

2022 DOUBLE FEATURE

InterCom

THE COLLEGE OF INFORMATION AND
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JACK CLAYPOOLE GETS IT DONE

J-school grad helps guide
growth at his alma mater

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Jack Claypoole, a 1987 public relations alumnus, is the executive director for strategic initiatives at USC.

Photo by Ricardo Rodriguez

RED LETTER DAYS

Last spring, the School of Information Science celebrated its 50th anniversary. As we gathered in the Russell House Ballroom to commemorate the iSchool's legacy, we enjoyed the chance to reflect on the efforts of the faculty and staff who have contributed to our success over the past five decades. We also took the opportunity to celebrate the alumni who have taken their passions out into the world.

The event likewise provided a wonderful opportunity to recognize current students preparing to enter such an exciting field, many of whom joined our ranks in the College of Information and Communications this past fall.

In his keynote address, former astronaut and 12th NASA administrator Maj. Gen. Charles F. Bolden Jr., USMC (ret.) spoke to each of these audiences and used the opportunity to inspire us all. Bolden touched on the importance of information, education and critical thinking —

the very foundations of what we at the iSchool have done for the past 50 years — and underscored the importance of ethics in the profession.

Bolden also touched our hearts, channeling the wisdom of his mother, Ethel Martin Bolden, whose spirited efforts as a teacher and librarian led to the establishment of libraries in Columbia's Black elementary schools pre-integration. A champion not only of literacy but also of access, Bolden's mother placed special emphasis on providing students with books on Black history.

But it was Ethel Martin Bolden's advice to students — past, current and future — that resonated most deeply as we began the new school year in August.

"Study hard, work hard, which means practice, practice, practice whether you are in a classroom or on a practice field, and never, ever, ever be afraid of failure," Bolden told the audience. "Don't ever let

anybody tell you what you cannot do."

If there's a single promise the iSchool can make to Maj. Gen. Bolden — and a single way we can honor his late mother, who worked so tirelessly to advocate for the values we all hold dear — it's that we will continue to work hard, practice and never be afraid of failure as we embark on the next half century.

Of course, our drive for excellence extends throughout the CIC — and we continue to mark other important milestones. In fact, the CIC celebrated its 20th anniversary, and the J-school will mark a pretty significant one in 2023, celebrating 100 years since we held our first class. Obviously, a lot has changed over the past century — we've moved a few times, we've grown and grown and grown some more, and we continue to improve — but the essential values are constant. So, too, is our commitment.

Tom Reichert

Tom Reichert



QUICK TAKES News and notes from the College of Information and Communications



APEL AT ATLANTIC

Taylor Apel landed her dream job as a publicity assistant at Atlantic Records in New York City. Apel, a 2020 public relations graduate, interned at the popular record

label in 2019. Now, she works under two publicists, helping get Atlantic artists on the covers of magazines like Rolling Stone, Variety and Forbes, setting up interviews and booking artist appearances on late night TV.

Her team's roster includes such artists as Jack Harlow, Charlie Puth, Coldplay, A Boogie wit da Hoodie and Mason Ramsey.

"My current goal is to grow as a publicist and learn from my managers who have 10-plus years of experience in the industry," says Apel. "Beyond that, I am looking forward to representing artists of my own and giving them the opportunity to tell their story to the world."

Even as a freshman, Apel knew she wanted to work within the entertainment industry. She credits

the university's Public Relations Student Society of America chapter for leading her to public relations. "When I found PRSSA sophomore year, I decided PR was my niche and made public relations my major," she says.

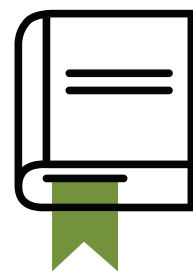
Apel got involved with the organization as a sophomore and ultimately served as the chapter president, helping her chapter earn the Star Chapter Award for excellence from the national organization. "PRSSA played a huge part in preparing me for post-grad," she says.

She also credits public relations sequence head and instructor Kelly Davis. "I owe so much to Professor Kelly Davis! She always believed in me, pushed me to be my best and taught me crucial lessons about becoming a leader," says Apel.

Davis shares the same admiration for Apel. "Taylor was an outstanding chapter president who brought a strong sense of organization and camaraderie to the chapter," she says. "She led the executive board in a way that each person on the team was able to excel in their role and have her full support and encouragement."

— Audrey Russell, senior, public relations

New program aims to diversify librarianship



The iSchool and the South Carolina Center for Community Literacy (SCCL) have partnered with Charleston County Public Libraries to develop a program to train library professionals who do not currently hold an MLIS degree.

The library covers all the expenses of the course to further

the education of their employees. Applications open in February and the course lasts for six months. Employees who show great potential but haven't had formal training are nominated to participate. One goal

of the program is to help diversify the field.

"There is a lot of interest in the program, and since it is online, we should be able to provide it to a wider audience," said Elizabeth Hartnett, program coordinator. "It is important to have the people who work in the library system look like the people who live in the community."

Currently, the program is limited to Charleston County Public Library, but leadership at SCCL is meeting with library boards to figure out how to expand not only in South Carolina but also to Georgia and North Carolina.

— Olivia Williams, senior, public relations

FROM HINGE TO TIKTOK

Mackenzie and Chance Edwards met in Nashville in 2019 but had no idea how often their paths had crossed at the University of South Carolina. Three years later, the couple is married and sharing their lives with over 140,000 followers on TikTok.

Mackenzie graduated in December 2015 with a degree in broadcast journalism and began a job immediately after graduation working for WXII in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. But after a few years working in North and South Carolina, she was ready for a change of scene. One of her childhood best friends was also looking for a new city, and the two decided to make the move to Nashville.

What Mackenzie did not know was that her new home was where she would meet her now-husband, Chance. The couple met on the Hinge dating site shortly after she arrived. "It was on both of our profiles that we were big Gamecock fans," she says. She recalls joking with her friends about the odds of finding a husband in Nashville who shared her love for the Gamecocks. "It was oddly important to me," she says.

Chance graduated with a degree in public relations in May 2014, three semesters prior to Mackenzie. For three years, the two Gamecock alumni attended classes at the SJMC without ever formally meeting. "All of my broadcast friends were in SGTV with him," she says. "I had an internship and did not have time to [do SGTV], so we never met."

The couple got engaged at the end of 2019, a few months before the pandemic began. As their August wedding grew closer, they decided to have their wedding in their backyard due to COVID-19 regulations. "Of course, at the time our backyard was a wreck, like there wasn't anything cute about it at all," says Mackenzie. "So we actually used our



The Edwards returned to campus for the first time as a couple in 2019.

wedding budget that my parents gave us to renovate our house."

Mackenzie and Chance started posting their renovation journey on TikTok and gained views quickly. "I think we just want to encourage people to, wherever you can, make your space yours in a way that makes you productive and creative and inspired by that space," says Mackenzie. The couple now has over 170,000 followers on their TikTok account and plans to continue growing their social media presence in the future.

Follow the Edwards on TikTok @homebodyhq

— Audrey Russell, senior, public relations



HAVE A STORY TO SHARE?
EMAIL DANIELLE McNAUGHTON AT
DANIMCNAUGHTON@SC.EDU

WRAP AND ROLL!



Cocky's Reading Express gets a brand new look

If you saw a massive garnet bird on the side of a bus, how would you react? For many kids around South Carolina, the bus triggers memories of when their feathered friend and his book buddies came to their school to promote reading. Now, the old familiar bus has a new look.

We're talking, of course, about Cocky's Reading Express, a literacy outreach program that brings

volunteers, staff and the university's beloved mascot, Cocky, to schools around the state. Through the program, volunteers read to the kids, Cocky acts out the books and the kids promise to read every day.

CRE acquired the bus through a gift from BP, along with some funding from Give for Garnet, the university's annual giving day.

And that brand new look? The custom wrap features a sunrise shining above clouds. Streaks of blue, orange and purple make for an eye-catching display. Cocky and children pose with books on the left and right side of the bus.

"This bus is phenomenal," says Christine Shelek, the executive director of the South Carolina Center for Community Literacy. "I mean, it's got quotes on it, it's diverse, it's a different color scheme — I'm extremely pleased with the way that it turned out."

The door side of the bus shows Cocky and a child flying through the sky on a book, and that's not an accident.

"When you're reading books, your imagination can take you anywhere," says Shelek. "That is the luxury of books, and we tried to put that on the design of the wrap. Not only is it Cocky and children, but with books you can go far."

Shelek is particularly excited to show it off on upcoming CRE trips. "Hopefully once we take off," she says, "there will be no turning back."

— James Smithwick, senior, mass communications

COCKY AT THE COAST!

Thanks to a grant from South Carolina Ports Authority, Cocky's Reading Express is headed to elementary schools in Charleston and Dillon County — and bringing a coastal spin. The program will highlight literacies in environmental, conservation, media and social-emotional learning. "If we can find a book that will go along with the theme, we will gladly give that out," says SCCL Executive Director Christine Shelek. "Anything that has diverse characters where the students can see themselves is very important to us."

— Abigail Foncannon, senior, broadcast journalism

A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Confidence is one thing, but no one really wants to be called cocky. Well, almost no one. University of South Carolina graduate student James Smithwick didn't just embrace the label; he took "being Cocky" to the next level.

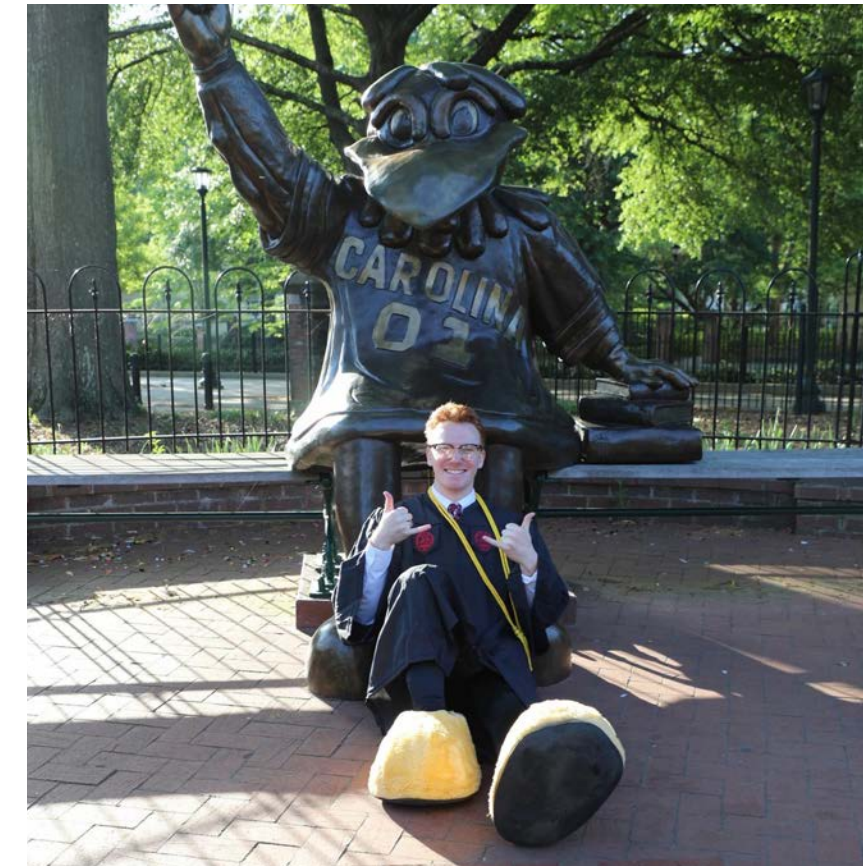
During his time as an undergrad, Smithwick was the Cocky's Reading Express Cocky, representing the program that promotes childhood literacy in elementary schools across the state. He first heard of the opportunity when an ad for Cocky tryouts was posted in his freshman dorm group chat. With his spirited, outgoing personality and some encouragement from his friends, he easily won the job.

Soon, Smithwick was dressing up as Cocky and sharing his own passion for reading at schools and daycares across the state. On an almost weekly basis, he would surprise the students and act out books, having kids vow to read every day. "It's almost like a whole show. When the whole thing is on, you're in Cocky mode," says Smithwick. "You're in business, but it's fun business."

His favorite part of the job was walking around the school and interacting with students.

Outside of school visits, Smithwick suited up for special events with USC, his favorites being a Valentine's Day video for the university's social media channels and a surprise appearance at one of his class instructor's weddings.

Smithwick received his undergraduate degree in mass communications in the spring of 2022 and remains a Gamecock as he pursues a Master of Mass Communication at the university. While he may no



Mass communications alumnus and current graduate student James Smithwick is doubly Cocky.

longer fill the shoes of Cocky, the joy he spread is something he cherishes.

"When you're in the suit and looking through his eyes, everyone around you is smiling. I would never trade that experience for anything," says Smithwick. "Knowing the number of people that I have been able to make happy is a truly incredible feeling."

— Maribeth Cooper, senior, public relations

INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING OR SUPPORTING COCKY'S READING EXPRESS?

For information about CRE or to volunteer, contact Valerie Byrd Fort at valbyrd@mailbox.sc.edu.



How many Twitter users do you know who are older than 60? Maybe not many. That's exactly what CIC alumna Kathleen Griffith thought as she started her internship with the U.S. Senate Special Committee on Aging.

After an internship in Sen. Tim Scott's South Carolina office her senior year, she found herself working for the Republican again in D.C., helping Scott in his role as the committee's ranking member for the minority party. At the beginning of her internship, she oversaw the special committee's Twitter, @SenateAgingGOP.

But Griffith realized her target audience was not seeing important messages because many of them were not on Twitter. She proposed a GOP

Senate Aging Committee Facebook page instead. The idea clicked with Scott and took off from there. By the end of the second week, the page had 300 followers.

"I thought we should make a Facebook because we were completely missing the demographic that we were trying to help by not meeting them where they're at," says Griffith.

— Jacqueline Van Slambrook, senior, public relations

#SOCIAL FOR SENIORS

Kathleen Griffith creates Senate committee Facebook page for older constituents.

Students step into the Creative Cloud

The College of Information and Communications now offers full personal access to the Adobe Creative Cloud for all students within the college.

The program, which began in the fall 2021 semester, is estimated to save students over \$1,300 across four years. This removes barriers to student success and innovation and fosters creativity across the college. CIC is currently the only school on campus that offers free Adobe licenses outside of college computer labs.

The initiative aims to increase digital literacy and help students create more compelling content. CIC Dean Tom Reichert hopes it will help prepare students for the workforce and familiarize them with industry-standard software.

"We're in a world where the ability to communicate digitally in a variety of forms is a distinctive advantage for students looking for their first job, and it continues to be an advantage as they advance in their careers," Reichert said.

Adobe Illustrator will help students create dynamic infographics. Adobe Audition will allow them to host long form audio content. Adobe Photoshop and Adobe InDesign will help students as they write and design publications, including *InterCom*.

The CIC also offers free Adobe workshops, which are non-credit sessions that are offered for students to learn the basics in Adobe Creative Cloud programs.

— Matthew Maixner, senior, public relations

TOUCHDOWN IN YOUR OWN ENDZONE:

Alex Grant's Journey to the Carolina Panthers

Football fan and Charlotte native Alex Grant always dreamed of working for his hometown team. Now a digital video manager for the Carolina Panthers, Grant's childhood dream is a reality.

"There are 32 teams in the NFL, and I knew working in the league was something I wanted to do over the course of my career," says Grant, '16. "I couldn't imagine having the opportunity to do it for the team I grew up watching."

After editing and shooting film for the University of South Carolina athletic department, Grant caught the eye of the Carolina Panthers in 2021 — and quickly landed a job in the Queen City. Brought in on a Friday, he was filming at the team's training camp the following Monday.

The fast onboarding was a testament to the rapid-blitz pace of the National Football League. For

Grant, though, it was nothing new. At the university, he learned how to work hard and work fast, and he always wants to stay on top of his game.

"I never want to be making content that's 'good for women's basketball' or 'good for the Carolina Panthers' — I just want to do good content," says Grant. "I just want us to be good, period."

Making sure the Panthers have better content than any other team is the ultimate goal.

When asked about his career path and what he wants School of Journalism students to know, Grant gives advice that he's carried with him since his days on campus.

"Your reputation always gets into a room before you do," he says. "How you carry yourself, how you work with people — that will always carry weight." — Spencer Jones, Master of Mass Communication student

A DEGREE OF COLLABORATION

J-school and iSchool combine forces for new master's program in data and communication



A new master's program helps recent graduates and experienced professionals in communications and information science expand their skill sets across disciplines. Combining courses from the J-school and the iSchool, the data and communication master's program was added to the curriculum this fall.

"My goal for the program is to meet demand from the industry for folks who are savvy in mass communications but also know how to gain insights from data," says Sabrina Habib, the program coordinator.

The program requires students to complete 30 credit hours, including seven core classes and three electives. Students receive a certificate after completing the first 12 hours. Upon completion of the full 30 hours, they receive a master of science degree.

Taught by award-winning CIC faculty, students gain a better understanding of data and information gathering and digital communication strategies, plus data collection and interpretation skills.

The program is designed to be flexible for both recent grads and seasoned professionals. Classes

can be completed entirely online. With prerecorded lectures, students can work remotely while still holding a job or internship, catering to professionals who are already working in the field.

"There are some components that are a little more geared toward transitioning to professional life," says Habib. "The asynchronous part is a strength for a lot of people."

But there are optional in-person opportunities. Instructors hold regular office hours, and students can meet with instructors in-person throughout the program. Thus far, in-person events have been well attended.

To emphasize workplace skills, the data and communication program provides internship opportunities as well as a capstone class that serves as a hands-on project, rather than a thesis.

As of fall 2022, there were 12 students enrolled in the program, and faculty are excited to see students take advantage of the program going forward.

— Megan Hoitsma, senior, public relations



RETURN of the journalist

Sarah Ellis returns to the SJMC to assist in teaching Intermediate Reporting and Production

SJMC alumna Sarah Ellis, '14, has returned to the university and was a co-instructor for JOUR 471 with Michelle LaRoche.

Now Ellis is helping teach the multimedia journalists in Senior Semester.

"They're learning the things that I practice every day now," says Ellis, who is currently an editor and reporter at *The State*. "It's cool to see that everything in that book that was written 30 years ago on how to be a journalist, how to report, how to write, rings exactly true to what I do today."

While Ellis has been out of school less than a

decade, the college has undergone a lot of changes since she graduated — and she's excited to be a part of the J-school's next chapter.

"The curriculum of the journalism school has evolved quite a bit over the last few years," says Ellis. "From what I can tell, that is a really good thing."

But some things haven't changed at all, among them CIC's commitment to preparing new journalists for success in the field.

"For me, the things I learned and the things I did in journalism school were really foundation-building," says Ellis.

— Elyse Harzog, senior, public relations



Librarians of the world, unite!

School of Information Science hosts 2022 International Association of School Librarianship Conference and Research Forum

In July 2022, the School of Information Science hosted the 2022 International Association of School Librarianship Conference and Research Forum. Approximately 200 scholars and practitioners from more than 40 countries attended the annual conference, which was held in a hybrid format to accommodate travel and COVID-19 precautions.

The forum focused on the evolving role of school libraries and how practitioners can adapt in response to those changes. Associate professor of library and information science Lucy Santos Green, who served as chair, was impressed by the variety of perspectives and ideas shared by participants.

"Because of our different cultural contexts, we have

different ways of looking at problems and challenges and coming up with creative solutions," said Green. "So it's nice to have a way of thinking outside of our own box."

The forum was also a great opportunity to show off the University of South Carolina through music, keynote speakers and events held on campus.

"I feel like participants got a fantastic overall impression of the campus, of our resources, and of the different programs we have available," said Green. "Not only did they have that Southern, American experience, but they also really had a true Gamecock week."

— Shannon Young, senior, public relations

REMINDER OF THEIR ROOTS

The iSchool celebrates its 50th year with a card catalog fundraiser

Card catalogs were once a library staple. Now, they're a reminder of how we used to conduct research in the pre-digital age. But with a little creativity, the vintage 'search engine' can also be reimagined as a cool way to raise money and generate excitement among alumni.

As part of the School of Information Science's 50th anniversary celebration in April 2022, the iSchool dusted one off, painted it with Gamecock colors, decorated it with spirit and put it to use as part of a fun new fundraiser. In exchange for a donation, alumni got to see their names placed on one of the drawers of a card catalog now displayed in Davis College.

Karen Gavigan, interim director of the iSchool, spearheaded the project. She was inspired by a painted card catalog she saw at Kent State University. "It was such a really cool focal point," said Gavigan. "I said, 'We could do that.'"

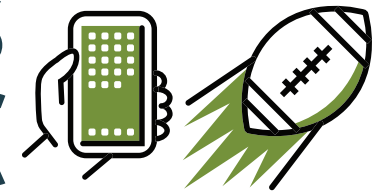
Gavigan recruited the iSchool's student association to repaint the card catalog, but it didn't stop there. She also worked with the college's development office, to use it as a fundraiser for the 50th anniversary. For \$50, alumni could get their name on a drawer, and for \$150 they could get the whole drawer. A directory lists each donor's name and their corresponding drawer.

As of September 2022, the iSchool has raised just over \$30,000 through this and other fundraisers. The funds will go toward student scholarships, facility improvements and travel grants for conference presentations.

"We have three national rankings in the iSchool, and we wouldn't be as successful as we are if it weren't for your alumni support," said Gavigan. "Just because you've come and gone doesn't mean you can't have an impact."

— Sabrina Hampton, senior, visual communications

New Minors for the CIC



The College of Information and Communications introduced three new minors in 2022 — sports media, social media and informatics — with the hopes of helping students cultivate new skills.

Any student can take the minors and increase their marketability. They are required to complete 12-18 credit hours, depending on the minor.

Due to the success of the sports media concentration in the J-school, the new **sports media** minor is expected to attract students interested in the intersection of two major industries.

The new minor in **social media and mass communications**, meanwhile, gives students the

opportunity to study social media strategies and the impact of social media on mass media and society.

Finally, the minor in **informatics** will help students explore the intersection of people and technology while learning essential hard and soft skills like data analysis and communication.

The CIC is optimistic the three new majors will increase the number of students currently enrolled while fostering partnerships between the J-school and the university's Sport and Entertainment Management program.

— Alondra Torres, senior, public relations



A FAMILY AFFAIR

Three Generations of Photographers

Like father, like daughter: Ella McNamee with dad, Win McNamee.

How does an impromptu photoshoot with friends turn into shadowing a photographer at the White House? Ask Ella McNamee.

Photography has always been present in McNamee's life. Her father, Win McNamee, is a USC alumnus and was a member of a team that won the 2022 Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News Photography. Her grandfather was also a respected photographer for *The Washington Post*.

Despite the family influence, McNamee claims that photography did not always come easy. When she joined her high school's newspaper freshman year, she was told she needed to refine her skills.

But as she rolled into her sophomore year, she gave photography another go. She picked up her father's old camera and began shooting photos of her friends. Much to her surprise, they fell in love with her work.

"My friends encouraged me to make an Instagram for my portfolio, and that's how it all started. I named it @ellamcnameepics and started charging people \$5

for a photoshoot," says McNamee.

By her junior year of high school, she found herself head photographer of the school newspaper. She was also booking photoshoots of prom, senior portraits and weddings.

"I started seeing people love the pictures they were getting, and being able to make people feel good about themselves really made me so passionate about what I did," she says.

Fast forward and McNamee is discovering what her passion looks like in college. She is now a freshman visual communications major at USC.

"I always wanted to come to USC because of how my dad had spoken about it," she says. "He gained a great training here, and it was always my dream school. When I got in it was a no brainer."

During her time in college, she hopes to gain more experience and exposure. She aspires to one day work in Washington, D.C. pursuing her love of photography.

— Jade Polson, senior, public relations

iSCHOOL OPENS EYES

Keeping her options open leads to new opportunities

Every team should have an information science specialist. Just ask Elle Boyle.

As a freshman, Boyle was a visual communications major, but she felt like she didn't quite fit in. After she discovered information science, however, she quickly became the student face of the program. She held five different internships during her time at the CIC, all relating to the information science field.

"I'm not really a great photographer, so I didn't want to stay there, but I didn't know what to move to," explains Boyle, who graduated in 2022. "I was talking to a media arts professor I had at the time, and he has a Ph.D. in information science. He told me to check out the iSchool. I stumbled right into the iSchool, and I'm so lucky I did."

The skills she picked up in class and through her internships have value across the board.

"Every discipline has information," says Elise Lewis,

an instructor in the iSchool. "You need somebody in the organization who manages and is responsible for the creation, the distribution and the archiving of it. That's what we do in our field."

Through Lewis, Boyle landed a summer internship doing digital experience work with Unum/Colonial Life Accident & Insurance and stayed on at the company in the fall. "I thought user experience was what I wanted to do, so it was awesome to get a taste of that and have a few mentors in the process," she says.

Prior to graduation, Boyle accepted a job at Ernst & Young doing technology consulting in Washington, D.C. She attributes her college success to her professors in the iSchool. "They're amazing," she says. "They're like a huge, committed bunch of people. I feel like everyone in the iSchool is there because they love the school. It's a really cool place to be."

— Julia Randolph, senior, visual communications

Elle Boyle (right) won the Samantha K. Hastings Award for Undergraduate Leadership presented by iSchool instructor Elise Lewis (left) in April 2022.

MAKEUP FOR Manhattan

SJMC grad takes on Manhattan at MAC Cosmetics

Story by Olivia Lein, senior, public relations

Adam Collins knows what he wants.

Although born in South Carolina, Collins planned for years to move to New York City after graduating from USC's School of Journalism and Mass Communications in 2016. "I remember thinking that I had to move to New York," he says. "I was ready to fight for my spot."

With little more than a suitcase and some big city grit, Collins flew to New York to meet with a professional recruiting agency. Because of his creative versatility and strong background in visual communications, he was able to land an entry-level design job at MAC Cosmetics before he even found an apartment.

That meant living out of an Airbnb for his first few

weeks as a New Yorker, but it was a small sacrifice for Collins, whose sights were set on bigger things. Many apartments and promotions later, he is the global senior digital designer at MAC. So far, he has led cosmetic collaborations with Disney, Keith Haring, BLACKPINK, Rosalia and countless other pop culture brands.

"My favorite project has been our recent Cruella collaboration. I am obsessed with how it turned out," says Collins. "The collection itself is captivating and, for me, it was a crazy experience to be on the phone with Disney's creative team."

Although the role comes with glamorous perks, Collins' favorite part is mentoring his own team of digital designers. He uses leadership tactics learned at

an internship with *Charleston Magazine* to optimize and problem solve. "Mentoring my team at MAC has made me feel as though I am doing something for a payoff that is bigger than any project, bigger than myself," he says.

The South Carolina native felt an initial shock when he traded southern hospitality for the fast-paced atmosphere of Manhattan, but after just a few months, he had gained respect in the industry. He credits his time at SJMC with giving him the confidence and hustle to make it in a highly competitive industry.

"You are a creator when you leave SJMC," says Collins. "You learn what resonates with audiences, how to tell a story that's engaging, creative and consumer-based, and that time builds confidence."



Visual communications alumnus Adam Collins makes it look good at MAC.

Carrying on a legacy

Story by Arianna Pierre, junior, public relations



For decades, the face of librarianship has been dominated by white females. The iSchool set out this year to help change that imbalance by actively recruiting a more diverse talent pool for its Ph.D. program. As a result, five of the eight recently admitted Ph.D. students in the iSchool are women of color, making the current cohort the most diverse in the college's 50-year history.

Nicole A. Cooke, the college's Augusta Baker Endowed Chair in Childhood Literacy, was instrumental in that effort.

"We don't always hear about the amazing Black and brown people who have come before us and done this work," says Cooke. "That's also something I'm working to change in my role as the Augusta Baker Endowed Chair."

A leader in her field, Cooke was recruited from University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, the top-ranked MLIS program in the country. Since coming to USC in 2019, she has helped put USC's library science program on the map for its diversity

of talent.

"I want these programs to be destination programs for folks of color who want to be in the field," says Cooke.

The recent influx of diversity in the Ph.D. program is also attributed to Cooke's persistent recruitment of Spectrum Scholars. The scholarship program is part of the American Library Association's national diversity and recruitment effort to combat the underrepresentation of minorities in the field. As part of the effort, the college vowed to match their scholarships if students choose to attend USC, giving each scholar a total of \$10,000 toward their tuition.

But this history-making cohort is not the finish line, says Cooke. Her next recruitment target is students from HBCUs.

"Previously in the profession, we had library and information science programs at historically black colleges and universities. For various reasons, they have all closed with the exception of North Carolina Central University," Cooke explains. "Being where we are in South Carolina, and surrounded by HBCUs, the manager of iSchool student recruitment and I specifically are working to recruit HBCU students and working with some other colleagues to put in for grants to continue recruiting HBCU students."

With revitalized social justice and advocacy coursework and a new certificate in equity, diversity and inclusion, the iSchool is making a big push for a more diverse future in library science.

"It's multifaceted," says Cooke. "We are working hard, that's for sure, but I'm also grateful to be able to stand on Mrs. Baker's shoulders to accomplish some of this work."

Augusta Baker Endowed Chair in Childhood Literacy Nicole Cooke (center) with Spectrum Scholars Randy Dantrell Heath (2021) and Cearra Harris (2022).

PREPARE FOR LIFTOFF

Meet Shawn Rourk, a star for Amazon and visual communications

Story by Sabrina Hampton, senior, visual communications

What started as a Pringles can is now on its way to space, and Shawn Rourk is preparing for liftoff.

Rourk, a 2006 visual communications graduate, is the creative director for content strategy at Amazon. He's worked with Amazon for a little over a decade now and has been a creative lead or designer on every product launch since the fourth generation Kindle.

Now he's working on their newest mission — embedding Alexa, Amazon's virtual assistant technology, into the center console on Orion, which was part of the Artemis 1 mission in November 2022.

But the Alexa you know today has come a long way from its origins. In fact, the creative prompt for the space mission project was about as earthly as it gets. "When I first started working on Alexa," he explains, "they put a plastic Pringles can on my desk and said, 'Talk to it.' I said, 'Excuse me?'" He laughs. "But now, when we connect to it in space, it's going to be the wildest thing I think I've ever seen in my life because it is like we're literally talking to a spaceship from Earth."

Of course, Rourk was a star even before Amazon. He was one of the J-school's first visual communications graduates.

He started as a print journalism major in 2002, but he was always more interested in the creative side of communications. Since the visual communications program didn't start until 2004, though, he initially took learning into his own hands. He enrolled in all the visual electives offered and spent his own time figuring out the software. Then, the moment visual communications became official, he jumped at the chance to change his major.

"I loved working with animation and video editing.

All that stuff was things I was personally getting into," he says. "So, when visual communications came online, I was like, 'How do we make this work?'"

It wasn't always easy. Rourk says visual communications started out tough because it was the "wild west."

He remembers one Saturday when a group of students were working on a video project, and Van Kornegay, now interim director of the School of Journalism and Mass Communications and one of the founding professors of the visual communications program, printed out the entire manual of Final Cut Pro and left them to figure it out.

"We just spent an entire Saturday learning Final Cut Pro," Rourk says.

"And it was cool because I'm always a more on-the-job kind of person anyway."

Kornegay remembers Rourk fondly. "He was a really helpful guy to other students," he says. "He was always willing to show someone how to do something in Photoshop or anything else they needed.

Visual communications was a cool environment. Students were always helping one another, and Shawn was

always at the center of that. He was the ringleader."

Rourk, who was recognized as the Outstanding Visual Communications Senior in 2006, has worked his way up to his current role, setting the tone for projects and doing discovery, research and audience segmentation. Then he formulates the creative strategy.

"At the end of the day, your job as creative director is to say, 'What's the story?'" he says. "Here's the story that we see out of this project, and here's how we are going to help you achieve your business goals."



Writer and editor John Roberts returns to coach rugby

Story by James Smithwick, senior, mass communications
Photos by Caroline Berry

What is passion? An artist working months on his masterpiece? A teacher sharing his knowledge? How about a coach coming back to the university that changed his life?

John Roberts is the new rugby coach for his alma mater, the University of South Carolina. Previously, the 1990 journalism grad worked as a writer and magazine editor at Furman University, where he also founded a rugby club, built it into a powerhouse and captured three national championships.

But the Spartanburg, South Carolina, native always wanted to return to Columbia. "I'm coming back to where my passion was ignited," he says.

For Roberts, who played high school football but lacked the size to play Division I college football, the need to compete has always been there. He discovered his outlet during a touch football game on the Horseshoe when a classmate invited him to join the rugby team.

"Playing rugby, I was able to just get to know a diverse group of guys that were from all over the place," he says.

The sport creates lifelong bonds and an instant group of friends. To this day, when he goes on vacation, he brings a rugby shirt, and someone almost always wants to talk with him about the sport.

Of course, USC means more to Roberts than just rugby. It's where he explored his other passions: writing and journalism. Roberts was editor of his high school newspaper and wrote for *The Daily Gamecock* in college. Over his long career, he has served as a reporter for *The Greenville News* and *The Augusta Chronicle*, written speeches for two university presidents, edited two magazines and worked in crisis communications.

He credits his undergraduate education with preparing him for success. "I had a really great experience when I came to J-school here," he says. "They really pushed me."

And now he wants to push others to perform at their peak as well — on the rugby pitch and off.

"My goal is to get us back up to where we're competitive nationally, but it's not all about winning games," he says. "I'm here to just make sure that we build the right culture, that our kids play for each other, that they realize that they represent more than just the guys that are on the field, that they represent our university, that they represent everyone that has ever worn the garnet and black before."

Roberts also wants the players to learn life lessons. "Team sports can help with resiliency, setting goals. It can help with giving our students a set of skills and a set of values that can help them succeed in the professional world," he says. "That means more to me than just about anything, getting these students connected with alumni and job opportunities."



PASSION on the pitch

PIVOT to politics

Story by Matthew Maixner, senior, public relations



Lauren Harper (right) with 2020 Presidential candidate Beto O'Rourke and campaign staffers Cynthia Cano and Chris Evans.

PR grad Lauren Harper drives political engagement, pitches big tent

Lauren Harper knows what she wants, but she also knows when to pivot. In high school, she planned to pursue a journalism career, but she switched to public relations her freshman year at USC, caught the public service bug then carved her own path.

Harper worked in various politically adjacent

roles with a public relations focus while pursuing her degree, which she earned in 2016. She spent time interning for current state Sen. Mia McLeod while McLeod was in the South Carolina House of Representatives; working for The Campbell Consulting Group, a public affairs firm; and interning in the Office of the Mayor under Steve Benjamin — all while participating in student government at USC.

"I found public service deeply fulfilling, and I was inspired by my bosses who held elected office. I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do with my life, but I figured, 'Hey, let's give this a shot,'" says Harper.

She found her experiences working in positions that serve the community rewarding.

"I knew deep down that as I started my career, I wanted to work for leaders and organizations that allowed me to do work that directly impacts people," she says

Harper was offered a job in former Columbia Mayor Steve Benjamin's office as policy and communications director and held the role for three years. She learned the ins and outs of how a mayor's office works and was able to practice many valuable skills that she uses today, such as engaging effectively with her community. She was also tasked with writing the mayor's annual State of the City address.

"I wrote probably hundreds of press releases working for Mayor Benjamin," says Harper. "They're certainly not rocket science, and you can figure it out with practice, but those technical writing skills are essential in the political world. When you go to write something, it shouldn't take you two hours; it should

Public relations alumna Lauren Harper is a rising star in the political world.

take you two minutes."

In 2018, while working for Mayor Benjamin, Harper also stretched her wings, founding CityBright, a political and communications consulting firm. It was originally a side job where she could hone her skills ghostwriting op-eds and speeches for clients. But in 2019, she was recruited by several presidential campaigns for the 2020 election cycle and chose to serve as state director for Beto O'Rourke's campaign.

The campaign was short, but Harper learned many valuable lessons and made the decision to work for herself after the campaign ended. In November of 2019 — right before the pandemic — she took a leap of faith, bet on herself and began working full time for CityBright.

Harper's career has accelerated at a stellar pace. She co-founded The Welcome Party, a 501(c)(4) nonprofit

that focuses on mobilizing independent and swing voters. She also co-founded the PAC affiliate of that organization, WelcomePAC, which works to grow a "big tent" Democratic Party by recruiting and supporting Democratic challengers in winnable but overlooked Republican-held districts and states.

Harper also worked for the Texas Democratic Party as coordinated campaign director for the 2022 election cycle.

"My passion is civic engagement. I get really excited when people learn more about how the government and political world work because people tend to engage with things more when they learn how they work," she says. "People don't necessarily watch football if they don't know the rules. You can't really get involved and watch the game if you have no idea what a first down is, right?"



JACK CLAYPOOLE GETS IT DONE

Story by Maribeth Cooper, senior, public relations | Photo by Ricardo Rodriguez

Jack Claypoole likes to finish things — and there's always something else that needs finishing. Right now, that means shepherding projects as executive director for strategic initiatives for his alma mater. Thanks to his decades of experience, and his passion for building things, he walked into the position well-prepared.

The 1987 SJMC graduate split classes between public relations and business administration and found himself with complementary skill sets that differentiated him from his competition in the marketplace. "I was able to sell myself, if you will, to potential employers, and I've been doing it ever since," says Claypoole.

He "sold his way" into banking, into consulting and into teaching at the university. Eventually, he also sold his way into public policy, where he spent 13 years focused on alcohol and drug abuse issues in South Carolina. The connections he made at USC have helped him at every step.

"The incredible part about my career is that every time I've been hired, I've been hired by a Gamecock," says Claypoole. This includes a stop at the White House, where he served as the administrator for Drug Free Communities in the Office of National Drug Control Policy under former President George W. Bush.

Once again, he was building — but this time, it was policies for an entire nation. He was organizing domestic and overseas initiatives, all while simultaneously earning a master's degree in leadership at Georgetown University.

After working alongside both Republican and Democratic governors in South Carolina on issues relating to drug-free communities, Claypoole was asked to help

STUDENTS OF THE WORLD

Story by Quinn Lilly, senior, public relations

In the background of Chilton Simmons' Zoom window hangs a replica of 19th century French advertising poster depicting a stylish black cat. It's a well-known image — there's a good chance you've seen it before — but it's also a reflection of Chilton and Rachael Simmons' deep love of international travel.

The couple, who began their careers at FedEx, where Rachael works as managing director of communications, has been enriched by their travels. Now, they hope to provide that same kind of experience to a brand-new generation of Gamecocks.

Created in June 2021, the Simmons Family Endowed Scholarship Fund for Education Abroad provides \$300,000 in funding for students to study abroad through the College of Arts and Sciences and the College of Information and Communications.

The couple's travel experiences have been different, but they share a similar enthusiasm. Chilton spent a portion of his undergraduate career abroad before transferring from Rhodes College to USC, where he finished a course-heavy senior year and graduated in 2005. Rachael, '06, didn't have the chance to take advantage of study abroad opportunities as an undergrad. Despite never making it abroad, her passion for language led her to double major in French and public relations, bridging the gap between the College of Arts and Sciences and the J-school.

The couple, who met at a softball game in Charleston, returned to USC to pursue their graduate

education. Chilton headed to the Moore School of Business while Rachael remained in the CIC to pursue her master's degree.

"We always had our eye on South Carolina," Rachael says. "Just because it's home."

Back in Columbia, and working towards an MBA, Chilton planned another semester abroad, heading to France through the Moore School — this time with Rachael.

"It was the moment I'd been waiting for," Rachael says, laughing. "Took me a while to get over there."

But adjusting to France was easy, especially for Rachael. While on a visit to Clermont-Ferrand, Chilton's native-speaking friends couldn't help but be impressed by Rachael's mastery of the language. She was even asked how long she had lived in France.

Her answer? About two days.

"Her accent was so good. South Carolina had prepared her so well," says Chilton. "It just speaks wonders to the quality of education you can get at the university."

Rachael's love of foreign language is something she uses to this day. After graduating from their respective programs in 2011, they headed for Memphis to pursue their careers at FedEx. (Chilton now works as the director of supply chain finance for Monogram Food Solutions.) Rachael's position has afforded her even more opportunities for travel, as well as opportunities to work with people



Rachael and Chilton Simmons want to share their love for travel.

Sandy, Connor (HRSM '18) and Jack Claypoole pose for a family portrait in the Rose Garden at the White House in 2007.

with the transition from President Bush to President Barack Obama. As associate deputy director and administrator of drug-free communities, he helped shape policy for the Obama administration for more than three years.

"It was neat because, by the time I had made the decision to leave, I had finished everything I had committed to do when I first got up there," he says.

But with his work in Washington, D.C. complete, Claypoole found himself yearning to sport his Gamecock cap once again.

"Public policy is never really going to be a good way to change people's behavior because you're trying to solve the problem after its begun," he says. "I figured the only place that I hadn't been that might have the right levers to teach people to think was higher education."

He reached out to three fellow Gamecocks.

"All three of them played a major role in helping me get back to the university, and all three of them were J-school graduates," says Claypoole.

Initially, he came back as executive director of the USC Alumni Association in 2012. His top priorities? Finding the association a permanent home and engaging better with alumni.

With his help, the university was able to retool its business model for alumni and design the association's permanent home in Columbia's thriving Vista arts and entertainment district.

"That, to me, was a lot of fun," says Claypoole. "But once it was all designed and built and the new strategic plan was done, now there I am again — 'this

isn't very fun.' That's when I went into administration."

As the university's executive director for strategic initiatives, Claypoole gets to help guide strategy for where the university is going. Over the last few years, he has helped implement USC's first strategic plan to deal simultaneously with administration and academics.

Claypoole also helped manage USC's COVID-19 response for over two years and worked closely with the university's government affairs team to get Campus Village, the largest student housing development project in university history, off the ground.

All of these projects speak to his skill set.

When opportunities around the university need troubleshooting, Claypoole knows how to bring together multidisciplinary teams capable of looking beyond the immediate.

"The upside of being an alumnus at the alumni association was that I formed a really great connectivity across the campus environment and good visibility of who to pull together in teams," he says. "Our strongest play at the university is the strength of our bench — it's our people."

As a professional "finisher," Claypoole also recognizes the strength of messaging success.

"How we communicate and how people understand the world around them through communication is different than it's ever been before," he says. "And I think we, as Gamecocks, have an amazing opportunity to do that."

from around the word.

"Being able to really appreciate people's diversity, really appreciate what people bring to the table, even if they're not a native English speaker — that's what I love to do at FedEx," she says.

She likes to tell the story of a 2015 FedEx trip to the Netherlands that stretched over the Fourth of July. Wanting to share a taste of home, she rallied her coworkers for an appropriately American breakfast at McDonalds, then took a trip into Amsterdam to an American-themed pub, complete with a miniature Statue of Liberty.

That sort of cultural exchange inspired Chilton and Rachael Simmons to create their scholarship, hoping to provide the same opportunities to broaden horizons for students, regardless of their financial status.

"Studying abroad really opens your eyes to being more accepting of other people, other cultures," Chilton says. "Nothing beats experience."





CITY OF LOVE

Story by Cara Bradford, senior, public relations

Jay Pou looks very different than he did a decade ago, working at the University of South Carolina's Thomas Cooper Library. Like any former coworker worth their salt, his wife Katherine Magner jumps at the chance to share an old pic of Pou with fashionably long hair and baggy clothes: "Do you want to see a picture of Jay in undergrad?"

Working in the library's circulation department, Pou and Magner both took advantage of the one class per semester USC offers to full-time faculty and staff.

"After I was in an academic library, that was it, that was what I was going to do," says Magner. When she graduated with her Master of Library and Information Science degree, Magner moved, first to Ohio, then Texas. They kept in touch over GChat while Pou put his master of education to work as an advisor and U101 instructor at USC.

Although Pou has nothing but good things to say about the iSchool, he represents the J-school, where he majored in journalism and obtained his bachelor of arts. "My name is Jay, so I guess I have to," he says.

Pou is effusive when he talks about the "new" J-school building. Magner insists Davis College, home of the School of Information Science, is much cooler.

When Magner moved back to Columbia to work at the South Carolina State Library, getting to hang out with Pou was a bonus. "To be clear, I did not come back for him," she insists. Both swear they were just friends at the time. Neither can identify a first date, but agree their 10-day trip to Europe is a solid contender.

Although their days at Thomas Cooper are behind them, nothing seemed out of the ordinary when Pou insisted he needed to stop by the library to pick up a book after hitting Soda City, the Columbia Museum of Art and Drake's Duck-In.

"I had been saying, like, 'Oh, let's have a Columbia day,'" Magner says. Nothing seemed out of the ordinary. "And then he just proposed, right in front of the library. So that was a really good Columbia day."

As members of the Columbia chapter of the USC Alumni Association, the couple demonstrate pride in not only USC but Columbia. Magner even bought Pou a hat emblazoned with the city flag.

"We live in Columbia on purpose," Pou says.



JAY AND KATHERINE MAGNER

Quick Study

Sports reporter turned foreign correspondent Isabelle Khurshudyan chases the toughest assignments

Story by Alondra Torres, senior, public relations

When a commercial plane was shot down over Ukraine in 2014, *The Washington Post* executive director Martin Baron gave Isabelle Khurshudyan a ring. The then-recent J-school grad was a rookie sports reporter for the *Post* at the time, but she was also fluent in Russian and could help translate crucial conversations for breaking stories.

This began her four-year quest to become a foreign correspondent.

"I don't know why I just hooked onto this idea that I'm going to be a foreign correspondent in the future, but I did," she says. "It was incredibly brazen."

But Khurshudyan, who graduated from the J-school in 2014, has always been a quick study. At USC, she joined *The Daily Gamecock* and was promoted to sports editor within two years. Meanwhile, she interned with *The Daily Press* in Newport, Virginia, during the summer, writing 68 stories covering various topics in just 10 weeks.

She even managed to crank out a 60-inch front page feature on a local Olympian for the paper's Sunday edition.

Back in Columbia, she covered Gamecock and high school athletics as a freelancer for *The State* before landing a second summer internship, this time at ESPN. Next came an internship with *The Washington Post*, which led to a full-time sports reporter position within six months.

"I really wanted a challenge," she says. "I knew that I could be really good at writing sports, no matter what sport."

But she could also be good at writing on other topics, which she proved in 2018 when she was offered a month-long position as a correspondent in Moscow. The gig stretched out, though, and by the end of the next year the permanent position was hers.

"I actually applied for a different bureau and didn't get it because I didn't have enough conflict zone experience," she recalls with a laugh.

Of course, the tension between Russia and Ukraine ultimately evolved into all-out war. In January 2022, she moved to Ukraine full time, leaving all her belongings and the life she had built since late 2019. She is unsure if she will ever be able to return to Moscow.

On the morning that Russian leader Vladimir Putin declared war, she was in Kharkiv, a Ukrainian city close to the border where Khurshudyan had her first experience with artillery shelling. By March, she was reporting from the Black Sea port of Odessa, which also happens to be her family's ancestral home.

When asked about what motivates her to write as much as she does, her reply is poignant.

"More so as journalists, I think we all feel this higher responsibility to really inform the world of what's going on," she says.



From the goal line to the front line, sports reporter turned international correspondent Isabelle Khurshudyan follows the story where it takes her.



Chris Horn doesn't want to make a big deal about retirement, but the University of South Carolina community will miss him. Horn, who retired in December 2022, has been a mainstay at his alma mater for 34 years — as a writer for numerous campus publications, editor of *Carolinian* magazine, host of the *Remembering the Days* podcast and director of publications in the university's Office of Marketing and Communications.

Horn began his career with the *Rock Hill Herald*. He then moved on to broadcast and worked with WIS-TV in Columbia. It was a good start to a career in media, but Horn realized he was more interested in writing than being a reporter.

Instead of doing a complete 180-degree turn, Horn found exactly what he was looking for at his alma mater. "It turns out, all I had to do was about a seven-degree shift, and I landed at this university," he says.

Horn began his tenure at USC in the early 1990s, when he was 28 years old, the youngest member of his department at the time. Even then, he knew he had found the right place to work.

"Man, I was like a rabbit landing in a briar patch," he says. "This was exactly the environment I could write in."

This was the beginning of Horn's switch from media relations to publications. What he didn't realize was that this was also the beginning of the rest of his career. Horn wrote piece after piece on any subject he could cover. From interviewing university President Michael Amiridis (back when Amiridis was still an engineering professor) to talking to students just starting their journeys at USC, he covered nearly every aspect of the university.

"I'm not making this up," Horn says. "I would wake up and I wouldn't care if it was Monday, Wednesday or Friday. I was so happy because I was doing what I really liked. I was writing."

Over his career, Horn covered six university presidents, famous actors, scientists, authors and historians. He has also produced more than 50 podcast episodes covering the history of the university and will continue to produce these episodes as a contract worker.

As an alumnus and father of three USC alumni, Horn enjoys ties to the university that extend beyond the day job. "When I started here my kids were two years old," he says. "Now, I walk across the campus and the students are several years younger than my youngest child." He laughs. "We get old."

But it was time well spent. He credits his experience to that decision to come back to the university as an employee 34 years ago.

"Because I bounced around so much early in my career, I said, 'Well I'll just stay here three years,'" says Horn. "Three years came and went, 10 years came and went, and I never entertained the idea of doing anything else or working anywhere else."

Many staff come and go at a large university, sometimes unnoticed. When Horn retired in December, people noticed. Many members of this university have been fortunate enough to work with, read and listen to him for over three decades. One of those staff members is USC photographer Kim Truett, who worked with Horn for over two decades.

"Through the 20-plus years we worked together, Chris has been an anchor," Truett says. "We underwent many changes in our office. New people, new management, changing divisions within the university. His ability to stay calm and see the bigger picture kept us calm during all those changes. He's wise beyond his years. It's not going to be the same without him."

SEVEN DEGREE SHIFT

Story by Spencer Jones, MMC student



Where there's a will, there's a way

Broadcast journalism major Jada Kirkland earns dream study abroad experience

Story by Jillian Brown, senior, public relations

In June 2022, second-year student Jada Kirkland stepped onto an airplane for the first time in her life. "Being that high up in the clouds was so beautiful," she says. "My eyes were so glued that I was breathing fog onto the window."

This 4,367-mile journey abroad meant that the Sumter, South Carolina, native's hard work was finally paying off. Years before she discovered her passion for broadcast journalism, Kirkland's favorite board game, "I Never Forget a Face," sparked her fascination with different countries and cultures. When word spread about the CIC's new low-cost study abroad trip to Barcelona, she seized the opportunity.

With no program fees and the help of a CIC scholarship, Kirkland convinced her parents that the Barcelona Experience was the perfect chance for her to travel overseas. But with the cost of next year's tuition in mind, she didn't want to burden her family's finances. "I decided to do my best to fundraise as much money as possible so that they wouldn't have to pay a lot for me to go," she says.

With the help of a friend, Kirkland recorded a short video to share on GoFundMe about the trip and why it was important to her. She also posted on Instagram and on her parents' Facebook accounts. Donations started flooding in. Because of her community's support, she spent a month exploring Catalonia and taking two classes: "Barcelona Multimedia: See It. Live It. Tell It." and "Intro to Information Literacies and Technology."

Kirkland connected with her coursework abroad. In class discussions about information science, she was captivated by all of the different ways that people take in information. The most important takeaway? The endless possibilities of life.

"I think sometimes we can forget there's a whole world out there to explore. We can become limited by our surroundings and what we see every day," she says. "So going to Barcelona, walking through the city, meeting all different types of people — all of it reminded me that there's so much out there in this world to see and I can't limit myself to one place. I have to explore as much as I can."

Jada Kirkland enjoyed the Barcelona Experience front to back.



RECENT J-SCHOOL GRADS FIND EARLY SUCCESS

Story by Grady Beauregard, senior, public relations



CONNOR HART

When Connor Hart and Nick Sullivan graduated in 2021, they didn't share the nervousness and anxiety that many graduates feel. Both held prominent positions with *The Daily Gamecock* as undergraduates — Sullivan as the outreach director and Hart as the managing editor — and felt more than prepared for life after college.

"Honestly, I don't think there's any better preparation than joining student media, specifically *The Daily Gamecock*. If it wasn't for *The Daily Gamecock*, I wouldn't have known anything about reporting," says Sullivan.

Well, that's not entirely accurate. Sullivan, who now serves as a general reporter for the Colorado Springs *Gazette*, also gives big props to the J-school, where he learned the essential skills of the professional journalist.

Most importantly, he says, he learned how to talk to people.

"For our first assignment in JOUR 471, Professor Michelle LaRoche made us go out on the street and talk to 40 people, just strangers on the street," says Sullivan. "I was incredibly uncomfortable, but it forced me to practice skills I still use to this day,"

Hart, who currently works for the *St. Louis Business Journal* covering restaurants, retail and supply chain, also credits LaRoche for her guidance while he was an undergraduate.

"Professor LaRoche has gotten me three jobs at this point, two internships and now my full-time job," he says. "I'm forever grateful and indebted to her. In fact, all of the professors I had went above and beyond."

Asked if they had any advice for current J-school students, both men emphasize the importance of reaching out to people in the field and then staying in touch.

"One thing that has benefited me so far in my career has been to just reach out to people," says Sullivan. "Don't be afraid to send an email, set up a call or meet in-person. Ask stupid questions, milk the student title while you still have it."



NICK SULLIVAN



NOW STREAMING

MLIS grad makes herself heard at Sling TV

Story by Carlie Smith, senior, public relations

Sara DeSantis jokes that she wasted three years of her undergrad because she was shy. “Going back, I would definitely raise my hand when I had a thought and ask more questions,” she says.

But DeSantis got over that shyness when she was completing her Master of Library and Information Science degree. She needed to be able to find answers, and that required asking lots of questions, so much so that it became second nature by the time she graduated in 2018.

That newfound confidence has been put to the test in her newest role as a content acquisitions specialist at Sling TV, where she fields pitches from potential TV programmers. But she didn’t go straight to streaming. Before joining Sling TV, DeSantis dipped her toes in many different sectors of librarianship.

After working at a public library, she moved to academic librarianship and a job at USC Upstate, where she discovered her knack for research. From there, she moved to pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly, where she worked in their corporate library doing acquisitions.

“This was a new side of librarianship that I had never done before, and I really liked that,” she says.

Then one day DeSantis saw a job opening for a content acquisition specialist at Sling TV and knew she wanted to give it a shot.

“I knew that I had a lot more potential outside of traditional librarian skills,” says DeSantis. “I really like working with people. I have a lot of ideas, so I just kind of knew that I wanted to leave kind of that role.”

While it may seem like a big jump, DeSantis explains that her background and education made the switch to media easy.

“I’m really organized, and I think that really helps with my job because I have to keep everything very organized and know exactly what I am doing, and I have to know how to find answers,” she says. “I think that’s what a librarian is really good at, just knowing where to find the answers.”

Going from librarianship to the media/tech sector did come with challenges, but she says the confidence she developed in graduate school has served her well. She offers other women entering male-dominated sectors some simple advice.

“Be confident. Even if you aren’t exactly sure what you’re doing, just fake it,” she says. “I’ve heard that my whole career, just fake it, everyone’s faking it, and eventually you will become successful that way.”

Of course, DeSantis isn’t actually faking anything. She is simply figuring out how to navigate the workspace.

“It definitely makes some of the guys feel really awkward when I’m raising my hand,” she says. “No one else raises their hand but me, you know? I think that kind of helps. I’m a little bit more aggressive than I probably would naturally be, just so I can make sure that my projects are being taken care of, my programmers are being taken care of and my ideas are being heard.”



@RICARDRODZ

@MICHAELABTAYLOR

@CJLAKE

BEHIND THE HANDLE

CIC GRADS GET SOCIAL, CLICK WITH USC

Story by Elyse Hartzog, senior, public relations

USC has always been a recognizable brand. Being a Gamecock is a pride point for many people, and the university's social media pages amplify that, coming in at No. 6 in overall social media engagement in rankings provided by *Rival IQ*.

But did you know that a large part of the university's social media success owes to a trio of CIC grads?

CJ Tamasco, Ricardo Rodriguez and Michaela Taylor aren't the only people driving online engagement on the Office of Communications and Marketing's social media team, but they each play a critical role — and all three cut their teeth in the CIC.

CJ Tamasco spearheads the university's social media efforts. After graduating in 2014 with a degree in public relations, she stepped out of the university setting for a few years to do public relations at Blue Cross Blue Shield. "I always tell people I did my time in corporate," she jokes.

But when Tamasco heard about the opportunity to become her alma mater's social media strategist, she left Blue Cross Blue Shield to return to the office where she had held an internship as an undergrad.

Tamasco's interest in social media started earlier — when she was searching for a gift for her little sister's birthday. "I came across a tweet from Tiffany and Co., unrelated to what I eventually got her," she says. "When I closed out of the purchasing window, I landed back on my Twitter feed and had a lightbulb moment. Someone got paid to make that interaction happen."

She explored the emerging field as an undergrad and sharpened her skills as a writer at the CIC. "Without a doubt," she says, "do not leave this college without tapping into all your resources to become a good writer."

Michaela Taylor graduated in 2019 with a degree in visual communications and immediately started working full-time for the CIC as the visual communications coordinator. It was a natural transition from her time as a student worker.

But Taylor wanted to broaden her horizons. After three years at the CIC, she found herself looking for career growth. She applied to be the social media strategist for the university and started that job in June 2022.

"I love the vis comm major because you get what I call 'the melting pot of the J-school,'" she says. "You get to choose your own adventure in terms of what you want to focus on. In my new job, I use so many of the skills I learned in the CIC — from taking social photos to coming up with post copy."

Ricardo Rodriguez took a less traditional approach. The native of Puerto Rico served in the army before going back to school for a degree in visual communications, which he completed in 2021. He worked for Sorinex Exercise Equipment while in school and after graduating before joining USC's Office of Communications and Marketing.

"What I like about this job is there are so many stories that need to be shared," he says. "You're constantly meeting new people and constantly telling new stories. As far as finding what you want to do, you've also got to sharpen those other skills. I think the J-school did very well at not pushing you out with the basics but expanding on those."

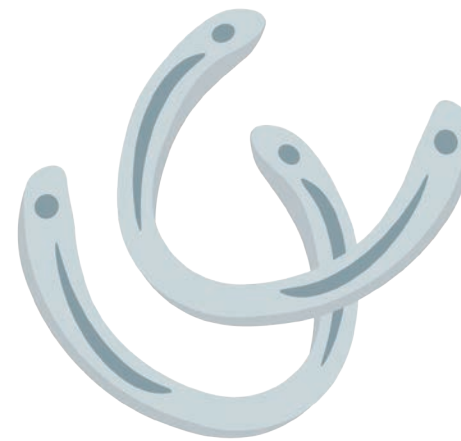


LIFE BY THE REINS

For alumna Kristen Terebesi, the story started with horses and took off from there

Story by Parker Nevels, senior, public relations

**ASSISTANT HEAD COACH
KRISTEN TEREBESI**



Kristen Terebesi. If you follow USC's equestrian team, you might recognize the name. Terebesi discovered her passion for horses early and has been turning heads as an equestrian competitor for as long as she can remember.

"I pretty much grew up on a horse," she says. "It's kind of one of those things that's in your blood."

And she only got better. A three-time MVP at the Varsity Equestrian National Championships, USC's Women's Female Athlete of the Year, Women's Equestrian player of the year and a two-time national champion, she took the reins and didn't let go.

"Sport inherently prepares you to achieve the next goal," Terebesi says.

But the former student athlete and current associate head coach also had something else in her saddlebag: a knack for storytelling.

After completing a degree in advertising in 2008, Terebesi stayed on for a fifth year and earned a second degree in visual

communications.

"I had found this avenue of creativity, design and photography," she says.

Terebesi wasn't done with competitive riding — she

“ I PRETTY MUCH GREW UP ON A HORSE; IT'S KIND OF ONE OF THOSE THINGS THAT'S IN YOUR BLOOD. ”

competed professionally for a few years — but eventually she hit burnout. That's when she joined The Book, a company that captures equestrian stories through photography and customized albums. She also pursued food photography with a boutique catering company

in Philadelphia called Food Underground and launched her own photography and graphic design firm, A Few Fishies.

Eventually, though, she was ready to get back in the saddle.

When USC Equestrian head coach Boo Major called and offered her the role of associate head coach, she didn't hesitate.

"I had all that time healing and exploring different avenues of who I am both professionally and personally, and one day I simply recognized I needed to get a job in the horse world again," she says.

While her two career paths may seem a little divergent, her experiences outside the arena inform her thinking as she coaches the next generation of riders.

"I see practice. I see our team. I see the years of capturing life through the lens and the catalogs and photographs in my mind," she says. "I am able to piece together the stories and direction of the team and its culture from a place that sees it from a deeper level."



CHANGE OF SMARTS: LEE GOBLE

Story by Mary Caitlyn Moore, senior, public relations

When Lee Goble started at the University of South Carolina, he was an English major with hopes of becoming a high school teacher. As happens with many students, his college experience changed his mind.

During his junior year, the historic floods of 2015 hit Columbia, and Goble realized the importance of effective communication.

He paid close attention to how government officials such as former Gov. Nikki Haley were communicating with South Carolina residents, as well as how the university was communicating with its students.

The next semester, Goble enrolled in an introductory journalism elective with Leigh Moscovitz. "I needed an elective because the one I scheduled was canceled, so I had happened to put Journalism 101 on my course schedule at the last

minute," he says.

One day in class, a guest speaker from the Master of Mass Communication program discussed career possibilities within the communications field. This was a turning point. Eager to get involved with communications marketing, Goble pursued an opportunity as a part-time marketing coordinator in a student leasing office his senior year.

"That was fun because I got to plan a lot of resident events and do some internal communications for current residents, but there was also a lot of external communication with prospective residents," he says.

During graduate school, Goble worked in admissions as the special events graduate assistant and in the Office of Communications and Public Affairs, where he helped promote the university's presence in the community.

"I really had the opportunity to put into practice what I was learning in an effort to market USC," he says.

By the time he graduated from the MMC program in 2019, Goble was prepared to begin his full-time position at the Central Carolina Community Foundation as a communications associate. He was promoted to a leadership role three years later.

In 2022, Goble served as the spokesperson for the foundations' biggest event, Midlands Gives, in which his team sent \$3.7 million to 53 different nonprofits. Following his success, he was named one of *Columbia Business Monthly's* "Best and Brightest 35 and Under" for 2022.

But Goble remains humble. "To me, the recognition is more of a team award," he says. "I didn't do that alone and I couldn't have done it without my team."

CIC MEET & GREET

COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR J. SCOTT PARKER

Story by Mary Caitlyn Moore, senior, public relations



J. Scott Parker is excited to be at CIC. The college's new communications director, who was previously communications manager at the Cranwell International Center at Virginia Tech, was looking for a larger college and wanted to be closer to family in South Carolina. USC seemed like a perfect fit.

In his new role, Parker writes news stories and produces social media content. He also brings a strong background in video production. He holds a bachelor's degree in film and media studies from the University of Florida and an MFA in film and video production from the University of North Carolina Greensboro. Earlier in his career, he worked as a documentary filmmaker.

While he doesn't make films anymore, Parker says that his experience has helped prepare him for his new role as a producer of photo/video content.

Story idea or questions about CIC communications? Share it with J. Scott at j.scottparker@sc.edu.

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT COORDINATOR DANIELLE McNAUGHTON

Story by Elizabeth Grich, senior, public relations

You may have seen the name Danielle McNaughton. A Charleston native and 2003 J-school graduate, McNaughton originally came to USC as a transfer student after attending a football game at Williams-Brice. She returned to her alma mater in 2022 after spending a few years as a recruiter and marketing and client services coordinator with a law firm.

As alumni engagement coordinator, McNaughton develops social media content, plans events for CIC alumni and works closely on other CIC projects with communications director J. Scott Parker. McNaughton is also in charge of promotional items such as T-shirts, CIC swag and gameday essentials.

In her spare time, McNaughton enjoys spending time on Lake Murray, catching live music and exploring Columbia, the city she's loved since 2003.

Alumni updates or questions about CIC events? Send it to Danielle at danimcnaughton@sc.edu.



CAREER SERVICES MANAGER KELLI CARROLL

Story by Madeline Alberse Jones, senior, visual communications



Maryland native Kelli Carroll moved around a bit before settling in Columbia as the CIC's new career services manager. Carroll, who holds a bachelor's degree in public relations from Claflin University and a master's in sports administration from the University of Miami, served as the career services manager at Ironhack US, a tech bootcamp school based in Spain, before coming to USC.

Carroll credits her mother for her interest in helping students build their careers and her enthusiasm for guiding students toward their goals.

"I've been around career development my entire life," she says. "My mother was also a career coach, so I feel very close to it. I just naturally fell into this line of work."

Want to hire an intern or get involved with the CIC Career Fair? Get in touch with Kelli at kc142@mailbox.sc.edu.



Ready, Set, Go

How two alumni succeeded in business and paved the way for others to do the same

Twenty-five years ago, broadcast journalism alumni Shawn Moffatt (left), '96, and Patrick Bryant (right), '97, launched Go To Team with the goal of providing video crews in local markets throughout the Southeast. Since then, the business has expanded, and the two have paid it forward through the Go To Team Endowed Scholarship for broadcast journalism majors in the School of Journalism and Mass Communications. We caught up with them to learn more about their time at South Carolina and how they're working to open doors for the next generation of J-school alumni.

What are some highlights of your time at USC?

Bryant: One of my favorite highlights from college was working on *Carolina News*. We started out as a club before it was a course, and we loved showing up four nights a week to produce our own news, sports and weather. We got an old set from WOLO and would walk the tape to the campus cable department. Then it became a course, and we founded the campus television station with six television shows including *Carolina News*.

Moffatt: The management track was shut down, which forced me into senior semester. It was the first of many doors closing and opening that led me down the path of journalism and content creation.

During your time at USC, was there a person who really influenced you?

Moffatt: On day one, Sonya Duhe said, "Don't go into this for the money." I say that every time I hire someone. I've done quite well in this industry, but it takes time.

Tell me about your journey from graduation to where you are now. What factors were the most influential?

Bryant: Shortly after graduating, I founded a business with the chief photographer of WIS-TV, Dwaine Scott. We had worked together for years while I was in college, and we set out to provide video services to the major television networks, including NBC News and ABC News. Obviously, my time at WIS-TV and USC put me in a place to meet my network contacts. That business is now 24 years old with 16 offices around the United States, and my business partner Shawn Moffatt and I are still working together after being classmates at USC.

What do you see in the future for Go To Team?

Moffatt: Content, content, content. We'll continue to grow and support our current companies and continue to build and/or buy others in media that will allow us to teach, mentor and grow people who have the same passion we do.

What advice would you give current students?

Bryant: Take advantage of every opportunity to work in your chosen field in addition to classes. There's no greater time than when you're in school to develop relationships and skills by helping an employer while learning.

What motivated you to give a gift to the CIC? Was the process easy?

Moffatt: Both Patrick and I didn't have a lot of money when we were in school. We needed scholarships, grants and loans.

What would you say to an alumnus who is considering a gift to CIC?

Bryant: Once we find success, one of the greatest privileges is to give that opportunity to future students.

NOW AND FOREVER: NEAL ROBINSON

What is a favorite story or memory from your time at USC?

My favorite memories as a student include representing SJMC as an orientation leader and being a university ambassador, co-founding the club tennis team, surviving Jim Haney's intense public relations writing course and seeing the Gamecocks upset Alabama in Williams-Brice Stadium my senior year.

What motivated you to establish a scholarship for the School of Journalism and Mass Communications?

SJMC has played a profound role in my career and life journey. I was fortunate to receive a scholarship which significantly decreased the financial burden of my education. Although I never had the opportunity to meet the donor behind the scholarship, I will never forget their generosity.

Why give a planned/deferred gift? Was the process easy and would you recommend it to other alumni?

When my spouse, Jeremy, and I created our estate plans, we included the people and organizations that have had the most significant impact on our lives; incorporating SJMC was an easy decision. Thanks to Elaine Arnold, Jessica Nickles and the incredible SJMC and advancement staff, documenting our plans and joining the corresponding giving society for planned giving donors, the Carolina Guardian Society, felt effortless.

You also made a cash pledge. What was your motivation for that?

Our planned gift through our estate will endow our SJMC scholarship so that it will support students in perpetuity. We also want to support SJMC students during our lifetime. Documenting a multi-year pledge enables SJMC to begin awarding our scholarship immediately. We look forward to connecting with our scholarship recipients, hearing about their experience at USC and learning about their goals and aspirations.



Neal Robinson (right) with spouse Jeremy (left).

What would you like the recipients of your scholarship to know about you?

My experience at USC inspired me to pursue a career in higher education administration. Following my time at Carolina, I received a master's and a doctoral degree in educational leadership and now work in external relations for a college. On a larger scale, I am committed to increasing opportunity and inclusion in my field and enjoy advancing this important work.

Why do you enjoy giving back?

Much like an investment, the impact of a scholarship compounds over time. Seeing recipients maximize their time at USC and then apply their education to transform organizations and communities is extremely rewarding. It's a privilege to play a small role in these scholarship recipients' journeys.

DONOR SPOTLIGHTS

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Even in retirement, Fred Monk continues creating opportunities for USC students and South Carolinians

When Fred Monk, '71, entered the University of South Carolina as a freshman journalism major, the first thing he did was join the staff of *The Gamecock*. The New York native was drawn to the university by the journalism program's reputation, and he wanted to make the most of his time here. By 1970, he was covering the Vietnam War protests from his dorm room on the Horseshoe.

Thanks to his experiences as a student and the lessons he learned from the J-school's faculty members, including interpretive reporting instructor Jack Bass, Monk soon found his niche as a business writer. In 1995, he and other colleagues created the Columbia World Affairs Council.

"USC laid a great foundation for my career," Monk says.

He has been involved with the Society for Advancing Business Editing and Writing since 1978 and is pleased with the school's long-standing relationship with the organization. Each year, funding through the Baldwin Initiative allows aspiring



From left, Dickson Monk, Dean Tom Reichert and Fred Monk.

business and financial journalists to attend SABEW's annual conference and learn the ins and outs of communicating fiscal matters. That relationship — and the work being done by Baldwin Chair Michelle LaRoche — is one of the reasons Monk supports the school as a donor and volunteer.

"I love to see people succeed, especially at USC," he says.



MEET THE CIC DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Braden Shain (right) is the lead senior director of development for the CIC. He oversees fundraising and development operations and works closely with the college's alumni and external relations and corporate engagement to advance the mission, research and ambitions of faculty and students.

Toni Mathis (left) is the assistant director of development. She supports the management and operations of development through lead annual gift fundraising for the CIC.

Support from our generous alumni and friends helps engage the best and brightest students in hands-on projects and empower our award-winning professors to shape the future of communication.

If you have any questions or are interested in engaging with the college as a donor, volunteer or ambassador, reach out to Braden (bshain@mailbox.sc.edu) or Toni (tkmathis@mailbox.sc.edu).

ALUMNI Notes

1990s

Amanda Sturgill, BA, '90, a professor of journalism at Elon University, published a new book, *We Are #AltGov: Inside the Social Media Resistance*, which tells the story of anonymous resistance Twitter accounts run by federal government employees during the Trump presidency.

2000s

Jared Kelowitz, BA, '02, started a new job as director of marketing and business development at The Capital Corporation, a middle-market investment bank that specializes in helping business owners sell their businesses.



Brooks Hearn, BA, '07, joined Chernoff Newman's Charleston office as senior public relations manager.

Chaunte' Turner, BA, '07, now serves as corporate communicators coordinator for Atlas Tech, a contractor for the U.S. Department of Defense and Department of Homeland Security.

Carolyn Callahan, BA, '08, leads communications and marketing for Jefferson County Public Schools in Louisville, Kentucky. JCPS is made up of more than 155 schools and more than 95,000 students.

Stephanie Warren, BA, '08, is a project manager in the Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, office of the Brandon Agency, a digital-centric, integrated advertising agency.

2010s

Haley Doty Vaden, MLIS, '12, is now the records manager at Charleston Water System in Charleston, South Carolina, where she also handles archival duties. An eight-year veteran in government records, Vaden was awarded a certified archivist designation in 2018.

Nancy Albers Shore, MLIS, '17, began a new position as STEM librarian at Columbus State University.

Jessica Land, MLIS, '18, is now a school librarian at Saluda River Academy for the Arts in West Columbia, South Carolina.

Madeleine Wagner, BA, '18, has accepted a new role as director for recruitment and strategic engagement in the Office of Admissions & Student Services at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Pharmacy.

Lee Goble, MMC, '19, has been promoted to lead the marketing and communications department at Central Carolina Community Foundation.

Mary Ramsey, BA, '19, began a new job as a service journalism reporter for *The Charlotte Observer*.

2020s

Martha Sweat, MLIS, '21, was named director of Tompkins Library and Welcome Center in Edgefield, South Carolina.

Samantha Douglas, BA, '22, accepted a job with Cox Communications in Atlanta.

Cara Bradford, BA, '22, is now working as an educator for the Charleston Museum in Charleston, South Carolina. She initially applied for the job as part of an assignment in Michelle LaRoche's business writing class.



Jesse Breazeale, BA, '22, was named digital media content coordinator at the University of South Carolina Alumni Association, where he creates the association's monthly newsletter, manages its website and social platforms and helps share engaging content with the university's 350,000 living alumni.

MEET THE STAFF

**SPRING
2022**



Bella Bohman



Cara Bradford

**FALL
2022**



Madeline Alberse Jones



Abigail Foncannon



Spencer Jones



Chloe Landreth



Courtnie Coffman



Olivia Lein



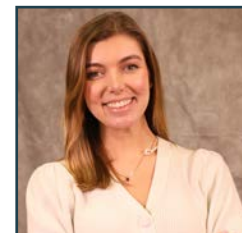
Quinn Lilly



Kate Marie Mattmiller



Elizabeth Grich



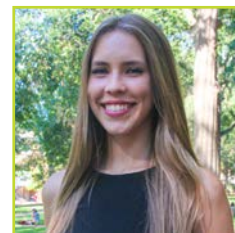
Adele McNair



Arianna Pierre



Julia Randolph



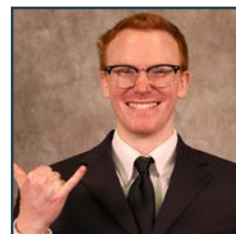
Megan Hoitsma



Audrey Russell



Leah Shaw



James Smithwick



Parker Nevels



Sydnie Tramontina



Carson Ann Turner



Jacqueline Van Slambrook



Carlie Smith



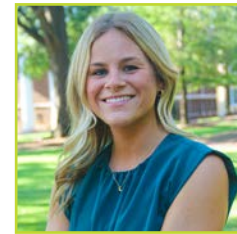
DJ Barber



Grady Beauregard



Jillian Brown



Maribeth Cooper



Catherine Dunn



Amaya Emmons



Sabrina Hampton



Elyse Hartzog



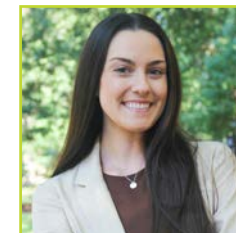
Riley Higgs



Nora Klas



Matthew Maixner



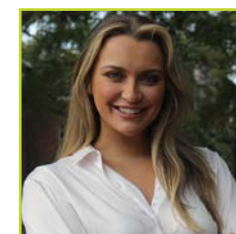
Mary Caitlyn Moore



Jade Polson



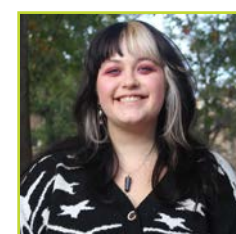
Laura Pryor



Allie Richardson



Alondra Torres



Olivia Williams



Shannon Young

Dr. Tom Reichert
Dean, College of Information
and Communications

Dr. Karen Gavigan
Interim Director, School of
Information Science

Van Kornegay
Interim Director, School of Journalism
and Mass Communications

Braden Shain
Lead Senior Director of Development

Toni K. Mathis
Assistant Director of Development

Patty Hall
Webmaster

J. Scott Parker
Communications Director

Danielle McNaughton
Alumni Engagement Coordinator

Elizabeth Grushkowsky
Visual Communications Coordinator

Craig Brandhorst
InterCom Editor

Michaela Taylor
InterCom Designer

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