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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 Terry’s future by supporting study abroad opportunities today.

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

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.

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 Holland, 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
Karl Davis Chair in Tuscaloosa Business Administration
busdean@uga.edu

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 also is a Terry Ambassador, Sea Island Scholar, Presidential Scholar, member of the Phi Beta Kappa and Beta Gamma Sigma honor societies, Athene Poeten 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.
NEWS IN BRIEF

Terry names new head... 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 given 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 conducted research on sales-force interactions — particularly in online communities — and how they influence consumer behaviors, the marketing-financial 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 rack up top rankings 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 in its fourth straight year to be ranked in the top-50 public program. Terry was ranked No. 33 overall and 12th among public 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 masters 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 earn 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 publication record is national. More notable, UGA ranked first for per capita research production in the nation.

- 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. Doctoral students with 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 led 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 Asl (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 LeaseQuery's CEO. "It inspires others out there that they can do it as well."

The company helps accountants and finance managers with data-driven insights through its lease accounting software — the first of its kind built by accountants for accountants. Asl and Ramsey, LeaseQuery's chief revenue officer who earned a bachelor's degree in business in 2003, 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, 31 businesses on the Bulldog 100 list included graduates from the Terry College, including six in the top 10. Terry graduates consistently rank among the top in five-year productivity for the same five-year period.

LeaseQuery, the company led by Terry alum George Asl (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 need-based scholarships to launch the initiative and annual funds to support programs at Terry for years to come.

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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, including several national and regional 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 students 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.”

“She was not just an educator, but an advocate for all students,” said Bennett-Alexander. “With a 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.”

“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 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 over saw 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, 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 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 advancement in the history of the Terry College, which houses IIA, and the largest single gift IIA 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 IIA 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 IIA. First, the IIA Leadership Fellows program will be expanded to welcome a new cohort of UGA undergraduates each fall and spring semester, instead of each year. Second, IIA 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, IIA has graduated nearly 1,500 leaders, many of whom joined Chick-fil-A over the years. IIA centers its programs on the core leadership values of responsibility, stewardship, excellence, integrity and purpose. Two programs — the Leonard Leadership Scholars and IIA Leadership Fellows — operate within IIA, 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, Jeff Nettner 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 Hellenbeck, 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. Hellenbeck’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 P.h.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 Younghak Kim was the Bearden winner last year.

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
In the 1960s, John W. “Jack” Rooker (BBA ’60) entered working life with his father — Terry alumnus 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 Hall 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, stung 850 monthly donations. They eventually invested their stash in real estate, and when they sold a value of Atlanta warehouse properties 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 ’92), 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,” John 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 private real estate development firm, 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 got to be 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 open here.

“Rooker asked me if I would also be interested in hiring and operating a movie production studio and a modern e-commerce facility. It houses a DHL logistics hub that brings goods to Union City. (Rooker sold the business center property to the federal government after building it for $143 million.)

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

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

A list of stars wanders 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 — sixing people up. Associates say Jack had the same ability to assess the worthiness of new contracts in a short time. John and Nick first shook hands in 2015, when Smerigan was designing 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 its feet on the ground.”

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 stage 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.”
“John is the very definition of a people person. People are drawn to him, and he’s constantly making new connections. As a friend, 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 made his case. He always loved Athens. He met April there.

“John is definitely a country boy at heart who felt stuck in the real estate career nowadays on industrial real estate deals,” says Wirth. “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.”

“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.’”
Douglas is a town of 16,000 along the Sulphur Springs Valley in Arizona's southeastern corner, boasting a semiarid climate, where you will find country to country. Douglas' population is nearly 85 percent Hispanic, and railroads provided the example of giving back and serving others. They knew 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 as good as it was intended to be," she says. "It was the first time I realized the education I received in Arizona was not as good as what I expected."

It was a critical point for Adrianna — school was never difficult before. But falling back on the lessons of her grandfather, she began to study and learn more about the subject. She worked with tutors, putting in extra work so she wouldn't fail behind. "I always heard my tata saying 'con ganas' or 'with desire' — I had to try," she says. "I 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.'"

Adrianna Samaniego's typical day at the Female Founders Fund consists of learning as much as she can. "We believe female founders are creating the next $1 billion businesses and we want to back them," she says. 

"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 stay on the right path."

But as she was about to enter Douglas High School (presumably nicknamed the Bulldogs), she was still at the table doing homework. "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. She had to work twice as hard as everybody else," Samaniego's mother says. "Her area of focus was around equity, how the law applies in different contexts. She was very special," says Dawn Bennett-Alexander, a longtime friend of Adrianna's mom. 

"They said, 'You know we don't meet a lot of people from Georgia,'" Samaniego says. "So I was like 'Well, it's great to meet you,'" she says. They agreed, "We have a lot of friends who know we are from Georgia," Samaniego says. "We know a lot of people who don't have all the opportunities, so I wanted to ensure I was 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."

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 of color are creating the next $1 billion businesses and we want to back them," she says. 

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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,'" Samaniego says. "It 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 businesses. 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.

The fund recently invested in more software startups but boasts companies such as Zola (wedding planning), Billie (razors for women), Eloquii (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.

“Last year was such a great placement, and she seemed the younger version of myself, who needed 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.”

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 Latinx,” 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.”

“Achievement and 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
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 speck. 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, flocks 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.


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
from 300 to 940+ with the goal of 1,500 by 2025. The goal is for each chief development officer. He has overseen growth in locations he was the company's vice president of franchise development and the foundation was cast in concrete with deft moves. Before that, Smoothie Café in December 2018 after a six-month stint as was to cut royalties 50 percent for two months. It was not a loan. "Our franchisees responded and signed on to these different sales together with Grubhub, Uber Eats, DoorDash and the brand's app. of Atlanta, pressed franchisees around the U.S. to lash themselves history of the brand."

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

The greatest opportunity was expanding the Tropical Smoothie Café digital reach before to restaurants started slamming shut in spring 2020. The headquarters, in Sandy Springs just north of "I was using digital, but it went from pushing it to it's absolutely mandatory in this environment," Watson says. "Our franchises responded and signed on to these different sales channels, and the lift of that helped us through.

Perhaps the most significant tactical move; a row of solidarity, was to cut royalties 50 percent for two months. It was not a loan. Franchises 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 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 franchisee to have $1 million in sales and 38 percent profit ability each year.

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 "E" is responsibility. We have two-hand touch football, Watson says. It is a 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 franchisees" 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. 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 show 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.

"We'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 do 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 our 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 bee 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.

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

Charleston 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

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"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 do that jazz or that thrill out of it."
“Starting out of the gates, you wear a lot of hats,” he says. “You’re the head sales guy. 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 $800,000,” 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.

“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... It’s exhilarating, but it’s also high stress because you don’t know how the story is going to end.

— Jeff Jones

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 and others with cloud and data expertise help clients implement business processes since they founded the business in 2014.

Helped companies make digital technologies work for their specific businesses since they founded the business in 2014.

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.

“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 nonprofit pro bono to help them implement Salesforce and enhance their use of the product. Employees give back 10 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 pharmacuetical sciences, while the youngest is now in high school.
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 superheroes, and 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.

Pam Rogers moved often as a child because of her father’s job, but she found a love for baton twirling that provided passion and inspiration to so many. She tells me, “I’m the person who comes in and says, ‘OK, what do we need 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. It 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 palm oil farms in Central America and hog and beef slaughters in North Carolina; Nestlé in Los Angeles, known for chocolate, pet food, hotels, and wineries, was the opportunity to see manufacturing in a whole different light; at General Motors as a risk analyst, followed by a stint at Perry Drug Stores as a risk manager.

Rogers has delivered this tenacity 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; Nestlé in Los Angeles, known for chocolate, pet food, hotels, and wineries, was the opportunity to see manufacturing in a whole different light; at General Motors as a risk analyst, followed by a stint at Perry Drug Stores as a risk manager.

In big-time retail, where she dealt with tens of 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 college 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 years at a company and then move to another company, you are not going 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 together deals such as Sears in the years before putting it up in 2015. Admitting she is “not going to retire,” she wanted to build a clientel
Maria Taylor (ABJ ’09, MBA ’13)

By Ed Morales

Several 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.”

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.

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.”
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 ESPNU 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 a new board and bridge connecting the business, teams and schools that it helped Taylor define her leadership style. Subsequent classes included case studies of business quandaries — should Netflix become fully digital, and why IBM needed a new board and bridge connecting the business, teams and schools that

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 and basketball 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.”

“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, you’re finding new ways to help others and don’t be so focused on you that you forget that there are others.”

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 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.’”

“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
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 Ellinwood, Kans., 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 more than 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 retired from UGA in 1996. He was awarded emeritus status in 1999 and kept an office in Brooks Hall until 2015.

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 bachelor’s 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. Proctor 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.

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 1999 — the year the PMBA program launched — and taught every class section of Analytical Tools for Decision Making to graduate students. The PMBA 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. Daniello, 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 anti-GA party. He earned his master’s degree and Ph.D. from Louisiana State University after winning his bid as president of the anti-GA party. He earned his master’s degree and Ph.D. from Louisiana State University.
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.


“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.”

**Leave benefits**

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

By Merritt Melancon (ABJ ’02, MA ’19)

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 concern and offers systemic best practices for maintaining a company’s 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 Liang 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” Sterns Chair of Banking and Finance and Meigs Distinguished Teaching Professor, joined 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 “Interpersonal Relationship Representations in Marketing: Effects on Social and Consumer Outcomes” was one of 12 selected from across the university.

Where did Terry take you? Submit your class notes online, upload photos, share a promotion.

news.terry.uga.edu/magazine
1970-74
Samuel Osburn (BBA ’74) 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 1966.

1975-79
Jones Hooks (BBA ’75) of Jekyll Island was named an honorary Life Member of the Georgia Economic Development Association. He is executive director of the Jekyll Island Authority. He served as the chair of GEDA in 1995.

1980-84
Mike Maxey (BBA ’80, MArch ’84) of Way- kiville was named chief revenue officer at DecisionLink, a provider of software solutions to the customer value management. Most recently, he was senior director of worldwide sales at product management for American Express and CFO since 2012.

1985-89
A.D. ‘Pete’ Correll was named in 1989 as the group president of Coca-Cola North America and SVP of The Coca-Cola Company. He previously was the vice president of Outdoor Bank, with oversight of the business digital banking application, payments, fraud and commercial card.

1990-94
Mike Everett (BBA ’90) of Albany launched Southcare Real Estate, a full-service commercial real estate firm. He was previously president and CEO of Southern Appliance Co. and served six years on the Albany-Dough-erty Planning Commission.

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 joined OG&E from Duke Energy Corp, where he served in various capacities since 2006, most recently as VP of investor relations.

1999-03
Misti Martin (BBA ’99) of Ball Ground was named the 2002 recipient of the Riley Award from the American School Computing Co-op and Georgia Economic Developers Association. She is the director of the Commerce Parishes Office of Economic Development.

1995-99
John Tatum (48 ’65, LLB ’65) of Savannah was named in The Best Lawyers in America 2021 edition. He is a partner and special counsel at HunterMaclean.

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.

1985-89
Bonney Shuman (BBA ’85) of St. Simons Island was awarded the University of Georgia Alumni Association’s 2021 Alumni Merit Award. It is the alma mater’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 1998, which became Sparta Corp. She served as president and CEO until she sold the company and retired in 2011.

1990-94
Carol Yancey (BBA ’90) of Bellaire, Texas, was named the new administrator at Mayfield Springs, a veteran rehabilitation center in Westport, Ct. She previously served in various capacities since 2006, most recently as VP of investor relations.

1995-99
Howard Lemons (BBA ’95) of McDonough joins Ameris Bank as an EVP and head of product development for Ameris Bank Treasury Services. He previously was the chief technology officer for Bank of America, with oversight of the business digital banking application, payments, fraud and commercial card.

1999-03
Brian Cooksey (BBA ’99) of Dalton was named president of the board of directors for Georgia National Bank’s Anderson office. He previously was the director of workforce development at Shaw Industries.

2000-04
Scott Rockfield (BBA ’00) of Mercer Island, Wash., founded Sports Stars, a Seattle-based creator of children’s sports programs that introduces athleticism to children through sports. He published Sports Stars: Aminostron for the Sports Fan in All of Us. He is principal at Rockfield Consulting LLC.
**CLASS NOTES**

Kelly Paynter (BBA ‘99, EdS ‘15) 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 Fleetvine ReInvent Technology Partners. A co-founding member of ReInvent Capital, he was previously a co-founder, managing member, and portfolio manager for BH Capital.

Cavit Yantac (BBA ‘00) of Istanbul, Turkey, was named VP and customer success lead for Microsoft 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 ServisFirst Bank. He previously served as VP and business banker at S&J&T.

Adam Fisher (BBA ‘00) of New York, N.Y., was named chief data officer at Sedgwick, a company. He previously served as CFO of the Sabanci Holding, one of Turkey’s largest publicly traded companies.

Baris Oran (BBA ‘01) of Istanbul, Turkey, was named CFO of GIX 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.

Mike Davis (BBA ‘01) 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 (BBA ‘01) of Atlanta is an attorney at Hall Booth Smith PC. He previously was general counsel at the Stickland General Agency.

Tamioka 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 (BBA ‘02) 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 American at MAXIS Global Benefits Network, the international employee benefits joint venture between MetLife and AXA. He joined MAXIS in 2016 and most recently headed up the U.S. East Region’s Business Development Team.

High School Lifetime Achievement Award. She graduated from Habersham Central as valedictorian and was named 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 Williamson, 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, M Acc ‘04) of Ringgold was recently promoted to senior EVP and CFO 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 ‘00) of Watkinsville was appointed to the Nonprofit 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 Calendarly, 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.

Scott Rountree (BBA ‘02) of Augusta was named chief advisor of the Richmond County Board of Assessors. He joined the department in 2011 and is a 2017 Leadership Augusta graduate.

Melissa Rutten (BBA ‘03) of Atlanta was named to the board of directors of OnBoard, the leading authority on women in the public companies. She is a financial advisor with The Levente Wealth Management Group of Merrill Lynch Wealth Management and a member of the Atlanta Women’s Foundation Inspire 2020 Program.

B.J. Schakowsky (BBA ‘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, she served as the chief sales and marketing officer at Vaticore, a provider of insurance technology.

Shelly Waters (BBA ‘04, M Acc ‘04) of Atlanta was named EVP and CFO of Atlanta and serves as a financial officer. She joined the department in 2011 and is a 2017 Leadership Augusta graduate.

Sarah Welton (BBA ‘05) of Marietta was named CEO of symplr, a technology company developing and deploying technology to feed a changing world. Before joining Cubic-Farm, she served as VP of sales at Stanley Infrastructure, a division of Stanley Black & Decker.

Rob Rayl (BBA ‘05) of Duluth was named chief financial officer and COO of the Dystrophic Epidermolysis Bullosa Research Association of America (dbA) (BBA ‘06). He previously served as president of R2 Medical Solutions LLC. He has been an active board member at dea duire 2014, and was recently elected vice chair in 2017.

Kevin Morelli (BBA ‘07, M Acc ‘09) of Brookhaven was named COO at Cabretta Capital, a firm specializing in structured tax equity and tax-exempt investment strategies. He previously served as Cabretta’s chief financial officer.

Dan Schmidt (BBA ‘08) of Douglasville was named director of U.S. business growth originating and structuring debt and equity transactions in key growth markets predominantly throughout the Southeast. Schmidt previously served as a director at Mali Brannen Goddard. Henson served as SVP of Disposition Services, and Silvius was a VP at Lincoln Property Co.

Stephen Pond (BBA ‘06) of Cumming, Chip Silvius (BBA ‘06) 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 MAL Brannen Goddard. Henson served as SVP of Disposition Services, and Silvius was a VP at Lincoln Property Co.

Tope Awotona named president and CEO of the Georgia Center for Innovation and Technology. He is responsible for originating and structuring debt and equity investments across Stonehill’s internally originated lending platform. He recently served as SVP at Jones Lang LaSalle.

Barbara Hampton (BBA ‘06) of Roswell was named president and CEO of the Georgia Transmission Corp., where she has served as EVP and CFO since 2015. She will lead the $10 billion-plus electric utility which delivers high voltage power to 38 of Georgia’s electric membership cooperatives.

Randall Leggins (BBA ‘07) of Atlanta was appointed CFO at Prudential. He joined Prudential in 2019 as CIO after years in banking and finance at SunTrust Bank, with a focus in health care. He will continue to oversee Prudential’s treasury, insurance, government, and COO and support to Prudential’s development divisions.

Heather Ripley (BBA ‘08, JD ‘08, MBA ‘09) of New York, N.Y., recently published a memoir reflecting on a life spent traveling, dating, and living in the reality television spotlight. She stars in the reality TV show Southern Charm.
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 café, in Delhi’s Shahpur Jat area.

Dana Bourke (BBA ’19) 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.

Adrienne Cantrell (MAcc ’09) of Columbia, S.C., was named CEO of Haywood Regional Medical Center in Clyde, N.C., part of Duke Lifepointe Healthcare. He previously served as CEO of Coliseum Northside Hospital.

Terry Cooksey (BBA ’20) of Macon was named an external advisor for the UGA Football Program’s new leadership structure. He previously served as the University of Georgia’s economic development director in Atlanta. He 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.

Lewis Cooksay (BBA ’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 & Hier.

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 Wilkins Ferr & 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.

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.

“lt is a large investment to come back to school. It requires the investment of time. The graduate scholarship makes the total education cost affordable for me.”

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

83%

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

77% OF STUDENT VETERANS HAVE NO VA EDUCATION BENEFITS

12% OF STUDENT VETERANS ARE LIKELY TO NEED SUPPLEMENTAL BENEFITS

CLASS NOTES: STUDENT VETERANS

To our student veterans, please reach out and connect with us for resources and support. We are here to help you succeed at UGA. Thank you for your service and sacrifice.

Patrick Sorrentino (MBA ’22)
United States Marine Corps

“Terry College of Business, in partnership with the UGA Student Veterans Resource Center, is committed to positioning student veterans for success. We see 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.”
CLASS NOTES: PASSINGS

1940s

Richard J. Born (BBA '43), Atlanta, Jan. 12.

Sanne N. Goldberg (BBA '42), Berkeley, Calif., Dec. 2.

Geraldine M. Grau (BBA '43), Savannah, Oct. 27.

Elizabeth "Suzi" F. Barr (BBA '42), Tucson, Ariz., Dec. 29.

Robert "Bobby" K. Bush (BBA '42), Columbus, Ohio, March 5.

Hudson Thomas B. Brimmer (BBA '43), Atlanta, March 16, Dr. Harold W. Berkman (BBA '59), Wellington, Fla., Dec. 20.

James 'Chick' B. Brown (BBA '49), Savannah, Feb. 6.

Thomas C. Cromwell (BBA '49), Covington, Jan. 10.

Billy H. Hargett (BBA '49), Peachtree City, Jan. 1.

Franklin P. Sheffield (BBA '62), Savannah, March 19.

Dr. Harold W. Schreiber (BBA '49), Covington, Oct. 25.

December 1949

James 'Chick' B. Brown (BBA '49), Savannah, Feb. 11.

Rayford 'Frank' F. Faircloth Sr. (BBA '58), Watkinsville, Jan. 16.

B. Drew Jr. (BBA '53), Athens, Jan. 10.

Ann Jones Brown (BBA '66), Martin, Nov. 5.


James 'Chick' B. Brown (BBA '49), Savannah, Feb. 11.

E. Fleeman (BBA '49), Savannah, Oct. 17.

Guy C. Arnall (BBA '55), Elberton, Dec. 20.

Wayne T. T. Ebert (BBA '49), Warner Robins, Nov. 25.

Kermit S. Dorough (BBA '49), Covington, Jan. 5.


Bicknel 'Earl' E. Bowdren Jr. (BBA '55), Macon, Feb. 11.

Rayford 'Frank' T. Faircloth Sr. (BBA '55), Regdred, Dec. 20.

Joel L. Jones (BBA '55), Rome, Jan. 1.

James 'Jack' W. Kern (BBA '55), Atlanta, March 26.

Parke R. Lowery (BBA '55), Aventura, March 18.

Lloyd E. Shepherd (BBA '55), Houston, Texas, Jan. 6.

"Weems' Homer" H. Bevill (BBA '55), Marietta, Jan. 10.

Jeanne "Nini" Rayte Chilton (BBA '48), Decatur, Nov. 18.

W. Leon Fondren Jr. (BBA '53), Savannah, Dec. 25.

Albert B. St. B. Maxwell Sr. (BBA '54), Athens, Feb. 3.

Allen E. McTighe (BBA '54), Savannah, Dec. 25.

Elberton, Dec. 29.

James E. Orr Jr. (BBA '54), Brunswick, Oct. 17.

Ernest M. Brackett Jr. (BBA '54), Monroe, Dec. 2.

Thomas L. Easley Sr. (BBA '54), Springfield, Jan. 10.

George H. Oley (BBA '54), Chatham, Va., March 5.

1950s

Guy C. Arnall (BBA '60), Newman, March 25.

John H. Hasty (BBA '60), Athens, Dec. 13.

Sam C. McGehee (BBA '60), Washington, D.C., Nov. 13.

Herbert A. Fadell (BBA '60), Duluth, Dec. 9.

George G.B. "Buck" Tucker (BBA '60), Fitzgerald, Nov. 10.

J. Glenn Johnson (BBA '60), Athens, Oct. 8.

William G. Adams (BBA '60, Med '61), Atlanta, Feb. 16.

Pamela Gilda, Oct. 16.


James W. Brimm (BBA '55), Jacksonsville, Fla., Feb. 16.

Margaret "Jean" J. Higginbotham (BBA '60), Thomasville, Nov. 9.

Wills Holcombe (BBA '60), Virginia Beach, Va., Nov. 16.

Dr. "Tom" H. Shriver Jr. (BBA '60), Covington, Oct. 25.

Kenneth E. Taylor (BBA '60), Athens, Oct. 27.

Hammond B. Horner (BBA '60), San Antonio, Feb. 1.

Col. Chovine "Chovy" R. Davis III (BBA '60), Pike Road, Ala., Nov. 25.

Dr. Al L. Lerry (BBA '60), Fort Lauderdale, Fla., Oct. 15.

William "Bill" D. McCorkle (BBA '60), Monroe, Jan. 31.

Ronald L. Schreiber (BBA '60), Wilmington, N.C., Jan. 30.

Richard W. Combs (BBA '60), Macon, Dec. 12.

Ronald G. Cox (BBA '60), Griffin, Dec. 22.

Dr. H. Melton Franklin Jr. (BBA '60, MA '62), St. Simons, Dec. 31.


Dr. Frederick T. Tank (BBA '60), Sylvester, Ohio, Jan. 12.

Jack Wallace (BBA '60), Michigan City, Dec. 19.

Dorothy Kaufmann (BBA '60), Calif., Dec. 2.

Geraldine B. Greenberg (BBA '60), Annette S. Goldberg (BBA '60), Richard I. Born (BBA '60), Dec. 20.

Rayford 'Frank' F. Faircloth Sr. (BBA '58), Watkinsville, Nov. 5.

Robert P. M. Bush (BBA '61), Savannah, Sept. 20.

B. Drew Jr. (BBA '53), Athens, Jan. 10.

Marvin J. Reynolds (BBA '59), Savannah, Dec. 21.

Col. William 'Terry' T. Hodgson Thomas (BBA '61), Atlanta, March 5.

Dr. "G.M." M. Tucker (BBA '61), Savannah, Jan. 13.

William F. Medders (BBA '70), Plant City, Fla., Oct. 31.

Dr. John A. Duggins (BBA '70), Athens, Dec. 15.

Harvey C. Brown Jr. (BBA '70), Athens, Dec. 15.

Robert R. "Bobby" K. Bush (BBA '70), Athens, Dec. 15.

Ottis A. Sweet Jr. (BBA '60), Jacksonville, Fla., Oct. 15.

Richard "Bobby" M. Basham (BBA '70), Savannah, Dec. 15.

Alan V. Davis (BBA '70), Forsyth, Nov. 9.

Dr. Karen Collins Johnson (BBA '70), Atlanta, Feb. 10.

Dr. George "Harry" H. Kinchen Jr. (BBA '70), Savannah, Oct. 17.

Dr. Harry H. Kinchen Jr. (BBA '70), Savannah, Oct. 17.

Dr. "D.O." O. Shirah Jr. (BBA '70), Virginia Beach, Va., Nov. 16.

J. Richard (MBA '61), Decatur, March 6.

James B. Howard (BBA '70), Athens, Jan. 16.

Samuel D. King (BBA '70), Tiger, Dec. 29.

Barbara A. Powers (BBA '70), Savannah, Dec. 25.

Alton D. L. Tisdale (BBA '70), Forsyth, Nov. 25.

Dr. Roy Martin (MBA '70, JD '70), Athens, Oct. 15.

W. Terry "Pete" D. Davis (BBA '70), Savannah, Oct. 17.


Jerry D. Weaver (BBA '70), Stockbridge, March 25.

1960s

Karl A. Haun (BBA '60), Woodstock, Feb. 7.

Dr. John "Herald" H. Mulhern III (BBA '60), Athens, Jan. 16.

Karl A. Haun (BBA '60), Athens, Jan. 16.

Raymond R. "Bobby" M. Basham (BBA '61), Watkinsville, Nov. 9.


Richard "Todd" T. Murphy (BBA '61), Douglasville, Feb. 3.


Dr. Leo B. Wright (BBA '61), Tyrone, March 19.

Richard "Todd" T. Murphy (BBA '61), Lizella, March 17.

Michael S. Shatz (BBA '63), Valley, Tenn., Oct. 22.

Dr. Harold W. Schreiber (BBA '49), Covington, Oct. 25.

1970s

Jay "Jen" Ashcraft (BBA '70), Dublin, Jan. 20.

Thomas Knoff (BBA '70), New York, N.Y., Feb. 30.

Dr. Kenneth B. Williams (BBA '74, MA '74), Decatur, Jan. 9.

Dr. Kelly G. Halm (BBA '74), Monroe, Oct. 1.

Dr. Richard L. Boyce (BBA '74), Athens, Nov. 8.

Blake R. Hill (BBA '74), Dalton, March 6.

Kevin D. Whitworth (BBA '74), Washington, D.C., Sept. 24.

Cedric B. Fears (BBA '70), Memphis, Tenn., Dec. 22.

Sean P. Lyons (BBA '70), Athens, Feb. 20.

Stephen D. Toole III (BBA '70), Savannah, Dec. 20.
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