

New day, new business model

John began to script the Rooker sequel soon after becoming CEO.

“It’s hard to be a good developer and a good general contractor at the same time,” John says. “By 2015, construction had become so competitive and margins so thin that it became a volume game. The way we were set up, we were never going to achieve the volume it took to keep us growing the way we had in the past. So, it made sense to transition out of general contracting and focus on developing.”

John Rooker cast the bigger net his father mentioned, looking beyond Atlanta for the first time into secondary markets, at growing cities such as Nashville, Greenville/Spartanburg, Tampa, Charleston, Savannah and Jacksonville. John and his team carefully tracked growth dynamics in these markets, noting population rise, company relocations, the construction of distribution centers.

As a privately held enterprise with a lean, trusted management team, Rooker could move quickly to seize opportunities.

“We have the ability to examine a market and quickly decide if it’s one we want to be in,” John says. “We can then focus on analyzing and acquiring a site, getting loans or partnerships and getting a building out of the ground.

“There’s not a lot of red tape. We sit around a table where we have all the players in place to make a decision. There’s no board approval, no investment committee review, just the right people to make a call.”

Murray Reavis, Rooker Co. CFO for 17 years, worked with Jack and now with John. He has a close-up lens on company decision-making.

“John’s best leadership skill is that he listens to the people around him,” Reavis says. “He is not one to rush to judgment. He’ll ask questions and gather input and make a well-thought-out decision. He’s self-aware, knows where his strengths are. People feel very valued by him, and you want to do well.

“John makes the ultimate decisions, and sometimes it’s 50 percent financial models and 50 percent gut ... maybe simply liking the way the sun rises on a piece of land. It’s like John can feel progress moving in that direction.”

Atlanta Metro Studios

In 2015, John felt progress moving in the direction of movie production.

Shannon Mall, built in 1979, stood abandoned in Union City, just off I-85, seven miles south of Atlanta’s busy international airport. Movie production was a growing industry in Georgia, thanks to a farsighted legislative policy that gave studios financial incentives to film in the state.

John recognized opportunity.

The mall sat on 100 acres co-owned by various parties, including previous mall tenants — Macy’s, Sears and others. Trusting he could wrangle a deal, John brought them all to the table. Next, he met with Union City officials who wanted to hear that “development” meant something other than dirt and trucks.

Through these sensitive negotiations, John presented a marquis project for the property — a world-class movie production studio. The city embraced his vision. Funding flowed. A huge ground-breaking ceremony brought out Union City’s mayor and city council various state representatives, and various other dignitaries.

“John orchestrated that whole process,” says Reavis. “He deserves all the credit in the world.”



John Rooker outside Atlanta Metro Studios in Union City in 2018. Photo by Peter Frey

Atlanta Metro Studios has been a success by any measure. Year-over-year revenue growth increased an average of 13 percent annually from 2016 through year-end 2020. All 245,000 square feet are at 100-percent occupancy by production companies.

“We’ve been fully booked for three straight years with new and repeating clients,” says Nick Smerigan, founder of RoadTown Enterprises LTD, AMS’s management entity. “One of our proudest achievements was hosting HBO’s ‘Watchmen,’ the most-nominated TV show in the history of the Emmys.”

A-list stars wander the Union City property: Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson, Gal Gadot, Jeremy Irons, Regina King, Cate Blanchett, Jack Black, Naomi Watts, Don Johnson, Melissa McCarthy, Octavia Spencer and many more.

Smerigan’s role underscores another of John Rooker’s skills — sizing people up. Associates say Jack had the same ability to assess the worthiness of new contacts in a short time. John and Nick first shook hands in 2015, when Smerigan was doing design work for the development.

“Rooker asked me if I would also be interested in hiring and training the studio staff,” Smerigan says. “We were discussing operational procedures, paperwork, etc., and in the middle of that process, they asked if I would manage the facility until it got on its feet.”

The studio is certainly on its feet — in fact, it’s off and running. Smerigan is still there. With the official title of director of operations/consultant, the California-based veteran of studio

management worldwide books Atlanta Metro Studios, negotiates client contracts, approves all purchases, and hires and schedules all the staff. He also sets deals and prices for vendors providing client services.

“John has the final say on everything,” Smerigan says. “He visits the studio on a regular basis, and we speak by phone about prices for a client, booking schedules, repairs we need to make, employee issues, everything. John is very open to suggestions and ideas, and he often adds to what we present.”

The remaining four-fifths of the Shannon Mall property, the land without the sound stages and rolling cameras, got a plum role too.

Rooker Co. developed Union Station Business Center on 65 acres, a project that won Georgia’s prestigious 2015 “Industrial Deal of the Year” Award, presented by the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties. The \$26 million, 988,000-square-foot distribution facility has 36-foot clear height ceilings and 60-foot-wide bays for handling consumer product and e-commerce operations. It houses a DHL logistics hub that brings good jobs to Union City. (Rooker sold the business center property in 2016 to CBRE Global Investors.)

Bottom line, John Rooker and his team replaced a derelict mall with a movie production studio and a modern e-commerce facility.

“It’s pretty progressive,” says Smerigan. “John understood what was coming to Atlanta, and he understood what this property could mean. His foresight was cutting-edge.”



Photo by AJ Reynolds

“John is the very definition of a people person. People are drawn to him, and he’s constantly making new connections. As a friend, he’s someone you can trust and depend on.” – Matt Wirth

The family way

John’s mom, Cindy Rooker, called after this past April’s G-Day Game. She caught her son on the way back from Sanford Stadium.

“John was walking home with his kids,” she says. “I thought, *he’s in heaven. He’s not out with his friends, drinking beer. He’s with his kids.* That’s just so cool.”

John and his wife, April (BBA ’02), moved to Athens four years ago from busy Atlanta with their trio: Will (11), Lola (9) and Tatum (6). They moved into a new house in Five Points last December, and they’re still settling in. John and April often attend sporting events at Athens Academy, where the kids go, and at UGA.

“It’s so great and so easy,” John says. “When we take the kids places here, it’s extremely less stressful than Atlanta. Actually, having some sense of belonging breathes energy into everything.”

Athens feels like home. It’s where John and April met, when she was moving into her dorm for freshman year. Her roommate went to The Westminster Schools in Atlanta, where John went. They started dating sophomore year.

“John was nice, likable, lots of fun,” says April. “He seemed trustworthy. We had lots of mutual friends, so he’d been vetted.”

After their wedding, they settled into Atlanta and started family life ... for the long haul, April assumed. But to her surprise, John asked about moving back to Athens from Atlanta not long after Rooker Co. built its first downtown Atlanta headquarters building, on Bishop Street, overlooking Atlantic Station.

John made his case. He always loved Athens. He met April there. He delighted in the university, the vibe, the football games. Terry College was important to him. Athens held fond memories of his beloved late grandmother, Mary Winston Rooker (BSAA ’33), who lived there.

April was skeptical. What sense did it make to live in Athens and commute 70 miles to work?

“John told me,” April recalls, “OK, it’s fine if we don’t move. I won’t bring it up again. I just want you to know it’s something I’ll regret the rest of my life.”

They started looking at houses.

“John is definitely a country boy at heart who felt stuck in the city in Atlanta,” April says. “We can drive 10 minutes from home now, and it’s green. We love the Bulldogs, and game days are way easier now, seeing we’re at ground zero. Things are more spur-of-the-moment and spontaneous. In Atlanta, it was harder to get around, and we had to plan everything. Athens is very, very easy.”

Matt Wirth (BBA ’01) is managing director in the Atlanta office of JLL Capital Markets, Americas. Wirth attended Terry and Westminster with John, and they often professionally partner nowadays on industrial real estate deals.

“John is the very definition of a people person,” Wirth says. “People are drawn to him, and he’s constantly making new connections. As a friend, he’s someone you can trust and depend on, somebody you can go to with anything in your life, professional and personal. I think a lot of people feel that way about him.”

How was John academically?

“The real estate career has probably been a little easier than school,” Wirth smiles. “John certainly wasn’t a stand-out performer academically, but he grinded through.”

John confesses he has “a little ADD,” a condition making study difficult. It never deterred him from finding solutions.

Cindy Rooker recalls how Jack was once working with his son on his math.

Now ... how does two go into four? Jack asked

Twice, John said.

And how does two go into three? Jack asked.

John thought before answering.

I guess I’d have to jam it in there.

“That’s how John got through school,” Cindy laughs. “He just jammed it in there.”

What makes you stronger

Though business has gone well, the past couple of years have tested the Rooker family.

Jack took a fall in 2020. He broke his femur and shattered a hip replacement. At age 82, the Rooker patriarch bravely battled back from a hospital bed to independent mobility on a walker. Cindy even catches him now sneaking around without the walker, earning a quick scolding.

Cindy has leaned on her son during this trial.

“John’s gone through it with me,” she says. “He’s held my hand many times.

In convalescence, Jack spent two months at Piedmont Hospital, two at Emory Rehabilitation Hospital, and six weeks at Shepherd Center, with its excellent rehab staff and facilities. (John is a board member at Shepherd, as he is at the Terry College).

“I was home alone all that time, and John was very attentive,” Cindy says. “It’s hard, I know, because he’s busy. It has been a big test on everybody. And everybody’s stood strong and leaned against each other.”

Those who work with John say they get the same brand of care. Genuine. Selfless.

“Rooker is a family-run business that treats people like family,” says Wirth. “They treat employees like family, business partners like family, and economic development people like family.”

Rooker CFO Reavis shares the same testimony.

“People migrate to the Rookers,” he says. “People enjoy working with them. People like seeing them succeed. They know the Rookers are always going to do the right thing even when they don’t have to.”

Projected onto the big screen, the Rooker family story would feel epic — larger-than-life characters in a multi-generational saga encompassing nearly 100 years of Georgia’s history for the 20th century, in a time when Atlanta was bursting with growth and jobs and opportunities.

The 21st century? Here’s a whole new sequel.

John Rooker sits in the director’s chair. ■

Found and Determined

Grounded in the lessons she learned from her family, Adrianna Samaniego (BBA '10) helps female-led companies gain opportunities and the financial footing to thrive.

By Ed Morales
Photos by Justin J. Wee

Hotfoot Plumbing, built on a border town in the Arizona desert, was the center of gravity for the Gonzales family.

It was the pride and joy of Ramon “Monchi” Gonzales, who put away savings through years working as a coal miner, janitor and any number of odd jobs to found the service and repair business. Run out of the Douglas, Ariz., home Monchi shared with his wife Adela, Hotfoot was a family-run company through and through: Monchi fixed the pipes, Adela ran the business, and their six daughters and son held various roles in the small venture.

On some days — when she wasn’t organizing Hotfoot’s payroll, preparing documents for the IRS, or going to 6th grade — 11-year-old Adrianna Samaniego joined her grandfather as he fixed his customer’s plumbing problems. Monchi, who at Adrianna’s age was the Arizona state marbles champion (and at 13 would take third at nationals), installed pipes while instilling advice to his granddaughter, who he nicknamed “*la tremenda*.”

“My father would take her and her sister on jobs and say, ‘Work is hard, but you have options. There’s nothing to be ashamed of doing manual stuff, but there’s a key that if you go to school, you can do something different,’” Corina Monnin, Adrianna’s mom, remembers. “He’d tell her it’s not just about making money; it’s about serving others. ‘If you make it, how are you going to help all those other people coming along to give them a hand so they can do what you’ve done.’”



Samaniego’s grandparents, who she called tata and nana, provided her the example of giving back and serving others. They were foster parents for more than 40 years, and Monchi was a Little League coach for half a century. The Douglas Little League field is named in his honor.

“It took a community to raise us, and my grandparents were the hardest working people I knew,” says Samaniego. “My tata was a miner at the Phelps Dodge smelter, which was one of the main businesses back in the day. But that coal mine closed, and he ended up doing a lot of other jobs and got up enough savings to build a plumbing and construction company. My nana ran everything — from accounting to customer service — so when I was a kid, she taught me the basics of accounting. I used to manage the checkbook, I used to issue checks to our employees, and this was all at the age of 10 and 11. That was the first insight into what it is to run a business.”

Fast forward 20 years and Samaniego, a 2010 Terry alumna who followed earning a degree in finance with an eight-year stint creating programs and startups at Google, embodies the promise of her grandfather’s words. As Investor at Female Founders Fund, she provides early-stage capital to female-founded companies to gain the early financial footing to excel and thrive in the marketplace. Since its 2014 founding, Female Founders Fund has invested in more than 50 of the fastest-growing female-led technology companies in the country.

“I could give you a list of all the deals I have done, and you probably haven’t heard of (the companies),” Samaniego says. “But you will.”

“Adrianna’s going to do what her heart is, and that is to continue to bring others along with her,” Monnin says. “She is anxious to serve women who don’t feel like they have an opportunity or think it could never possibly happen for them. She wants to show them that it has happened, and it can happen for them too.”

Douglas is a town of 16,000 along the Sulphur Springs Valley in Arizona’s southeastern corner, boasting a semiarid climate, where on even the hottest summer days it cools to the lower 60s at night. Across the border from Douglas is Agua Prieta (AP as the locals call it), a Mexican city of 180,000 initially built (like Douglas) on mining and railroads.

If you live on the U.S. side, many days are spent going from country to country. Douglas’ population is nearly 85 percent Hispanic — mostly Mexican — so AP was merely a suburb (albeit a large one) for the town’s residents. And there was just more to do there.

“You are daily or weekly crossing into Mexico for whatever needs,” Samaniego says. “Whether it is to go to eat, or for myself to go to the doctor, which I had in Mexico for affordability reasons. But in Douglas, there weren’t a lot of opportunities. We had a movie theater with one screen; there was a lot of playing outside. You had to get creative. I have 30 first cousins, so that helped keep me busy, plus my business activities with Hotfoot Plumbing.”

Samaniego threw herself into school and sports. Growing up in a single-parent household of humble means, she understood that education was the way to a different kind of life. Always at, or near, the top of her class, she was a constant ball of positive energy.

“Just staying focused was critical — I had a lot on the line to ‘make it out,’ and I knew this from a young age,” she says. “My mother put a large emphasis on education and staying out of trouble. I always loved school and I loved sports, so that was easy. It was my outlet to staying on the right path.”

But as she was about to enter Douglas High School (presciently nicknamed the Bulldogs), her life in the only hometown she’d ever known was about to change. Her mom was getting married, and Adrianna and her sisters Crystal and Bianca were leaving Douglas for Buford, Georgia. Her new home was not only far from where she grew up (some 1,700 miles), it proved a huge difference in culture and education.

She first noticed Buford’s cultural diversity. Most everyone in Douglas was Mexican, but Buford was a mix of white, Black, Hispanic, Asian and people of two or more races. There were more families of means — the median family income in Buford was 27 percent higher than Douglas. It was a culture shock, but she viewed her setting as a great opportunity.

And then she started high school and was hit with another kind of shock.

“I quickly realized the education I received in Arizona was not at par,” she says. “They put me in equivalent classes that were advanced, and I immediately started to struggle. I put such an emphasis on doing well in school, and I couldn’t believe how far behind I was to my peers.”

It was a critical point for Samaniego — school was never difficult before. But falling back on the lessons of her grandfather, who turned challenges into openings by pushing forward, she did whatever she could to catch up. She worked with tutors, putting in extra work so she wouldn’t fall behind. “I always heard my tata saying ‘*con ganas*’ or ‘*echala ganas*’ — give it your all,” she says.

“She had to work twice as hard as everybody else,” her mom says. “I remember my husband would worry about her. He’d say, ‘It’s 2 in the morning, and she’s still at the table doing homework.’ She never gave up. She always pushed herself until she felt like she was at the same level as everyone else.”

By her sophomore year, she was. By senior year, she was ahead of almost all of them, finishing her high school career fifth in a class of more than 600. The next challenge was something that hadn’t been done in her family — going to college.

“I had not been on a lot of campuses, but after I first came to Athens, with all the buildings, the lawns, everyone walking around — it was utopia,” she says. “But somebody who is first gen you always have to consider finances. I was not getting support from family to cover college expenses or tuition, so I was very focused on a full ride to school.”

And that’s when Samaniego learned another benefit of moving to Georgia — the HOPE Scholarship. Her grades put her in a position to have full tuition paid to a state school, and after visiting Athens, she knew which school it would be.

That she got into Georgia was not a surprise; that she stayed might have been. After learning she was accepted to UGA with HOPE Scholarship money in tow, she received the Gates Millennium Scholarship. Each year the GMS is awarded to 300 students from low-income households nationwide, and it pays for everything at any college.

“I had the chance to go elsewhere,” Samaniego says. “But I fell in love with Georgia. I was excited to stay.”



Adrianna Samaniego’s typical day at the Female Founders Fund consists of learning a little about as much as she can. “We believe female founders are creating the next \$1 billion businesses and we want to back them.” *Contributed photo*

“I don’t remember the first time I met Adrianna; it was probably in class. But given how she is, it was not long before I realized who she was just in terms of her personality and what she contributed to class. She is so special,” says Dawn Bennett-Alexander, a longtime professor in Terry’s Legal Studies Program who retired in January.

Though Samaniego had experience in accounting through helping with the family business, she chose to be a finance major because its versatility appealed to her — “it’s strategic, it’s not just input-output, and that’s what makes it complicated,” she says. “And there’s a variety of ways you can leverage that degree.”

The adjustment to college was not a problem. She focused on her finance degree, gathering internships (such as a Goldman Sachs), joining the Banking and Finance Society and the Association of Latino Professionals in Finance and Accounting. Outside of class, she was a member of Lambda Theta Alpha Latin Sorority and Order of Omega, the Greek honor society, while also starting the mentorship program Latinos investing in the Students of Tomorrow (LiSTO).

She received guidance from Management Leadership for Tomorrow, a group providing visibility to corporate careers, which coached and prepared her to succeed.

But what she wanted to do after college was still in the works.

Looking at where some of her fellow finance majors were headed, she saw a corporate career track in a New York City skyscraper — and she wasn’t sure that was her passion.

And then she took Bennett-Alexander’s class.

“Her area of focus was around equity, how the law applies in business, employment law, and it was the first time I started to see an emergence of me being able to bring what I was so passionate about,” Samaniego says. “I always felt I was the underestimated individual who didn’t have all the opportunities, so I wanted to ensure I am creating opportunities to provide a more equitable future. It was the first time I had a class that provided that lens, which gave me the thought I could potentially be the amalgamation of business and inclusion. I felt very empowered.”

So empowered that instead of seeking an analyst job on Wall Street, where she knew she had plenty of suitors, Samaniego applied online, without any referrals, to a position at Google. The tech giant has for years been one of the toughest companies to get a job offer from: the success rate for candidates is somewhere between .2 and .4 percent.

“They said, ‘You know we don’t meet a lot of people from Georgia,’ and I was like ‘Well, it’s great to meet you,’” she says. They agreed, and she got the job.



“It was such a good placement, and she seemed perfect for it,” Bennett-Alexander says. “It was empowering for all the students because it was like, ‘Oh my god this is what we want.’ And not only does she get a job — she got a job at a place we all admire.”

Starting as an account strategist, she moved to account manager, where she worked with chief marketing officers and business leaders to develop and execute digital media strategies. By 2014, she started on the path she realized in Bennett-Alexander’s class years before.

She co-founded the Hispanic Googler network HOLA, an employee resource group committed to the representation, advancement and inclusion of Hispanics at Google. HOLA educates Googlers about Hispanic culture, provides mentorship opportunities, and empowers growth and volunteer opportunities in the Hispanic community.

She made products — like how to find Hispanic- and black-owned businesses on Google maps and providing them the tools to create a website and digital presence — while pitching her bosses the business case for building programs and products targeted at minority-owned businesses. They listened and made her the Global Supplier Diversity Manager, a job description she wrote up herself. Samaniego filled a variety of roles in the venture — finance, sales, diversity — and within two years created over \$1 billion in opportunities for diverse-owned businesses. Google was the first high-tech company to build such a program, and Samaniego went on to consult peers at Facebook, Airbnb and Twitter to follow along.

When given the chance to start her own business within Area 120, the company’s startup incubator, she took it. Called Emporium, its mission was to empower minority and women-owned/led businesses to unlock untapped economic potential for their businesses and community. Her team created and launched a marketplace for Fortune 500 companies to procure from diverse-owned companies. Like many startups, the venture didn’t work out, but the experience doing it was invaluable.

“What influenced me most was my grandparents,” she says. “They were entrepreneurs and small business owners. So how can I try entrepreneurship and phase it into something that I love to do? So, I joined Area 120 with a close friend, and we embarked on this startup journey. It was fantastic. I would do it all over again.”

Every day is different for Samaniego, which is how she likes it. Curious since the day she was born, she is a generalist when it comes to daily work at Female Founders Fund. “I get a variety of work because we invest across all sectors, so I have to know a little about a lot,” she says.



*“It was also for
the younger version
of myself, who needed
to see myself in
these rooms and know
it was possible.”*

— Adrianna Samaniego

The fund recently invested in more software startups but boasts companies such as Zola (wedding planning), Billie (razors for women), Eloqui (fashion apparel), Rent the Runway (online designer dress rentals), Tala (global lending platform), and WinkyLux (cosmetics) in its portfolio of investments.

Samaniego sources and evaluates all kinds of deals, doing the due diligence to help execute the deal, and then supporting the founders to get them through future rounds of funding.

She honed her VC expertise by getting an MBA at Columbia Business School.

“I did what I always wanted to do,” says Samaniego, who was a UGA 40 Under 40 honoree in 2018. “As a first-generation college student, I wanted to get an MBA to change the trajectory of our family. I’m not going to get my MBA just to get my MBA. I’m going to get it for me, and I am going to ensure I am leaving with an intended next step. It was also for the younger version of myself, who needed to see myself in these rooms and know it was possible.”

With internships at New Media Ventures and JetBlue Technology Ventures in San Francisco and Harlem Capital in

New York, she crafted a knowledge base where tech meets venture capital meets equity. And she narrowed her focus to investing in businesses just at the point where they can take off.

“Less than 3% goes to all female-founded companies, only 12% of venture capital dollars go to teams with at least one female founder. Latinx and Black women-led startups lag behind peers — only 0.27% went to Black women and 0.37% went to Latinas,” she says. “But it’s not only about being the right thing to do, it’s about outsized returns. We believe female founders are creating the next \$1 billion businesses, and we want to back them. We don’t look at this as charity. This is a really good business.”

Her achievements since graduating Terry 11 years ago are impressive, it doesn’t seem possible to do so much in so little time. But then you realize she hasn’t been working 11 years, she’s been working her whole life. She’s as august as someone with three decades of experience — because she has 33 years of life experience.

“It makes me quite proud knowing this amazing woman, who I shook my head at many times worried her curiosity would get her in trouble,” Monnin says. “But it has been good trouble, and she journeys on making her mark — mentoring others and helping to create world changers.” ■



smoothie OPERATOR

With a ‘hospitality first’ attitude, Tropical Smoothie Café CEO Charles Watson (MBA ’05) steadily expands and adapts the restaurant chain.

By Ray Glier

It is a sunny day, and on the sidewalk outside of his beloved smoothie joint in Dunwoody, Tropical Smoothie Café CEO Charles Watson leans back in his chair and brings his right leg up to rest on his left knee and ... what’s that? Glue.

You see it because the edge of the sole of his shoe has come loose on the instep. It sure is dried glue, just a spec. The shoes are Gucci. Watson (MBA ’05), the man running a chain of Cafés that will do \$1 billion in annual sales by 2024, and who has grown Tropical Smoothie Café to 940+ franchise locations in the U.S., with 700 more Cafés in the pipeline, flicks at the loose sole with a finger. He explains his shoes are 12 years old. Watson has had these Guccis resoled seven or eight times.

“Might have to replace these soon,” he says. So, you come to a quick understanding about Watson, 44. He wears Gucci loafers, but the man does indeed walk the walk, even if the walk is in expensive shoes. Be prudent, get out from behind the desk, and burn shoe leather on the pavement. It is the hospitality industry, after all. Alternately rejoice and scheme and commiserate and stand with the hard-working as they stand over the smoothie blender in their worn shoes. Watson will do more than commiserate. In those Guccis, he will jump in and wash dishes. “Can I make a smoothie? Yes. Am I the best at it? No,” Watson says. “But I’m pretty good at washing dishes.”

He practiced his craft early. Not smoothies. Washing dishes. Watson stood on a plastic tub used for busing tables so he could reach the water hose to wash dishes in his father’s restaurant. He was 11 years old. Later, as a teenager and college student, he came home from his father’s restaurant at midnight and got out of the clothes with smears of grease and Comet cleaner, only to be back up at 6 a.m. so he could collect more grease and Comet on his clothes. No job was beneath Watson in those first six years in the restaurant business because, after all, he was already at the bottom.

The Watson do-the-work ethos was legitimately passed down. He saw his dad, George, wearing an Oxford shirt, khakis, and loafers one day while plunging the stopped-up toilet in one of his restaurants. His mother, Mary, had her Eastern Airlines pension fleeced by ownership, Watson says, so she built from scratch a thriving business in cosmetics, which put him through the private Lovett School and Cornell of the Ivy League.

“I don’t mean to put myself in a Charles Dickens novel, or something like that, I was given many opportunities and a great

Photo by Jason Thrasher

education, but I think my parents showed me the way with their own work,” Watson says. “You do learn things through osmosis. It was never, ‘Oh, you’ve worked too much, you need to go home now.’ No, it’s more like, ‘You’re here until we’re done.’

“Finish the job. It’s a matter of get it done and you don’t get to decide the quitting time.”

Watson calls it “chopping wood,” and it was one of the reasons Tropical Smoothie Café opened 99 new restaurants in the 2020 pandemic year, growing sales by 7.5 percent while many other restaurants were shutting down. The brand is now on pace for double-digit comp sales and opening 130 locations in 2021.

“I’ve been blessed with great leaders who are very experienced, and who have varying backgrounds and varying points of view, and we all came together during this to gel as one,” Watson says. “One thing that everybody knew how to do, and probably why I hired them, is they all knew the value of chopping wood. As a leadership team, we viewed the pandemic as an ‘opportunity is now here’ — not ‘opportunity is nowhere’ — moment in the history of the brand.”

The biggest opportunity was expanding the Tropical Smoothie Café digital reach before doors to restaurants started slamming shut in spring 2020. The headquarters, in Sandy Springs just north of Atlanta, pressed franchisees around the U.S. to lash themselves together with Grubhub, Uber Eats, DoorDash and the brand’s app.

“We had been pushing digital, but it went from pushing it to ‘it’s absolutely mandatory in this environment,’” Watson says. “Our franchisees responded and signed on to these different sales channels, and the lift of that helped us through.”

Perhaps the most significant tactical move, a vow of solidarity, was to cut royalties 50 percent for two months. It was not a loan. Franchisees did not have to pay back the money.

This is why Watson was named full-time CEO of Tropical Smoothie Café in December 2018 after a six-month stint as interim CEO. He was charged to grow the brand and make sure the foundation was cast in concrete with deft moves. Before that, he was the company’s vice president of franchise development and chief development officer. He has overseen growth in locations from 300 to 940+ with the goal of 1,500 by 2025. The goal is for each



Charles Watson was the punter for the Cornell Big Red in the late 1990s, where he has three of the six longest punts in the 133-year history of Cornell football. Photo courtesy Cornell Sports Information

franchisee to have \$1 million in sales and 18 percent profitability each year.

It helps that Watson has a presence about him, not just in work ethic, but a fill-the-doorway presence. He is 6-foot-3, 250+ pounds. His size meant he could be an athlete, and he played quarterback for Lovett in high school. But when he got to college at Cornell the humbling began, and it was just another business lesson. Watson was back to being a role player, just like in his dad’s restaurants when he scrubbed pots and pans. His feet weren’t quick enough to play Division I quarterback, but one foot was plenty strong enough to be a punter for the Big Red and that’s what he did for four years.

Watson has three of the six longest punts in the 133-year history of Cornell football (73, 74, 75 yards).

His two best seasons — averaging 40.76 yards per punt in 1997, 40.15 in 1998 — rank in the top 10 all-time at the school. He is prouder of this: Before the corporate headhunters came to find him on campus in Ithaca, N.Y., he was something of a headhunter on the football field with two unnecessary roughness calls and a late hit.

“If I was going to get on the field just four or five times, I wanted to get my licks in on special teams and feel like I was out there, part of the game,” he says.

More important, Watson says his college football career, “taught me a huge lesson in terms of being a role player.”

Watson relishes his football moments and sometimes has to explain his business lessons learned through playing football to his team of non-football devotees. Like this one, told with a smile and gentle dig at southern kickers: “I had to punt the ball in the northeast where it is cold and rainy and there is snow on the field. Would have loved kicking down here on a nice sunny Saturday. You had to be resilient.”

That resilience tracks right back to his mother and father. The harsh lessons of business are indelible memories because his father’s restaurant empire, which was launched with college friends in the late ’60s, swooned in the ’90s.

“I’ve seen scary before,” Watson says, “and scary is the inability to adapt. It is my dad making the same bad decisions over and over again. Ultimately, I learned you have to adapt and change.

Overcoming fear is a big thing and that is my focus on being a visionary leader people trust.”

The company built an acronym to describe that culture, Watson says.

TRUST

The “T” is for transparency. Tell it like it is. The “R” is responsibility. This isn’t two-hand touch football, Watson says. It is a street-corner business. Everyone has to do their job. The “U” is unique because the company has more than 400 “unique franchisees” and more than 100 “unique individuals” at the corporate office.

“We’ve got to let people be themselves,” Watson says. “It’s also important from a diversity, equality, inclusion perspective, which is the right thing to do.”

The “S” is for service-oriented. “There isn’t an “H,” in the word trust for hospitality, but we are in the hospitality industry and we can never forget that,” says Watson.

The “T” is for tenacious. “Do you have to be chained to the business? No. But how do you know the business without at some point being there from 6 in the morning to 8 at night?” Watson asks.

He knew the business of hospitality from his studies at Cornell and his first jobs out of college, which were connected to real estate and hotels, but Watson had bigger goals for his career. That’s why he went to the Terry College for his MBA in 2003, just four years into his professional life.

“I’m a believer in education. I wanted to get smarter, and I wanted to get better,” Watson says. “I felt like there were holes in my education, not because Cornell had holes, but because a 19-year-old Charles Watson maybe wasn’t as focused on his schooling as he should have been. I wanted to shore up areas that I didn’t feel as strong and, for me, that’s finance and accounting. Sales and marketing, I was pretty strong on.”

Watson can summon that sales and marketing cache in an instant. The first thing he says to a visitor is, “Can I get you something, a smoothie?” His hospitality radar is always on, which is not something he learned at Cornell, or Terry, but is simply part of his personality.

“I’ve always been attracted to hospitality, in terms of serving others,” Watson says. “Hospitality is fun to me. The greatest, the greatest thing you can do in this life, I think, is to serve. You can say it all day long, but when you actually feel it, you like serving others, you get that jazz or that thrill out of it.”

“I do service in a different way now as a CEO and as a leader with franchisees and with my corporate staff, but it is something that I learned early on when I waited tables, or I tended bar. If you do a good job, there’s a monetary reward. And I liked that monetary reward. It was a direct connection for me, the harder I worked, the more hospitality I provided, the more remuneration financially.”

At the end of an interview, Watson popped up from the sidewalk chair, and walked into the Café and saw a crowd of customers. The three-person crew was a beehive of activity behind the counter trying to catch up to the rush. Watson took the pressure off by walking around the restaurant and handing out free drink cards to each customer. Their wait was more palatable because the CEO of Tropical Smoothie Café has “hospitality first” stamped on his conscious and a pair of shoes used for walking among his customers to show how hospitality works from the top down.. ■

“The greatest thing you can do in this life, I think, is to serve. You can say it all day long, but when you actually feel it, you like serving others, you get that jazz or that thrill out of it.”





Change with the times

With Ad Victoriam Solutions, Terry alums Jeff and Alice Jones are guiding companies through the vagaries of digital technology.

By Gail Allyn Short

Fueled by pandemic lockdowns and a consumer preference for more virtual interactions with businesses, companies are making the choice: Go digital or get left behind.

Consider Jeff (BBA '93) and Alice Jones (BBA '94) as two Terry alums well ahead of the curve. Through their multi-cloud consulting firm Ad Victoriam Solutions LLC, the Joneses have helped companies make digital technologies work for their specific businesses since they founded the business in 2014.

At Ad Victoriam Solutions, teams of consultants, developers, and others with cloud and data expertise help clients implement and integrate the Salesforce platform to fit their individual needs. Its clients range from retailers, manufacturers and health care service organizations to software companies and video game developers.

"Digital transformations are what we bring to the table," Jeff says. "Change is always hard for people. No matter how bad they want it, there's some level of pain involved with that. Our goal is to help people understand how they should go about that change."

Early on, Jeff says Ad Victoriam set out to redefine the consulting business.

"Consulting involves long hours and is very intense," he says. "We wanted to try to bend it out a bit to where we cared about our employees as well as our customers and created an environment conducive for people to thrive."

To foster that ideal, Ad Victoriam embarked and earned B Lab's B Corporation certification in 2018. Certified B Corporations are dedicated to being socially responsible and sustainable — from their supply chain to charitable giving — for their customers, employees, environment and community.

Since certification, Ad Victoriam has been busy in this area. The company raised money for disease research, programs to feed the hungry and charities to save homeless animals. The company even sponsors the nonprofit Georgia English Bulldog Rescue, a group that rescues, rehabilitates and rehomes English and French bulldogs.

Its employees work with nonprofits pro bono to help them implement Salesforce and enhance their use of the product. Employees get 40 hours a year off to do volunteer work.

Both Jeff and Alice give personally of their time and resources. They recently partnered with the Terry College faculty to present a "Digital Transformation" technology symposium for business leaders. At UGA, Ad Victoriam is part of the Innovators' Pledge — a community of innovators, creators, equity holders and entrepreneurs — who made a nonbinding promise to share their future success with the university.

"The University has always been near and dear to us, and we've stayed connected over the years," Alice says.

Jeff is a native of Roswell and majored in international business at Terry, where he met Alice, a native of New Orleans who majored in management information systems. Alice says they both credit Terry with preparing them for the business world.

"Terry was a good school," she says. "One of the things that we pulled from our time there was learning how to learn. Every day you're going to learn something new, and when you walk out into the business world you're going to have to keep learning. It's OK not to know something, but you have to keep learning and figure it out as you go along."

After graduation, Jeff worked in sales several years before an interest in technology led him to get an MBA degree, with an MIS focus, at Georgia State. His MBA led him to EY, where he was an enterprise architect for seven years, followed by a nearly seven-year stint at Innovative Architects. There he rose to COO and eventually became president at the IT consulting firm.

But in 2014 he took a leap of faith, quitting his job at Innovative Architects to launch their business — Ad Victoriam Solutions. He says Alice came up with the company's name, which in Latin means "to victory."

For the first three years, Jeff never took a salary. Alice worked full time in the tech industry to support Jeff and their two daughters, the oldest who is now a UGA student with plans to study pharmaceutical sciences, while the youngest is now in high school.

Starting out of the gates, you wear a lot of hats ... It's exhilarating, but it's also high stress because you don't know how the story is going to end.

— Jeff Jones

"Starting out of the gates, you wear a lot of hats," he says. "You're the head accountant. You're the head sales guy. You're the head of HR. You're the head recruiter, and you work seven days a week and 10- to 12-hour days. It's exhilarating, but it's also high stress because you don't know how the story is going to end."

"Anybody who says it's not scary must not be working it right because from May until December of that first year, we sold \$30,000," says Jeff. "But then the following year, from January to December, we hit seven figures."

Today, Ad Victoriam has just over 100 employees and garnered national recognition among companies in the software

tech services industry. In 2020, for the second straight year, it appeared on the Inc. 5000 list of the fastest-growing private U.S. companies.

The magazine ranked the company in 2020 at No. 2,167, with 195 percent growth.

Ad Victoriam is training the next generation of workers through its Elevate Program, which recruits recent college graduates and students in their final semester interested in technology. Those selected undergo a rigorous training program preparing them for the consulting ranks. Many of those candidates the company hires come from UGA, Jeff says.

"It's a way for us to bring in young talent, train them, and get them on the right career path from the beginning," he says. "It's because a lot of the technologies that we're using are new, and it's hard to find someone with 10 years of experience. So, we're building that experience in the people that we're bringing on board."

Jeff says the company continues to focus on commerce, both B2B and B2C. He's not sure if he'd ever take Ad Victoriam public, and he never says never when it comes to possibly selling the business. "We have to always keep that option on the table, especially as a privately-held business," he says, adding, "neither of our daughters has expressed an interest in taking over the business — they have other interests."

What he does know is he will keep moving ahead with the same grit that got Ad Victoriam to this spot.

"I've still got a whiteboard with the word 'determination' written across the top," he says. "It takes hustle and determination, a vision of where you want to go, the wisdom to know how to get there, and the strength to endure the challenges you'll encounter as you push forward." ■

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Terry College of Business
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA



Grand Gala

The Terry College Alumni Awards and Gala, held April 24 in Atlanta, honored Outstanding Young Alumni Award winner Maria Taylor and Distinguished Alumni Award winner Pam Rogers (top right), as well as Terry's eight newest members of the Pinnacle Society, including Brian and Anne Beckwith (above left) and Donald Carter and Gretchen Hitchcock (above center). A virtual silent auction leading up to the gala included an original painting by renowned artist Steve Penley. Photos by Jason Thrasher



SHE COMES TO SAVE THE DAY

Pam Rogers (BBA '82)

By Ed Morales

Superheroes blend into the world. It's how they get the job done when trouble arises. Only a select few know about their true identity and full worth — if everyone knew who they were, they wouldn't get a moment's rest. They are there when we need them, and oftentimes stop problems before they start.

Pam Rogers, risk manager extraordinaire, is a superhero.

She has spent decades navigating companies and clients through the vagaries of risk management and insurance, offering a skill set few have but all benefit, whether they know it or not.

If there's a crisis, and you're not sure who to turn to, it's time to call Pam.

"I like to create order out of chaos, and once everything is in order, there are much better people to run a well-oiled ship," she

says. "I'm the person who comes in and says, 'OK, what do we need to do to make this a well-oiled ship?' I'm the fixer, I'm the problem solver. That is what I do best."

Noelle Codispoti, one of Rogers's many mentees throughout the years, confirms this star power.

"If you have a celebrity walk into a room, everybody knows immediately that a celebrity is in a room," says Codispoti, co-founder and chief transformation officer at Verto, a company dedicated to advancing the insurance industry's recruiting and diversity and equity efforts. "I know it's silly, but for those of us who studied risk management Pam is a celebrity. She provides passion and inspiration to so many. She tells you the things you don't want to hear in a way that resonates and helps you grow."

True to the superhero ethos, Rogers is never in one place too long, always ready to go where she's needed the most. It's a pattern that started when she was young, as her father's contractor jobs took her to locations throughout the Southeast — in fourth grade alone she attended three different schools. Amidst the constant moving, Rogers found structure in academics, numbers — and baton twirling. From the ages of 5 to 17, she twirled at a national competition level, at one point reaching the pinnacle of the discipline.

That's right — Pam Rogers was the Majorette Princess of America. Shazam!

"It would be all summer, eight hours a day of practice, nationals in the summer and competitions one, two, three times a month," she says of her majorette days. "I was always very focused. It's one reason moving around didn't bother me because I had that to focus on. I learned how to compete, learned how to win, but also learned how to lose gracefully."

Since graduating from Terry in 1982, Rogers has delivered this tenacity to well-known companies across the county. Her career began in Detroit, starting at General Motors as a risk analyst, followed by a stint at Perry Drug Stores as a risk manager and corporate safety officer before becoming a manager at NCR in Dayton, Ohio. While in Detroit she earned her MBA at the University of Michigan. The tools she learned there helped at NCR, where she encountered her first sign of professional commotion.

"When I got to NCR, on page four of the job description, it said something about accounting. I did some accounting in my MBA but didn't know what I was in for when a couple of weeks later I noticed something didn't seem right, and that something wasn't right," she says. "We had to discover what it was and had to fix it. It took a couple of years. It was at NCR that I got my Certified Management Accountant designation. That body of work was the platform for my next four or five jobs because so few people have that skill set."

After three years at NCR, Rogers moved to brand name companies each offering a different product, and challenge. At Chiquita in Cincinnati, she learned about banana and palm oil farms in Central America and hog and beef slaughters in North Carolina; Nestle in Los Angeles, known for chocolate, pet food, hotels, and wineries, was the opportunity to see manufacturing in a whole variety of settings; Sears in Chicago and Target in Minneapolis offered opportunities in big-time retail, where she dealt with tens



Pam Rogers moved often as a child because of her father's job, but she found a love for baton twirling that eventually led her to be crowned the Majorette Princess of America. After graduating from Georgia, she started on a career path that would take her around the country and world.

and thousands of small claims (Sears) and the science of retail research (Target).

It wasn't until she got to New York that she decided to put down roots. At Marsh USA, Rogers was given her own practice and tapped to create a risk management function review to help CFOs and treasurers understand the importance of risk managers. This task lined up with her dedication to elevate up-and-coming risk management professionals. For 38 years she's been a member of the Risk and Insurance Management Society, and for 27 years on the board of the Spencer Educational Foundation. In both groups, she worked tirelessly to promote risk management in colleges and help those students find jobs and mentors when they enter the profession. A class featuring a guest-speaking risk manager set her on a career path when she was at UGA and spurred her to return the favor in college classrooms in the years since.

"It is what I love," she says. "I've had the good fortune to be involved in different groups that work with students at the university level. On the Spencer Educational Foundation board of directors, I helped create the risk manager in residence program with the hope we could get experienced risk managers who would go on a college campus for two to three days, and when they are ready to retire they would partner with the university. I've had the good fortune to work with students since '93, and these students are now very successful. I see them now in meetings and they say, 'I saw you when I was in school and you came in and spoke and I changed my major.'"

"She gave a lot of good advice to the students, and I could tell from the start she was concerned about what the students were doing there in terms of their experience and trying to get the most out of it," says Ed Troy, owner of Ed Troy Associates Risk Management Consulting in New York, who first met Rogers years ago at a Risk and Insurance Management Society conference. "The first thing you think about if you've spent five minutes with Pam is high energy. She has this abundance of energy; she always seems to be going. But she's high energy in a very prepared manner. She's smart, she knows her business, and she doesn't have a lot of time to waste on something that's not going to be productive."

During her time at Marsh, she initially created her own firm — Risk Choices LLC — putting it on the back burner for years before revving it up in 2015. Admitting she is "not going to retire," she wanted to build a clientele



“
I’m the person who
comes in and says
‘OK, what do we need
to do to make this
a well-oiled ship?’
I’m the fixer,
I’m the problem solver.
That is what I do best.”



Pam Rogers is now based in New York City (top photo) and has had steady support from family and friends as she found new adventures throughout the years. Contributed photos.

to keep her in the risk management game when she was no longer in it. This forward-thinking would come to light when Rogers took a job at Estée Lauder in late 2016.

Once again working with a global brand in an industry she knew little about, she served as the company’s executive director of enterprise risk management but was given the opportunity in 2019 to try something new not in the realm of risk management. And since this is Pam Rogers, who never ducks a challenge, she immediately jumped in.

Embedded with the research and development team, she works to transform Lauder’s global product safety and regulatory organization and processes. It’s new and unusual to her, and “every day is a blast.”

“So back to my passion of taking what might need some organizing in an area I have little knowledge about,” she says,

laughing. “I’m not a scientist, I’m not a toxicologist, I’m not a regulatory specialist, but that’s OK. We have a highly qualified team in this group. My job is to help look at what they do and find more efficient, effective ways to do it. How to put the technology overlay on it, so that as a global organization we can continue to enable the growth pattern of the business.”

Helping to ensure global product safety is such a superhero move, another piece in a career that’s featured many of them. It’s all in a day’s work for Rogers, though, who credits others for her splendid service.

“Doing the work that I do is a real passion of mine, I feel fortunate,” she says. “I credit the wonderful opportunities I’ve had to work with, and give back to, students to make our industry thrive.

“It brings my passions together, how exciting.”

COMMUNITY: OUTSTANDING YOUNG ALUMNI AWARD



‘A BRIGHT SHINING LIGHT’

Maria Taylor (ABJ ’09, MBA ’13)

By Ed Morales

Several word suggestions appear when typing “Maria Taylor” into a web browser, but three that don’t are “certified public accountant.”

It’s not for a lack of trying on her part.

“I thought when I went to school, I wanted to be a biology/pre-med major and become a team doctor, but then I changed to business, took both accountings, real estate and finance,” Taylor says. “My mom was a certified public accountant. I would go with her to take your daughter to work day — we were always at my mom’s office. I knew everything about her job, so in my mind, that was what you did when you grow up. You go to an office, and you work in business.”

Taylor is not a team doctor, nor is she an accountant, but you knew that. As a host, analyst and reporter for ESPN, Taylor is on television more often than, well, “The Office.” She co-hosts “College GameDay” and “NBA Countdown,” sideline reports “ESPN Saturday Night Football” and Sunday NBA games, and is part of the reporting team for the NFL and NBA drafts. A basketball and four-time

All-Southeastern Conference volleyball player during her time at UGA, Taylor hosts or has hosted the NCAA Women’s Basketball Tournament and Women’s Volleyball National Championship.

But when the camera isn’t rolling, the burgeoning sportscaster stays true to the business roots of her youth. She earned her MBA from the Terry College in 2013, four years after her broadcast journalism degree — because if sports taught Taylor anything, it was to prepare for all possibilities.

“I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do, but I knew an MBA was something I wanted,” she says. “I deferred my enrollment for a year because things were picking up in broadcasting, but you never know — when you start in a career you don’t know anything. I didn’t know if broadcasting was going to work out, whether I was in the right field, whether sports is something that turns into a way you can take care of yourself. I moved home and was working part-time and going to school part-time — I felt like a complete human being working toward something. It ended up being one of the best decisions I ever made.”



Maria Taylor interviews Georgia head coach and fellow Terry alum Kirby Smart during the G-Day Game in Sanford Stadium in 2019.

As Taylor moved her way from assignment to assignment in the broadcast world — first as a reporter and host for IMG College at UGA, then to ESPN2 and SEC Network as a college football sideline reporter, before moving to GameDay and Saturday Night Football in 2017 — she sought steady guidance from veteran broadcasters on how to improve. “You want to know how to be an analyst, or how to create your stories,” she says. “Or if you’re a sideline reporter, how do you do that? They may seem like stupid questions, but they make all the difference.”

Working to find those mentors made her realize her profession needed more of them. Her first MBA course was a leadership class led by management professor Laura Little, and it helped Taylor define her leadership style. Subsequent classes included case studies of business quandaries — should Netflix become fully digital, and why IBM needed more diversity. The culmination of her experience and her studies spurred entrepreneurial instincts, which in turn became the Winning Edge Leadership Academy.

Launched in 2015, Winning Edge provides networking, financial resources and workforce training to develop a generation of diverse leaders in the sports and entertainment industry. It partners with companies, univer-

sities, collegiate conferences and professional sports teams to offer students an opportunity to connect and discover a future in the sports business.

“I planned to match up students who wanted to get into sports — and it didn’t have to be broadcasting, maybe you want to be an athletic director or work in sports marketing,” says Taylor, who co-founded the academy with Corinne Millen. “In the early days of a career, having people believe in what you’re doing matters.

Having someone take five minutes out of their day to talk to you is going to make a huge difference in the way you approach your career. A lot of our kids are first-generation graduates, so they don’t even know where to start. We’re that sounding board and bridge connecting the dots between a base of women and minority candidates to these businesses, teams and schools that have great jobs.”

“Maria Taylor is a light, a bright shining light,” says Alexis Randall (BSFCS ’08), who played volleyball with Taylor at UGA and has remained close with her since. “When you invest so much time into young people, when you’re bringing them in and helping their careers, it’s the coolest thing. She is never going to pull you down. She’s going to lift you up. She’s going to bring you with her.”



Maria Taylor interviews Georgia Bulldogs defensive back Richard LeCounte III at media day for the 2018 Rose Bowl.

Winning Edge hosts summer retreats where students learn about career opportunities. In 2019 they watched television production at Turner Sports, took a behind-the-scenes look at Atlanta Braves’ Truist Park, and talked sports marketing with the crew at Jackson Spalding. A two-day summer summit includes a dinner pairing students with young professionals and industry veterans, and throughout the year the academy makes campus visits, working with athletic departments and colleges to broaden internship chances for its students. Taylor reached back to her time at Terry to partner Winning Edge with the Institute for Leadership Advancement, which is helping her find ways to fund her nonprofit.

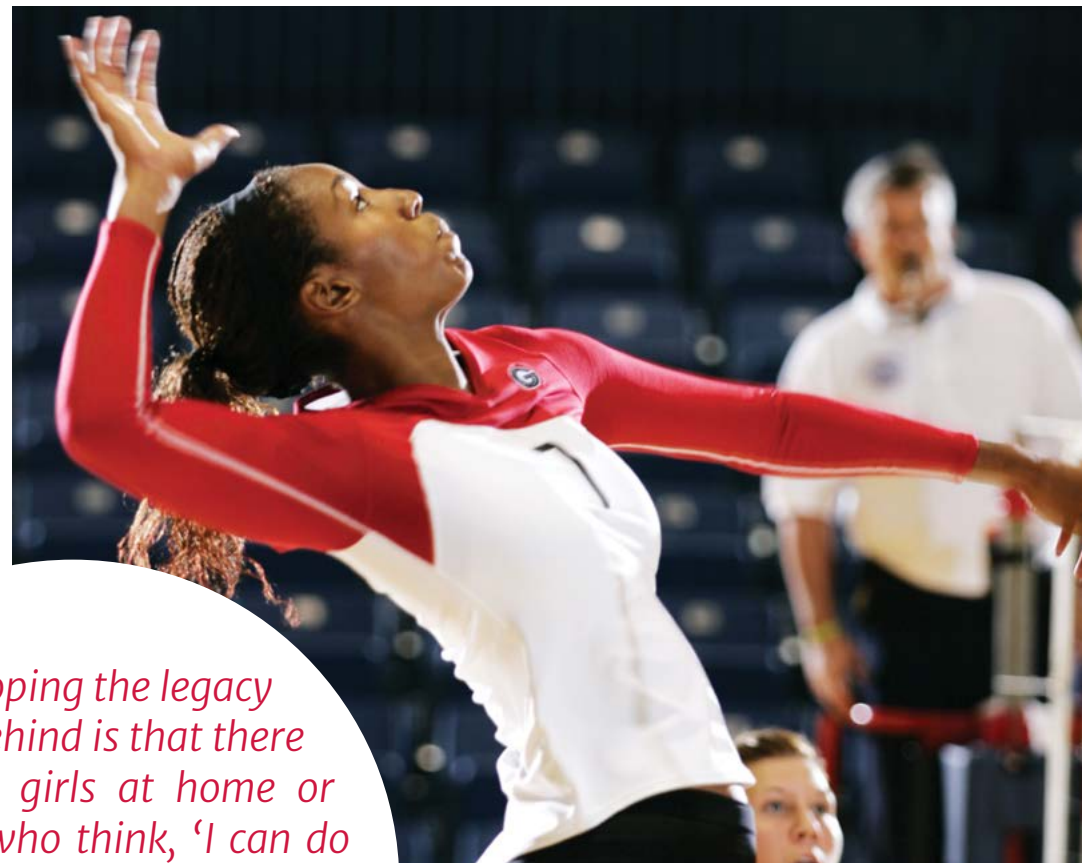
But the biggest influence on the academy’s success is Taylor — and her time in front of the camera.

“Someone reached back and lifted me up. If not, I’m not here,” she says. “I’m hoping the legacy I leave behind is that there are young girls at home or minorities who think, ‘I can do whatever I want because she’s out there working a national championship game or doing something we haven’t seen done before.’”

The present is busy for Taylor, but the future is unlimited. She can see herself behind the camera in a producer capacity — her time at ESPN and work with Winning Edge has her curious about all aspects of broadcasting. She can also see herself outside of sports, moving into a news role like one of her mentors, Robin Roberts, who anchors ABC’s “Good Morning America.” It was Roberts who lifted Taylor up when she started her career, giving her advice she applies to her daily routine.

“She said every day you show up to work you need to have everyone around you believe it is the best day ever for you. That you would not want to be in any other place,” Taylor says.

“Everyone who ends up doing well in life makes their workplace better. You want to be that friend that makes everybody feel a little bit better. She challenged me in that way — that no matter what you’re going through, try to find new ways to help others and don’t be so focused on you that you forget that there are others.”



“I’m hoping the legacy I leave behind is that there are young girls at home or minorities who think, ‘I can do whatever I want because she’s out there working a national championship game or doing something we haven’t seen done before.’”



During her time at UGA, Maria Taylor (top) was named a member of the All-Southeastern Conference volleyball team each season. Taylor (above) talks with former UGA deputy athletics director Carla Williams during G-Day in 2017. Williams is now the University of Virginia’s director of athletics.

Top photo by Georgia Sports Information | Bottom photo by John Paul Van Wert

In Memoriam

The Terry College community experienced the loss of five prominent faculty in recent months, whose careers and academic talents were integral to the college's educational mission.

We celebrate the lives and remember the achievements of these five faculty members:



James Don Edwards, professor emeritus of the J.M. Tull School of Accounting and interim dean of the Terry College from 1996-98, died Nov. 21, 2020, in Athens. He was 94. Born in Ellisville, Miss., and raised in Louisiana, Dr. Edwards served with the U.S. Naval Marines in China, Korea, Japan and Okinawa Island during World War II. He earned a bachelor's degree from Louisiana State in 1949, an MBA from the University of Denver in 1950 and his Ph.D. from the University of Texas at

Austin in 1953. In a career that spanned half a century, Dr. Edwards was an accomplished textbook author, effective fundraiser, decisive administrator, prodigious networker and loyal friend and mentor to hundreds of UGA alumni, accounting colleagues and former students. He joined the accounting faculty at Georgia in 1972 and was the central figure in securing the endowment from the J.M. Tull Foundation to name the School of Accounting in the late 1970s. Dr. Edwards authored or co-authored more than a dozen textbooks and nearly 100 research articles on accounting, financial management and accounting history. *Accounting Today* named Dr. Edwards one of the "100 Most Influential People in Accounting," and during his time at UGA he served on the UGA Foundation, Presidents

Club, UGA Alumni Association Board of Directors and the UGA Athletic Board. He served two years as interim dean of Terry during the restoration of Brooks Hall following fire damage in 1995 and construction of Sanford Hall. Dr. Edwards retired from UGA in 1998. He was awarded emeritus status in 1999 and kept an office in Brooks Hall until 2017.



Richard "Rich" J. Fox, a longtime member of the marketing faculty who once served as interim head of the department, died Dec. 2, 2020, in Athens. He was 78. Born in New York, N.Y., he earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Dayton and then went on to Michigan State, where he earned his master's and Ph.D. in mathematical statistics. He joined the Terry Marketing Department as an associate professor in 1983 and taught market research and quantitative analysis. Dr.

Fox served as the interim department head in 2007-08 and retired in 2010 but continued to serve as part-time faculty until last fall. Known for bringing his extensive professional experience into the classroom, Dr. Fox was honored many times for his teaching, including being named the 2020 Master of Marketing Research Teacher of the Year. He is remembered for his vibrant storytelling and dry wit. He was a statistical guru and trivia genius who loved sports — as a player and fan — music, the performing arts, history, nature and animals, with a special place in his heart for golden retrievers.



Gregory "Greg" T. Jones, who taught statistics for 12 years in Terry's Professional MBA program, died Dec. 11, 2020, in Atlanta. He was 60. Born in Honolulu, Hawaii, Dr. Jones earned his undergraduate degree at the University of the South in 1983 and his MBA from Auburn University at Montgomery in 1992, then went on to Georgia State, where he earned his JD and MPA in 2003 and Ph.D. in 2004. Dr. Jones joined the management faculty as a lecturer in

2009 — the year the PMBA program launched — and taught every class section of Analytical Tools for Decision Making to graduate students. The MBA faculty, staff and the hundreds of students he taught regarded him as a cornerstone of the PMBA program. Dr. Jones was a strategist, professor and decision scientist who devoted more than 30 years to helping organizations of all types navigate complexity, promote adaptive change and create environments that bring out the best in all people. He accomplished this work through his academic teaching as well as through Cooperation Science LLC, of which he was founder and principal scientist.



Richard "Rich" L. Daniels, professor of management and longtime director of the Executive and Professional MBA programs, died Jan. 17 in Atlanta. He was 63. Dr. Daniels was born in Melrose Park, Ill. He earned an undergraduate degree in chemistry at Northwestern University and went on to earn his Ph.D. at the UCLA Anderson School of Management in 1986. Dr. Daniels joined the Terry College in 2000 and led the formation

and growth of Terry's Executive MBA program. Under various titles at different times, he also directed Executive Programs, the Full-Time MBA program and the Professional MBA program. Dr. Daniels regularly taught graduate-level courses in operations management and quantitative methods. He previously was a member of the operations management faculty at Duke University and was a program director at Georgia Tech's College of Management from 1995-2000.



J. Harold Mulherin III, who held the Georgia Athletic Association Professorship in the Department of Finance, died in Savannah. He was 62. Born in Savannah, Dr. Mulherin received his bachelor's degree in economics from UGA in 1980. He made headlines at UGA by disbanding the Student Government Association after winning his bid as president of the Abolitionist party. He earned his master's degree and Ph.D. from UCLA. He joined the Terry

College faculty in 2006, was a Fulbright Distinguished Scholar in mergers and acquisitions in Italy and served as co-editor of the *Journal of Corporate Finance*. His previous teaching assignments included Clemson University, Dartmouth College, Penn State and Claremont McKenna College. He also held corporate positions at the Getty Oil Co., the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corp. and the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. ■



Photos by Cassie Wright



Leave benefits

Study shows positive effects after more generous maternity leave became law in Norway

By Merritt Melancon (ABJ '02, MA '19)

A study of women who were new mothers in the late 1970s found that those who were given longer, paid maternity leave lived healthier lives as they entered middle age.

While universal paid maternity leave is now available in many Western European nations, this has not always been the case. A new study by Terry College economics professor Meghan Skira looked at the health of Norwegian mothers before and after paid maternity leave became law in 1977. She found that the health benefits of leave continued for years after their children were born.

Skira worked with economist Aline Bütikofer of the Norwegian School of Economics and Julie Riise of the University of Bergen on the study. Their paper, "The Impact of Paid Maternity Leave on Maternal Health," is online in the *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy* and appeared in the journal's February print edition.

"This sharp change in who was eligible for paid maternity leave provides a nice natural experiment," said Skira. "It provides an environment where we can examine the causal health effects of paid leave. Our findings show that having access to paid leave leads to important health benefits for mothers around age 40."

The women who gave birth after July 1977 were in better health across the board as they hit middle age, but the biggest gains in health were seen among low-income women who may not have been able to afford to take the full amount of unpaid leave available before the change.

Abundance of data

Skira and her co-authors examined biometric data like body mass index, blood pressure, cholesterol levels and rates of diabetes combined with self-reported rates of pain, mental health, tobacco use and exercise habits to paint a comprehensive picture of women's health at 40.

The women who had access to paid leave had 2.5% to 3.7% lower BMI than those who did not have access. They were 10% less likely to have high blood pressure. They were 16% to 18% less likely to smoke and 14% to 20% more likely to exercise regularly.

"We know that women are healthier at 40, but we don't know exactly why. We did not find significant changes in income or employment among the women who had access to the reform, so the health improvements are unlikely due to income effects. We speculate that a reduction in stress, more time to recover from childbirth, and perhaps breastfeeding played a role," she said. "More research on exactly why maternal health improved would be valuable."

The study does draw clear causation between women staying home after giving birth and being healthier as they enter middle age.

Policy change paved the way

"In a typical observational study, you would be worried that those who take more leave are different in ways that might make their health better or worse," Skira said. "Those who take longer leave may be wealthier or have more family support. On the other hand, those who have more postpartum health problems may



take more leave. But here, because there is this sharp change in access to paid leave for everyone, the concerns about selection into leave-taking are minimized."

This was possible because the Norwegian Institute of Public Health collects health data on its citizens around age 40 as a way to benchmark the nation's well-being. Because of the so-called Age 40 Program, Skira and her co-authors had access to a tremendous set of birth, health and income data for the women who gave birth immediately before and after the law changed in 1977.

Norway expanded its paid leave policies again in 1987 and 1992, but those expansions marginally improved women's health at age 40, Skira said.

Several dimensions

"There does seem to be evidence of diminishing returns to leave length," Skira said. "But maternal health is only one dimension of maternity leave to consider. Effects on children's outcomes, women's labor market attachment and employers are also important."

As the mothers of 1977 continue to age, Skira hopes to examine their use of long-term sick leave and disability insurance to see if the health benefits they gained in middle age made a difference in their quality of life as they entered retirement. It's too early to tell what the long-term benefits of this policy shift will be, she said.

"While things have changed since the late 1970s, understanding the effects of this policy change is important since it extended leave benefits from a level similar to what the U.S. offers today under the Family and Medical Leave Act," Skira said. "Our results, therefore, may inform the current debate over family leave policy." ■





BLAGOEVA



CHAKRAVARTY



CHATTERJEE



KARAHANNA



MUNNEKE



POULSEN



SCHMUTTE



SEVILLA



SINGH



SMITH

Radina Blagoeva, assistant professor of management, received the 2020 Dissertation Award from the Erasmus Research Institute of Management. The award recognizes Blagoeva's dissertation, "The Hard Power Of Soft Power: A behavioral strategy perspective on how power, reputation, and status affect firms," published in the *Academy of Management Journal* and *Strategic Management Journal*.

Anindita Chakravarty, associate professor of marketing, was selected by the Marketing Science Institute to the 2020 class of MSI Scholars. The program recognizes excellence in marketing scholarship, develops a cohort across marketing disciplines, and strengthens ties between scholars and MSI.

Dave Chatterjee, associate professor of management information systems, published "Cybersecurity Readiness: A Holistic and High-Performance Approach." The book serves as a guide for managers to think of cybersecurity issues as a business-wide concern and offers systemic best practices for maintaining a company's informational integrity. It was published in March by SAGE Publishing.

Elena Karahanna, the C. Herman and Mary Virginia Terry Distinguished Chair of Business Administration and UGA Distinguished Research Professor, received the LEO Award for exceptional global contributions in the field of information

systems from the Association of Information Systems. The award recognizes individuals whose sustained contributions throughout their careers had a far-reaching global impact on information systems and beyond. Fewer than 50 MIS scholars have received the LEO Award since it was established in 1999.

Henry Munneke, associate dean for undergraduate programs and Roy Adams Dorsey Distinguished Chair in Real Estate, and doctoral student Lu Fang received the 2020 Edwin S. Mills Real Estate Economics Best Paper Award for "Gender Equity in Mortgage Lending," presented by the American Real Estate and Urban Economics Association.

Annette Poulsen, the Augustus H. "Billy" Sterne Chair of Banking and Finance and Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professor, joins the 2021 cohort of the UGA Special Collections Libraries Faculty Fellows Program. The fellowship provides professional and financial support to faculty developing research programs that tap into the library's immense archives.

Ian Schmutte, associate professor of economics, was named to the editorial board of *The Journal of Privacy and Confidentiality*, an interdisciplinary journal focusing on sharing research in the areas of privacy, confidentiality, and disclosure limitation. Schmutte, who studies labor economics and data privacy, also was named review

board chair for the Atlanta Research Data Center at the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.

Julio Sevilla, associate professor of marketing, was selected for the Advertising Research Foundation's 2021 class of MSI Young Scholars. This group of marketing academics convenes every other year to discuss their research, encourage future collaboration, and foster their interest in solving real-world marketing problems. Sevilla is ranked 30th in the world for research productivity in top American Marketing Association journals between 2011 and 2020.

Ruchi Singh, assistant professor of real estate, was awarded a \$127,840 grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The grant aims to develop new methods for calculating fair market rental rates in areas with rental shortages or rapidly rising rents. The project is a collaboration with faculty at the University of Illinois-Chicago.

Assistant professor of marketing **Rosanna Smith**, associate professor of marketing **Julio Sevilla** and marketing doctoral student Nicole Davis received UGA's Diversity Research and Scholarship Grant. Their project "Interracial Relationship Representations in Marketing: Effects on Societal and Consumer Outcomes" was one of 12 selected from across the university. ■

class notes



Left to right, top row: Nicole Epps (MBA '09), John Tebeau (BBA '97), Christian Dustmann (MA '86), Barbara Hampton (MBA '06). Bottom row: Ben Gooding (BBA '09), Dr. Emily Howell (BBA '00), Tope Awotona (BBA '02), David Dyer (BBA '89, MBA '90)

Where did Terry take you? Submit your class notes online, upload photos, share a promotion. news.terry.uga.edu/magazine

1945-49

Abit Massey (BBA '49) of Gainesville was named to the board of directors of the Georgia Humanities Council, a group of civic, business and academic leaders from across the state who help set policy and direction for Georgia Humanities. He is president emeritus of the Georgia Poultry Federation, retiring as the Gainesville-based organization's president in 2009 after serving in the role since 1960.

1960-64

A.D. 'Pete' Correll (BBA '63) of Atlanta was honored with the Lifetime Achievement Award at *Atlanta Business Chronicle's* 2020 Most Admired CEO Awards. He is the retired chairman and CEO of Georgia-Pacific.

Arnold Young (BBA '63, LLB '65) of Savannah was named in *The Best Lawyers in America* 2021 edition. He is a partner and general counsel at HunterMaclean.

1965-69

John Tatum (AB '65, LLB '68) of Savannah was named in *The Best Lawyers in America* 2021 edition. He is a partner and special counsel at HunterMaclean.



David Rosenthal (BBA '78, MBA '79) of Flower Mound, Texas, is retiring in July as VP and controller of the Exxon Mobil Corp. He has held that role since 2014, and previously served as VP of investor relations and board secretary, and assistant controller. He began his career with Exxon in 1979 as a financial analyst at Exxon Chemical Americas in Houston.

1970-74

Samuel Ozburn (BBA '73) of Covington retired from his position as a superior court judge in the Alcovy Judicial Circuit Superior Court. He has served on the bench since 1996.

1975-79

Jones Hooks (BBA '75) of Jekyll Island was named an Honorary Life Member of the Georgia Economic Developers Association. He is executive director of the Jekyll Island Authority. He served as the chair of GEDA in 1995.

Mike Maxey (BBA '75, MAcc '76) of Watkinsville was named chief revenue officer at DecisionLink, a provider of software-enabled customer value management. Most recently, he was senior director of worldwide sales at VMware-AirWatch.

Julio Ramirez (MBA '77) of Coral Gables, Fla., was named CEO of BurgerFi International, among the nation's fastest-growing better burger concepts with approximately 125 BurgerFi restaurants domestically and internationally. He founded JEM Global Inc., a company specializing in assisting QSR and fast-casual brands with franchising and development efforts domestically and internationally. He served in several senior positions at Burger King Corp.

Jeff Chandler (MBA '78) of Royal Oak, Md., is CEO of Easton Robotics, a startup investing in the development of robotics to help the small acreage farmer. He previously served as CEO of American Technology Services LLC.

Kevin Goodwin (MBA '79) of Newark, Del., retired from his position as senior data analyst after 39 years at DuPont Capital Management.

Hal Kravitz (BBA '79) of Westport, Ct., was appointed to the board of directors of Preferred Commerce Inc., which offers children's education and online games designed to help combat childhood obesity and promote making good nutritional choices. He serves as CEO of Certified Management Group, a food and beverage brokerage company and division of Global Broker Advantage Solutions, responsible for its C Store channel and inside sales businesses.

David Sweat (BBA '79) of Brunswick retired from the Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. He served as a commissioned risk examiner. He previously was a regional president at Atlantic Southern Bank and an SVP at Synovus.

Paul Williams (BBA '79) of Cordele was named chairman of the State Charter Schools Commission of Georgia. He has served on the commission since 2013 and is the regional



Bonney Shuman (BBA '80) of St. Simons Island was awarded the University of Georgia Alumni Association's 2021 Alumni Merit Award. It is the alumni association's oldest and highest honor and is presented to individuals who bring recognition and honor back to UGA through outstanding leadership and service to the university, the community, and his or her profession. She co-founded Bar Code Systems in 1983, which became Stratix Corp. She served as president and CEO until she sold the company and retired in 2011.

director of external affairs at Foothills Education Charter High School.

1980-84

Kitty Kendrick (BBA '80) of Marietta was named CFO of Craft Bank, a full-service commercial bank in Atlanta. She is owner of Kitty A. Kendrick CPA and has more than 30 years experience in the banking sector.

Bob Plante (PhD '80) of West Lafayette, Ind., retired as the Lewis B. Cullman Professor of Management at the Krannert School of Management at Purdue University. He was at Purdue for 40 years.

Stuart Bean (MBA '81) of Tampa, Fla., retired from his position as senior location executive for the Tampa Bay region at IBM after 22 years.

Donny Luker (BBA '81) of Atlanta retired from his position as managing partner after 38 years at Mauldin & Jenkins.

Roy Reeves (BBA '81) of Moultrie departed the Colquitt County Archway Partnership executive committee after 15 years of service, including 12 years as chairman. The part-

nership, a UGA Public Service and Outreach program, was piloted in Colquitt and now serves 13 Georgia communities. He is the owner of Reeves Properties and continues to partner with the university in his role on the J.W. Fanning Institute advisory board.

Cliff Williams (BBA '81) of Acworth retired from his position as partner after 39 years at Mauldin & Jenkins.

Barry Wabler (BBA '82, MAcc '83) of Atlanta was named CFO of SJV Data Solutions, a global provider of background screening data and research for consumer reporting agencies. He comes to SJV from Davidson Hotels & Resorts, where he had served as EVP and CFO since 2012.

Jim Dinkins (BBA '84) of Atlanta was named CEO of the Honey Baked Ham Co., a privately owned food retailer with more than 400 stores nationwide. He previously retired as group president of Coca-Cola North America and SVP of The Coca-Cola Company.

1985-89

Christian Dustmann (MA '86) of Bunde, Germany, was awarded the Carl-Friedrich-von-Weizsäcker-Prize 2020 by the Stifterverband and the German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina. The research prize is endowed with 50,000 euros and is awarded for scientific contributions to socially important challenges. He is a professor of economics and director of the Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration at University College London. His research centers on the field of migration and the labor market.



Carol Yancey (BBA '85) of Atlanta was appointed to the board of directors of BlueLinx Holdings Inc., a distributor of building and industrial products in the United States. She is the EVP and CFO of Genuine Parts Co.



Howard Lemons (AB '92) of McDonough joins Ameris Bank as an SVP and head of product management for Ameris Bank Treasury Services. He previously was the product manager at Renasant Bank, with oversight of the business digital banking application, payments, fraud and commercial card.

Mike Everett (BBA '87) of Albany launched SouthCore Real Estate, a full-service commercial real estate firm. He was previously president and CEO of Southern Appraisal Co. and served six years on the Albany-Dougherty Planning Commission.

Bryan Anderson (BBA '89) of Chevy Chase, Md., was named EVP and president of external affairs at Southern Co. He served as SVP of governmental affairs for the gas and electric utility holding company, which he joined in 2010.

David Dyer (BBA '89, MBA '90) of Winder joined Peach State Bank & Trust as SVP. He most recently served as market executive for Newton Federal Bank in Braselton.

1990-94

Rodney Hawkins (BBA '90) of Little Rock, Ark., was named EVP and audit executive at Simmons Bank. Before joining Simmons Bank, he was chief compliance officer and VP of internal audit at Windstream Communications.

Hughes Ash (BBA '93) of Benton, Ky., was named the new administrator at Mayfield Health and Rehabilitation. He previously served as executive director of the Christian Care Center of Kuttawa.

Brady Head (BBA '93) of Bellaire, Texas, was named SVP and product line officer for D&O Liability Insurance in North America of Berkshire Hathaway Specialty Insurance. He comes to BHSI after 27 years at AIG, where he was most recently head of management liability.

Preston Jones (BBA '93) of Townville, S.C., was named VP and commercial lender at Park National Bank's Anderson office. A veteran banker, he has almost two decades of experience in this market. While at Georgia, he was a member of the Bulldogs football team, where he played quarterback.

Danette Beck (BBA '94) of New Rochelle, N.Y., was named a Women to Watch by *Business Insurance* magazine. She is the national construction practice leader at USI Insurance Services LLC.

Brian Cooksey (BBA '94) of Dalton was named president of the board of directors for Georgia FIRST Robotics. He serves as the director of workforce development at Shaw Industries.

Scott Rockfeld (BBA '94) of Mercer Island, Wash., founded Sports Stars, a Seattle-based creator and publisher of children's books that introduces astronomy to children through sports. He published *Sports Stars: Astronomy for the Sports Fan in All of Us*. He is principal at Rockfeld Consulting LLC.

1995-99

W. Bryan Buckler (BBA '95) of Charlotte, N.C., was named CFO of OG&E Energy Corp., a regulated electric utility with customers in Oklahoma and western Arkansas. He joins OG&E from Duke Energy Corp., where he served in various capacities since 2006, most recently as VP of investor relations.

Misti Martin (BBA '95) of Ball Ground was named the 2020 recipient of the Rip Wiley Award for Professional Excellence by the Georgia Economic Developers Association. She is president of the Cherokee Office of Economic Development.

John Tebeau (BBA '97) of Athens was promoted to the Athens Region Market Executive at Synovus. He has been with the company since 1997 and recently served as a VP/commercial banker, with responsibility for commercial and industrial customers.

Ivan Tornos (BBA '97) of Coral Gables, Fla., was appointed COO at Zimmer Biomet Holdings Inc., a global company in musculoskeletal health care. He previously served as the company's group president of orthopedics and group president of global businesses and the Americas.

Candice Herndon (BBA '98) of Alpharetta was named president of IFCO North America, a division of IFCO Systems, a leading provider of reusable plastic containers for fresh food packaging. She previously served as VP of first mile solutions and key European accounts at CHEP.

Kelly Paynter (BBA '99, EdS '04) of Marietta was promoted to an associate professor in the School of Education and Professional Studies at Jacksonville State University in Alabama.

Michael Thompson (BBA '99) of Miami Beach, Fla., is CEO and CFO of Reinvent Technology Partners. A co-founding member of Reinvent Capital, he was previously co-founder, managing member, and portfolio manager for BHR Capital.

Cavit Yantac (MBA '99) of Istanbul, Turkey, was named VP and customer success lead for Micorsoft Turkey. He previously served as the technical program management lead for the company.

2000-04

Jill Creech (BBA '00) of Leesburg is a VP and commercial banker at Ameris Bank in Albany. She previously served as VP and business banker at SB&T.

Adam Fisher (BBA '00) of New York, N.Y., was named chief data officer at Sedgwick, a global provider of technology-enabled risk, benefits and integrated business solutions. He previously served as SVP of products and solutions at DemystData.

Thomas Forsberg (BBA '00, MBA '10) of Columbus was named a SVP and commercial banking officer at ServisFirst Bank. He previously served as a SVP and commercial relationship manager at Wells Fargo.

Dr. Emily Howell (BBA '00) of Jefferson was honored with the 2021 Habersham Central



Baris Oran (MBA '98) of Istanbul, Turkey, was named CFO of GXO Logistics Inc., a global logistics provider of supply chain solutions. He most recently served as CFO of the Sabanci Holding, one of Turkey's largest publicly traded companies.



Kim Adams (BBA '99) of Brookhaven was named the VP of diversity, equity and inclusion at Papa John's. Before joining Papa John's, she served as VP of engagement, inclusion and diversity at Equifax. In 2020, she was selected by the Atlanta Business League as one of "Atlanta's Top 100 Black Women of Influence" for her achievements.

High School Lifetime Achievement Award. She graduated from Habersham Central as valedictorian and was crowned Miss Georgia 2001 and competed in the 2002 Miss America pageant. She is an orthodontist and owner of Howell Orthodontics.

Eleanor Loiacono (PhD '00) of Williamsburg, Va., was named an associate professor of business analytics at the Raymond A. Mason School of Business at William & Mary. She previously was a professor of information technology at Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

Paul Bunn (BBA '00, MAcc '01) of Ringgold was recently promoted to senior EVP and COO of Covenant Logistics Group Inc. Covenant is a diversified logistics company focused on expedited and dedicated transportation along with warehousing and freight management/brokerage.

Kate Patterson (BBA '01) of Watkinsville was appointed to the Nonpublic Postsecondary Education Commission by Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp. She served in several management roles and as the director of a church preschool for eight years. She is a graduate of Leadership Georgia and served as a program chair for the organization in 2015.

Tope Awotona (BBA '02) of Marietta closed on an investment of \$350 million for his company Calendly, a popular cloud-based service people use to set up and confirm meeting times with others. Based in Atlanta, his startup is valued at more than \$3 billion.

Mike Davis (BBA '02) of Athens was named president of brokerage services at Binswanger Commercial Real Estate Services. Before Binswanger, he served as managing director of CBRE's advisory and transactions services practice in Washington, D.C.

John Lange (JD '94, MBA '02) of Atlanta is an attorney at Hall Booth Smith PC. He previously was general counsel at the Strickland General Agency.

Tamieka Weeks (BBA '02) of Douglasville was named president of the Atlanta RIMS Chapter, a nonprofit organization dedicated to promoting the profession of risk management. She is a risk management manager at Southwire Co.

Ken Kaufman (MBA '03) of Charlotte, N.C., will serve on the board of advisors of the Dentist Entrepreneur Organization, a peer-to-peer membership community for dentist-entrepreneurs and leaders seeking to scale their emerging dental group/dental service organization. Kaufman is CFO of Community Dental Partners/National Dental Partners.

Paul Lewis (BBA '03) of Brookhaven was promoted to regional director of the Americas at MAXIS Global Benefits Network, the international employee benefits joint venture between MetLife and AXA. He joined MAXIS GBN in 2016 and most recently headed up the U.S. East Region's Business Development team.



Shep Rose (AB '02) of Isle of Palms, S.C., recently published *Average Expectations: Lessons in Lowering the Bar*, a memoir reflecting on a life spent traveling, dating, and living in the reality television spotlight. He stars in the reality TV show Southern Charm.



Stephen Pond (BBA '06) of Cumming, **Chip Sipple** (BBA '09) of Atlanta, and **Jeff Henson** (BBA '08) of Sandy Springs co-founded and established Industry Real Estate Partners, a boutique capital markets advisory firm. Industry REP supports the facilitation of real estate solutions in key growth markets predominantly throughout the Southeast. Pond previously served as a director at NAI Brannen Goddard. Henson served as SVP of disposition services, and Sipple was a VP at Lincoln Property Co.

Scott Rountree (BBA '03) of Augusta was named chief assessor of the Richmond County Board of Assessors. He joined the department in 2011 and is a 2017 Leadership Augusta graduate.

Melissa Rutten (BBA '04) of Atlanta was named to the board of directors of OnBoard, the leading authority on women in the boardroom and executive suites of Georgia public companies. She is a financial advisor with The Leverte Wealth Management Group of Merrill Lynch Wealth Management and a member of the Atlanta Women's Foundation Inspire 2020 Program.

B.J. Schaknowski (MBA '04) of Westminster, Colo., was named CEO of symplr, a global health care governance, risk management, and compliance software-as-a-service platform. Before joining symplr, he served as the chief sales and marketing officer at Vertafore, a provider of insurance technology.

Shelly Waters (BBA '04, MAcc '04) of Atlanta was named SVP in the industrial and commercial services group of the investment banking division at Stephens, an independent financial services firm. Before joining Stephens, he was a director at SunTrust Robinson Humphrey.

Sarah Welton (BBA '04) of New York, N.Y., was named director of U.S. business growth for the East Coast at Longevity Partners, an ESG advisory firm. Before joining Longevity Partners, she served as a VP at the International WELL Building Institute.

2005-09

Dan Schmidt (MBA '05) of Lenexa, Kan., was appointed as SVP of global sales at Cubic-

Farm Systems Corp., a technology company developing and deploying technology to feed a changing world. Before joining Cubic-Farm, he served as VP of sales at Stanley Infrastructure, a division of Stanley Black & Decker.

Tyler Wright (BBA '05, MAcc '06) of Atlanta was named partner at Moore Colson, an accounting, consulting and advisory firm. He joined the firm in 2018 as a consulting senior manager and was promoted to director in 2019.

Nick Baer (BBA '06) of Smyrna was named VP of business development at Stonehill Strategic Capital. He is responsible for originating and structuring debt and equity investments across Stonehill's hospitality lending platform. He recently served as SVP at Jones Lang LaSalle.

Barbara Hampton (MBA '06) of Roswell was named president and CEO of the Georgia Transmission Corp., where she has served as SVP and CFO since 2005. She will lead the not-for-profit electric cooperative which delivers high voltage power to 38 of Georgia's electric membership cooperatives.

Randall Loggins (BBA '06) of Atlanta was appointed CFO at PruittHealth. He joined PruittHealth in 2019 as CIO after years in banking and finance at SunTrust Bank, with a focus in health care. He will continue to oversee PruittHealth's treasury, insurance, government affairs, and planning and development divisions.

Heather Ripley (BBA '06, MAcc '06) of New York, N.Y., was named an international tax partner at Alston & Bird. She has been with the firm since 2011 in the federal and inter-

national tax department.

Jordan Tippet (BBA '06) of St. Simons Island received the Innovation of the Year award from UGA's Small Business Development Center for his contributions to the creation of Digicon, a digital marketing conference in Savannah. He is a director of client experience at Abilitie.

Stuart Bern (BBA '07) of Atlanta was named head of strategic partnerships and corporate development at ATTOM, a curator of the nation's premier property database. Before joining ATTOM, he was the VP of business development and partnerships at Knock.

Kevin Morelli (BBA '07, MAcc '09) of Savannah was named COO at Cabretta Capital, a firm specializing in structured tax credit equity funds and tax-advantaged investment strategies. He previously served as Cabretta's CFO.

Rob Rayl (MBA '07) of Duluth was named chief development officer and COO of the Dystrophic Epidermolysis Bullosa Research Association of America (debra of America). He previously served as president of R2 Medical Solutions LLC. He has been an active board member at debra since 2014 and was elected vice chair in 2017.



Rajan Iyer (MBA '07) of Bennington, N.H., was named VP of research and development and technical services and Monadnock Paper Mills Inc., the oldest continuously operating paper mill in the United States. He previously worked for Georgia-Pacific, where he was responsible for innovation and tech service as a senior product development engineer.



Sakshi Mithal (MBA '08) of Bangalore Urban, India, founded the startup TKC Foods, which offers ready-to-cook, plant-based frozen food. Before starting TKC Foods, she launched The Kitchen Connect, a confectionery and cafe, in Delhi's Shahpur Jat area.

Dana Bourke (BBA '09) of Alpharetta is the chief marketing officer at Fresh Harvest. The company partners with farmers to offer weekly delivery of organic produce throughout Greater Atlanta. She previously served as the company's head of customer experience.

Adrianne Cantrell (MAcc '09) of Duluth serves as treasurer on the board of directors for the nonprofit Atlanta Angels, which offers support for children and caretakers in the foster care system.

Greg Caples (MBA '09) of Waynesville, N.C., was named CEO of Haywood Regional Medical Center in Clyde, N.C., part of Duke LifePoint Healthcare. He previously served as CEO of Coliseum Northside Hospital.

Jonathan de Lauréal (BBA '09) of New Orleans, La., was promoted to managing director at Bernhard Capital Partners Management LP, a service and infrastructure-focused private equity management firm. He has been with the firm since 2013.

Nicole Epps (MBA '09) of Frederick, Md., was named executive director of World Childhood Foundation USA. She had been the foundation's managing director of programs and policy since 2015, supporting the organization's mission to end sexual abuse, exploitation and violence against children.

Benjamin Gooding (BBA '09) of Columbia, S.C., was named a member of Robinson Gray, where his practice focuses on appellate advocacy, professional negligence and commercial litigation. He served as an associate for the firm since 2014.

Stephen King (BBA '09) of Augusta was named to the Downtown Development Au-

thority of Augusta. He is a regional external affairs manager for Georgia Power, serving as the utility's liaison for power delivery, customer service, sales and community/economic development efforts for the metro Augusta area.

Rachel Phipps (BBA '09, MIT '11) of Smyrna was named to the CURE Childhood Cancer Young Professional Leadership Council, which works to conquer childhood cancer through funding targeted research. She is a strategic digital partner in privacy program management at the Chick-fil-A Corporate Support Center.

Elizabeth White (BBA '09, ABJ '09) of Atlanta was named to the 2020 Top Wealth Advisor Moms list by SHOOK Research. She is a certified financial planner and a wealth management advisor and SVP at Merrill Lynch Wealth Management.

2010-14

Christopher Collier (BBA '10) of Cornelia was appointed to serve on the Stone Mountain Memorial Association by Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp. He is EVP and corporate counsel for Ely Corp. in Cartersville.

Sean Kavanagh (BBA '10) of Atlanta was named principal, VP of acquisitions at Middleburg Communities, a company that acquires, renovates and manages apartment properties. He previously served as executive director of investments at The RADCO Companies.



Lewis Cooksey (MBA '16) of Dacula was named director of the Gwinnett County Department of Transportation. He previously served as the county's assistant transportation director and has worked for Gwinnett County for 12 years. He was hired as a project manager in 2008 and worked his way up the ranks in the transportation department.

Mike MacDonald (BBA '10, MS '13) of Baltimore, Md., was named defensive coordinator for the Michigan Wolverines. He joins the Wolverines' coaching staff after seven seasons with the Baltimore Ravens, where he last served as linebackers coach.

Clay Knowles (BBA '11, JD '14) of Atlanta joined Adams and Reese as an associate attorney. He previously worked as an associate attorney at Swift, Currie, McGhee & Hiers.

Jonathan Killian (MBA '12) of Atlanta joins NewsNation Network as VP of creative marketing and brand communications. The network is owned by Nexstar Media Group Inc. He joins Nexstar from CNN International, where he was executive director of creative and brand development.

Peter Melampy (AB '13) of New York, N.Y., joined Blank Rome LLP's corporate, M&A, and securities group as an associate in the New York office. He previously served as an associate at Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP.

Matthew Colvin (MBA '14) of Atlanta was selected as the University of Georgia's economic development director in Atlanta. He previously served as the executive director of economic development for the University System of Georgia.

2015-19

Hannah Farhadi (BBA '17, BS '17, MPA '20) of Atlanta was named a development coordinator at Southern Conservation Trust, a trust aimed at preserving greenspace in communities.

Abby Jessen (BBA '17, ABJ '17) of Tulsa, Okla., was named director of branding and programming for Cox Media Group's KRAV-FM (Mix 96.5) in Tulsa. She started with CMG as an afternoon news/traffic reporter.

Kendrick Hardison (MA '18, MA '19) of Cheraw, S.C., is pursuing a joint doctorate in political science and public policy at Duke University.

Clark Sukaratana (BBA '18, MA '20) of Tampa, Fla., was named the database and financial services administrator at Shorecrest Preparatory School in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Jeffrey Bruce (BBA '19) of Lawrenceville was named a Realtor at Crye-Leike.

2020-

Allison Keen (BBA '20) of Soperton was named operations and sales analyst at Bland Farms, the largest grower, packer and shipper of sweet onions in the United States.

Erin McCall (BBA '20) of Charlotte, N.C., was named a leadership development program analyst at Truist Financial.

Elizabeth Ortega (BBA '20) of Macon was named a risk control representative at CNA Financial Corp. ■

CLASS NOTES: STUDENT VETERANS



Supporting Terry's Troops

The Terry College of Business, in partnership with the UGA Student Veterans Resource Center, is **committed to positioning student veterans for success**. We seek to help meet the needs of these nontraditional students, attract more veterans to UGA and ease their financial burden by securing private gifts to establish scholarships designated for our military heroes. With your help, we can realize our goal of securing **\$5 million of endowed support**.

- These scholarships provide critical help to veterans who have no GI Bill benefits, and supplemental coverage that keeps them in school when they've exhausted their benefits.
- Support allows Terry to provide much needed assistance for living expenses and study abroad, externships and internships.
- Endowed scholarships ensure Terry can compete with other business schools in student veteran recruitment.

83%
INCREASE IN GRADUATE
VETERAN ENROLLMENT AT TERRY
IN THE PAST 2 YEARS

17%
OF STUDENT
VETERANS HAVE NO
VA EDUCATION BENEFITS

72%
OF STUDENT VETERANS
ARE LIKELY TO NEED
SUPPLEMENTAL BENEFITS



“It is a large investment to come back to school. It requires the investment of money and time. The graduate scholarship makes the total education cost affordable for me.”
PATRICK SORRENTINO (MBA '22)
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

To support our student veteran efforts, please contact: Kathy Ortstadt, ortstadt@uga.edu or 706.542.3546

1940s

Richard I. Born (BBA '42), Atlanta, Jan. 13. **Annette S. Goldberg** (BBA '42), Berkeley, Calif., Dec. 2. **Geraldine B. Greenberg** (BBA '43), Savannah, Jan. 31. **Dorothy Kaufmann Steinheimer** (BBA '46), Atlanta, Jan. 17. **Elizabeth 'Sisie' F. Barr** (BBA '48), Tucson, Ariz., Dec. 29. **Robert 'Bobby' K. Bush** (BBA '48), Columbia, Mo., March 6. **H. Hodgson Thomas** (BBA '48), Atlanta, March 5. **Dr. Harold W. Berkman** (BBA '49), Wellington, Fla., Dec. 7. **Thomas A. Brennan Sr.** (BBA '49), Savannah, Feb. 6. **Thomas C. Crenshaw Jr.** (BBA '49), Covington, Jan. 19. **Billy H. Hargett** (BBA '49), Peachtree City, Jan. 1. **Franklin P. Sheffield Jr.** (BBA '49), Bostwick, Dec. 2. **James 'Chick' S. Wilson Jr.** (BBA '49), Monticello, Nov. 10. **Margaret Tepper Winkler** (BBA '49), Baton Rouge, La., Nov. 13.

1950s

Charles A. Wells (BBA '50), Cordele, Oct. 8. **William T. Bradshaw** (BBA '51), Woodstock, Oct. 2. **Richard A. Chew** (BBA '51), Charlotte, N.C., Feb. 18. **Hal L. Cofer Jr.** (BBA '51), Athens, Dec. 17. **Sam T. Davis** (BBA '51), Griffin, Oct. 25. **Frank K. Norton Sr.** (BBA '52), Gainesville, Jan. 19. **John 'Jack' D. Schaaf** (BBA '52), Beaufort, S.C., Jan. 26. **Ann Jones Brown** (BBA '53), Orlando, Fla., Nov. 17. **William G. Moody Jr.** (BBA '53, MBA '59), Athens, Jan. 10. **Marion 'Buster' A. Morrison** (BBA '53), Atlanta, Jan. 7. **James B. Drew Jr.** (BBA '54), Atlanta, Dec. 3. **Kermit R. Hall Sr.** (BBA '54), Marietta, Dec. 21. **Milton T. Spratlin** (BBA '54), Martin, Nov. 5. **Phyllis Allen Ward** (BBA '54), Villa Rica, Oct. 2. **Marion 'Glenn' G. Fox** (BBA '55), Tucker, Nov. 2. **James R. McGeever** (BBA '55), Atlanta, Oct. 8. **Cal H. Watford Jr.** (BBA '55), Roswell, Nov. 25. **Kermit S. Dorough** (BBA '56), Cordele, Jan. 7. **F. Douglas Puckett Jr.** (BBA '56, LLB '58), Atlanta, Jan. 10. **Bicknel 'Earl' E. Bowden Jr.** (BBA '57), Macon, Feb. 11. **Rayford 'Frank' F. Faircloth Sr.** (BBA '57), Ringgold, Dec. 20. **Joel L. Jones** (BBA '57), Rome, Jan. 5. **John 'Jack' W. Kern** (BBA '57), Atlanta, March 26. **Parker R. Lowry** (BBA '57), Acworth, March 28. **Lloyd E. Sheffield Sr.** (BBA '57), Houston, Texas, Jan. 6. **Weems 'Homer' H. Boatright** (BBA '58), Marietta, Jan. 10. **Jeannine 'Nini' Maltby Chilton** (BBA '58), Decatur, Nov. 16. **W. Leon Friedman Jr.** (BBA '58), Savannah, Dec. 25. **Albert 'Bert' B. Maxwell Sr.** (BBA '58), Athens, Feb. 3. **Allan E. McGarity** (BBA '58), Elberton, Dec. 20. **James E. Orr Jr.** (BBA '58), Brunswick, Oct. 27. **Ernest M. Brackett Jr.** (BBA '59), Monroe, Dec. 2. **Thomas L. Exley Sr.** (BBA '59), Springfield, Jan. 16. **George O. Haley** (BBA '59), Chatham, Va., March 5.

1960s

Guy C. Arnall (BBA '60), Newnan, March 25. **John N. Haley** (BBA '60, JD '63), Athens, Dec. 13. **Sam C. McGill** (BBA '60), Washington, Dec. 4. **Herbert A. Sodel** (BBA '60), Duluth, Dec. 9. **George 'G.M.' M. Tucker** (BBA '60), Fitzgerald, Dec. 21. **John C. Upchurch** (BBA '60), Athens, Oct. 8. **Milton G. Adams** (BBA '61, MED '69), Punta Gorda, Fla., Oct. 16. **Col. William 'Terry' T. Baggett** (MBA '61), Douglasville, Dec. 20. **John William Brim** (BBA '61), Jacksonville, Fla., Feb.

16. **Margaret 'Joann' J. Higginbotham** (BBA '61), Thomasville, Nov. 19. **J. Willis Holcombe** (BBA '61), Virginia Beach, Va., Nov. 16. **Dewey 'D.O.' O. Shirah Jr.** (BBA '61), Covington, Oct. 25. **Kenneth E. Taylor** (BBA '61), Athens, Oct. 28. **Raymond H. Bacon** (BBA '62), Irwinton, Feb. 1. **Col. Chovine 'Chevy' R. Davis III** (BBA '62), Pike Road, Ala., Nov. 25. **Alan J. Levy** (BBA '62), Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Oct. 7. **William 'Bill' D. McKenny** (BBA '62), Monroe, Jan. 31. **Ronald L. Schreiber** (BBA '62), Wilmington, N.C., Jan. 30. **Richard E. Tomberlin** (BBA '62), Macon, Dec. 12. **Ronald G. Cox** (BBA '63), Griffin, Dec. 2. **H. Lehman Franklin Jr.** (BBA '63, JD '64), Statesboro, Dec. 31. **Ottis A. Sweat Jr.** (BBA '63), Jacksonville, Fla., Jan. 13. **Dr. Frederick E. Tank** (BBA '63), Sylvania, Ohio, Jan. 22. **J. 'Mack' McGinnis Caldwell** (BBA '64), Bogart, Feb. 14. **William 'Billy' T. Ellison Jr.** (BBA '64), Gainesville, Oct. 20. **James F. Gingrey Jr.** (BBA '64), Marietta, March 2. **Daniel C. Jones** (BBA '64), Whigham, Jan. 31. **Michael 'Barry' B. Kesser** (BBA '64), Virginia Beach, Va., March 23. **Anita Schulman Levy** (BBA '64), Decatur, Nov. 9. **Edgar B. Smith III** (BBA '64), Cairo, Oct. 6. **Donald J. Snellings** (BBA '64), Marietta, Dec. 19. **Terry 'Butch' D. Bradshaw** (BBA '65), Canton, Jan. 18. **Philip A. Dreger Sr.** (BBA '65), Atlanta, Feb. 19. **William E. Fleeman** (BSA '59, MBA '65), Hull, Dec. 17. **John M. Rhodes** (BBA '65), Anderson, S.C., March 27. **James 'Bobby' R. Shepard** (BBA '65), Nashville, Jan. 16. **Thomas B. Andrews III** (BBA '66), Savannah, Oct. 17. **Charles 'Allen' A. Busbee** (BBA '66), Cumming, Nov. 19. **Bobby G. Combs** (AB '66), Watkinsville, Nov. 11. **Wayne T. Elliott** (BBA '66, JD '68), Blue Ridge, Dec. 22. **John F. Gillam** (BBA '66), Panama City, Fla., Feb. 5. **George S. Haynie Jr.** (BBA '66), Lawrenceville, Oct. 28. **Raymond 'Ray' E. Landreth** (BBA '66), LaGrange, Jan. 20. **Alfred 'Dan' D. Lindstedt** (BBA '66), Mableton, Nov. 4. **Perry S. Patterson Jr.** (BBA '66), Harrisburg, Ore., Dec. 10. **Jimmy E. Thomas** (BBA '66), Watkinsville, Nov. 23. **Robert 'Bobby' M. Basham** (BBA '67), Watkinsville, Jan. 1. **Charlie D. Bruce Jr.** (BBA '67), Brunswick, Jan. 25. **Robert W. Galloway** (BBA '67), Pooler, March 10. **Harry L. Hudson Jr.** (BBA '67), Duluth, March 24. **Ralph S. Kelly Jr.** (BBA '67), Dublin, March 11. **John J. Murphy III** (BBA '67), Charleston, S.C., March 5. **Grady 'Gene' E. Brooks Sr.** (BBA '68), Gainesville, Oct. 22. **James B. Davis** (BBA '68, MBA '72), Jacksonville, Fla., March 16. **W. Roger Holden** (BBA '68), Savannah, Feb. 18. **James W. Stovall** (BBA '68), Elberton, Dec. 16. **Rev. Stanley R. Durden** (BBA '69, JD '72), Watkinsville, Feb. 1. **Rodney 'Rod' M. Kittrell** (BBA '69), Roswell, March 5. **Joseph T. Rei** (BBA '69), Middleburg, Fla., Oct. 6.

1970s

Dennis W. Griffin (BBA '70), Columbus, March 28. **Florian 'Bob' C. Merritt** (BBA '70), Miami, Fla., Oct. 17. **Dr. Dwight R. Norris** (MBA '70, PhD '79), Auburn, Ala., Nov. 13. **William C. Thornton III** (BBA '70), Athens, Oct. 11. **Capt. Charlie L. Waters** (BBA '70), Dallas, Oct. 25. **Joseph E. Blythe** (MBA '71), Macon, Dec. 24. **Thomas J. Callaway III** (BBA '71), Thomasville, Nov. 6. **Paul R. Freeman** (BBA '71), Atlanta, Jan. 7. **J. 'Bill' William McPherson** (BBA '71), Dunwoody, Feb. 10. **Curtis A. Summerlin Sr.** (BBA '71), Douglas,

Feb. 1. **Samuel E. Vivian** (BBA '71), Greenwood, S.C., Dec. 12. **Clinton G. Adams** (BBA '72), Athens, Jan. 13. **William F. Medders** (BBA '72), Plant City, Fla., Oct. 31. **John D. Scoggins** (BBA '72), Athens, Dec. 15. **Harvey C. Brown Jr.** (BBA '73, JD '76), Lindale, Nov. 8. **Marion 'Buddy' P. Harris** (BBA '73), Sylvester, Jan. 25. **Larry W. Massey** (BBA '73), Dawson, Feb. 17. **Dr. Larry H. Beard** (ABJ '64, MA '65, PhD '74), Decatur, March 6. **James R. Harvey** (BBA '74), Milner, Jan. 19. **Samuel D. King** (BBA '74), Tiger, Dec. 29. **Barbara A. Powers** (BBA '74), Savannah, Dec. 25. **Alan V. Davis** (BBA '75), Forsyth, Nov. 9. **Dr. Karen Collins Johnson** (BBA '75), Watkinsville, Feb. 10. **Dr. George 'Harry' H. Kinchen Jr.** (BBA '75), Graceville, Fla., Nov. 22. **Stewart J. Hull** (BBA '76), Salem, S.C., Nov. 13. **Dr. Richard J. Judd** (PhD '76), Springfield, Ill., Oct. 11. **John T. O'Brien** (BBA '76), Albany, Dec. 21. **Jacquelyn E. Matthews** (BBA '78), Macon, Dec. 27. **Dr. Roy 'Martin' M. Richards Jr.** (PhD '78), Denton, Texas, Feb. 13. **Edwin M. Ruus Jr.** (BBA '78), Walhalla, S.C., Oct. 26. **Michael 'Clay' C. Sewell** (BBA '79), Thomasville, Dec. 14. **Jerry D. Weaver** (BBA '79), Stockbridge, March 25.

1980s

Karl A. Haun (BBA '80), Woodstock, Feb. 7. **Dr. John 'Harold' H. Mulherin III** (AB '80), Athens, Jan. 13. **Kevin F. O'Brien** (BBA '80), Stone Mountain, Nov. 5. **Douglas C. Craft** (BBA '81), Douglasville, Feb. 7. **Rickey T. Herren** (BBA '81), Larkspur, Colo., Feb. 10. **Stewart S. Richardson Jr.** (AB '81), Watkinsville, Feb. 1. **Gregory 'Hop' B. Askew** (BBA '82), Chattanooga, Tenn., Feb. 26. **Brian A. Perry** (BBA '82), Cypress, Texas, Oct. 9. **Daniel A. Buck** (BSFR '77, MBA '83), Lorton, Va., Jan. 31. **James G. Nixon** (AB '85), Macon, Jan. 1. **Robert B. Stroup** (AB '85), Suwanee, Dec. 20. **Lee B. Wright** (BBA '85), Tyrone, March 15. **Richard 'Todd' T. Murphy** (BBA '87), Lizella, March 27. **Michael S. Shatz** (BBA '87), Jackson, Tenn., Oct. 21. **Kenneth 'Jeff' J. Smith** (BBA '89), Dalton, Nov. 29.

1990s

Joel 'Joey' H. Ashcraft (BBA '90), Dublin, Jan. 20. **S. Thomas Knoff** (MBA '91), New York, N.Y., Feb. 25. **Kenneth B. Williams** (BBA '91, MAcc '93), Cumming, Jan. 9. **Kelly G. Hale** (BBA '93), Monroe, Oct. 1. **Richard L. Steed** (BBA '95), Athens, Nov. 8. **Blake R. Hill** (BBA '96), Dalton, March 6. **Kevin D. Whitworth** (BBA '99), Duluth, Oct. 24.

2000s

Cedric B. Fears (BBA '00), Athens, Feb. 7. **Thomas A. Pacello Jr.** (BBA '00), Memphis, Tenn., Nov. 16. **Theo P. Moss** (BBA '01), Reno, Nev., Oct. 20. **Sean P. Lyons** (BBA '03), Joshua, Texas, Nov. 22. **Alexis R. Balkum** (MBA '07, MED '16), Smyrna, Dec. 26. **Blake A. McManus** (BBA '08, MAcc '08), Snellville, Dec. 8.

2010s

Stephen D. Tootle II (BBA '10), Savannah, Dec. 20. ■

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