

TU



| **MAGAZINE** **SPRING 2023**



First In Their Class

FORGING A PATH AS THE FIRST IN YOUR FAMILY TO ATTEND COLLEGE AND GRADUATE TAKES COURAGE AND COMMITMENT.

12 THE HISTORY OF TU'S SCIENTIFIC METHOD

26 NEW FOOTBALL COACH WAS DESTINED FOR UNITAS STADIUM

28 LIFELONG LEARNER STILL TICKLING THE KEYS



All That Jazz

Few people love anything more than Bill Murray '08, '11 loves jazz. His Towson home is filled with piano-themed art like this piece.



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48 **OUR TOWN**



FEATURES

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Learning by Real-World Discovery

Hands-on science education is one of TU's founding principles.



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Boldy Going

Members of TU's first-generation community, like Alejandra Balcázar, share their collegiate journeys.



26

All About Arete

TU's new football coach plans a program that will embody the Greek word for excellence.



ON THE COVER



There are plenty of statistics about the demographics of college students. But there are people behind those numbers. We wanted to tell their stories, particularly those of our first-generation students and staff.

"Everyone has a story, and sometimes as a writer, it's best for you to step back and let them tell it themselves," says Megan Bradshaw, associate director of publications and author of Boldy Going. "Setting is important to a story, so I asked our students and staff to pick a location that was meaningful to them for their photographs."

Art Director Lori Marchetti (pictured) set up the cover shot, for which Assistant Director of Photographic Services Alexander Wright '18 shot Matt Wright '24—himself a first-generation student—in the studio. Wright, 37, has served in the U.S. Navy for 11 years. He's as good a model as he is a sailor.

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Interim President's Letter

It's been an incredible spring term at Towson University, filled with academic accomplishments, athletic achievements, art performances and so much more. We cheered on our basketball teams through another year of successful seasons, celebrated TU's six Fulbright semifinalists—the most in school history—and a University System of Maryland-best four faculty award recipients, witnessed 150 of our best musicians perform in the annual PRISM showcase and roared through the state capital with another amazing Tiger Pride Day.

Beyond these achievements, we have welcomed new leaders to campus and are in the process of recruiting others to join us. In December, we introduced our new football coach Pete Shinnick, who has enjoyed a prolific career in college football (page 26). And of course, we are in the midst of a national search for TU's 15th president, with hopes of celebrating the inauguration of a visionary leader for our campus in the next academic year. Several members of our community have supported the University System of Maryland Board of Regents in this search process, providing a great opportunity to amplify many of the key initiatives that make Towson University such an exciting place to work, learn and grow.

Among those initiatives is our pursuit of R2 Carnegie Classification for high research activity, a top institutional priority that will expand TU's reputation as a leader in academic excellence. In support of this goal, I am proud to report we have more than doubled research expenditures in the last fiscal year alone, leading to more experiential opportunities for our students and enhanced scholarship among our faculty. You'll learn more about this effort in a Q&A with Sidd Kaza, our associate provost for research and dean of graduate studies (page 9).



If you've visited TU recently, you've seen tremendous growth to our physical campus. This includes the construction of our new, state-of-the-art College of Health Professions building, which is slated to open next summer, as well as the opening of new academic facilities such as the Cook Library Academic Commons and the Dr. Francis S. Soistman Jr. '79, '15 (hon.) and Family Athletics Academic Achievement Center. And just this spring, TU purchased the Armory, an historic building in downtown Towson that has become home to our nationally recognized StarTUp initiative and business engagement center.

As always, philanthropy and stewardship are critical to everything we do. Thanks to the leadership of so many—including former TU Foundation president Bill Murray '08, '11 (page 28) and current president Edna Primrose '84 (page 47)—we are nearing the end of our ambitious, \$100 million goal for the RISE campaign. With the collective support of our Tiger family, we are fueling the future of this great institution and empowering the next generation of students who will call TU home.

I hope you will enjoy this fantastic issue of TU Magazine and learn about the remarkable programs and people flourishing on our campus. As you'll read, our momentum really is stronger than ever. I can't wait to see what new heights we'll reach together.

MELANIE PERREAU
INTERIM PRESIDENT



TREASURES

Kindheit Memories

Romy Hübler understands why there are a lot of misconceptions about her kindheit—or childhood—in Communist East Germany. She grew up in the small mining town of Borna in the years preceding the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

And while she admits some of those assumptions are valid, that doesn't mean she doesn't have fond memories. "I would spend a lot of time with my dad out in the park riding bikes in the spring or sledding in the winter. We lived in a very small but very tight-knit community," she says.

In summer 2022, Hübler came to TU as the new director of the Office of Civic

Engagement & Social Responsibility. But she is still relatively new to the country, arriving in the United States as an immigrant in 2005.

When packing for her new life, she wanted to bring a few items that kept her connected to home. This included hand puppets that belonged to her grandfather, who used them to entertain kids in her coal mining town, and the only doll she had during her childhood.

Growing up about 30 minutes outside of Leipzig, one of the country's largest cities, Hübler didn't have a lot of toys. She vividly remembers visiting her first Toys "R" Us in 1991, when she was 10. "Everything was pink," she says, laughing. "I don't think I had seen

pink in my life. I was just amazed that everything, from Barbies to roller skates, was this bright pink color."

Her doll's clothes also have a special meaning since her grandmother Margarethe knitted them. In fact, that's something Hübler has in common with the doll. Her grandmother knitted a lot of her clothing as a child, as it was hard to find the right size.

"My grandma knits clothing for me to this day, and I have a lot of scarves, hats and socks to prove it," Hübler says. "But I held onto that doll because it reminds me of my humble childhood and how important my family is to me."

Campus News



Mastering It

TU ranked No. 30 in the Best Online Master in Education Programs and No. 61 in the Best Online Master in Computer Information Technology Programs.



Real Money, Sim Students

In collaboration with four other institutions, TU received \$3.2 million in funding from the National Science Foundation to develop avatar-based teaching aids.



We're Engaged

At the University Economic Development Association Summit on Oct. 11, peer institutions selected the StarTU at the Armory as the Engaged University winner in its 2022 Awards of Excellence. The award recognizes universities for engaging multiple community partners to leverage and connect efforts in talent development, innovation and community development.

FCSM's New Dean



Matthew Nugent will join TU in July as the new dean of the Fisher College of Science & Math. He comes from University of Massachusetts–Lowell where he is the dean for research, innovation and partnerships in the Kennedy College of Sciences. He was also the department chair and is a professor of biological sciences at UMass–Lowell. His more than 35 years of higher education leadership and instruction also includes previous service as a professor of biochemistry, biomedical engineering and ophthalmology at the Boston University School of Medicine.



Planning for Student Success

New Vice President for Enrollment Management Boyd Bradshaw and the Division for Enrollment Management—comprised of admissions, academic advising, retention & completion, financial aid, tutoring & learning center and the registrar—have launched the 180-page strategic enrollment plan to support student success and create a sense of community that attracts an increasingly diverse student body and graduate students prepared to apply their knowledge for the public good.

The plan is a roadmap for attracting and enrolling a diverse community of learners that propels the university forward and supports achieving Carnegie Classification as an R2 institution, with high research activity.

There are several key parts. One is being strategic around how the university awards scholarships and financial aid to have the greatest impact on student success. Another is academic advising, retention and completion, focusing on intentional work with students from the time they enroll to the time they graduate. A third is integration of the plan with marketing and communication. And, finally, looking at the academic program mix is crucial, especially as TU moves toward becoming an R2 university.

“When people think of enrollment management, they often think of recruitment, but it’s so much more than that—we have just as much focus on retention and student success,” Bradshaw says. “I like to say, ‘recruit to graduate,’ as it involves the entire lifecycle of a student and puts the outcome of what higher education is about front and center.”

ADMIT IT, WE'RE ON A ROLL

650

high school and community college visits and college fairs attended

2,000

personalized outreach calls to encourage application submission

6,000

prospective student visits (over 15,000 total visitors) from Aug. 22 to May 23

19,353

freshmen applications received for fall 2023 (as of March 8)

Statistics are for undergraduates only.

Paws-ing to Eat

Paws has long been an institution for TU students. Now, the popular cafe is reopening after yearlong renovations that were part of the University Union expansion.

Paws is open daily starting at 4:30 p.m., and its new menu features made-to-order smash burgers,

sandwiches, salads and sides.

A variety of milkshakes and fresh baked goods are available for dessert. After their meals, students can play pool in the adjoining game room. There is also a SodaStream available, offering customizable still and sparkling water.





A Spotlight on Rhodes Scholar Finalists

For the first time, the university had two Rhodes Scholarship finalists and a nominee.

Rasul Wright '22 and Briseyda Barrientos Ariza '22 were named finalists and Tionna Harris, a senior chemistry major and Hill-Lopes scholar, was TU's third nominee. Political science major Reema Riaz '15 was the university's only prior finalist in 2015.

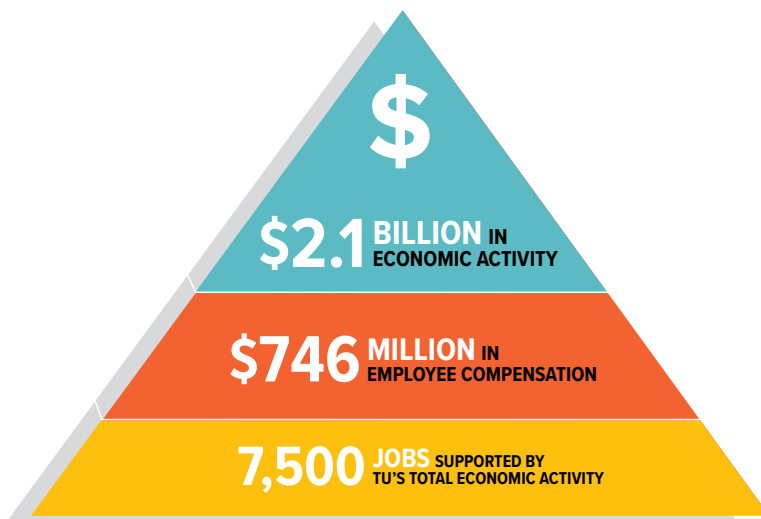
Ariza is a first-generation college graduate and university scholar who majored in English literature and psychology. While at TU, she worked as a resident assistant and Writing Center tutor, founded the Honorables of Color and researched the oral histories of Guatemalan people on female figures of their regional folklore.

Wright, a history and secondary education major with a pre-law track, was a TU Writing Center tutor, academic mentor through the TU Teacher Scholars Summer Institute, president of the TU chapter of the national history honor society Phi Alpha Theta and the keynote speaker at the university's 2022 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Summit. With his twin brother Malachi, Wright's desire to give back to other students in need was profiled by WBAL TV.

The oldest and most celebrated international postgraduate award, the Rhodes Scholarship brings 32 students from the U.S. to the University of Oxford for a fully funded, full-time study for two or more years. Rhodes Scholars are

chosen not only for their outstanding scholarly achievements but also for their character, commitment to others and the common good and their potential for leadership in their field.

"The process is highly competitive and intense," says Mary Sajini Devadas, associate professor of chemistry and head of the Office of Competitive Fellowships and Awards. She notes that students must submit eight letters of recommendation attesting to their academic excellence and character alongside a letter of endorsement from TU and their own personal statement. "We thank the faculty and staff who wrote such eloquent and thoughtful recommendation letters, which are extremely vital to the student application portfolios."



(according to the Regional Economic Studies Institute report for FY 2022)

TU Makes an Impact

TU takes great pride in being an anchor institution in the greater Baltimore area and the region, furthering its mission to advance the public good. In the 2022 economic impact report, the university generated \$1.8 billion. The university is also investing on campus, planning on more than \$1 billion in projects over the next 10 years.



OFFICE HOURS

Daylight Saving Time

Geography professor Martin Roberge on why we have it and what can go wrong when we don't understand it.

Standard time across the United States' four time zones was established on March 1, 1918. In the same act of Congress, daylight saving time was created. Just a year later, daylight saving time was repealed, and it wasn't until Lyndon Johnson signed the Uniform Time Act of 1966 that it was federally standardized.

In 1974, Nixon signed a law that made daylight saving permanent year-round. But it lasted less than a year because the very first winter, everybody hated it. You had to get up early, and it was dark out. People didn't realize how bad it would be in the winter.

I think most people hate switching back and forth. There are plenty of medical studies against it, and everybody has a story of showing up an hour early or an hour late. Most people agree that it needs to stop.

What's strange is any time we want to, we can. A state just has to say, "OK, we're no longer going to be switching to daylight saving time." And then the state is unilaterally allowed to pull out of it.

We could stop the madness any time we want. But to switch to permanent daylight saving time nationally, you'd have to pass another law.

The thing is, you're not really saving any time. Every day is always 24 hours. In the summer you get lots of extra daylight, and you get very little darkness. And then in the winter you get lots of darkness and very little sunlight. That's why it's cold in winter. It's just the way the sun works.

What you're doing with daylight saving is you're getting everybody to wake up an hour earlier. It's kind of like a trick. It sounds like a great idea. But it's against our circadian rhythms to wake up when it's dark out. Or go to bed what it's still sunny out.

People have suggested workarounds like pretending to be in a time zone ahead of yours, but time zones are confusing enough without people switching back and forth.

For example, when we had mechanical watches, you'd get on an airplane, and you'd have to change

“We could stop the madness any time we want. But to switch to permanent daylight saving time nationally, you'd have to pass another law.”

your watch. If you didn't, you'd miss the second leg of your flight to San Francisco, because you thought you had 45 minutes. Now our phones just take care of it for us.

It turns out the information behind the automatic changing is completely on the shoulders of a bunch of volunteers. They run a historical database that keeps track of every clock change that

anybody anywhere made since 1970.

Devices probably have multiple copies of this database because they have to know what time it is. If you want to do a Zoom call with somebody in Japan, are they doing daylight saving, and do they have any weird rules about it? When are they switching on, and when do they switch off? Did they pass any laws recently that changes that date?

Just to schedule that call, we need a copy of this database. If there were a mistake, somebody would be malicious or if the volunteers were to rise up—any one of these things would mess things up very badly.

It started with one guy who needed to keep track of time changes for his own purposes way before the internet, and he shared it with others. There's just so much infrastructure relying on an ad hoc group of people.

Your computer, your cell phone, every computer operating system—anybody who wants to know the local time needs a copy of this database. If Turkmenistan decides they want to go to permanent daylight saving time tomorrow, there would be an update, and everybody's computers and phones would all have to get a copy of the update.

In 2007, the United States unilaterally decided to make daylight saving end later and start earlier. Any country can do that. Mexico recently got rid of daylight saving and went

to permanent standard time. Most of Asia got rid of daylight saving at some point.

China only has one time zone. So when you say it's 12 p.m., everybody knows it's 12 p.m. Which is a little weird because sunrise might be three hours earlier in one place than it is in another.

But at least the clocks are all the same.



Coffee With...

Rhea Roper Nedd

We spoke with the new director of the Center for Student Diversity to learn why TU is a leader in the field.

📍 LOCATION:

Aveley Farms Coffee Roasters

☕ IN HER CUP:

Caramel latte

🔗 ADDICTION LEVEL:

"I start with one cup of coffee and let the day dictate if another is needed. On most days, just one is enough!"

Q: Where are you from?

A: I'm from Trinidad and Tobago. My family immigrated to the United States, Maryland specifically, when I was 7. I've been here ever since.

Q: What did you major in at the University of Maryland?

A: Government and politics with a concentration in international relations and development. The development of people and communities in the international and national arenas and our local communities requires equitable access to opportunities and resources, especially by groups that have been marginalized and underrepresented.

Q: What does the term diversity mean to you?

A: Diversity is the intersections of our many identities; it recognizes that we own visible and invisible identities that are a part of human nature and result in our uniqueness and differences.

Q: What attracted you to this role here at TU?

A: The existence of the Center for Student Diversity at TU is noteworthy and is telling of the importance that the university places on diversity and the success of its student population. I recognize that inequities exist, whether it is a result of historical, systemic, conscious and/or unconscious biases. This position affords me the opportunity to advocate for greater equity for the students to bring about positive change and experiences that lead to their sense of belonging, retention and eventual graduation. The work I do at the center is very personal to me. As a person who has so many identities that have

historically been marginalized, I wish to serve as an agent of change so our TU students who may be underrepresented are not underserved.

Q: What exactly does the Center for Student Diversity do?

A: Our charge as an institution is to retain students so they can complete their degree and graduate. The center is one of the major keys to the retention of students of diverse identities. CSD creates spaces and opportunities for students that make them feel included and that they belong. It is our responsibility to advocate for students of diverse identities and those traditionally underrepresented and to develop identity-based programs and communities for students. We want our students to know that the university cares, that they have advocates and allies here and that their authentic selves are welcome.

Q: Why is diversity important?

A: Diversity is important because it acknowledges our uniqueness and differences. Diversity is telling of our individual and group stories, experiences and beliefs—where we come from, how we identify, who we are and who we are becoming. We need to ensure that it coexists in a system in which diverse groups have equitable access to opportunities and that they feel included and can actively participate and engage. We are making progress, and we are on a journey to be better people in a more just world.



Moving On Up



TU has sparked countless innovators. These are their stories.

John Von Paris '82

**President and CEO,
Von Paris Moving and Storage**

What started as one man with a horse and wagon has grown into one of the oldest and most recognizable moving companies in the country.

Maryland-based Von Paris Moving and Storage has moved three U.S. presidents, governors and sports stars. It's stored priceless works of art for embassies and museums. But fourth-generation leader John Von Paris says it treats every customer like a VIP.

"People from all walks of life relocate for many different reasons," he says. "Whether they're buying their first house or moving into a retirement community, we like to make it easier for them."

Although he's run the company for more than a decade, Von Paris knows its success wouldn't have been possible without the help of countless others.

"The people that are out on the road and are interfacing with our customers are the lifeblood of the company," he says. "There were a lot of people that came before me who worked very hard to build the business. It was a team effort, and it still is today. I'll never forget that."

1892

JOHN'S GREAT-GRANDFATHER ELIGIUS FOUNDED THE COMPANY IN BALTIMORE.

1915

ELIGIUS' SON BONAVENTURE CONVINCED HIS DAD TO MODERNIZE.

"He bought a motorized moving van, one of the first in the country," John says. "He had nine children. They all were involved in the business one way or another. That's how the family grew, and the business grew." John's 92-year-old uncle, Eligius, is the company's chairman emeritus. "He is an amazing leader and mentor."

1959



BORN AT MERCY HOSPITAL IN BALTIMORE.

"My cousin David was born the exact same day, and we made the Sun papers. Two weeks later my wife, Patti, and her cousin Patrick were born at Mercy Hospital on the same day."

1982



GRADUATED FROM TU WITH A DEGREE IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION. WORKED FOR THE COMPANY WHILE ATTENDING COLLEGE.

"I had some great instructors at Towson and have maintained friendships with some of them. I enjoyed the challenge of working full time while completing my education. History, psychology and of course business classes were my favorites. It broadened my perspective."

1977

ENROLLED AT TU.

"I really wasn't going to go to college. I thought I was just going to go into the business. The principal at John Carroll (the private high school he attended) said, 'You should go to Towson.' I took it from there."

1974

BEGAN WORKING IN THE FAMILY BUSINESS DURING SUMMERS IN HIGH SCHOOL.

"I started in the warehouse, sweeping the floors and putting away packing material."

1986



MARRIED HIS WIFE, PATTI. THEY HAVE SONS JOHN, 33, AND SAM, 31

1989-96

HANDLED MOVES INCLUDING PRESIDENT RONALD REAGAN'S ARCHIVES FROM WASHINGTON TO CALIFORNIA, THE ORIOLES' FROM MEMORIAL STADIUM ON 33RD STREET TO ORIOLE PARK AT CAMDEN YARDS AND THE RELOCATION OF THE RAVENS FROM CLEVELAND TO BALTIMORE.

2012



BECAME PRESIDENT AND CEO OF VON PARIS ENTERPRISE, INC., THE PARENT COMPANY OF VON PARIS MOVING AND STORAGE AND SUBSIDIARIES.

2023



TODAY THE COMPANY HAS MORE THAN 100 PIECES OF EQUIPMENT AND ROUGHLY 300 EMPLOYEES AND CONTRACTORS. IT HAS MOVED PEOPLE TO AND FROM ALL 50 STATES AND THROUGHOUT THE WORLD. SERVICES INCLUDE COMMERCIAL AND RESIDENTIAL MOVING, DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT, CLIMATE STORAGE AND INTERNATIONAL FORWARDING.

"Whether it's a 200-person office move or a corporate move from coast to coast or around the world, I enjoy seeing our team always going the extra mile."

2020



PURCHASED THE BUSINESS FROM THE FAMILY AND BECAME CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD.

2013

SERVED FOR TWO YEARS AS CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD OF THE BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU OF GREATER MARYLAND.

"I established some great relationships with many well-respected and accomplished business owners. It was a wonderful experience professionally and personally."

Breaking new ground, complementing
current knowledge and leading to
solutions for the public good

RESEARCH

TU to R2: The Evolution to High Research Activity

As TU seeks designation as a high research activity institution, TU Magazine will each issue bring readers a story of high-impact research. We're debuting this feature with a Q&A with Sidd Kaza, the university's inaugural associate provost for research and dean of graduate studies.

Abstract— Kaza took on his new job in July after serving as the chair of the Department of Computer & Information Sciences in TU's Fisher College of Science & Mathematics. In his new role, he advances the transformative influence that research plays in students' lives and inspires faculty and students to create a productive research environment. The goal: furthering TU's impact as an anchor institution for the region and state and achieving Carnegie Classification R2: High Research Activity institution status.

A Conversation with Sidd Kaza

Q: What is the Carnegie Classification?

A: It is used by researchers, policymakers and administrators for informing grant-making and federal and state funding of institutions. It was initiated in 1973 by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education. Simply put, it is a way to classify universities by the types of degrees awarded.

Q: How often are Carnegie Classifications determined?

A: Updates are completed every three years. The 2021 update classified just under 3,900 institutions; 133 were R2—which is a diverse set of institutions.

Q: What is TU's current classification?

A: Master's Colleges & Universities: Larger Programs (or M1) awarding more than 200 master's degrees per year. TU awards more than 900, so we are clearly at the top of that classification.

Q: How will TU earn the R2 Carnegie Classification?

A: R2 universities have high research activity,

which means they award at least 20 research doctoral degrees annually and have at least \$5 million in total research expenditures. This funding can come from a combination of external sources and institutional investments including support for students. In 2021–22 TU had \$8.78 million in research expenditures and awarded 16 research doctoral degrees. So, we are very close but we are aiming higher, because these criteria are subject to change.

Q: How will R2 attainment further TU's reputation?

A: In addition to having high research activity, R2 universities also hold high value for professors' roles as educators first. At TU, this means most courses will continue to be taught by professors who are involved in research. The institution's emphasis on research will create additional and more robust opportunities for students to participate in engaged learning experiences in the classroom and outside it. TU as a R2 institution will remain a comprehensive environment with many faculty doing basic,

applied and experimental research (including in learning sciences) and others primarily focusing on innovative teaching in the classroom.

Q: Why is the R2 designation important externally and to the university community?

A: It emphasizes that TU faculty perform research at world-class levels while furthering the university's mission. It allows our students to get involved in a new kind of research-based learning, opening different opportunities for them. The university will have increased funding opportunities for faculty, staff and students. We will continue to serve our region's needs not just through our academic programs but with research on topics that matter to our students and our community. Our investment in research will add yet another exciting dimension to the student experience at Towson University.

For more information on research at TU, visit towson.edu/academics/research.



Coaching

Academic Success

★ GENERAL ATHLETICS

In 2020, Fran Soistman Jr. '79, '15 (hon.) made a \$5.4 million gift to his alma mater. It was the largest gift from an alum in TU history and demonstrated his affection for and gratitude to the university. A portion of this gift (\$2.415 million) was made to the Towson University Foundation, specifically to the Athletics Capital Projects Fund for the creation of an athletics academic achievement center.

The Dr. Francis S. Soistman Jr. '79, '15 (hon.) and Family Athletics Academic Achievement Center has been a long time coming. On a 2019 football trip to the University of Florida, an impromptu conversation between Soistman and Elysa Newman, then TU's director of academic

achievement, revealed a need for 20 laptops. His gift purchased the computers, which aided the players in reaching a team GPA goal that term.

"That was easy to do. Address the need. No fanfare," he says. "I could have just stood there [while waiting for the team] and worked on emails. But I knew she was part of the program. It was an opportunity to not only understand the need but actually do something about it."

Just about a year later, Soistman's multimillion dollar gift to his alma mater touched many areas of campus: the College of Health Professions, the College of Business & Economics, programming to

advance equity, diversity and inclusion and, of course, athletics.

Renovations transformed field house classrooms into a student-athlete academic achievement center that accommodates more than 520 student-athletes and supports on-site technology for project work, tutoring and academic advising.

It officially opened in December with a ribbon cutting attended by Soistman, his son Stephen and his daughter Kendall.

Throughout his career, he has hired several former student-athletes. "They are wired differently," he says. "Competitiveness and discipline live in a student-athlete's DNA, and both serve them well in business."

With an already strong academic showing by its student-athletes, the department is excited to see how they will use the center. And as Soistman points out, "The fact that the center is alongside Honor Way means it will serve as a reminder of TU Athletics' values and instill pride and honor in those who came before, on and off the field."

"This is a game changer for our student-athletes and the impact of philanthropy on TU Athletics," says Steve Eigenbrot, TU's athletic director. "This project changes the landscape for our students and shows our commitment to their success in the classroom. It also signals to our donors that together great things are possible with their support."



CAM HOLDEN '23

recorded the men's basketball program's second triple-double in the Tigers' 92-73 win over William & Mary on Jan. 28. He posted 20 points, 10 rebounds and 10 assists.



ISABELLA MINERVINI '26

posted a 9.900 on bars at a January quad meet, matching her career best and helping TU achieve its second-highest team bar score in gymnastics program history.



ANISSA RIVERA '23

passed the 1,000-point mark with 11 points in the women's basketball game against Monmouth on Jan. 15. She also grabbed six rebounds in the 63-57 Tiger win.



MASON WOODS '26

became the first Tiger football player since 2016 to earn All-American honors this past offseason, earning a place on the HERO Sports FCS Freshman All-American Team. He was the team's leading tackler in 2022.

Outstanding in Her Field

Katie Gerzabek Salem is the new head field hockey coach, becoming the 13th in program history. The head coach at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, for the past two seasons, she made great strides in the development of the program, winning the 2021 Southern Athletic Association (SAA) conference tournament and the 2022 SAA regular season.



Katie Gerzabek Salem



FOOTBALL

Facing the Future

New head coach Pete Shinnick signed 10 players ahead of the 2023 football season. The recruiting class included six defensive players, three on offense and one special teams hopeful. In 2022, TU won its final four games to finish the season at 6-5 overall and 4-4 in the Colonial Athletic Association. **Read more about new coach Pete Shinnick on page 26.**

LACROSSE

Lofty Expectations

Both the lacrosse teams were picked to finish second in the preseason CAA Coaches' Poll. Senior Blair Pearre and junior Jo Torres earned CAA Preseason All-Conference honors for the women, while junior Colby Barsz, sophomore Matt Constantinides and graduate students Garrett Zungailia and Kyle Berkeley were recognized for the men.

POLAR BEAR PLUNGE

Cold Tiger Toes

At halftime of the Jan. 28 men's basketball game, Tiger student-athletes participated in a mini-Polar Bear Plunge on the plaza in front of SECU Arena. The event benefited Maryland Special Olympics. Athletic Director Steve Eigenbrot plunged into the Chesapeake Bay during the official event the day before.

TRACK & FIELD

Run, Beighley, Run

Beighley Ayers ran 9:57.28 in the 3,000 meters at the National Open in January, becoming the fourth TU runner to break 10 minutes in the event. Ayers improved from her previous personal record of 10:10.24. She is a graduate student working toward her master's in forensic science.

Learning by Real-World Discovery Inspires Generations

HANDS-ON SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH IS ONE OF TU'S FOUNDING PRINCIPLES.

BY MEGAN BRADSHAW | PHOTOS BY LAUREN CASTELLANA '13, '23 AND ALEXANDER WRIGHT '18



*Botanizing Class. 1888.
Mt. Airans*



George La Tour Smith (not pictured) frequently took his classes on outings to green spaces around Baltimore to experience nature first hand.

When the Maryland State Normal School (MSNS) opened in 1867, it offered instruction in botany and hired a lecturer to teach natural history. Four years later, the school now known as Towson University made another key hire: George La Tour Smith.

Smith became MSNS's first dedicated physics, chemistry and natural history professor. A botanist and keen photographer when the skill was considered a science, he came to the school from the U.S. Coast Survey, where he constructed and mapped lighthouses for the organization.

From its inception, excellence in hands-on experiences and science education have been bound together in TU's curriculum and mission. Today, the university continues Smith's legacy as the oldest and largest preparer of educators in Maryland and an institution on its way to a Carnegie Classification of R2, signaling high research activity.

"One of the things that attracted me about Towson was that it emphasized undergraduate research," says TU emeritus biology professor Rich Seigel.



GEORGE LA TOUR SMITH

"That was one of the things Towson has always prided itself on—training undergraduate students—and there's always been financial support, logistical support, credit for doing the work. If you want to learn about doing undergraduate research, this is a good place to be."

Seigel calls his own undergraduate research experience “the single-most important thing that I ever did” and describes research as addictive.

“It tends to take over your life, to give you a very different perspective on things,” he says. “[When I was in school,] I was out in the field with another undergraduate student studying turtle nesting one afternoon when she said, ‘Don’t you have an organic chemistry final today?’ I said, ‘Yeah, why?’ She said, ‘Rich, you’re going to miss your final.’ I said, ‘I’ll take a makeup. There’s too many turtles nesting for me to worry about a final.’ I will not, to this day, accept a master’s student in my research lab who has not done undergraduate research experience.”

A small contract with Maryland’s Department of Natural Resources in 2008 to verify the existence of the endangered northern map turtle in Cecil County ballooned into a long-running research project for Seigel and his students—graduate and undergraduate.

Working in partnership with the town of Port Deposit, Seigel and faculty colleague Steve Kimble are based out of a field station tucked behind a marina. There is a narrow, 30-foot beach in front of the field station where the endangered turtles come to lay eggs.

A larger contract with the state has allowed the research team to expand its scope, and town officials have responded positively, even adopting the turtle as a town mascot. The initiative

was recognized in November 2022 with a BTU Partnership Award, which recognizes faculty, staff, students and community organizations engaging in exemplary partnerships that embody the spirit of TU and benefit the communities they serve.

“It’s worked out great for everybody, the town, students and professors at Towson and the turtles,” says Kimble, a clinical assistant biology professor.

There are many avenues for TU students to pursue research at undergraduate and graduate levels. TU generated nearly \$9 million on research in 2021–22 and received \$15 million in external funding the same year. Students can contact the Office of Undergraduate Research and Creative



Professors Rich Seigel and Steve Kimble have mentored graduate and undergraduate students for more than a decade while studying the endangered northern map turtle (right) in Port Deposit, Maryland.





submerge the turtles' preferred basking areas. So, they built wooden platforms that raised and lowered with the water but were anchored to the riverbed.

"We wanted to see if they would actually use it," Cole says. "The answer was yes, after a little period of adjustment when they weren't sure what was in the water with them. It seemed like if we invested in some of these floating

dedicated lab, as a field trip destination and as a resource center for teachers through equipment loans and professional development.

Students from every county in the state have participated in programming through the center, a three-hour experience where they are presented with a question, gather data, analyze it and develop a conclusion.

"Lately, our focus is on social justice in science because my team and I feel strongly these issues are real to the students we serve," says Mary Stapleton, center director. "We're able to bring students into science who might not otherwise have seen the relevancy to their lives. Equity of access is a big thing with us. We want to make sure all students have access to high-quality student programming, whether it's the curriculum, materials or trained teachers."

In 2022, the center served more than 18,000 students through field trip experiences and equipment loan programs.

Stapleton and her team have worked hard the last few years to include more elementary programming to a slate that had been middle and high school heavy.

"Elementary is an interesting challenge because the teachers teach everything, for the most part, and a lot of elementary teachers are not science majors," she says. "Many don't have science backgrounds and can be intimidated to teach it.

"That's where we can make a huge impact, providing these teachers with the support for their own content knowledge as well as materials that are easy to use, that they can quickly fit into the 20 minutes once a week that they may have for science."

George La Tour Smith was the secretary of Cornell's Engineering Society as a senior; in 1870, the alumni association listed his occupation as civil engineer. While he had extensive training in various scientific fields, he faced a learning curve when it came to teaching.

As former MSNS principal Sarah Richmond remembered in 1893, "His pupils were the graduating class.

**TU'S CENTER FOR STEM
EXCELLENCE IN DOWNTOWN
BALTIMORE IS ENTIRELY
COMMUNITY FOCUSED.**

Inquiry and the Office of Undergraduate Research, which connects them with faculty who need help conducting their research. Or they can reach out to their professors on their own.

Jenna Cole '15 was one of those students.

She took Seigel's herpetology course and approached him after class one day. Cole shared her experience volunteering in her hometown with diamondback terrapins, and Seigel invited her to visit the project in Port Deposit.

After volunteering with him, she became a student worker on the project until Cole earned her bachelor's degree in biology with a focus on organismal biology and ecology and moved to Florida for graduate school.

She started with nesting surveys, creating artificial nesting plots to see if the turtles had a preference in soil. Cole also sat in a deer blind for hours-long shifts to observe the turtles climbing onto the beach: where they went, what they investigated and where they nested. Then she would mark the nests for continued monitoring. Any hatchlings they caught were marked for identification with orange paint.

Cole and her fellow student researchers also tested whether turtles would accept artificial basking surfaces. Because of the Conowingo Dam upriver, the water levels changed and could

platforms and maintaining them, the turtles will use them and benefit from them.

"My experience working at Towson and working with Rich really set me up to understand what was important to me as a student and where I wanted to go with my career," says Cole, who finished her master's degree at the University of Florida. "I learned I like the field work; I like working hands on with the animals more so than working in an office all day every day."

These are all skills she draws on now as a wildlife biologist for UF, doing reptile surveys and invasive reptile removal.

She says the experience she gained collaborating with professionals and the community of Port Deposit has been beneficial to her in her new role.

"I need to use that skill in outreach here. I'm not working with cute turtles anymore. I'm working with snakes and lizards. And people don't have the same opinions of them as they do the turtles. So learning how to communicate professionally, politely and understand what's important to the community members really helped me do what I do now."

TU's Center for STEM Excellence in downtown Baltimore also is entirely community focused. It supports Maryland's elementary through high school learners in three ways: with a

Hitherto their instruction had been given by the Principal only. The class rather resented the change and I suspect there was an inward feeling of satisfaction when an experiment of the new teacher's failed in the promised effect."

Smith recognized he needed more experience, so he spent nights in the school laboratory, studying just as much as the students he taught during the day.

That commitment paid off almost immediately.

Minnie Davis (Class of 1887) wrote of Smith in *75 Years of Teacher Education*: "It is not possible that any teacher could ever be more beloved than was Professor George Smith. Not only was he a truly great instructor, but there was never anyone who found more real joy in teaching. He made his pupils feel that he was benefited, not they; that they conferred a favor upon him when they asked for help."

Smith took his botany classes to Druid Hill Park to study plants and their natural habitats. Even then, science educators prized hands-on activity as a learning method.

Current biology professor Sarah Haines was greatly influenced by her undergraduate research experience and includes the same technique in her courses.

"Pretty much all of my courses have some kind of hands-on, outdoor field component to them," she says. "We go outdoors in the Glen on campus where the students are collecting data or using equipment."

Another activity her education majors complete is something she calls life in a square meter.

"They have a PVC pipe that's shaped in a square," she says. "And they lay that down somewhere in the open meadow area of the Glen and do vegetation samples. They look for things that are crawling on the ground or sometimes we even find animal droppings.

"Then I might say, 'OK, how could you do this activity with your students because it's perfectly appropriate for elementary or middle level?' We pick it apart: we look at the pedagogy, the

teaching theory behind it. It's like content and teaching methods put together in one course."

Haines also runs a summer study abroad program in Costa Rica. Senior Bailey Hardwick participated last year.

"It taught me so much about ecology, ecosystem interactions and the effects of anthropogenic climate change," she says. "Costa Rica is a great example of what a country can do for the environment and use it as a resource without exploiting it. Seeing that in person versus learning about it in a classroom was so beneficial."

The environmental science and studies major has done internships with Harford County Parks and Rec, Eden Mill Nature Center and Marshy Point Nature Center.

"My internships focus on environmental education and interacting with the public," says Hardwick. "I realized that's the path I want to go down. Because then I can work in my interest of ecology and conservation and tell the public all about it. I know from the research I did that educating people is the best way to get them to care about the environment. I'm still able to enact the change I want to see, just in a more indirect way."

Pam Lottero-Perdue, a physics, astronomy and geosciences professor and director of the Integrated STEM Instructional Leadership (PreK-6) Post-Baccalaureate Certificate Program, thinks of her classes as stories, with topical threads linking course content and her students' backgrounds.

"I want it to make sense. I want it to be connected to their experiences, to what they might teach, and to itself: adhesion and cohesion," she says.

In fall 2021, Lottero-Perdue took special education and elementary education majors in her earth-space science class to the Conowingo Dam in Harford County, near the TU in Northeastern Maryland building where she taught the class.

Her students brainstormed the questions they had about the dam and spent the rest of the term answering them. Lottero-Perdue's students learned about erosion, connected the dam's technology with ideas about engineering that are part of the Next Generation

Science Standards teachers must adhere to and studied the structure's history and the equity issues that faced the dam's construction workers.

Then they visited the site as well as the old town of Conowingo that was submerged for the dam to be built. Lottero-Perdue's course touched on these topics throughout the rest of the term.

Her methods have struck a chord with her students. Katie DePew '18 was a career-changing, mature student who took courses with Lottero-Perdue.

"Dr. Lottero had hands down the biggest impact on me throughout my time at Towson. She pushed me to be a better student every single class," she says. "My very first student-teaching experience was in a fourth-grade classroom for science. We would learn the material with Dr. Lottero and then teach it to the fourth-grade group. I absolutely loved the way the learning and the teaching aligned. Dr. Lottero would excitedly teach us the content, which we would then be equally as excited to teach to the fourth graders."

Smith's teaching skills

went beyond the camera and the classroom.

For a short while, he took over drawing instructor duties at MSNS—possibly even teaching students how to draw botanical specimens. He was instrumental in the school's Arbor Day festivities.





PROFESSOR PAM LOTTERO-PERDUE TOOK STUDENTS TO THE CONOWINGO DAM IN HARFORD COUNTY, MARYLAND, TO SEE HOW THE DAM'S TECHNOLOGY CONNECTED WITH IDEAS ABOUT ENGINEERING THAT ARE PART OF THE NEXT GENERATION SCIENCE STANDARDS PUBLIC SCHOOL TEACHERS MUST ADHERE TO IN THE CLASSROOM.



HISTORY ALUM JONATHAN WOOD '11 SITS IN A RE-CREATION OF BENJAMIN BANNEKER'S CABIN ON THE GROUNDS OF THE BANNEKER HISTORICAL PARK AND MUSEUM IN CATONSVILLE, MARYLAND. WOOD IS A NATURALIST THERE, TEACHING VISITORS ABOUT THE MAN WIDELY KNOWN AS THE FIRST BLACK MAN OF SCIENCE IN AMERICA.



He was also a member of the Botany Club of Baltimore and secretary for the Photographic Society of Baltimore. Smith was a member and curator for the Maryland Academy of Sciences, the precursor to the Maryland Science Center. His ability to transfer his scientific skills into other areas of his life helped him make a positive impact on the Baltimore-area scientific community, outside of public education.

Scientific education through outreach is still a key component to TU's curriculum.

Thomas Potter '22 was working as a naturalist at the Wilde Center in upstate New York doing public education before enrolling at TU as an environmental studies major with a concentration in informal science education. He is now in TU's master's program for geography and environmental planning and hopes to enroll in the new sustainability doctoral program in the future.

"Where I want to end up with these degrees is somewhere I can give communities the information and tools they need to advocate for themselves, like a community organization or

nonprofit," Potter says. "I want to connect the intersecting facets within any given system—politics, science, economics—and turn that into a narrative that informs individuals

about the facts of a situation, why they should care about it and what they can do."

A similar motivation drives Gia Grein '10, the lead specialist with the wildlife conservation team at the World Wildlife Fund. Her team looks for solutions to the illegal wildlife trade.

The environmental science and studies major took courses with Haines and appreciated her approach.

"It was very hands on in taking something that everybody loves—nature and the outside—and diving deeper, looking into bigger issues like climate change and all its implications. It made what we were learning more tangible," Grein says.

She sees a direct correlation between what she learned in those classes and what she does now.

"I work with private sector companies to help them understand what the illegal wildlife trade is and help them find solutions," Grein says. "I want to take these same skills of making these crazy, difficult global issues more digestible, easy to understand and offer solutions. Instead of talking to kids, I'm talking to businesses."

Jonathan Wood '11—a former history major—does spend his days talking to kids. The historical park manager at the Benjamin Banneker Historical Park and Museum in Catonsville, Maryland, works outdoors—his favorite office—maintaining trails, the orchard and garden beds and facilitating programs and events the park runs. One is a program for 2-to-5-year-olds offering an early childhood immersion into nature through hands-on activities.

"Mr. Benjamin Banneker was a model for self-teaching with hands-on experiences," Wood says. "When he had the opportunity, which was limited as a Black man in the 18th century, he took [it] and ran with it. He's very well known now as the first Black man of science in the Americas. And it was all hands-on experience that he used to teach himself."

Over the course of the northern map turtle project, around 30 students have been trained in research and/or scientific communication and outreach.

TU's research station is in a renovated gas house. Downstairs is a town museum, and upstairs there are quarters in the back for students to stay if need be and an area in the front to communicate with tourists and school children about the turtles and conservation.

"This outreach arrangement has been great for Towson University interns we hire in the spring who are interested in scientific communication," says Kimble. "They go up there on Saturdays and Sundays during the summer, and they have all kinds of other stuff they can teach visitors about: how we track the turtles, the shells and why they're called map turtles. And sometimes, if we're lucky, they can see little hatchlings headed back to the water."

"Sometimes it's two people, and sometimes it's 30," Kimble adds. "If you do that all summer, year after year, then you can reach hundreds of people. The outreach program has the potential and is already touching lots of lives: turtle lives, lives of people who are in the area and lives of the Towson University faculty and students."

In 1965, university officials decided to name the newly erected science building on campus George L. Smith Hall, in honor of his many academic and scientific contributions. In 2021, TU built the state-of-the-art, 320,000-square-foot Science Complex. With its 50 teaching laboratories, 30 research laboratories, 50 classrooms, eight lecture halls, 10 collaborative student spaces, an outdoor classroom leading to the Glen Arboretum, a rooftop greenhouse complex, a new planetarium and an observatory, TU is better positioned than ever to continue to honor its commitment to science education and research.

In 1892, Smith's last year at MSNS, there were 331 students enrolled in the entire school. As of spring 2022, the Fisher College of Science & Mathematics alone had 3,305 students enrolled, based on their first majors. Looking at how far Towson University has come, George La Tour Smith surely would be impressed. **TU**

Boldly Going

Members of TU's first-generation community share the stories of their collegiate journeys.

BY MEGAN BRADSHAW

PHOTOS BY
ALEXANDER WRIGHT '18

First-generation students and graduates have found their way to TU through a variety of paths: college visits, recommendations from friends and family and job opportunities. No matter how they arrived, it took lots of hard work for them to get here.

TU has made it a priority to support its first-generation students all the way

through graduation, providing plenty of resources for current and future first-generation Tigers.

The Generation One and the Students Achieve Goals through Education (SAGE) programs provide first-generation college students tailored mentoring and guidance to foster academic and personal accomplishments as well as

peer support. The College Readiness Outreach Program (CROP) connects Baltimore City ninth graders with TU student mentors for a series of college readiness workshops that build a solid plan for matriculating successfully through high school then college.

Each first-generation student has a unique story. Here are some of them.

Atika Syed

ASIAN, PACIFIC ISLANDER, MIDDLE EASTERN AND DESI
AMERICAN COORDINATOR, CENTER FOR STUDENT DIVERSITY

I come from a family in Pakistan where education has always been extremely important. My parents were very particular about my sister and I getting as far as we could education-wise. But because I got married very young, that was interrupted.

When we moved here for my husband's job, I was like, "It's time for me to restart my life here."

I didn't have a support system as such. With two young kids, it was tough. There were points where I thought I should go part-time, take a semester off. But I forged on. In two and a half years, I finished my undergrad at Penn State, and I started grad school next semester. Then I went part-time and completed it in three years.

It was all because from the very beginning, it was instilled into us that education is extremely important. And it doesn't matter how you identify, what you identify as. If there's one unifier, that is education.

Being a mature student, it was twice as hard. But I never found that intimidating or felt like I needed to hold back because my opinions and thoughts were always valued there.

Trying to navigate the space with the multiple, marginalized identities I have was also quite something. Being oftentimes the only Muslim woman of color in the class, viewing things from a different lens and trying to find the words to express those thoughts...

I learned I am stronger and more determined than I thought. We are our own greatest critics. There's this guilt that keeps gnawing at us, but I learned to put that to sleep. I believed my kids when they said I was a good mom and they were happy and proud of me. That was a huge motivator.

The other wonderful thing was self-awareness and how to carry all my identities and protect them. I come from a country where race is not an issue when it comes to social justice.

Learning what covert and overt racism looks and sounds like is very important to me. How to respond to that is also something that I learned along the way. My kids' experiences are what took me on the path to DEI (diversity, equity and inclusion). A lot of what shaped me into who I am today came from the educational journey I'm on.



Vernon J. Hurte

VICE PRESIDENT OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

I'm from Central Virginia. My family on my grandmother's and grandfather's sides are from Nottoway and the Amelia County area—so a very rural background.

My grandparents were very active in the community and focused on education. From the time I can remember, the idea of going to college was always planted, even if I didn't necessarily have the path clearly laid out for me or have someone to go before me to complete college.

My grandfather was a role model. He started working for a bank after high school, as a janitor, and when he retired from what is now Bank of America, he was a vice president. His drive, his wisdom was always an inspiration.

I was fortunate to have some great teachers in high school, some great mentors. I had a teacher named Jan Westbrook who would allow me to hang out with her between classes and after school, and I would constantly get advice from her.

Trying to identify colleges was a challenge for me. I didn't know what I was looking for. I ended up going to Bowie State University, and that was largely influenced by my AP English teacher in high school, Dennis Reed.

It felt like home. It was just a great location, a real sense of community. I felt inspired and even challenged, particularly by Dr. Mary McManus,

an English professor and director of the honors college. There were a number of folks who really embraced me from my RA Dale Funny, who, 25 years later, I still remember. Renardo Hall was the director of housing at the time, and when I was having challenging days, he would find a way to lighten those moments with a joke or something.

Being surrounded by supportive people—people who want to see you succeed—is such a critical part of the college journey, especially for first-generation students. Confidence is boosted when you know there are folks in the community who are really invested in your success.

My undergraduate experience inspired me to go into higher education and work to create that type of experience for all our students, but particularly for students who are first-generation and may be coming from challenging backgrounds, students who may not have always seen themselves as college students—or college graduates—to see opportunity and really be able to flourish and thrive.

I'm very proud of my identity as a first-gen student, first-gen college graduate and I'm very proud of the students we have here. Seeing the positive impact they're having on not just campus but the whole region and hearing the stories of success and where students are going after they leave TU is something I'm very proud of.



Alejandra Balcázar

COORDINATOR OF LATINE/X AND UNDOCUMENTED STUDENT DEVELOPMENT, CENTER FOR STUDENT DIVERSITY

I am originally from Bogota, Colombia. My mom was a CEO in a small company. She was working a lot of the time. But she was very present at the same time.

My mom set me up to be independent. Something she did, which was sneaky but now I really appreciate, when I was 4 or 5, she told me the Disney Channel didn't exist in Spanish. She made me watch cartoons in English. She jokes now, "Yeah, I could have put it in Spanish, but why?"

My grandma also had a big influence on me because after school, I would come home, and my grandma would be there, cooking dinner for us. And then my mom would come around 5:30. And it was 100% me time—helping me with homework, playing or teaching me other things.

My mom could not afford to go to college, but she was always a very hard worker. When I started looking for colleges, I was not sure what I wanted to study. But I knew what college I wanted.

At 16, I started studying modern languages in Colombia, at Javeriana University, where I learned four languages, which I use a lot. When

I came here, I could not start working in education, which was a big shock because back in Colombia, I already had my degree. I was working in a trilingual school.

But then when I moved here, they told me that because I didn't learn with the Common Core, I couldn't teach. I couldn't get my certificate. So my degree was not valid.

I learned, depending on where you are, that sometimes it doesn't matter the knowledge you have, the actual certificate or transcripts do. I spent more than \$200 to bring my transcripts, to explain I studied modern languages, which is the equivalent to a particular certificate. Explaining myself was very hard.

I started at TU as a Latine/x and undocumented student coordinator in January. The Latine/x students are so passionate and so positive. That gives me joy. On the other hand, working with undocumented students, whose day-to-day reality is so different, has been a good challenge, due to the fear of not knowing how the policies are going to change. I want to give back and support communities that do not have that support. I acknowledge it was a privilege I had in that moment. I want to do something with that.



Anthony Landaverde '24

EARLY CHILDHOOD AND SPECIAL EDUCATION

My parents are originally from El Salvador, a small, rural town called Chalatenango. When I was little, I couldn't speak English or Spanish. I went to speech therapy, and then when elementary school came, I had ESOL (English as a Second Language) until fifth grade. I had an IEP (individualized education program) in middle school, and I had a 504 plan to provide accommodations in high school.

The language barrier for receiving help in school was a bit difficult. My special ed teacher, Mr. Lebar, was a big help. I loved him because when I was in sixth grade, I was very shy. He helped me open up more. I was getting better in school, and I remember my mom would go to IEP meetings and just cry because she saw all the progress I was making.

Towson was my first choice from the get-go because I had a cousin who came here. She graduated with a degree in accounting, and she loved Towson.

I chose my major because I believe in early intervention. If you help children as soon as possible, it's the best for the long run. I understand how it is to be in their shoes, especially from having parents who are immigrants as well—our native language is not English. I can understand the parents' point of view now.

I can understand the students' point of view too. Being taken out of class for meetings or having accommodations can be intimidating for students because they're getting accommodations everyone doesn't. It can make you feel like an outsider. If I do go the special education teacher route, I can help my students feel more of a pride about it rather than be worried.

I have a couple goals: to be a school psychologist, an ESOL teacher or something to do with spreading more representation into schools. This semester, I made my own student org called LEO, Latinx Educator Organization. It helps anyone who wants to be a teacher or anyone who wants to work in the school setting.

I would tell a student considering TU to get involved. You can find yourself a lot in orgs, and you feel at home. It is a great way to know people on campus and have fun. I have gone to Gen One meetings. I really liked the stuff they were planning. I feel like it helps a lot of students. And SAGE—Alexia Crawley has helped me a lot as well. She got me interested in it and, last semester, when I was going through some things, she was there for me. I also loved it because I had mentees who were also education majors and helping them has helped my leadership development and how I have grown as a person.



Ariana Maturi '23

MASS COMMUNICATION

I wasn't 1,000% sure I was going to go to college when I was in high school. I went to a private Catholic school, and they were very big on college prep. As soon as I came in as a freshman, they were like, "We're going to prep you for college." I was like, "Oh, I didn't think about that." But the more I looked into it, the more I realized it was for me. I thought I was going to do something in the medical field. But I realized my senior year I was way better with more creative stuff, like media and writing and English.

I come from a very traditional family—my parents wanted me to be close to home. I was looking at schools in New Jersey and New York, but when I decided I wanted to do media, I realized those schools didn't really have any programs I loved. My sister's boss told me about Towson, saying, "They're one of those schools that have almost every major you could think of. You should really check out that school."

I was excited about going to college. But I feel like I did come in blindly. I was so terrified on my first day. I couldn't believe that I did it: I applied, I got accepted, I enrolled and now here I am moving in to Tower B.

Freshman year was a little all over the place. I remember the first time

I met with my adviser, and she started explaining things to me. Every few sentences I had to be like, "Whoa, wait, what does this mean?"

I did join a club. I was part of Actors Anonymous, so I made friends with some older students who had been at Towson longer than me. We did *Carrie*, and that was really fun. It helped me make friends. Once I made friends and started getting adjusted to living on campus, I was like, "I'm living like this now. This is where I live, this is how I live. This is okay."

I feel like I'm a completely different person after these four years. I've become more outgoing. When I came into college my freshman year, I was so painfully shy. I've become much more comfortable in academic spaces. I've been much better at having a presence in the classroom, at work, in social settings.

My goal when I graduate is to land a job in Manhattan. I'm hoping to stay in media. I often look at jobs in broadcast journalism. I've also been doing social media for the university. I look at social media positions in New York as well.

I get excited because when I look at the job qualifications, I see, "I've done that before. I have experience in that." I feel like I could totally land a good job.

Jenna Hess '23

BUSINESS

I was in the Air Force for four years. In June 2020, I separated from the military to do a skill bridge program where they let you discharge six months early to do an internship that helps you transition to civilian life.

I am pretty sure I only applied to Towson. Sometimes I'm stubborn, like, "I want this. I don't want anything else."

Project management, supply chain and strategic management were interesting to me. I'd like to work on a team. I've learned all these valuable things about businesses and business concepts you can apply to any industry, and I've heard from so many different types of people. It was priceless. When I graduate, it's not going to feel like I'm doing this without a net underneath me.

One of my professors had a ton of guest speakers. I felt like that was really valuable because project management's one of those things where it's really hard to sit and talk about. You have to go out and do it. And that's something the professors at TU understand.

I'm a work study student at the Military & Veterans Center (MVC) on campus, and my internship is with Sodexo. I'm a future leader intern in the human resources department.

I want to do food supply chain, whether that be human resources or facility management in Sodexo. Food is cool and fun, and it brings people together.

I've found the MVC to be my launch pad for every day. It's been very calm. I thought school was going to be very stressful, but I feel like I've gotten a handle on it. And a lot of it's been through the help of the MVC. As a student veteran, I do feel taken care of by the school.

Advice I'd have for other first-generation students is Google everything. I tried to be as proactive as possible so that I didn't face getting emails from the bursars or admissions or [ones saying] you're not going to graduate on time. As first generation, I couldn't call my dad and be like, "Hey, how does admissions work?"

Towson has done everything they promised, which was to set me on a path to get a degree, and that's all I wanted. **TU**

START YOUR
JOURNEY NOW:



towson.edu/student-success/generation-one



ALL ABOUT *Arete*

TU's new football coach plans to craft a program that will embody the Greek word for excellence.

BY MIKE UNGER

About a month after becoming just the fifth head coach in the more than half-century history of TU football, Pete Shinnick is sitting in his corner office in the field house at Johnny Unitas® Stadium. The walls are still mostly bare; since being hired on Dec. 11, his time has been monopolized by recruiting, not interior decorating.

Still, he did make sure a few things were hung. Behind glass in one frame is a photo of his father, former Baltimore Colts linebacker Don Shinnick, squaring up, his form perfect, preparing to tackle an about-to-be-in-pain New York Giant. In another, his dad and Johnny U himself are embracing, all smiles, after a victory (pictured right). The elder Shinnick and the legendary Colts quarterback were great friends, and the fact that Don's son is now coaching in the stadium named for Unitas, well, some people might call that fate.

But kismet alone is not responsible for bringing Pete Shinnick to this place, at this moment. That was accomplished through years of hard work, often as far from the spotlight as a football coach can be. Shinnick has built a resume that speaks for itself. He won at Azusa Pacific, a small California school that at the time competed in the NAIA (roughly equivalent to the NCAA's Division III). He won at Division II UNC Pembroke, which didn't even have a program before he arrived. And after starting yet another program from scratch at the University of West Florida in 2014, he won the Division II national title in 2019. In 20 years as a collegiate head coach, he's amassed a 159-67 record.

Now, a new challenge awaits. Shinnick, 57, has never coached at the Division I Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) level, just one step removed from the top. It was the chance to do that in a place he's long felt ties to that attracted him to the job.

"When I look at this university and what's taken place over the course of the last 10 years, you see a growing, vibrant campus," he says. "Not many FCS programs are in this type of setting. I don't care who you are, it's very difficult to get to a national championship game, and so to do it in the D-III level, the D-II level and FCS [as TU has done], that's unique. Yeah, those are years apart, but it shows that everything aligns and there's an opportunity for something here."

Pete Shinnick was born in Baltimore, and though he only lived there for the first five years of his life, his parents always considered it home.

"I think if my dad hadn't gone into coaching, my family would still be living here," he says. "My dad passed away about 20 years ago, and my mom still says this is the favorite place that she's lived. For all the moving that they did, that's a heck of a comment."

The Shinnicks followed the nomadic path of a football coach's family. As Don jumped from one assistant coaching job to the next, first with the Chicago Bears, then the Oakland Raiders, followed by the St. Louis Cardinals, his family moved too. Despite the constant upheaval, Pete loved being the son of an NFL player and coach. Once, he

attended a practice in Oakland where he played catch with Raiders quarterback Ken Stabler.

"There was a kid at school who had gotten Stabler's autograph at some signing session," Shinnick recalls. "He was showing it to the kids, and I really wasn't that interested. He was like, 'What's wrong, you don't want to see it?' I said, 'Well, I was playing catch with him the other day.'"

Shinnick loved football, but he didn't start playing until high school. An offensive lineman, he got just one Division I offer, so he took it and enrolled at the University of Colorado.

In Boulder, he struggled to get on the field until he learned to long snap. He knew he wasn't going pro, so coaching was always in the back of his mind. After an ill-fated marketing internship, the business major was surer than ever that coaching was where his future lay.

His first job was as a volunteer assistant at the University of Richmond. His bank account was light, he worked long hours—he absolutely loved it.

"I enjoyed the competitiveness and camaraderie of it," he says. "That's really what has kept me in the game. It's the most unique sport out there. There are 105 guys. You've got a staff. How do you get everyone on the same page? I saw that as a unique challenge."

As his career progressed, Shinnick made his way to bigger programs. He worked with the defensive line at Arkansas and served as the recruiting



coordinator at Oregon State. In between he coached tight ends at Clemson, where he met his wife, Traci, at a Fellowship of Christian Athletes dinner. They've been married for 31 years and have four children and two grandchildren.

At each stop, he channeled the coaching lessons he learned from his father.

"His philosophy was trying to make the experience for the player great," Shinnick says. "The first thing my dad did very well was he never forgot what it was like to be a player. He never forgot that we've got helmets and shoulder pads on, it's hot out here, it's muggy, there's humidity. Number two was to really coach the whole person. This guy is under my care, and it's not just about football. It's about what type of person he's going to become, what type of husband he's going to become, what type of father he's going to become."

In 1999, Shinnick was hired as head coach of Azusa Pacific University. Although it's located just 15 miles west of the Rose Bowl, one of college





Alexander Wright '18

football's shrines, it couldn't be further from the upper echelons of the sport. That first year, his only full-time assistant was his defensive coordinator. "You can make wherever you're at be whatever you want it to be," he says. "What you learn is that you can probably do way more than you thought you could. I learned that the administrative aspect of it is something I'm very good at. Mapping it all out."

After seven years there, Shinnick moved east to start the program at UNC Pembroke, in rural North Carolina. Success came quickly. In his second season, the team went 9-1. Overall, six of his seven years were winning ones, but he had an itch to face stiffer competition. So it was off to Pensacola, where the University of West Florida was looking for someone to build its program, slated to join the powerful Gulf South Conference, from scratch.

"We started with a phone and a cubicle," says UWF Athletic Director Dave Scott. "As soon as we hit the ground running with Pete, we knew that he was the right guy because of how

he interacted with our faculty and our staff. Pete's a great communicator. He's a great motivator. He's about lifting up the student-athletes, training them to be better people. We want them to be not only successful on the field but in the classroom and in the community. His personal vision matched up well with what we want to do as a department."

Once again, year two proved to be a breakthrough. The Argonauts notched 11 victories. Two years later, they won 13, the last of which was the national championship game.

From the onset, Shinnick set out to build a specific culture at UWF. Argonauts are a band of heroes in Greek mythology, so for his program's theme, Shinnick chose the Greek word arete, which means excellence.

"It's an amazing word to encompass every aspect of someone's life, to say, 'Let's get you to be the best version of yourself that we possibly can,'" says the folksy, affable-yet-driven Shinnick. "We say, 'Are you living up to your fullest potential when you're going to study hall, when you're going to class, when you're in the weight room, on the

practice field, when you're home as a son? I told myself, 'We're going to use it here, but if I go somewhere else that's going to be the standard: Live up to your fullest potential.'"

When TU put together a magical run to the 2013 FCS championship game, Shinnick began taking notice.

"I've been tracking their success, and I think there's a handful of FCS jobs that are unique, that have the combination of location and campus that I would say, 'Hey, if that ever opened up, that would be appealing to me.'"

The feeling was mutual. When UWF reached the national semifinals last season, TU Director of Athletics Steve Eigenbrot took notice.

"This job had an amazing candidate pool, which allowed us to be very selective," he said in announcing Shinnick's hire. "Ultimately, character and fit for Towson drove us to this place. We listened to a lot of alumni, fans and supporters. They wanted someone who understands how to build and run a program and has a history of meaningful and relevant success.

Obviously, the ability to develop players and recruit were high on the list, especially with this area being so rich in talent. Pete checked all those boxes and then some."

After signing a five-year contract, he started working on the roster immediately, convincing leading tackler Mason Woods to withdraw from the transfer portal. About 80 players attended his first team meeting.

"When we talked to our guys it was really, 'Look, this is who we are and this is how we do things,'" he says. "This is the standard that we're going to hold you accountable to. If you can grasp all of that, then you're going to have a great opportunity to be successful here. If you want different rules for yourself, if you want to fall into your own category, this is not the program for you."

Shinnick called plays for 23 years, but here he's relinquishing those duties to offensive coordinator Brian Sheppard. He wants his focus to be more program-wide.

"I think we have a great football alumni group," he says. "I feel like engaging with them will bring them back into the fold a little bit. I think there's other things in the community that my time can be spent doing while not having to worry about a practice script or a gameplan in the detail that it takes to call the plays. You still gotta worry about all those things as a head coach but not to the finite detail that it takes."

Clearly, an abundance of free time is a luxury Shinnick does not possess. As he sits in his office, he takes a moment to reflect on the circular path his life has taken.

"Dad would say what a small world that this has worked out to be," Shinnick says. "He'd be proud."

Somewhere, Don Shinnick and his buddy Johnny U are smiling. **TU**

FOOTBALL HOME OPENER



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ALL THAT JAZZ

Bill Murray '08, '11 might have gotten a late start making music, but that doesn't mean he's stopping anytime soon.

By Mike Unger ■ Photos by Nick Sibol '23

At first, the tune is so faint you think it may be playing just in your mind. But as you walk from the dimly lit parking garage into the hallway of Greater Baltimore Medical Center (GBMC) in Towson, past one sign warning those with COVID-19 symptoms not to enter and another proclaiming “Heroes Work Here,” the jazzy notes become progressively louder. A few steps later, you arrive at the lobby outside the emergency room, where the man who’s making this music in the most surprising of venues sits at an old brown Baldwin grand piano, his fingers deftly tapping away.

Bill Murray ‘08, ‘11 is perched on a black cushion atop the worn maroon one that covers the bench. As doctors, nurses, support staff, patients and visitors shuffle by, he continues to play. Occasionally EMTs pass pushing a person on a stretcher, and still, Murray plays. Everyone is wearing a mask, so it’s tough to tell when a few moments of a song elicit a warm feeling or smile—however fleeting—from a listener.

But you can tell.

Most people don’t stop, but one man is sitting in a wheelchair, intently watching and listening as Murray plays “Polka Dots and Moonbeams,” a popular jazz standard from the 1940s.

“That’s beautiful,” he says after Murray finishes.

“Any favorites?” Murray, 78, responds.

“I’ll let you select them,” says the man, who’s hooked up to an oxygen tank. “I really enjoy the way that you play.”

The man stays for only a few more minutes before he’s wheeled to treatment. He’s here five days a week for radiation. Murray’s music, he says, is the best part of his day.

“I try to play relaxing music, mostly ballads and medium tempo songs,” Murray says. “I am a great believer in the concept of music therapy. Most of these people don’t want to be here. If I give them 15 or 30 seconds of relaxation, I’m happy. It’s a great experience for me.”

Murray began volunteering at GBMC nearly a decade ago, when his late wife, Helen, was being treated there for cancer. He noticed an old piano sitting dormant, collecting dust, and asked



if he could use it. He’s been playing it twice a week ever since.

Few people love anything more than Bill Murray loves jazz, and few people are as invested in seeing its next generation of performers thrive. His establishment of and support for the Murray Fund for Visiting Jazz Artists and the Murray Jazz Residency have positioned TU as a leader in the field—and he’s not done giving. Last year Murray pledged \$545,000 to RISE, the campaign for Towson University. The money will support the TU Foundation Grant Endowment, subsidize College of Fine Arts & Communication performance student tickets and fund the programs that bear his family name. He also plans to donate his immense collection of jazz CDs, books and vinyl to TU’s Special Collections and University Archives.

Murray’s relationship with TU is part of what he calls his second journey in life. After a successful career in commercial banking, he pivoted at the age of 58 and decided to turn his passion for jazz into an academic pursuit. Two degrees, five albums, 50 original compositions and countless acts of philanthropy later, he’s created a legacy that will ensure his impact on the genre will be felt for years to come.

The Colorado town in which Murray grew up was not exactly the cultural equivalent of Greenwich Village. Located about 150 miles south of Denver, Walsenburg had only about 5,000 residents, few of whom likely saw Duke Ellington or Charles Mingus perform.

But music was always flowing through the Murray household. Bill’s

mother, Virginia, was a singer and a music teacher. She died when he was 9, but the love for the artform she instilled in him resonated. When he was in middle school, his buddy formed a band and asked Murray to be the piano player.

“The songs were jazz, from the Great American Songbook,” he says. “It was a little before rock and roll started to come in. We’d play homecomings and proms. I played my first New Year’s Eve gig for adults when I was in the eighth grade. I was making \$10 a night. I thought I was in heaven.”

Murray played trombone in the marching band in high school, and when he arrived at the University of Colorado as an undergraduate, he joined the Golden Buffalo Marching Band.

After graduating with a degree in business, he earned an MBA from Northwestern University and went to work for Illinois National Bank. He met Helen in Chicago, and the two were married in 1970. The couple moved to suburban Glen Ellyn, where Murray announced to his wife that he was buying himself a Christmas present: a piano.

In 1982, Murray got a job with a bank in Maryland, and the family moved to the single-family home in Towson in which he still lives. Shortly after relocating, he started exploring Baltimore’s jazz clubs.

“I was determined to find a person that I could take piano lessons from,” he says. “This was my main hobby. I wanted to learn how to play jazz piano.”

At a club near the old Mechanic Theatre on Charles Street downtown, Murray met a piano player named



This toy piano (left) was a gift to Murray from TU students on the 10th anniversary of the jazz residency.

Murray got the tuna can figurine in France.

Lou Rainone, who would become his teacher for the next 20 years. While playing remained a passion, it took second billing to his banking career and helping to raise his three children. But when the kids left the nest and his bank was sold, Murray leapt at the chance to retune his life.

"I never used the word retirement," he says. "You'll never hear me use that word. I just don't like it. I use the term 'second journey.'"

His first call was to Terry Ewell, a professor in TU's music department, who spoke to him about the university's program. In 2002, he became a 58-year-old freshman.

"What I noticed is he's a very humble gentleman," says Ewell, a bassoonist who teaches online technology and music theory. "Very eager to learn and very interested in improving his musical skills. When he came into the music department, he didn't expect any special favors. He just wanted to be like one of the students. The jazz faculty were very pleased to have him there. He was an eager student and applied himself diligently."

Despite being four decades older than some of his classmates, Murray was determined to assimilate.

"When I was working, I said, 'I don't ever want to be called Mr. Murray,'" he says, laughing—as he frequently does. "When I was working with younger people, I wanted them to feel like they could call me Bill. So I made it known right away that I was Bill. I'd sit in the back of the class and keep my mouth shut. I would tell the professors. 'Don't expect me to raise my hand. If you call on me, I will respond, but I don't want to take anything away from the other students.'"

Six years after enrolling, Murray owned a second bachelor's degree, this one in music. But he wasn't done.

Thirsting for more knowledge and playing experience, he went on to earn a master's in music three years later. His thesis compared the work of his idols, jazz pianists Bill Evans and Billy Strayhorn, with his own compositions.

During his second scholastic stint, Murray decided to establish the Murray Fund for Visiting Jazz Artists. Three years later, he and his wife founded the Bill and Helen Murray Jazz Residency, which the fund for visiting jazz artists now supports. (It's now known as the Murray Jazz Residency, and his sister and children also are donors.)

Each term TU hosts a jazz professional who, over the course of a week, gives private lessons to students, teaches a master class and performs one concert with their peers and one with TU students.

"It's definitely distinguished us from other jazz programs in the nation," says music professor Dave Ballou, leader of the Jazz and Commercial Music Division and founding director of the Murray Jazz Residency. "Other programs bring in great people for a few days, and mostly those programs only have the guests play with the faculty, but we insist on the guests playing with the students. It's had such a profound effect on the students."

A decorative address plate in the shape of a piano outside Murray's home offers guests a preview of what awaits when they enter. Much of the decor in the house could be described as piano chic—if that actually was a thing. The focal point of the front living room is the 35-year-old Kawai grand piano he plays almost every day. On it sits a tip jar, a tongue-in-cheek gift from his family that came with a few dollar bills in it. (They're still stuffed in there.)

Down a flight of stairs is a den lined

with bookshelves. He estimates he has more than 3,000 volumes on jazz and classical music, most of which he's read. Up another flight of stairs is his recording studio, where he spends many of his waking hours at home. It's packed with file cabinets containing most of his roughly 10,000 jazz CDs, which he believes is one of the biggest collections in the world. The rest are in the basement—he ran out of room upstairs.

There are two electric pianos and a computer for when he wants to compose, but he spends most of his time in the studio listening to music. While the tunes flow through his world-class Totem speakers he often works on Japanese number puzzles or builds Lego sets that his kids give him. This Christmas, he got a 1,600-piece jazz quartet set that, for now, remains unopened.

Sprinkled throughout the room are photos of Murray with jazz luminaries whose camps he's attended. The drummer T.S. Monk. Saxophonist Robbie Coltrane. The late, legendary tenor sax player Stanley Turrentine.

Also displayed are Murray's albums, which he hands out for free to friends and family. He recorded many of them with TU faculty and alums. *Billy's Touch*, a soothing, melodic collection of seven Murray originals, features Murray on piano, TU adjunct professor Jeff Reed '02 on bass, Frank Russo on drums, Dan Ryan '13 on guitar, and Ballou on trumpet.

"He has a very strong idea and opinion about what he wants musically, but it's great to work with him because he doesn't assume that he knows everything. He's very self-effacing," Ballou says. "Jazz and improvised music are very personal expressions. It's an artform. What I like about

Bill is that he's somebody who is using that artform to express what he wants to express in it. That's cool."

In the back of the house is a second living room, which is dominated by Murray's collection of tiny, kitschy pianos he's bought and been gifted from around the world. There are hundreds of them. One is a small rendition of a piano that's actually a wine bottle holder. Another is a figurine playing a piano crafted from a tuna can. He got that one in the Bordeaux region of France.

Murray is proud of his philanthropic efforts at TU and keeps several plaques and awards from the university on display in the room. He joined the Towson University Foundation board in 2006 and served as the organization's president from 2018 until he stepped away in 2022. There's another, slightly larger model piano that sits on the floor near the door that was a gift from TU to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Murray Jazz Residency.

When he founded the program, it was named for Murray and his wife. The two were inseparable for decades until she died from colon cancer in 2013. In one corner of the room sits a framed copy of his original score for "Thinking About You," his love song to his bride.

"She went through seven years of cancer and treatment and ups and downs," he says. "It blew my life apart, but in the last couple of years of her life, we knew that it was not a question of if, it was a question of when."

After a grieving period, he met Rodica Johnson. She was a fellow volunteer at GBMC, and the two have become friends and enjoy spending time together. Now that the pandemic has subsided, they're looking forward to resuming traveling as well. Murray also is planning to record two more albums in the near future.

"It's been an interesting life," he says with the curiosity of a man wondering where his next journey—and note—will take him. **TU**

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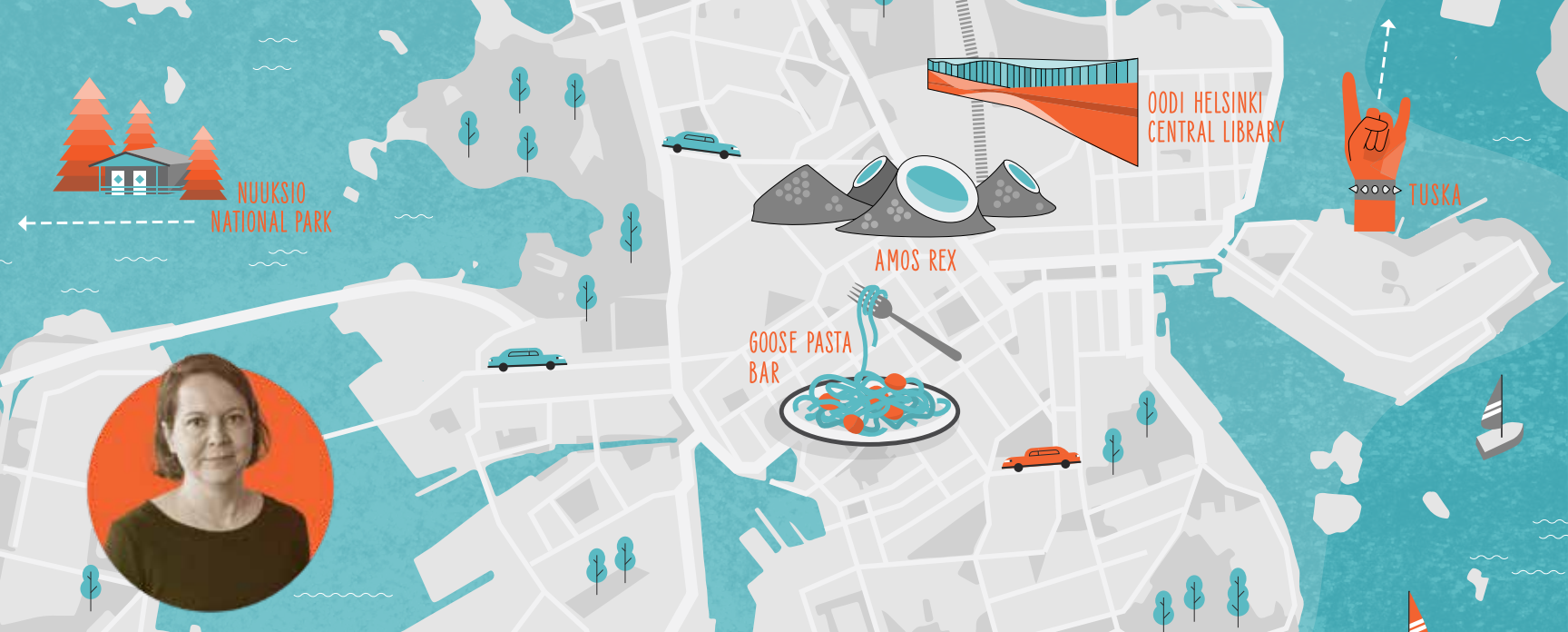
THE STARTUP

MU
ANI



📷 Moore Face Time

Maryland Gov. Wes Moore began his third week in office at TU. On Feb. 3, Moore and his senior leadership team convened for a cabinet meeting at the StarTUP at the Armory and visited campus to see progress on the new College of Health Professions building. “We are here because we know that Maryland’s economy and our education system are inextricably linked,” he said. “We will make this Maryland’s decade, and it all starts with education.”



MY TOWN

Piia Lindroos '97 Helsinki

BEST MOVIE THEATER
Kino Tapiola

TOURIST ATTRACTION
Suomenlinna Fortress

HIDDEN GEM
Porkkala National Park

FILM SHOT IN HELSINKI
Aki Kaurismäki's *A Man Without a Past*

BEST AMUSEMENT PARK
Linnanmäki

As the head of marketing for Live Nation Finland, you couldn't ask for a better guide to Helsinki—a city full of art and entertainment—than native Finn Piia Lindroos.

Drawn to the strong reputation of TU's mass communication department, she can connect her experiences at TU with her career success.

"I studied screenwriting, editing, TV production, had internships," she says. "Towson got its first nonlinear computers for editing film and TV during my last year. That was perfect because that enabled me to get editing jobs I was doing for 15 years after I graduated."

She suggests summer visitors check out the film and music festivals in the nation's capital, specifically mentioning **TUSKA**, a popular heavy metal festival in June, and the **Flow Festival**, a music and arts gathering in August.

But there are plenty of ways to enjoy the arts in Helsinki and Espoo, a town 20 minutes from the capital where Lindroos lives.

"A couple of my favorite ones are the **Espoo Museum of Modern Art (EMMA)** and **Amos Rex** in Helsinki. Both have a variety of exhibitions that change," she says. "You can buy a museum card that costs like \$60 for a year and visit as many museums as you like."

A surprising place to enjoy the city's architecture is its public libraries.

"In downtown Helsinki there's the **Oodi Helsinki Central Library** that's architecturally very famous and very beautiful to look at," she says. In addition to its collection of 100,000 books, there are also nine living trees within its walls.

There is a thriving international cuisine scene in Finland. Lindroos suggests **Goose Pasta Bar** in Helsinki for its constantly changing menu, desserts and antipasto but warns there is almost always a line. She enjoys trying everything from Korean barbecue to pizza, but if you're looking for a local specialty, try the salmon soup at

"The Helsinki area is the ideal place to live. I work at a truly inspiring, international company and enjoy nature and its changing seasons. After a night at a high-energy concert, the next day I go for a nice, long walk in the forest. It's all about the variety and harmony that living here offers."

Löyly—and then hit the sauna or go for a swim year-round in the sea right outside the restaurant.

Even though winter in Finland can be long and dark, there are plenty of places to spend time outdoors regardless of what season you visit. Explore the wild natural setting at **Nuusio National Park** or walk the 40 km that make up the **Espoo Waterfront Walkway**. Take a day trip to **Porvoo** and admire one of Finland's most-photographed areas. Hop on the ferry and experience one of the 330 islands in the Helsinki area archipelago.

"The Helsinki area is the ideal place to live," Lindroos says. "I work at an inspiring, international company and enjoy nature and its changing seasons. After a night at a high-energy concert, the next day I go for a long walk in the forest. It's about the variety and harmony that living here offers."

Alumni News



Save the Date

This year's Homecoming will take place Oct. 7 when the Tigers face the University at Albany.



Commencement Volunteering

Spring Commencement returns to SECU Arena May 24–26. Alumni volunteers are needed across six ceremonies. View the schedule and register for a shift at alumni.towson.edu/commencement.



Accepted Student Send-Offs

Welcome new students and their families while catching up with Tigers in your area at one of several accepted student send-offs around Maryland. See the full list of locations and dates at alumni.towson.edu/sendoffs.



Recognizing Achievements

During Homecoming week, eight exceptional alumni were celebrated at the 2022 Distinguished Alumni & Deans' Recognition Awards banquet. These prestigious awards recognize alumni for their notable career achievements and inspiring legacies. This year's recipients are a testament to TU's wide-ranging and dynamic academic programs, having excelled in the arts and entertainment, health care, education, media, international business, finance and STEM.

Distinguished Alumni Award:

Peggy Cyphers '77, College of Fine Arts & Communication

Distinguished Young Alumni Award:

Katerina Burton '17, College of Fine Arts & Communication

Deans' Recognition Awards:

Eric R. Thompson '82, College of Business & Economics
Stefani Pautz Stephenson '16, College of Education
Brian Norris '99, College of Fine Arts & Communication
Terris King '84, '18, College of Health Professions
Tracy Wright '99, College of Liberal Arts
Jacqueline Mims Tibbs '91, Jess and Mildred Fisher College of Science & Mathematics

TU Alumni Alliances

Like many things at TU, alumni alliances are on the RISE. Based on region, identity or common interests, alliances connect alumni with similar passions or backgrounds. Whether you're interested in networking, building friendships or simply having fun with other Tigers, there are eight established alliances you can join:

- Business and Leadership Alumni Alliance
- D.C. Metro Alumni Alliance
- Jewish Tigers Alumni Alliance
- LGBTQ+ Alumni Alliance
- Marching Band Alumni Alliance
- New York City Alumni Alliance
- Southern California Alumni Alliance
- Towson Black Alumni Alliance

Our Tiger Veterans and Latinx groups are also building momentum. If you are interested in joining an alumni alliance or group, visit alumni.towson.edu/groups.

Introducing the TU Alumni Association Travel Program

Explore the world through the Towson University Alumni Association travel program launching this fall. Domestic and international trips will be offered each year, creating opportunities to connect with fellow alumni, students and faculty locally and abroad. Trips in 2023–24 will include a civil rights journey through Montgomery, Birmingham, Tuskegee and Selma, Alabama (Nov. 2023), a visit to monarch butterfly sanctuaries in Mexico's Sierra Madre Mountains (Jan. 2024) and a tour of the Amalfi Coast of Italy (June 2024).





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CAPS GAME: Towson University Night with the Washington Capitals took place Jan. 17. Tigers cheered on the Caps against the Minnesota Wild and received co-branded knit hats in TU colors. Ahead of the game, alumni met at City Tap House–Penn Quarter for drinks and appetizers.

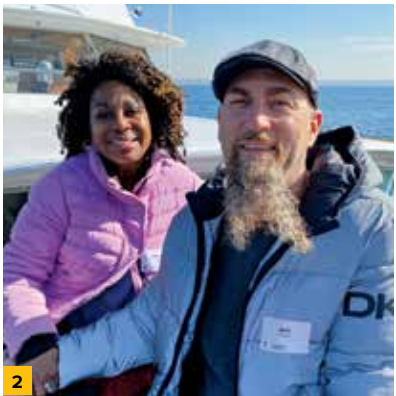
1. Guests enjoy happy hour before the game.
2. Alumni and friends sport their Capitals jerseys and Tiger gear.
3. Kristen '84 and Jim Brown
4. The Capitals face off against the Minnesota Wild (photo by Alan Weinraub '95)

PHOENIX RECEPTION: On Jan. 18, the TU Alumni Association made a first-time stop in Phoenix, Arizona. Tigers savored a unique experience at Taco Guild, an historic church turned neighborhood gastropub.

1. Bernice Truskowski '69 and Joan Meagher '70, '74
2. Ron Roach '00 and Ray Harris '03
3. Diane '77 and Fred Bibeau
4. Mike Wells '73 and Lori Armstrong



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CALIFORNIA DREAMING: Jan. 20–22 the alumni association headed west to visit Tigers living in Southern California. Stops included receptions at Stone Brewing World Bistro & Gardens in San Diego and The Maybourne Beverly Hills in Los Angeles as well as a whale watching adventure out of Marina del Rey.

1. Tyler Campbell '13, Karl Bublitz '11 and Jonas Jacobson '90 (San Diego)
2. Allyson Pippin '87 and Arric Johnson (Marina del Rey)
3. Arissa Gabe-Palmer '99, '02, Erandi Tillakaratne and Toria Turner '04 (Los Angeles)
4. More than 30 Tigers and friends enjoy a picturesque cruise aboard The Legend Yacht. (Marina del Rey)



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SOUTHERN CHARM: The TU Alumni Association held back-to-back events in Charlotte and Atlanta Feb. 17 and 18, respectively. The reception at Church & Union Friday night marked our first visit to Charlotte in more than a decade. Saturday night was spent with Tigers at Cooks & Soldiers, enjoying cuisine from the Basque Country of Spain and France.

1. James Rice '91, Eric Bower '93, Tracey Bower '94 and Ira Cox '88 (Charlotte)
2. Jacqueline Mims-Tibbs '91 and Kimberly Michel-Clark '96 (Charlotte)
3. Ellen Pritchard '68 shows off her Towson State College ring. She turns 100 on May 3. (Atlanta)
4. Inise Mayfield '06 and Valerie Destin (Atlanta)

Class Notes

SEND US YOUR NEWS!

We'd like to hear about your personal and professional lives.

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1970s

VONNIE WINSLOW CRIST '74, '06 has writing in more than 200 anthologies and magazines listed on Amazon. More than 1,000 of her illustrations have been published. Her recent story



collection, *Beneath Raven's Wing*, was a 2022 finalist for the Imadjinn Award and is a nominee for the International Edgar Allan Poe Festival's Saturday Visitor Awards. Her latest collection of stories and illustrations, *Shivers, Scares, and Goosebumps*, was released by Dark Owl Publishing.

LINDA ALISON D.

CARTER '76 is a distinguished Marquis Who's Who listee. She is featured in Who's Who of Professional Women and the organization's flagship registry, Who's Who of America (2021–22). Inclusion is based on professional integrity, outstanding professional achievement and contributions to society.



EMERSON L. DORSEY JR. '76 is a partner at Tydings & Rosenberg LLP. He was recognized by Best Lawyers for his real estate practice. Dorsey has been selected for inclusion since 2019. He chairs the business, corporate and tax and real estate departments at the firm. He also serves as

general outside business counsel to numerous privately held companies as well as religious and tax-exempt organizations in Maryland.

EVE GOLDEN '79 will have *Strictly Dynamite: The Sensational Life of Lupe Velez*, published in September.

1980s

WILLIAM R. JONES '82 serves as president of AquaBioCorps, established to provide technical expertise to international organizations and others working on sustainability issues. He retired from 20 years of federal service at the FDA, most recently as a senior science adviser and director on the food safety side of the agency.

KEITH B. PLUMMER '85 of Plumgood Productions and Plumgood Cinema



released his thriller/sci-fi film *Self Quarantined*. The 90-minute movie was written by Plummer in 2020. The movie revolves around three African American women who are dealing with the social isolation resulting from a worldwide pandemic and trauma in their lives. They decide to leave their confines and go on a mountain retreat together. While reconnecting and recharging, inexplicable things start to happen to them, which challenges their grips on reality.

HOPE C. TARR '86 sold her historical novel, *Irish Eyes*,

to Lume Books in a two-book deal. The novel, which follows Irish immigrant Rose O'Neill from the turn of the century through the Jazz Age in New York City, will be released in December.

RICHARD L. COSTELLA '87 is a partner at Tydings & Rosenberg LLP. He was recognized by Best Lawyers for his bankruptcy and creditor/debtor rights, insolvency and reorganization law and bankruptcy litigation. Since 2013, The Best Lawyers in America has recognized Costella in the field of bankruptcy and creditor-debtor rights law. Chambers USA has also recognized Costella as a leader and notable practitioner in bankruptcy litigation. Since 2011, Maryland Super Lawyers has selected him for inclusion in its list for his bankruptcy, business litigation and creditor/debtor rights practices.

1990s

DAVE CARBERRY '92 founded Enradius, a digital marketing company, eight years ago and has released a new system to network and connect called Needworking.com.

MELISSA L. LEEDOM '92 released *The Story of the Bible* (McGahan Publishing).

RENETTA DIANE WEAVER '93 owns the private practice Regain No More. Weaver created a space to connect bariatric patients to culturally attuned mental health therapy.

MICHELLE HUGGINS '94 completed the 41st cohort



Plack took the four photos above while on runs.

ELLIOTT PLACK '09, '17

Running Man

Forrest Gump has nothing on Elliott Plack. At the beginning of 2021, Plack left his Towson home to go for a jog. For the rest of year, he never went the same way twice. Eleven months later, the two- to three-times-a-week recreational runner traversed the last of Towson's 579 streets (according to the U.S. Census Designated Places). That's about 179 miles if you're keeping track—and Plack most definitely is.

Now he has a new goal: slamming his sneakers on every road in Baltimore County.

"I get bored running the same route, and I'm always looking for ways to change it up," says Plack, 40.

He's found it. Last year he notched 30 more miles by running each of Lutherville's 107 streets. (An app tracks his progress.) He doesn't even take vacations off. At the shore in Delaware last

summer, he ran each of Dewey Beach's 33 streets in a single day. This year, Timonium and Cockeysville are in his sights.

Plack was on the cross country team in high school but was just a casual runner while earning his undergraduate degree in geography at TU. His wife, Meredith (Budner) '12, a former star swimmer who will be inducted into the TU Athletics Hall of Fame in the fall, is the real athlete in the family, he says.

His consistency is unwavering. While he runs, he splits his time listening to music—ranging from '70s rock bands like Little Feat to electronic dance when he needs a pick-me-up—and newsy podcasts. Running, he says, is therapeutic.

"I like to bike too, but you need a bike, a place to store it, all that kind of stuff," he says. "Running is so easy. You just put on some shoes and go."

of the Baltimore County Police Department's Citizens' Academy. The primary objective of the academy is to afford community advocates and business leaders the opportunity to evaluate the benefits of public service, learn about the challenges and demands associated with law enforcement and gain a better understanding of the criminal justice system and community policing. Huggins also delivered the graduation address on behalf of her class.

HEATHER HILL '95 was recently promoted to vice president of mission

integration and spiritual care services at the University of Maryland St. Joseph Medical Center.

JEFFREY R. ASH '96 is the inaugural chief diversity, equity and inclusion officer for The Universities at Shady Grove.



VONNETTA CORNISH'S '97 latest movie, *The Exit Row*, a drama/thriller set in the nation's capital, is streaming on major U.S. platforms. Cornish wrote and executive produced the movie, which was produced through her company

Cine30 Media. The feature film is about a chance encounter on a traumatic flight that leads to a deadly obsession.

KATE DANLEY'S '97 theatrical adaptation of Agatha Christie's first Poirot book, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, had its world premiere at Theatre in the Round in Minneapolis.

PERRY LEE CONLEY '98 released *Plays of Our Own – An Anthology of Scripts by Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Writers*. It is part of the Routledge Series in Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Theatre and Performance.

TOM HERB '02

Home is Where the Help Is

Tom Herb is changing lives, one person at a time. After the death of his brother Jimmy in 2019 from a drug overdose, Herb made it his life's mission to honor his brother's memory and to save as many lives as possible.

After 14 years working for tech companies, Herb co-founded The HOFFA Foundation (Healing Opportunity Free From Addiction), an ode to Jimmy's nickname and a way to help others avoid the same fate.

"How do I keep my brother's spirit alive?" he thought. "What can I do to keep him around us every day?"

In 2021, the foundation purchased a home and turned it into The HOFFA House. The men's recovery provides access to peer support programs, transportation to services and job skills training in Carroll County.

Several board members have been affected by substance abuse or are in recovery themselves, including Herb. He believes that helps them relate to those they are helping.

The National Center for Drug Abuse Statistics estimates that since 2000, over 700,000 Americans have died from drug overdose. Herb is hoping that the work of the HOFFA Foundation will, at least in a small way, help reduce that number.

"My mission for the rest of my life until I see my brother again, is to help as many people as I possibly can," he says.

—Matt Wright '24



In Memoriam

Alumni

Mildred C. (Crum) Nicodemus '44
Aug. 15, 2022

Virginia F. (Franz) Hilbinger '48
Feb. 7, 2022

Shirley V. (Vance) Wood '48
Nov. 20, 2022

Mary C. (Creager) Sands '50
Sept. 5, 2022

Suzanne G. (Pretty) Windsor '52
Aug. 14, 2022

Joan D. (Dannettel) Buttner '53
Oct. 3, 2022

Sylvia J. (Godsey) Creamer '53
Sept. 29, 2022

Mary Lou D. (Dodson) Fenton '53
Aug. 9, 2022

Jean U. (Umberger) Francis '53
Jan. 28, 2023

Isabelle C. (Christle) Shenton '53
Nov. 2, 2022

Kay L. Maisenthalder '55
Nov. 7, 2022

James O. Porter Jr. '55
Sept. 12, 2022

William Binder '56
Sept. 15, 2022

Mildred B. (Bressler) Dorf '56
Feb. 15, 2023

Anne F. (Frush) Forder '56
Aug. 11, 2022

Dorothy K. (Knight) Kay '56
Jan. 15, 2022

Judith N. (Northrup) Rudolph '56
Nov. 28, 2022

Sally W. (Wagner) Clayton '57
Aug. 10, 2022

Helen R. (Rynars) Fleischmann '57
Aug. 20, 2022

Donald B. Hoffer '57
Jan. 7, 2023

Joan R. (Runkle) Lewis '57
May 12, 2022

Shirley A. (Bowling) Mackessy '57
July 2, 2022

Thomas W. Minnich '57
Jan. 2, 2023

Rosemary J. (Jenkins) Berry '58
Dec. 24, 2022

Thelma E. (Southcomb) Gundersdorff '58
Oct. 22, 2022

Julia M. (Moran) Hofferbert '58
Nov. 17, 2022

Donald Knox '58
Aug. 14, 2022

Ada E. (Bigler) Martin '58
Oct. 30, 2022

Anita M. Brown '59
Jan. 20, 2023

Norma J. Cook '59
Nov. 20, 2022

Robert M. Forder Sr. '59
Dec. 18, 2022

Martin D. Kurland '59
Oct. 26, 2022

Alva M. (Amoss) McMullen '59
Dec. 14, 2022

Jerry R. Merrenblum '59
Nov. 7, 2022

Betty S. Goosman '60
Feb. 10, 2023

Mari M. (Mayhan) Kane '60
Dec. 11, 2022

Gary C. Harn '61, '73
Jan. 31, 2023

Gabrielle (Lyter) Holland '61
Nov. 15, 2022

Helen F. (Weiner) Schmukler '62
Dec. 17, 2022

Ralph J. Trautwein '62
Oct. 20, 2022

William F. Moessinger '63
Nov. 28, 2022

Ann P. (Phillips) Yingling '63
Sept. 28, 2022

Carolyn E. (Feldman) Hubberman '64
Feb. 17, 2023

Katharine E. Ditman '65
Nov. 12, 2022

Joan M. (Mattheiss) Hooper '65
Oct. 13, 2022

Theodore N. Black Jr. '66
Aug. 2, 2022

Dennis C. W. Hill '66
Nov. 3, 2022

Ann W. (Fraser) Sole '66
Dec. 15, 2022

Marlene G. (Ramsburg) Weintraub '66
Nov. 5, 2022

Nancy Martin '67
Dec. 29, 2022

C. Edward Prager '67
Dec. 4, 2022

Carolyn D. (Davis) Etzler '68
Dec. 17, 2022

Michael E. Trippett '68
Jan. 11, 2023

Philip L. Bailey '69
Dec. 7, 2022

Bruce Thomas Bradshaw '69
Sept. 18, 2022

Leslie A. Daniel '69
Dec. 19, 2022

Richard L. Mellor '69
Jan. 30, 2023

Bonnie W. (Monroe) Miller '69
Nov. 6, 2022

John M. Morgan III '69, '73
Jan. 13, 2023

Donald E. Setzer '69
Sept. 19, 2022

Linda A. (VanWymeersch) Webb '69
Nov. 27, 2022

Sharon J. (Gallahan) Bell '70
Feb. 6, 2023

Gerald F. Clark Jr. '70
Dec. 9, 2022

Charles F. Pearson '70
Sept. 4, 2022

Barbara Ann Russo '70
Aug. 17, 2022

John H. Suter '70
Sept. 1, 2022

Ruth H. (Hagen) Alper '71
Jan. 4, 2023

Adrienne H. Block '71
Dec. 11, 2022

Elliott R. Coleman '71
Nov. 17, 2022

William C. Hannemann Jr. '71
Feb. 18, 2023

Harry R. Kessler '71
Jan. 30, 2023

David P. Marshall '71
Jan. 29, 2023

Shirley (Meginnis) Neale '71
Dec. 29, 2022

Louise B. (Blount) Smith '71
Dec. 17, 2022

Richard W. Thompson '71, '75
Nov. 25, 2022

Gladys M. DeMuth '72
Dec. 14, 2022

Mary B. Ericson '72
April 6, 2022

Alice G. (Grain) Killmer '72, '75
Aug. 20, 2022

Timothy Krausz '72
Feb. 25, 2023

Selma C. (Caplan) Mandelberg '72
Jan. 30, 2023

James G. Miller '72
Jan. 30, 2023

Marshall B. Strickler '72
Dec. 20, 2022

Patricia E. Vitagliano '72
Feb. 19, 2023

Susan J. West '72
Nov. 10, 2022

Mary A. Huffman '73, '78
Nov. 4, 2022

John H. Hunt Jr. '73
Nov. 27, 2022

Nancy J. Klein '73
Jan. 24, 2023

Claire D. (Dice) Lott '73
Nov. 16, 2022

Yvonne Mueller '73
Sept. 30, 2022

Laurence F. Orendorff '73
Aug. 2, 2022

Janet L. (Fazenbaker) Sickoria '73
Dec. 19, 2022

Nancy S. (Smith) Bauer '74, '77
Oct. 6, 2022

Martha J. Bernstein '74
Jan. 23, 2023

Michael R. La Martina '74
Aug. 10, 2022

Deborah L. Miller '74
Nov. 24, 2022

Susan F. (Matz) Milstein '74
Dec. 3, 2022

James P. Robinson '74
Aug. 6, 2022

Ronald W. Waitz '74
Oct. 23, 2022

Ann F. Eicholtz '75
Dec. 18, 2022

George K. Kron '75
Feb. 18, 2023

Linda O. McDougall '75
Nov. 7, 2022

Cevia H. Rosol '75
Dec. 28, 2022

Christina G. (Giorgilli) Reyes '76
Aug. 30, 2022

Ellen R. (Unkart) Watsic '76
Oct. 12, 2022

Patricia N. Brooks '77
Feb. 6, 2023

Bradley H. Dobbins '77
July 20, 2022

David S. Donovan '77
Sept. 27, 2022

Lynn T. Hawkins '77
May 31, 2022

Arline C. Nitzberg '77
Oct. 9, 2022

Devora Rosen '77
Sept. 16, 2022

Sharron L. Rosenbaum '77
Aug. 7, 2022

Edward G. Wagner '77
Dec. 12, 2022

Maria A. Williams '77
July 27, 2022

Lenora L. (Netz) Barnhart '78
Nov. 22, 2022

Colleen M. Fisher '78
March 3, 2022

Wayne Richard Fleit '78
May 19, 2022

Richard A. Nelson '78
March 7, 2022

Joanne V. Timmel '78
Jan. 5, 2023

Francis E. Duffy '79
Sept. 30, 2022

Joan C. Evensen '79
Aug. 20, 2022

Laura A. Majchrzak '79
Oct. 17, 2022

Michael G. McCloskey '79
Oct. 9, 2022

Katherine R. Meyer '80
Aug. 14, 2022

Greta R. Adler '81
Sept. 19, 2022

Ted David Annenberg '81
Nov. 13, 2022

Nona K. Christensen '81
Nov. 12, 2022

JoAnn C. Reitz '81
Aug. 19, 2022

Robert Michael Fields '82
Oct. 24, 2022

Jeffrey M. Mann '82
Oct. 5, 2022

James M. Odell '82
Sept. 30, 2022

Philip R. Pace '83
Nov. 28, 2022

William W. Pheil '83
Oct. 29, 2022

Keith Thomas Shelly '83
Jan. 1, 2023

Dorothy A. Griswold '84
Jan. 3, 2023

Doreen Lea Rusnak '84
June 20, 2022

Wendy S. Koch '85
Jan. 16, 2023

John Rodney Norvell '85
Jan. 16, 2023

Jeffrey Michael Tesch '85
Oct. 20, 2022

Rona H. Butler '86
Oct. 5, 2022

Stephen P. Gilbert Sr. '86
Jan. 4, 2023

Glenn E. Peacher '86
Nov. 17, 2022

Ronald P. Sadtler '86
Feb. 9, 2023

Shawn Soper '86
Feb. 15, 2023

Melinda Marks '87
Feb. 10, 2022

Veronica T. Ridings '87
Dec. 23, 2022

Henry Karl Stoecker '87
July 26, 2022

Leatrice C. Goldberg '88
Oct. 28, 2022

Keith Rubin '88
Nov. 12, 2022

Mildred P. Eikenberg '90
Jan. 21, 2023

Phillip Doran Bresee '91
Feb. 18, 2023

Jeffrey Mark Fradel '91, '99
Sept. 1, 2022

Sherry L. (Crowe) Frick '91
Sept. 13, 2022

Joyce M. Miller '91
June 1, 2022

Charles D. Orrison '91
Feb. 2, 2023

Daniel James Cahill '92
Feb. 5, 2023

Marie K. Kittelberger '92
Feb. 16, 2023

Michael Dennis Brune Jr. '94
Sept. 29, 2022

Theresa M. Cassant '94
Feb. 22, 2022

Jeffrey Mark Hottle '95
Sept. 19, 2022

Linda Carol Brewster '96
Feb. 12, 2022

Michael Arthur Buchanan '96
Sept. 27, 2022

Jennifer M. Crouch '97, '99
Sept. 5, 2022

Catherine Honora Murray '97, '06
Sept. 14, 2022

Jennifer A. Caplan-Jollie '99, '00
Feb. 7, 2023

Nancy V. Kearns '00
Nov. 2, 2022

Vincent Bailey '02
Oct. 6, 2022

Yelena Pens Moore '04
Sept. 8, 2022

Robert Adam Solomon '06
Nov. 14, 2022

Kathryn J. Stitz '07
Feb. 10, 2023

Jaclyn E. Bryant '08
Oct. 23, 2022

Sydney G. (Lippa) Magness '15
Dec. 15, 2022

Dallas A. Savoy '18
Sept. 12, 2022

Faculty & Staff

James L. Fisher
Sept. 7, 2022

Arlene Geppi
Dec. 21, 2022

Michael E. Hickey
Aug. 28, 2022

Michael J. Keating
Feb. 21, 2023

Earl W. Killian
Sept. 21, 2022

Carolyn L. Parmenter
Nov. 26, 2022

Timothy E. Sullivan
Aug. 27, 2022

Irvin Weintraub
Jan. 21, 2022

Mark I. Whitman
Jan. 17, 2023

Ted Zaleski Jr.
Jan. 12, 2023



JESSICA DICKERSON '11

Advocating for Urban Natives

As a person of Native American heritage, Jessica Dickerson has often felt like she was on the outside looking in. It's a predicament she is determined to change for others like her.

"Growing up I didn't have a strong Native connection to a lot of other people," says Dickerson, who is a member of the Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina. "As an adult I've surrounded myself with more people who are like me and have really been invested in learning about our history and the importance of what's happened and how we can continue to advocate for Native folks all over."

Dickerson was raised in Baltimore, and it is through her grandmother, a member of the Lumbee, that she traces her lineage. While she always identified with her Native American roots, she didn't fully understand what that meant to her until she got older. When she came to TU, she intended to become a nurse, but the 2008 election changed her path. She was inspired to become more involved in social issues, so she switched her major to communication studies.

"When I was at Towson, I realized that advocacy is so important," says Dickerson, who participated in student government, worked as an orientation leader and was involved in Alternative Break Connections, which are community service-learning experiences. "You really have to fight for what you believe in and who you are. I really started to figure out who I was, what was important to me and my values while I was at Towson. I was challenged in a lot of ways."

After graduating, she worked in the corporate sector before pivoting and taking a position at the Baltimore Native American Center. It's located in Fells Point, where her grandmother and many other members of the Lumbee tribe settled in the late 1950s.

Today, Dickerson works as a medical case manager for Native American LifeLines, a nonprofit that promotes "health and social resiliency within Urban American Indian communities." She is also a member of Indigenous Strong, a group that lobbied Baltimore City to abolish Columbus Day in favor of an Indigenous Peoples' Day. The city did so in 2020, and the group is now hoping the state will follow suit.

"For me it's not just about my own tribe," she says. "When you're an urban Native, you really lean into the Native people around you and share experiences and stories and traditions. You become a family and a support system. While I still identify as a Lumbee tribal member, I'm also very appreciative of the other folks and members of different tribes who have shared their stories with me and taught me things I wouldn't necessarily know otherwise."

"There is a spot in my heart for urban Natives."

MELISSA HATCHER '98 was promoted to assistant principal of a large Baltimore County public



high school in July 2022 after teaching, serving as a department chair and staff development teacher for 23 years.

MICHAEL C. HARDY '99 was appointed managing partner of Duane Morris LLP's Baltimore office. Hardy represents clients in connection with complex financings, mergers and acquisitions and other strategic transactions domestically and internationally. Hardy's corporate clients include companies in the technology, financial services, consumer products, telecommunications, education, real estate, health care and life sciences industries.

ANDREW TEITELMAN '99 is celebrating his 15th year as an attorney at Teitelman Law in Portland, Oregon, where he has a general law practice.

2000s

JOSHUA COLEMAN '03 joined Kramon & Graham, a Maryland-based law firm providing real estate,



litigation and transactional services. Coleman has more than 10 years of real estate law experience,

which includes advising real estate developers, builders and investors in matters involving large-scale economic development projects and acquisitions regarding common-interest communities.

MATT DESIENA '05 was hired as the head of social at the Martin Agency, part of the Interpublic Group of Companies.

GREG JANOS '05 works for The Harvey School and has rebuilt its girls lacrosse program, which has four Housatonic Valley Athletic League championships. He also coaches ice hockey for John Jay High School. He won coach of the year his first two years there.

SARAH KITLOWSKI '06 moved back to Baltimore and helped found Glass House Creative Recovery, a mental health center for creatives and artists in Ellicott City. She is its chief development officer.

ADRIAN ALBIDRESS JR. '07 is the author of *Financial Planning & You*. The 140-page book illustrates



financial topics from the reader's perspective as their story unfolds in retirement.

JENNA BRODSKY '07 has been appointed assistant principal of the Nassau BOCES Preschool Program at Barry Tech. She began her educational career in the New York City school system as head special education teacher for the Northside Center for Child Development then went

“I took several writing classes at Towson and those were challenging yet fun for me...I wouldn't have even thought I'd have the skills or ambition to pursue writing a novel until TU challenged me to unleash those skills.”

ROBERT PLANT '10

on to serve as a special education teacher for the SPECTRUM School.

2010s

ROBERT PLANT '10 published *Heartstrings*, his first novel, on Amazon. It's about a man who loses his wife and son in a tragic house fire.

KELLIE J. FLOOK '11 was promoted to manager at SEK. She is responsible for planning and organizing client engagements, performing risk assessments, preparing and analyzing financial statements, evaluating internal controls and maintaining strong client relationships.

MICHAEL BRASHEARS '12 has joined Brooks Financial Group Inc., as the vice president of corporate benefits. Prior to joining the company, Brashears held positions with Dominion National and Kelly Benefits. He will be providing innovative employee benefits solutions that specifically address the

needs of the company and are aligned with its strategic goals.

EMILY GREENE '13 was recently named a Best Lawyer: Ones to Watch in the areas of Commercial Litigation and Personal Injury Litigation—Defendants in the 2023 legal ranking guide The Best Lawyers in America.

MIKE SCHOELEN '16 recently became a senior solutions engineer with Salesforce. He works with small businesses in health care and life sciences as they modernize their engagements with patients.

MADDY VOYTEK '16 was hired by Ørsted to serve as deputy head of government affairs and market strategy in Maryland. Voytek will be responsible for developing and implementing engagement strategies in the state, including maintaining and strengthening working relationships with policymakers, environmental NGOs, local community organizations and other stakeholders.



RAPHAELA MORAIS '22

An Outlaw with a Cause

Raphaela Morais doesn't work on documentaries to earn recognition. As part of the Ocean Outlaw Project, her goal is to bring to light the issues that occur in the world's oceans.

Serving as executive producer for the nonprofit's latest film, *Get Away from the Target—Rescuing Migrants from the Libyan Coast Guard*, Morais (pictured behind the Emmy) and her team provided an inside view of a boat of asylum seekers leaving Libya in search of a place to settle in Europe.

The documentary captures a high-stakes showdown between a ship run by Doctors Without Borders, which is attempting to rescue and escort the migrant boat to safety, and the Libyan Coast Guard, which is fighting to imprison the asylum seekers.

At the 43rd News and Documentary Emmys in September, the film won in the Outstanding Crime and Justice Coverage category. It took a few minutes for the news to sink in to Morais.

“I was just shocked sitting there, because I wasn't expecting to be called on stage,” she says. “It's such a huge accomplishment for our team, and it's great to see what [the Ocean Outlaw Project] has accomplished in a short time.”

Morais, who has a master's degree in marketing intelligence from TU, is the graphic design director for the Outlaw Ocean Project. Along with working on documentaries and investigative journalism, she helps the organization reach a younger audience by leveraging non-news platforms.

“Through TU's marketing intelligence program, I learned that there are different ways we can reach our intended audiences,” she says. “We don't want to be popular or famous; our reporting is important, and we want people to hear about it. It feels like I'm working on something that matters and has a purpose.”

Rearview Mirror

FROM THE DESK OF FELICITY KNOX '94, Library Associate to Special Collections and University Archives



ASK AN ARCHIVIST

Hey Felicity...

Q: Why is there an Emerson Drive on campus?

A: Why does Towson University have a street named after a 19th-century philosopher from Massachusetts? Prior to 1968, the roads on campus didn't seem to have names. So that year, perhaps in honor of the Maryland governor becoming the vice president of the United States, the roads were named after Maryland governors, and the road in front of Stephens Hall was named Agnew Drive. But by 1971, students wanted to honor those who had been killed during civil rights protests and highlight great philosophers and local journalists. Agnew Drive became Kent State Drive, and another road was renamed Jackson State Drive. A traffic circle was named after Goethe and another one named after Thoreau. And one road connecting a parking lot to Towsontown Boulevard was named Emerson Drive.

In 1984, the administration changed the names again, creating the ones we have on campus today but kept only one from those created in 1971, which is why West Village sits along Emerson Drive.

Have a question for Felicity? Email her at fknox@towson.edu.

WHAT'S NEW

Unearthing TU's History Through Oral Histories

In summer 2019, TU student and faculty researchers began the Unearthing Towson's History Project, delving into the University Archives collections with the goal of exploring the history of diversity on our campus.

As part of that project, researchers have conducted oral history interviews with alumni and former faculty members about their experiences on campus. The first was an interview with Whitney LeBlanc, the first Black faculty member hired by the school, who taught theatre in the 1960s. More interviews will soon be added to the online collection. For more information, visit towson.edu/unearthinghistory.

PAST



1963

The College Concert Band appears in the yearbook for the first time. This student group was under the direction of Benjamin Glover, who was at the school for just three years.



1968

Hank Levy establishes the Towson State Jazz Ensemble. They would become so proficient under his direction that they would be barred from entering the Quinnipiac Jazz Festival in New Haven, Connecticut.



2018

The Towson University Jazz Orchestra celebrates 50 years of supporting students studying jazz at TU.

PRESENT

On My Bookshelf



SAM POLAKOFF, CLASS OF 1986

Sam Polakoff was the third generation of his family to run Nexterus, a 77-year-old logistics firm. About 10 years ago, he was looking for a creative outlet when a life coach challenged him to write a book. *Hiatus* was published two years later.

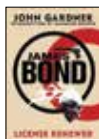
Polakoff calls his genre sci-fi thriller. He has published four novels, including *Shaman*, in which TU plays a prominent role as the location where the main character learns vital information about the visions and voices that have been plaguing him since childhood.

His next novel will be a departure from his usual—historical fiction set in Harford County in the 1700s.

“My job as a writer is to make the completely impossible sound entirely probable,” Polakoff says.

In 1986...

What Polakoff learned as an undergraduate at TU has stuck with him. “My marketing and business courses absolutely impacted me,” the marketing major says. “Things I learned 40 years ago I still use today.” Here’s what he was reading back then.



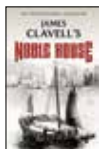
License Renewed (007) by John Gardner

I devoured my father’s collection of original James Bond novels by Ian Fleming. When Gardner picked up the mantle in the early ‘80s, it was as if an old friend had returned.



The Bourne Identity by Robert Ludlum

Ludlum was my favorite author of that era. My father always loved stories from which he could escape the pressures of the world. Of all the Ludlum novels, this was the best.



Noble House by James Clavell

Clavell’s knack for writing historical fiction, mostly in Asian settings, took me to faraway lands with colorful characters. In *Noble House*, the protagonist was the next generation of a family business, a situation to which I also relate.



Overload by Arthur Hailey

I’m pretty sure I’ve read all of Hailey’s novels. This story places the California electric grid in a state of peril at the hands of a terrorist. In the 1980s, Nexterus was beginning to work for public utility clients, and, for me, the picture Hailey painted was frighteningly real.

In 2022...

Starting his new company, Thrill Dog, and the publication of his next novel, *An Inch from Oblivion*, have kept him busy. The novel tells the story of a man’s unexpected and involuntary participation in a criminal conspiracy to control a programmable public. But Polakoff still makes time to read for pleasure.



The Nightingale by Kristin Hannah

The book tells the stories of two sisters in World War II-era France, who struggle to survive and resist the Nazi occupation. It was a wonderful story. The women had to overcome a powerful adversary by making dangerous choices.



The Seawolves by Clive Cussler

The protagonist, Detective Isaac Bell, is a thinker. I’m a proponent of brain over brawn. He fights to recover a secret technology that could affect the outcome of World War I.



With a Mind to Kill by Anthony Horowitz

When you read the old Fleming stuff, he was a great writer, and he created a phenomenal franchise, but his writing didn’t flow as well as you’d like. Guys like Horowitz who write the same premise and characters are a little easier to read.



Someone Knows by Lisa Scottoline

I thought it was an interesting premise. It’s a thriller set in Philadelphia about a group of friends who share a secret about a tragedy that happened 20 years before the novel takes place.

From Towson, With Love

At TU, thousands of romances have blossomed in dorm rooms, dining halls and at dance parties—no swiping right necessary. Tell us about yours by emailing munger@towson.edu or tweeting using the hashtag #JUSTTHETUOFUS.



Sara Moncayo-Escala

CLASS OF 2017, ECONOMICS

I was born and raised in Ecuador and came to the U.S. when I was 5. I lived most of my life in Montgomery County. My high school counselor suggested I apply for Towson. The moment I got there, it was everything I wanted. I couldn't have envisioned a better college experience.

Jake and I lived on the same floor in Tower D. He was on the dive team the first year, and he and his roommate were busy exercising all the time. Everyone was eager to meet the two athletes on the floor.

Right when you move in, the RA gets everyone together to introduce you to all your floormates. That's where we officially met. All the people on the floor would hang out that first semester.

Our first kiss was Oct. 3 of that first semester. We kept everything on the down low until we made it official in March of the next semester.



He was fun; he was very open minded. He opened my brain to a lot. I found him to be someone I could confide in. We were able to open up to each other. We were best friends. We've been together ever since.

He popped the question in July 2021. He had been trying to get me to go on a hike before work, and I kept saying no. I was very stressed at work, so I was like, "Why is he even asking me?"

He finally hit his breaking point.

We were about to go on a beach trip the next day, so he just popped the question right before leaving for work. I was in my pajamas. He was all dressed up and he proposed, and our kitties were there. It was perfect for us. Jake got me our first cat, Scout, for our six-month anniversary. We have three now.

We decided to elope, so we went to D.C. in August, and then we announced it during a family gathering. We surprised everyone. Then we went to Hawaii for our honeymoon.

He's a very calm, kind and patient person. But he's also very caring and giving. It's great to have him as my best friend.

Jake Daigle

CLASS OF 2017, INFORMATION COMPUTER STUDIES

We actually lived in the same residence tower, on the same floor. One time we ran into each other in the elevator, which was the first time we talked. I liked her for sure.

It was pretty casual at first. I don't know if we called them dates, but we would go out and do stuff. It may have been just walking through Glen Woods. We're nature enthusiasts.

After the first year, I had my own apartment. We'd spend so much time together. She was great at cooking; honestly, her cooking is what really caught my attention as far as long-term aspirations. She makes some mean blackened chicken, chicken Caesar wraps and stir fry. By our junior or senior year, we were on the same lease, officially living together. We were already so used to each other.

I started thinking about proposing right around Covid, but it got put on hold. It wasn't until the following year I was able to find the ring I wanted.



Originally, I wanted to take her on a nice sunrise hike somewhere relaxing and private. I wanted to get her up early, which is not something we would normally do. Ultimately, I got kind of antsy. It wasn't that exciting. I just did it in our own place one morning before going to work.

I was pretty confident that she'd say yes, so I was mostly nervous about whether she would like the ring. She loves the ring to this day.

We ultimately decided to elope in D.C. We went to the courthouse and saw some of the memorials around the Capitol Building. Instead of having a wedding, we opted to go on a nice, long honeymoon to Hawaii. We did a little stint on Maui, and most of our stay was on the Big Island. We went to a dormant volcano where you can watch the sun set. You're above the clouds. It was awesome.

She's very outgoing and confident. She shines. She has an energy about her. Everyone in the room gravitates toward her.

Philanthropy



Tall- Wiedefeld Society

Featured student speaker at the Tall-Wiedefeld Spring Mixer, Elise Woodfolk (second from left), joins her fellow MentHER program participants in celebrating their grant award.

The Tall-Wiedefeld Society, in its inaugural year, awarded grants totaling \$20,000 to five programs on March 8.

\$5,000 to the MentHER Program in the College of Business & Economics (CBE)

The program, in its 14th year, builds leadership skills and connects female students with information and mentors while instilling a sense of community engagement. In addition, MentHER develops high school students' college and career readiness.

\$3,750 to Grantwriting in Valued Environments (G.I.V.E) in the College of Liberal Arts (CLA)

G.I.V.E. provides female undergraduate and graduate students opportunities to connect with nonprofit leaders, increase the resources and assets of

the organizations and advance their professional writing goals by connecting their coursework to the needs of nonprofit organizations in Baltimore.

\$3,750 to the women's and gender studies department's 50th anniversary

Students will develop a digital archive of the department's history and impact. In collaboration with the Special Collections and University Archives, students will collect materials and oral histories for a launch event at the Peale Center.

\$5,000 to Learning to Fly: Girls After-School STEM Program in the College of Education (COE)

This six-week, one-on-one STEM program will match 26 TU undergraduate women from all majors with 26 elementary/middle school girls. They will learn to operate drones, investigate flight patterns and make suggestions for alterations to future drone design models/flight technology.

\$2,500 to Mental Health Support for Women STEM Students in the Fisher College of Science & Mathematics (FCSM)

Ensuring an equitable research culture is the focus of this grant, which aims to increase the number of minority students successfully completing degree programs in STEM disciplines and provides individualized and group coaching to reach that goal.

For more information on the Tall-Wiedefeld Society and the grant program, visit towson.edu/tallwiedefeldgrants

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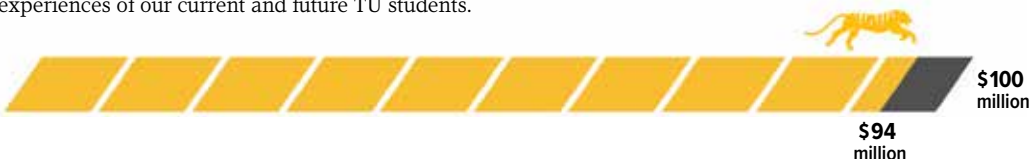
3



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\$100 million RISE campaign

More than \$8 million has been raised since we last reported our RISE campaign success in the fall issue of TU Magazine. The campaign now stands at \$94 million. "We are in the homestretch of TU's largest campaign ever," says Brian DeFilippis, vice president for university advancement. "We are so overwhelmed by the generosity of our entire TU community—alumni, students, faculty, staff and other friends of TU have all stepped up. And our future is brighter for it." It's not too late to RISE with us...every dollar and donor impacts the lives and experiences of our current and future TU students.



♥ GIVING

STEM Success

In 2018, Barbara Hill and Ancelmo Lopes drove past TU's new home of the College of Science & Mathematics at about the same time they were discussing how to help women interested in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM). The timing was perfect, and the Hill-Lopes Scholars Program was born, forever changing the trajectory of women in STEM at TU.

Now, five years later, their gifts to establish and sustain the Hill-Lopes Scholars Program, which delivers dedicated, transformational support for STEM majors at TU to improve the advancement and retention of women in STEM fields, exceed \$1.2 million with their most recent gift. The beta cohort of scholars will graduate this spring. Jordan Brooks and Kelsey Evans are among them.

Brooks, a forensic chemistry major and first-generation college student from Prince George's County, says she always had a knack for science but gravitated to chemistry because "I liked the numbers." As a Hill-Lopes scholar she's had the opportunity to attend a variety of conferences that have further honed her interest in forensic science. She plans to attend graduate school for forensic science and has been accepted into Thomas Jefferson University and Penn State University. She credits her

Hill-Lopes mentor, Kelly Elkins, who connected her with conference and research opportunities.

Mentoring is a cornerstone of the Hill-Lopes Scholars Program, according to Kristin Pinkowski, its coordinator. "My hope is the program's mentoring and community support will give our scholars the encouragement they need to succeed in the workplace," she says.

Evans' Hill-Lopes mentor, Gillian Briggs, has experience in the cosmetic chemistry field, an area of deep interest for Evans. The Germantown, Maryland, native entered TU as a biology major but



Kelsey Evans, left, and Jordan Brooks.

changed direction after she took a chemistry course. Her interest in starting her own business began with her hair.

"I am mixed race and have curly hair. My mom didn't know how to take care of my hair," she says. So Evans did her own research and started making her own hair products. "People don't think about cosmetic chemists and product ingredients, but the industry is huge," she says.

Evans recently participated in the 10-week Women with Impact Academy, a mini-MBA program that equips young women with

"Our vision was to create a 'community' for young women interested in STEM and build the support system they need to stay in STEM for life." —Barbara Hill

the skills, knowledge and confidence to become leaders and entrepreneurs. After graduating, she plans to dive headfirst into the business of cosmetic chemistry.

"Hill-Lopes has meant the world to me," Evans says.

Read more about Barbara Hill and Ancelmo Lopes' story at rise.towson.edu/news/continuing-a-commitment-to-women-in-stem.

Edna Primrose '84

After six years on the TU Foundation Board of Directors, Edna Primrose '84 was elected the organization's president in November. Primrose, who leads the workforce development, education and environmental consulting firm Differenza, is passionate about the value of philanthropy. As a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., she is particularly proud that TU honored the National Pan-Hellenic Council's legacy of community service with the recently dedicated NPHC memorial walkway in the Chapman Quad.

YOU CAME TO TU TO BECOME A TEACHER BUT SWITCHED TO BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION. WHY?

I had an interest in business and education throughout high school. My exposure to both areas at TU helped feed my passions throughout my career. My business degree led me to manage large and small organizations focused on multiple forms of education programs and policy.

HOW HAS YOUR PHILANTHROPIC PHILOSOPHY CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?

I used to think I couldn't make much of a difference philanthropically at Towson. I thought I had to be rich to contribute. My time on the TUF board helped me realize every contribution matters.

WHAT MOVED YOU TO CREATE AND ENDOW A SCHOLARSHIP?

As a student, I struggled financially. I had to work and was grateful for any help I could get to ease my tuition, books and living expenses. I decided to create the Primrose-Better Scholarship in the College of Business & Economics, which honors my mother, Barbara Better, who was a single parent. I endowed the scholarship to exemplify my family's commitment to ensuring all students have access to an exceptional TU experience.





OUR TOWN

Domino Sugar

T'Shurah Dove '02 has a sweet gig. As a senior customer service specialist for Domino Sugar, she manages about 100 accounts that use the company's sugar in their products.

"I have a sense of pride when I go into my favorite store and I see that I put the order in for a particular product," says the radio/TV/film major.

The iconic Baltimore refinery can produce more than 6 million pounds of sugar per day. That's more than enough to satisfy Dove's sweet tooth, which has only gotten worse since she started working for the company about three years ago.

"I can't get away from snacks," she says. "There are cupcakes right now at the office."



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- Donor advised funds
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- Make your desired changes
- Return the form to establish your gift

If you have questions, please contact:

Kathleen Hider

DIRECTOR OF PLANNED GIVING & MAJOR GIFTS

PHONE | **410-704-6287**

EMAIL | khider@towson.edu



**Charlie
Conklin**

Charlie's Story

For many years, Charlie Conklin participated in environmental workshops and worked with TU students at the Gunpowder Valley Conservancy (GVC).

He also established the Charlie Conklin Scholarship Fund to support environmental science and studies majors as a tribute to the many TU volunteers who give back at the GVC.

When the time came for Charlie to consider his legacy beyond the scholarship, he decided to establish a bequest with TU as the beneficiary.

towson.edu/giving



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Mark your calendar for Homecoming 2023, and be on the lookout for more details closer to the event at alumni.towson.edu/homecoming.