

THE ALUMNI MAGAZINE OF CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT UNIVERSITY SPRING 2024

VOYAGES

A New Era

*Time Tested
Values:*

LEADERSHIP

SCHOLARSHIP

SERVICE

HONOR



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J. Courtney Michel

PHOTOGRAPHERS

Kyle Cummings '13

Erin Farina

Sydney Smith

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Brandon Berry '22

Ben Leistensnider '17

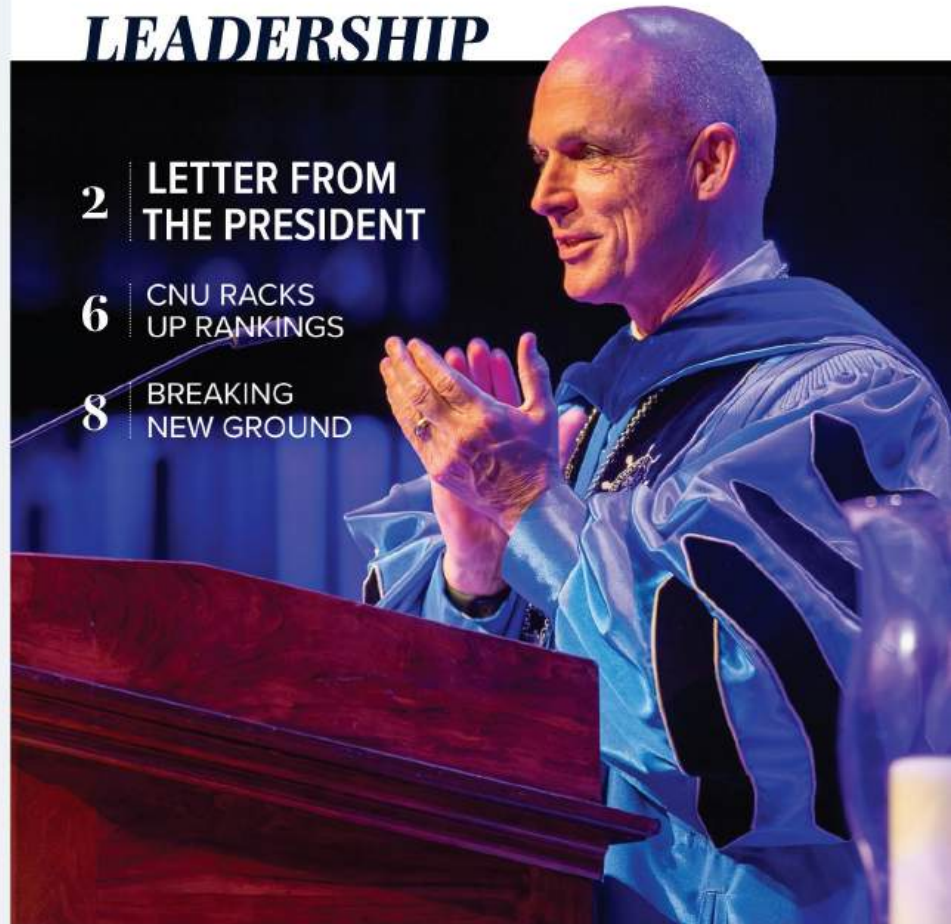
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Voyages is published by the Office of Communications and Public Relations for alumni and friends of Christopher Newport University.

CNU.EDU



Thanks to you

*and so many others, being at
Christopher Newport has been better
than we could have ever imagined and
has exceeded all of our expectations.*

Letter from
the President



Dear Captains,

What a year! It went by so fast. It seems like it was just yesterday that Angie and I received the wonderful news that we were selected to join the University as its sixth President and First Lady. What an honor and privilege it has been. It is said things never turn out as good as you hope or as bad as you fear, but that's definitely not the case here. Thanks to you and so many others, being at Christopher Newport has been better than we could have ever imagined and has exceeded all of our expectations.

Here are just a few of the memories that we'll treasure forever:

- Greeting students and their families as they arrived on campus. This was the moment that crystallized our awesome responsibility: families delivering their children into our care with the expectation that all of us—and it takes all of us—will prepare them to lead lives of meaning and consequence.
- Walking very early nearly every Wednesday morning with a dedicated and surprisingly large band of sisters and brothers, exchanging updates on our lives, circling the campus and finding companionship and good cheer that made hump day feel like the best day of the week.
- Sharing in the joys of people being their best selves. There are far too many celebrations and victories to mention, but the fireworks, conference championships and holiday parties come to mind. So does the opportunity to serve pancakes to Captains before finals, have a part in “9 to 5,” and escort our PLP, Wason Center and Community Captains to the Virginia State Capitol.

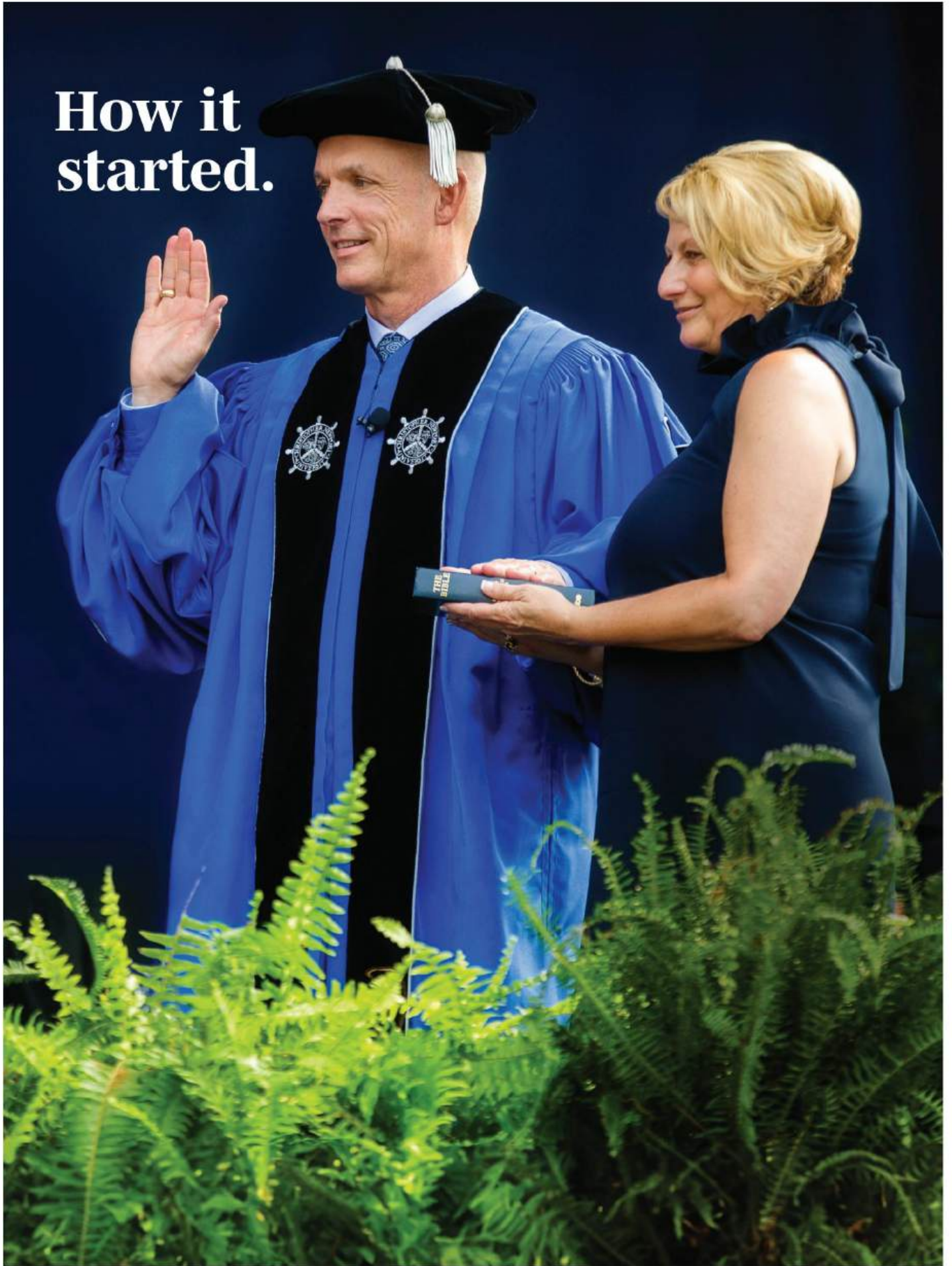
We will also remember the challenges you have helped us meet: the need to more deeply understand our institutional history, the risk posed by an intruder and a weapons discharge, and the navigation of budget and enrollment issues that many universities face.

In the pages that follow, you will find numerous examples of our shared values: leadership, scholarship, service and honor. You will learn about the accomplishments of our students, faculty, staff and alumni that exemplify the Christopher Newport difference. Your encouragement, financial support, great ideas and nonstop enthusiasm anchor Christopher Newport in excellence and inspire us to be **all in**.

As you read this, we are on the verge of celebrating our first commencement as your President and First Lady. To our Class of 2024 and to those that came before: Please come back to campus often. This is your home and you are always welcome here. We are grateful that we can be together with you on this journey and we're proud to share its stories in this edition of *Voyages*.

President
Christopher Newport University

**How it
started.**



How it's going.*



WEDNESDAY
WALKS
WITH THE PRESIDENT



149
CHALLENGE COINS
BESTOWED

HUNDREDS OF
SELFIES



EIGHTY-TWO OPEN OFFICE HOUR MEETINGS

FAVORITE PHRASE

AND AS ALWAYS,
GO CAPTAINS!

213 PANCAKES
SERVED



**CAMPUS EVENTS
ATTENDED**

COUNTLESS
ATHLETIC
GAMES
CHEERED



**and counting!*



CNU RACKS UP RANKINGS

3

CITING ITS OUTSTANDING business, psychology, engineering, teaching, and computer science programs, U.S. News has once again recognized Christopher Newport as one of the top three regional public universities in the South.

The most recent rankings list CNU as #3 among 58 public universities in the category of Top Public Schools among Regional Universities in the South and #7 in overall rank of 135 Regional Universities in the South. Christopher Newport's undergraduate teaching program was ranked #13 among Regional Universities in the South, a new category.

A+

The Master of Arts in Teaching program at CNU is one of only 48 teaching programs in the country to earn an A+ for the way it educates graduate students to effectively help elementary school-age children achieve success on the reading front.

7

In The Princeton Review's annual list of the nation's Best Value Colleges for 2023, Christopher Newport was selected as a top 10 public school (#7) for Internships. CNU also ranked #9 for Making an Impact.

CNU IN THE TOP 3 FOR STUDY ABROAD

Christopher Newport is ranked among the top universities nationally for study abroad participation, according to new rankings published by the U.S. State Department.

In a ranking of master's degree-granting institutions offering short programs, CNU was ranked third among public universities and sixth among all universities, public and private. CNU ranked 10th nationally in total study abroad participation.

The rankings are part of the Open Doors 2023 Report on International Educational Exchange, released in November by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs and the Institute of International Education (IIE).

Above: Overseas and beneath the seas, Captains explore the world.



LUTER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS EARNS HIGH PRAISE

The business education news outlet Poets & Quants for Undergrads gave high marks to the Joseph W. Luter, III School of Business based on its satisfied alumni and its professional development opportunities.

The Luter School is ranked #74 on the Top Business Schools list, the highest ranking among Virginia's regional public universities and above the rankings for much larger institutions, such as Rutgers University and the University of Kentucky.

The rankings, considered the most comprehensive assessment of undergraduate business schools, are based on employment and admissions data, as well as an extensive survey of alumni.

In the sub category of "Academic Experience," CNU ranked #24 nationally. Two of Luter's programs were highlighted as contributors to the ranking: the Signature Program and the Capstone Project. The Signature Program includes an array of coursework and workshops that help students develop personal and professional soft skills necessary for success and career advancement. The Capstone Project offers student teams the opportunity to simulate running real-world businesses.

"It's gratifying to be so highly ranked by Poets & Quants and it's a reflection of our total focus on student success," said Luter Dean Alan Witt '76. "Faculty and staff prepare students for immediate and lasting career success. We're proud of the quality of the students we admit, how we grow those students over their four years here, and then how the marketplace responds to them as graduates. The Luter School is unique and the ranking demonstrates that what we do is working."

The Luter School features a Liberal Learning Core Curriculum that requires 40 semester hours of coursework from every student, in addition to 30 credit hours of pre-business preparatory work before being admitted as a business major.



CNU NAMED ONE OF THE 2023 BEST COLLEGES IN AMERICA

Christopher Newport has been awarded a four-star rating by Money magazine in its Best Colleges in America 2023 survey.

Money evaluated more than 2,400 four-year public and private colleges in the U.S., then downselected the list to 700 institutions using a variety of data points for its Best Colleges list. Money selected Christopher Newport as one of the country's top performing schools based on an analysis of factors that included graduation rates, net price of a degree, debt incurred, ability to repay debt, student-to-faculty ratios, standardized test scores and alumni earnings.

The four-star rating from Money magazine continues Christopher Newport's trend of college rankings success.

The publication also selected Christopher Newport as one of the nation's top 10 for Career Preparation, and placed it in the top 8% of all colleges and universities when it comes to providing the highest quality education for students at the most affordable cost.



Left to right: Senior Project Manager for Whiting-Turner Jeff Howell; Vice President for Administration and Auxiliary Services (ret.) Christine Ledford '85; Dean Nicole Guajardo; President William G. Kelly; Board of Visitors Rector Lindsey Carney Smith, Esq. '01; and Provost Quentin Kidd

Breaking New Ground

Students will have access to state-of-the-art research facilities and technology in the Science and Engineering Research Center

The Marching Captains set the stage with a rousing drumroll, commencing the ceremonial countdown to construction of the Science and Engineering Research Center. Under a clear September sky, the first scoops of dirt were shoveled to make way for the new state-of-the-art research facility that will offer students the best preparation for their future careers.

"As Captains, we strive everyday to improve the quality of the lives of people around the world. The shovels and the hard hats are humble symbols of progress toward that goal," said President William G. Kelly. "Soon the labs, robotics, simulators, computing tools, and classrooms will be the newest and among the most technologically advanced anywhere."

"This is where CNU will attract the best and brightest students from our local high schools," said Board of Visitors Rector Lindsey Carney Smith, Esq. '01, gesturing to the Center's site, located directly behind Luter Hall. "Speaking

on behalf of the Board of Visitors, I want you to know how much we appreciate the hard work, the inspired thinking, and the passion to serve our Captains that has gone into making this day possible. I also want to underscore the Board's commitment to supporting and guiding this University. We believe in this place. We believe in our students."

President Kelly extended his gratitude to the many people who worked to make construction of the building a reality, including Gov. Glenn Youngkin, Virginia Secretary of Education Aimee Guidera, [now former] State Sen. Monty Mason, State Del. Shelly Simonds, [now former] State Del. Mike Mullin '04, and former Rector Bobby Hatten. He also paid tribute to former President Paul Tribble, whose vision set the project in motion several years ago.

Students will conduct research alongside faculty in expansive labs that offer unparalleled opportunities for career preparation, including in the growing field of kinesiology.

FEATURES OF THE CENTER INCLUDE:

A state-of-the-art 100-seat demonstration classroom for chemistry, physics and engineering experiments and research.

Specialized classroom space, an exercise science lab, and a biomechanics lab for kinesiology.

A two-story lab to develop and test unmanned aircraft systems and other robotics.

A makerspace, including 3D printing and space to foster a culture of entrepreneurship and connect with the professional community.



“The new Science and Engineering Research Center will expand our learning facilities and allow for more room to explore and research. I am beyond excited to hopefully spend my last year at CNU in this new building full of new opportunities!” said Mya Lee, '27 Kinesiology.

The new building will also include a makerspace for students and faculty to bring their innovative ideas to life.

“The makerspace in the new Center will be pivotal in strengthening existing engineering programs. I believe it will inspire students from different majors to come together, brainstorm ideas and work on projects where they turn theoretical knowledge from coursework into practical applications,” said Darryle Logan, '24 Computer Engineering.

Dr. Nicole Guajardo, Dean of the College of Natural and Behavioral Sciences, said the new space will provide critical teaching and research space for the departments of Physics, Computer Science and Engineering and Mathematics, as well as for Kinesiology and Neuroscience. Once it's complete, Guajardo said Christopher Newport students will have access to the most modern, innovative science facility in Virginia.

“The themes you will keep hearing about with this building are collaboration, innovation, interdisciplinarity, and partnerships with the community—themes that reflect the mission of Christopher Newport. The completion of the center will enable us to elevate scientific training and preparation at Christopher Newport, preparing our students for their future careers,” Guajardo said.

The new Science and Engineering Research Center was designed by Glavé & Holmes Architecture and will be constructed by Whiting-Turner Contracting Company. It is scheduled to be complete in the fall of 2025. 📍

RENDERINGS COURTESY OF GLAVÉ AND HOLMES ARCHITECTURE



A photograph of First Lady Angie Kelly, a woman with short blonde hair, wearing a white jacket with a black floral pattern and black pants. She is smiling and holding a champagne bottle, which she is about to break against a light-colored stone wall. A spray of champagne is visible as the bottle hits the wall. In the background, there are large white columns and a brick building, suggesting a university campus setting. The scene is outdoors with trees and foliage visible.

NEW BUILDING MAKES A SPLASH

First Lady Angie Kelly breaks a ceremonial bottle of champagne on the new Administration Building, now home to Advancement; Communications and Public Relations; University Events; Human Resources; Procurement; the University Architect; and the Education and Real Estate foundations.

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*This is a space
where students
can find refuge
and community.*

LOUISE BYRNE '23
STUDENT DIVERSITY
AND EQUALITY COUNCIL



Space for Diversity to Thrive

THE CLASS OF 2023 has left a meaningful legacy with the creation of a new space that celebrates and embraces the myriad of cultures that enrich Christopher Newport.

A new multicultural center is now welcoming the CNU community in the David Student Union. The Center is an inviting, comfortable space where Captains can come together to learn from one another, hang out and foster lasting friendships.

The official dedication of the room was a celebration of inclusivity. The Center was packed with students, staff and alumni, as President William G. Kelly, joined by Kayla Caine '23 and Louise Byrne '23, unveiled the Center's plaque. The plaque reads, "I will serve my community, seek equality and embrace all people." These words were added to the Alumni Oath after the George Floyd racial awakening.

"Our Alumni and our community have brought those words to life. This space will ensure our students of all backgrounds and beliefs can gather in a safe, inclusive, and respectful space," said President Kelly. "I ask that we all challenge ourselves, especially the students, staff and faculty here today, to ensure this space is one where free speech is prized and diversity is celebrated. And please ensure that this door stays open so that all folks will come in and engage, because that's the only way we're going to grow together."

Caine, '23 Senior Class Gift Campaign co-chair, said the class wanted to provide an impactful gift that would benefit students.

"We believe part of living a life of significance is through philanthropy. My co-chair, Andrew Pomeranz, and I knew this was something we wanted to do. At a time like this, when different cultures at war dominates the news, we need more respectful dialogue and the purposeful exchanging of ideas between different people."

"This space is meant to foster community and inclusion for every single Captain," said Byrne, '23 Student Diversity and Equality Council. "It is able to be reserved by multicultural-based organizations and we hope that they are able to find a place here where they can be authentic and cared for. This is a space where students can find refuge and community."

THE TORGGLER TURNS TWO

As the Mary M. Torggler Fine Arts Center turns two, George and Mary Torggler are like proud parents, basking in the glow of its achievements thus far and excited to watch it hit new milestones.

Mary and George Torggler are longtime supporters of arts and education programs at Christopher Newport. Through their generosity and vision, the Torgglers have aspired to create distinctive opportunities for artists in both the performing and visual arts to flourish.

The \$60-million building, funded by the state with additional support from private donors, is home to the Department of Fine Art and Art History and also to several galleries that showcase exhibitions featuring the works of local, national and international artists. It is a center bustling with programs for both CNU students and the broader community, offering year-round art classes for the public and a summer camp for children.

"The very existence of the Torggler represents CNU's commitment to a strong liberal arts education, of which the visual arts are a critical part," said Holly Koons, the center's founding executive director.

Since it opened, the Torggler has welcomed more than 35,000 visitors. It has presented seven exhibitions in the Anne Noland Edwards Gallery, five of which were original exhibits organized by the Torggler staff. In addition, 15 exhibits have been showcased in Torggler's three other galleries: the William Grace Community Gallery, the Microgallery and the Academic Gallery. The Academic Gallery is devoted to presentations of student, faculty and alumni work.



Marching Captain Keeps Step Despite Visual Impairment

BY KELLI CAPLAN



WHEN RAECHEL ERLER visited Christopher Newport as a high school senior, she was blown away by the high energy and dynamic presence of the Marching Captains. She immediately knew she wanted to be a part of it.

"I was able to see the Marching Captains in action on my visit," Erler said. "It was really cool to watch them practice. The band was huge and so good!" On that day and every day, Erler "sees" the Marching Captains unlike any other member of the band.

Erler has been legally blind since birth. Although she does have peripheral vision, she can't see anything in front of her—including sheet music. She has adapted by learning to play music by ear. Once she hears a piece, she says she can figure out fairly quickly how to play it. Moving in step with the band is another challenge for Erler. Occasionally other band members will assist her when she needs it, but mostly she relies on her peripheral vision.

"I want to do what other people do," said Erler, '26 Criminology. "I know there are things I can't do. But I always try to figure out a way to do something if I want to do it."

Erler brings plenty of marching band experience with her—she's been playing trumpet in various bands since fifth grade. Playing the instrument comes naturally to her, she says, because she hails from a family of musicians and shares her love of the trumpet with her father. Being able to play in a college marching band has been a dream of hers for years.

"I really enjoy playing," Erler said, "I've been a Marching Captain ever since I got here."

While the everyday tasks that other students encounter take a little more thought or effort for Erler, she has proven to herself that her resolve and capabilities are much greater than any of the challenges she faces. Being in the Marching Captains has been an anchor to Erler's CNU experience. It has allowed her to capitalize on her passion for music while also providing a foundation of fun and friends.

Erler knows her fellow Marching Captains are there if she needs them, both on and off the field.

"The rank leaders are always making sure she gets to where she needs to. Even with that though, Raechel is really good at fitting the form," said bandmate Christopher Lubinski, '24.

“

“Having done this through high school, she has the experience and level of commitment to where she is capable of doing a lot of these actions on her own.”

Erler was born with a genetic condition that caused her blindness. She can read Braille, but is also able to use an iPad for some of her classwork. She takes exams in the testing center, which allows her a bit more time. In addition to her work with the Marching Captains, Erler is an avid member of the Knights of the Force lightsaber club on campus, which provides her an opportunity to channel her appreciation for Star Wars.

Academically, Erler has discovered her calling at Christopher Newport. She is on the pre-law track, involved with the pre-law fraternity and is focused on going to law school. Once she graduates, she hopes to become an attorney who helps survivors of domestic violence.

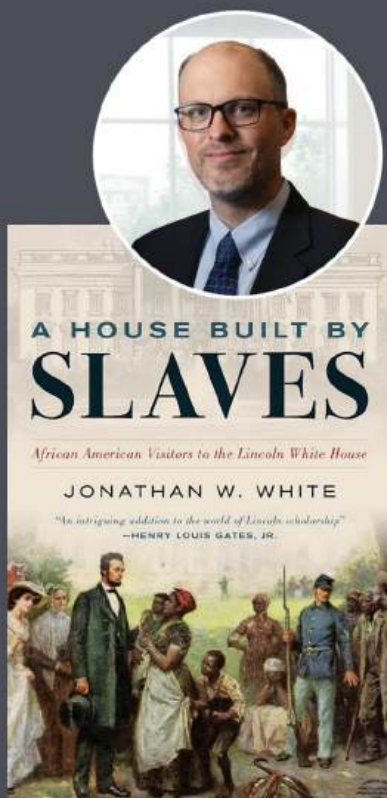
She plans on volunteering for non-profit advocacy groups as much as possible to get hands-on experience. The fact that Christopher Newport offers a 3+3 fast track program allowing pre-law students to get a law degree in six years instead of seven with the help of partner law schools has been a huge incentive for her.

Erler says her experience at Christopher Newport has been enriched by a close community, engaged professors, and small classes. Being an integral part of the Marching Captains has simply reinforced her love of the school. Each time she marches onto the field, playing the instrument she adores and surrounded by a supportive group of musicians, she feels connected and inspired.

“I picked well,” she said. “I would absolutely choose it again.”

I want to do what other people do. I know there are things I can't do. But I always try to figure out a way to do something if I want to do it.

RAEHEL ERLER '26



PROFESSOR WINS BOOK AWARD

Dr. Jonathan White's book, "A House Built By Slaves: African American Visitors to the Lincoln White House," has been named co-winner of the 2023 Gilder Lehrman Lincoln Prize, a prestigious award that recognizes extraordinary works focused on the life of Abraham Lincoln and the Civil War.

Selected as White's co-winner was Jon Meacham, a Pulitzer-prize winning author, historian and popular television commentator. Meacham was awarded for his book, "And There Was Light: Abraham Lincoln and the American Struggle." White and Meacham were chosen from a group of five finalists.

The two were presented with the award and a \$50,000 prize at the Harvard Club in New York City.

White, who focuses his teaching and research on Lincoln, began writing "A House Built by Slaves" in 2018. It was born from

a collection of 125 letters he amassed and published that were written to Lincoln by African Americans. What White realized from reading the letters was that many of the men and women who wrote them had also visited the White House while Lincoln was president.

Michael Dwight Sparks, '23 Economics and Mathematics, was one of the students who helped White conduct research for the book.

"A House Built by Slaves" is one of 13 books White has penned during his career. His most recent books include, "Shipwrecked: A True Civil War Story of Mutinies, Jailbreaks, Blockade-running, and the Slave Trade," which tells the story of a man named Appleton Oaksmith, who was convicted of outfitting ships for the slave trade during the Civil War, and "My Day with Abe Lincoln," his first children's book.

Helping Homeless Vets

*Jose Gonzales Jr. '18 returned to college
as an adult with a renewed mission*

BY KELLI CAPLAN

Jose Gonzalez Jr. never thought he would enroll in college as an adult. After all, he was a master sergeant in the Air Force who was married with children. With nine deployments under his belt, he was fully invested in his military career.

THEN LIFE THREW an obstacle in his way, and everything changed. Gonzalez came back from a tour in Iraq with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. He knew he had to get help to keep it from affecting his future and his family.

He went to see two social workers, but they were not good fits for his personality. When he sat down with a third social worker, he knew he was going to be OK, that she was the right person to help him conquer the paralyzing hold PTSD had on his life. That social worker not only successfully worked with Gonzalez to help him combat PTSD, she also changed the trajectory of his life.

"We just clicked," he said. "I had an Aha moment. It was such a sense of relief that I was not crazy. I was so thankful to have the chance to work through this."

"I owe a lot to her," he said.

Once the social worker successfully guided him toward recovery, he felt strongly that he needed to do the same for other members of the military who were struggling with PTSD, often in silence.

After 24 years in uniform, Gonzalez retired in May 2013. He was ready to embark on a new mission. His goal: to become a social worker as impactful as the one who had set his life back on course.

"I really wanted to pay it forward," he said. "I wanted to help those in the same boat I was in. I knew others were dealing with it. I wanted to help out fellow vets. It gave me purpose and direction."

Gonzalez's educational journey began in August 2013 as a student at Thomas Nelson Community College (Now Virginia Peninsula Community College). After two years, he transferred to Christopher Newport as a social work major. Although he was 45 and older than most traditional students and even some of his professors, Gonzalez was thrilled to be on campus and studying what he was passionate about. Despite his age, he felt right at home.

"I loved it," he said. "It's a good culture they are trying to impart here. The mindset at Christopher Newport is great. Everyone is just very respectful and very cool. There is a lot of customer service."

He considered being a student his job.

"This is how I am going to support my family moving forward," said Gonzalez, who had earned an associate's degree in vehicle management early in his career. "I took it very seriously. It was a total life change."

Walking onto campus everyday brought Gonzalez joy, purpose, and optimism that he was moving in the right direction. His professors, he said, were insightful, interesting, and always willing to help and guide him. He was also able to connect with other social work students.

"It was the right choice," said Gonzalez, who passed his love for CNU on to his daughter, Isabella, who is a freshman on campus. "I really liked being here. It's always great to come back."

As thankful as Gonzalez was for Christopher Newport, faculty was equally thankful for him and the zeal for learning

“

I just want to try and help them. I focus on what they need to move forward.

JOSE GONZALEZ JR. '18

he brought to the classroom. He offered a dynamic viewpoint and energy.

“Having Jose as a student gave me a new perspective on the capacity of individuals at any age to achieve and succeed; his past experience and enthusiasm for learning added such depth to class discussions and projects—I am not surprised in the least that he has gone on to make such a difference in the lives of veterans,” said Dr. Diane Griffiths, director of the Social Work Program.

After graduating in 2018 with his bachelor's in social work, Gonzalez continued on to Norfolk State, where he earned his Master of Social Work. He was then offered a job at the Hampton Veterans Affairs Medical Center. He now works as a social worker at the VA's domiciliary helping homeless vets, which is exactly the type of job he envisioned when he set out on his social work mission. He has embraced the position, as it allows him to accomplish what he had hoped to do: make lives better for vets who are struggling. Each day is different, and each vet brings his or her own set of circumstances and life experiences. Gonzalez works with them on housing, employment, addiction, and mental health, among other issues.

“I tell them ‘I'm a vet. We're all vets.’ Everyone is going through something,” he said. “I just want to try and help them. I focus on what they need to move forward. I have a military influence when I talk to veterans. I can connect with them. I try to take a different approach. I want them to let me help them.

“I like to think I have made a difference,” he said. 🐾





Left to right: Mary Semerling, Ben Jones, Calvin Smith and Katie Bowersox

Captains Bring Home the Gold...Again

Students win global leadership competition

A TEAM OF Christopher Newport students won first place at the International Leadership Association Case Study Competition in Vancouver, Canada, defeating teams from across the country and adding to the University's streak of leadership victories.

It is the fourth time since 2018 that a Christopher Newport team has placed first in the annual competition and the ninth consecutive time Captains have been in the final three since the competition began in 2008.

"No other university has as many wins as CNU," said Lacey Grey Hunter '08, director of the President's Leadership Program (PLP).

Dubbed the "Silver Team," the four-member crew was led by Katie Bowersox, '24 Neuroscience, and included Ben Jones, '26 Political Science and International Affairs; Mary Semerling, '25 Criminology; and Calvin Smith, '24 Political Science and American Studies. All of the students are members of PLP, a program that combines academic study, experiential learning and personal development to help prepare them for a life of leadership, service and civic responsibility.

For the competition, each team identified a contemporary socio-political-economic problem on the global or national level and proposed a leadership-based solution. The Silver

Team's focus was on ways to reduce neonatal and maternal deaths in Mali.

Bringing home the victory was thrilling for team members, who had worked for months preparing for the competition. "Winning felt very validating," Jones said. "It was satisfying to know that the hours we put into the case study were valued and appreciated by experts in the field which we were studying and applying to a real-world issue."

Bowersox said winning was "a big relief."

"A lot of time and energy went into this, and knowing that after my team and I poured so many hours into this competition, having it all pay off was a very gratifying experience," she said.

The team's triumph is the latest in CNU's stretch of top finishes at the competition.

"I believe we are in a rare era where Christopher Newport is now solidly making its presence and excellence in leadership education and practice known among the elite leadership schools, such as Gonzaga, Washburn, Kansas State, and Claremont McKenna, to name a few," Hunter said. "At CNU, we develop leaders with the capacity and demonstrated skills to actually do leadership. This success demonstrates that CNU has clearly made our presence known as a top tier leadership school."

The first round of the competition came in the form of a two-page executive summary that focused on how the team planned to apply leadership theory to the issue to reduce its negative impact. The second round was a five-minute virtual poster presentation that showcased the executive summary.

After the first two rounds, which did not require travel, team members learned they had advanced to the final round, which meant they were going to Canada for the global conference. There, they expanded on their case study by incorporating what they learned at the conference into their work and then creating a 15-minute presentation.

The students used both a global and local (also known as “glocal”) hybrid leadership framework to incorporate systems thinking, African Ubuntu leadership, and Islamic leadership as they worked to solve the problem of neonatal and maternal deaths in Mali, Hunter said.

“No other university has as many wins as CNU.”

LACEY GREY HUNTER '08, DIRECTOR OF PLP

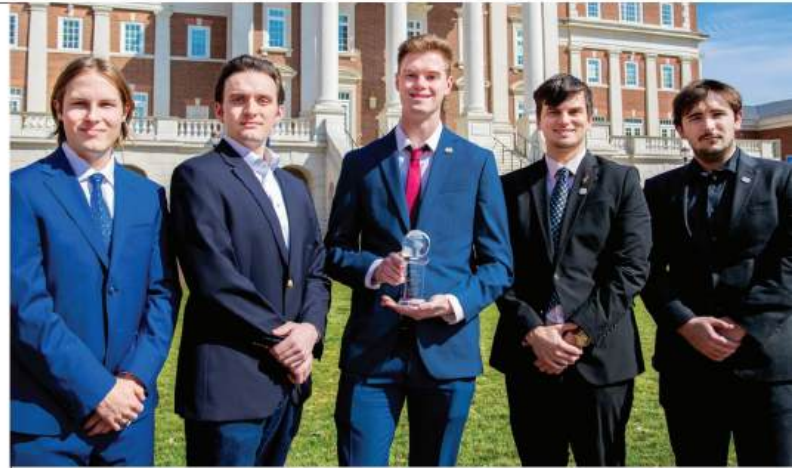
Working as a team taught the students lessons they said they will carry with them when they enter their career fields.

“I will certainly take this experience with me for the rest of my time at CNU and apply it to additional leadership competitions and leadership courses,” Bowersox said. “After CNU, I will utilize this experience in the workplace as an example of how to use time effectively and efficiently, and how to perform in stressful situations.”

The team is selected by Leadership faculty and PLP staff, said Dr. Brent Cushner, Associate Professor and Chair of the Leadership and American Studies Department.

“What is amazing about our students is that once the teams have been established, they develop their research projects independently, without a major amount of coaching—a major testament to the high quality of students we have at CNU and the strength of the Leadership curriculum,” Cushner said.

“The Leadership faculty are tremendously proud of the CNU Silver Team for taking home first place in the ILA case study event. The competition was once again stiff,” he said. “But the fact that CNU has won first place honors in this competition four times over the past six years (and placed teams in the final round in the other two years) demonstrates how skilled our students are at applying what they learn in the class. Next year’s ILA conference is in Chicago, and we hope to continue the victory streaks with another fantastic group of students.” 🍀



CEE FUND TURNS 500K INTO MORE THAN A MILLION FOR THE WIN

Christopher Newport’s student investment team came in first in the country and second in the world during a recent global trading challenge, beating out Ivy League schools and top business programs.

The Captains’ Educational Enrichment (CEE) Fund team turned the \$500,000 it was given to invest into a simulated portfolio worth \$1,189,481.55. This produced a whopping return of almost 140 percent and earned the team a podium finish at the CME Group University Futures Trading Challenge. Five Luter School of Business students comprised the CEE Fund team at the competition, which included more than 400 teams from 250 universities around the world. The CEE Fund team came in ahead of Yale, MIT, and the Wharton School of Business, among others.

Dr. William Donaldson, CEE Fund’s faculty advisor, said the victory “says that we can stand toe-to-toe with the very best universities in the U.S. and the world.”

The CEE Fund, which is fully student managed, started in 2011 as a way for business students to sharpen their investment skills. While the competition used a simulated portfolio, the CEE Fund gives students experience with actual investment funds. Currently, the CEE Fund manages a total of \$380,000, which includes \$250,000 of endowment funds and \$130,000 in its fundraised portfolio. The CEE Fund has about 50 members, all of whom had to apply and interview to be “hired.” Every year, a portion of the organization’s returns fund scholarships for fellow CNU students.

Left to right: James Whipp, Spencer Parks, Trevor Plesko, Daniel Smith and Michael King



Making Her Voice Heard

BY KELLI CAPLAN

Prominent political strategist and commentator Alencia Johnson discovered the best version of herself the day she became a Captain: Confident. Energized. *And ready to take on the world.*

SHE RECENTLY RETURNED to campus to speak to students in the President's Leadership Program (PLP) about working through resistance and to preach the power of being a Captain for Life.

"I really honed in and developed my leadership skills here," said Johnson, smiling as she talked about her alma mater. "It's such a unique university, in that it teaches all of us to be leaders."

Choosing to attend Christopher Newport, Johnson said, turned out to be one of the best decisions of her life and it is still paying dividends as she continues her ascent to the top. Johnson is a frequent guest on national news programs and owner of a social impact consultancy.

A cheerleader, PLP participant, tour guide and member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., Johnson got involved from her first day as a freshman. She took advantage of all social, academic and extracurricular opportunities CNU presented. She studied abroad in China and did internships at news stations in Norfolk and Washington, D.C. She even organized a mission trip to Honduras.

"There were limitless opportunities for me to get involved. Being at CNU, the world was my oyster," said Johnson, who continues to be a cheerleader for Christopher Newport as she chalks up professional successes and attributes them in large part to her education. "I like to tell folks, I was always making good trouble on campus. The late John Lewis always said, 'It's OK to make trouble, as long as it's good trouble.'"

And good trouble she did make.

"I was in so many different organizations and I had so much support when I was here from (former) President Paul Tribble, the faculty and staff, and my classmates—even if we disagreed on some things, which we did quite often," she said. "CNU really instilled so many values of being a holistic person and making contributions to the world. I don't think I would have been able to hone in on those skills had I gone to another university."

After graduation, Johnson '09 Communication Studies, worked for the campaigns of Presidents Barack Obama and Joe Biden and presidential candidate Sen. Elizabeth Warren (D-Mass.). She is now owner and chief impact officer of 1063 West Broad, which strives to connect brands and people with mission-driven marketing concepts. Some of her clients have included America Ferrera and Wilmer Valderrama's nonprofit Harness; Apple; and BET Networks. She also serves on Warner Music Group's Social Justice Fund Board, which is distributing \$100 million to racial justice organizations in the wake of the George Floyd uprising.

Johnson is currently writing her first book, teaching people how to be everyday disruptors for good. It will be released in spring 2025.

Johnson has emerged as a power player focused on moving society's needle in a direction where words and actions spur a kinder and more equitable world. She can often be seen on CNN and MSNBC, sharing her thoughts on breaking news, politics and society. Her insight runs the gamut. She's been on the airwaves talking about everything from Rudy Giuliani going on reality TV, to pop culture's role in politics, to the Supreme Court, to Black women winning elections.

Johnson has been named to EBONY magazine's "Power 100" list of influential African Americans and PRWeek's "40 Under 40" list. Former Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam appointed her to the Virginia Council on Women in 2020. Much of her success, she said, is rooted in the skills she developed at Christopher Newport.

"A lot of what I learned on campus was the importance of being able to work with people of differing opinions and how to agree to disagree when you're really passionate about something," Johnson said. "But you have to move those beliefs into action. And being here at CNU, I learned that in so many different ways."

"I also learned to juggle so many different responsibilities," she said.



“

None of that would have happened if I had been married to ‘the roadmap’ so many of us believe we have to follow in order to achieve our dreams.

ALENCIA JOHNSON '09

I came in as a business major, which is so laughable because that is not who I am. And obviously, with the communication studies degree, I found my own path and found a way to use communication skills.

Johnson has embraced the life lessons imparted by her parents, grandmother, and Tribble. From Stafford, Va., Johnson is the daughter of a preacher and the granddaughter of a woman who took activism to heart.

Her grandmother influenced her so heavily that she adopted her address, 1063 West Broad, as her firm's name.

From an early age, Johnson was taught to stand up for what she believes. When she got to CNU, she and Tribble “had an open door relationship,” and he emphasized to her the importance of leadership and fostered in her the spark to lead and to develop into the highly-sought after professional she is today.

“I am so grateful for that,” she said. “These experiences really shaped who I am.”

Johnson calls herself “a connector and disruptor for good.”

She also is a storyteller, influencer and expert in culture, able to easily and affirmatively express her views and opinions in a relatable way.

At one point, Johnson thought she wanted to be a news anchor. But then, during her senior year, Obama became president, and that ignited in her something she never expected.

“I was so inspired by it that I scrapped my resume and moved to D.C.,” she said.

She started in corporate communications at GEICO, then got her chance to dive head first into the world of politics, working on President Obama's re-election campaign. She moved into advocacy at Planned Parenthood—where she spent six years at its national office

advocating for reproductive freedom and engaging with the entertainment industry and the political campaigns the organization endorsed, including the presidential campaign of Secretary Hillary Clinton.

“None of that would have happened if I had been married to ‘the roadmap’ so many of us believe we have to follow in order to achieve our dreams,” she said.

Using herself as an example, her message to Christopher Newport students was simple yet impactful: “Literally try everything and also not be so married to what it is you think you're going to do.”

“It's important for us to try anything and everything,” she said. “CNU gave me the confidence to do that. It gave me the room and space to try something new.”

Johnson's effort to pay forward the support, confidence and knowledge Christopher Newport provided her so many years ago resonated with current students, who found her message of resilience and her contagious love of CNU enlightening and encouraging.

“Alencia Johnson is a distinguished leader in her respective field, and she left a lasting impact on campus during her time as a Captain,” said PLP student Luke Dietrich, '24 Finance. “When she spoke to us, she displayed confidence, encouragement, and enthusiasm that was well-reciprocated throughout the evening. She provided inspiration, showing all Captains that the effort given and skills acquired during our time here at Christopher Newport will translate well into our future endeavors.”

Finding Friends and Answers in a New World

Group focuses on students who are first in family to attend college

BY KELLI CAPLAN



ABI SLONIKER remembers well the competing feelings of exhilaration and confusion when she stepped onto campus her freshman year.

As a first-generation student, the experience was at times overwhelming. Her family was supportive, but as the first to go to college, Sloniker was navigating uncharted territory.

With the guidance of faculty, she eventually found her way and solid footing, but it took time, patience, and a lot of searching for the right resources.

Now more comfortable with all things college, she has immersed herself in a project that she hopes will keep other students from feeling the way she did when she arrived at Christopher Newport.

Sloniker has launched First-generation Captains, a club focused on fostering community, acceptance and knowledge. She has involved faculty members and University offices to provide ideas to bolster the club's reach and effectiveness.

"I want to pull together as many different resources as I can to support first-generation students," said Sloniker, '26 Sociology.

The response so far has been extremely positive, with both faculty and students energized about getting the club off the ground. Already, the club has attracted members. Approximately 20 percent of students at Christopher Newport are first generation.

Sloniker lived the first-generation experience, but she began to realize she was not alone when she was offered a chance to do research on the topic as a Summer Scholar. She conducted the research under the direction of Dr. Linda Waldron, Associate Professor of Sociology and Director of the Center for Education Research and Policy (CERP). Her assignment was analyzing data provided by first-generation students at Christopher Newport. The research looked for similarities in first-generation stories and ways the University could apply the findings to make positive changes.

Waldron, who also was a first-generation student when she began college, believes the club has the potential to have a huge impact on student success.

Together, using research and their common bond of being first-generation students as their foundation, Waldron and Sloniker are working toward establishing more visibility for first-generation students. Sloniker envisions the club becoming part of the fabric of campus life.

"I want it to have a stable foundation so that it stays here long after I leave," Sloniker said. "For that to happen, there's going to be a lot of work that needs to go into it. But it's worth it because it's for the betterment of the community on campus. I want to create something that is going to outlast me." 🍷



“After that, I can’t see things the same.”

*Africa internship
changes student’s
med school focus*

BY KELLI CAPLAN

CHRISTINA RICHARDSON has known for years that she wants to be a doctor.

She has been focused on becoming a neurologist since seventh grade. The day she arrived on campus, she started her journey toward accomplishing that mission.

But last summer, an internship opportunity changed her worldview and altered her plans.

Richardson spent the month of July in Mombasa working as an intern at the second largest public hospital in Kenya with the organization International Medical Aid.

She was one of about 60 students selected from around the world to intern at the hospital.

“I loved it. Everything I learned spoke to me,” said Richardson, ’25 Neuroscience and Leadership.

In Mombasa, she found her true

calling. She has shifted her life goal from being a neurologist to becoming an obstetrician/gynecologist.

“It made me want to change my career path,” she said. “It moved me.”

Richardson’s breakthrough moment came while working in the hospital’s delivery room. She was stunned to learn women were given no pain medications and were not allowed to have visitors in the room. The hospital had only the bare necessities. She watched mothers experience jubilation when their babies were born healthy—and grief when their babies didn’t make it.

“After that, I can’t see things the same,” said Richardson, a Bonner Service Scholar. “It was mind blowing. I saw a lot I can’t forget.”

Richardson worked in many areas of the hospital, shadowing doctors and learning from them as they cared for ailing patients.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHRISTINA RICHARDSON

"It has definitely been an eye opener," she said. "I kept thinking, 'this is real life.'"

Richardson was not supposed to have been in Mombasa. Originally, she had planned to study abroad in Japan. But, when that program was canceled, she changed course. With the help of the Study Abroad Office, Richardson learned about the Mombasa opportunity.

As a pre-med student, Richardson was entranced by the possibility of working in an African hospital in what would be her first time leaving the United States.

She did rotations in the surgical, intensive care, and maternity units. She worked with a number of doctors and saw a plethora of procedures, including C-sections and a craniotomy. She loved watching the doctors at work, especially the OB/GYNs, and could picture herself doing what they were doing.

In addition to her work at the hospital, Richardson also traveled to a nearby high school to help teach the students about feminine hygiene. She enjoyed the educational aspect and the chance to enlighten young women.

"They asked a lot of questions they didn't know the answers to," she said. "They asked so many great questions. It made me realize I want to go into the field."

"I feel like I have made a great decision by switching my career path," she said.

Internships and Study Abroad are two of the four pillars of a Christopher Newport education. Those opportunities were huge positives that helped draw Richardson to CNU, along with being only one of a handful of schools in Virginia offering a degree in neuroscience.

"I love the academic nature of the school," she said. "I like the small class sizes and that people genuinely like being here. There is a close connection with faculty. This school cares about its students."

Richardson, part of the President's Leadership Program, has immersed herself in campus life, as president of her sorority, president of the Black Student Union, and as an admissions tour guide.

Her drive to become a doctor shines through as she enthusiastically talks about Mombasa and her future.

Being a doctor, she said, combines all of her strengths in one career.

"It's the perfect combination of using the right and left side of my brain," she said. "It's technical, but it involves a lot of interpersonal relationships."

Richardson's plan is to take a gap year after graduation to study for the MCAT. From there, she wants to head to medical school. She is determined to make her mark on the medical world, maybe even around the world.

"I can see myself changing someone's life," she said. 🌟



Get the SCOOP

ON AN ICE CREAM SHOP
WITH A CNU FLAVOR

BY KELLI CAPLAN

AS A PROUD ALUMNA,
CATHERINE MICHEL
IS DISHING OUT HER LOVE
AND SUPPORT OF
CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT,
ONE SCOOP AT A TIME.

THE CO-FOUNDER OF Aux Délices dessert shop in Newport News and a dedicated Captain for Life, Michel has created signature ice cream flavors that are not only delicious, but also pay tribute to her beloved alma mater. These special flavors—Smooth Sailing, The Hook, and All-Nighter—were crafted in collaboration with CNU students for Family Weekend. Via social media, Michel solicited flavor and ingredient suggestions from students and the wider community.

The crowdsourced ice cream flavors not only satisfied taste buds, but also fostered a sense of community. Each flavor was made with ingredients highlighting its name. For example, The Hook incorporated cheesecake cream with locally-made bourbon, Smooth Sailing combined a creamy vanilla base with toffee and sea salt caramel, and the All-Nighter, of course, included a trio of sugar and caffeine that incorporated coffee ice cream, brownies and Oreos.

"It's been so much fun," Michel said.

Michel, '91 Communication Studies, and her husband, Steve Mueller, doled the sweet treats out from the store's food truck, which they brought to campus as part of the event festivities. All three flavors sold out quickly.

Making ice cream to help amp up the vibe of Family Weekend was an act of love by Michel, who remains a huge supporter of the University that she credits with providing her with the foundation to help her to be successful as she shifted to different career tracks. Not only does Michel serve up desserts, she also is a designer and has been a clinical therapist.

"I can talk to anyone anywhere about anything," Michel said, applauding the public speaking skills she developed while in communication classes. "I use my communication degree in everything and in every part of my life. It was well worth it."

Michel was raised in France and Germany and decided when it came time for college, she wanted to attend a school in the U.S. As she looked at options, she came across Christopher Newport. The size of the University and the location spoke to her.

Her father, in the military, began working at Langley Air Force Base, and her mother, Patricia, taught French at St. Andrew's Episcopal School until it closed in 2018.

Christopher Newport lived up to all of Michel's expectations, providing her with skills that would fuel her many passions.

"It's a small school with a big-school education," she said.

"You don't get lost in the shuffle. CNU is about community."

"They taught me how to communicate my thoughts and ideas in a way people can understand," she said. "If you don't speak well in public, you can't sell yourself well."

Opening Aux Délices, which means "to the delights," provided an ideal platform for doing what brings the couple joy: getting to know people and feeding them decadent treats—including crepes and macaroons—in the process. They chose the location to be in the shadow of CNU, and leaned heavily into her heritage for the perfect crepe recipe. Michel and Mueller, using their design prowess, wanted the dessert shop to be elegant yet comfortable and inviting.

"This made sense to me," Michel said. "People want to be here. It's just good all the time."

The shop employs Christopher Newport students, and the couple is quick to jump in when there are events and activities on campus they can partake in as vendors or sponsors. Making the special CNU flavors was a perfect way to put a special twist—or scoop—on Family Weekend. It's a relationship she hopes to continue to build.

"Everyone at CNU is wonderful," Michel said. "It's full of great humans who are supportive and have great energy. There is so much we can do together." 🍷



Walks, Talk and Task Force Explore CNU's Neighborhood and History

With a focus on the Shoe Lane neighborhood that adjoins Christopher Newport, University and Newport News leaders are taking steps to understand their shared history and strengthen relations between the campus and its surrounding community.

BY JIM HANCHETT



THE CITY AND THE UNIVERSITY have launched a task force to examine the decisions that led to the location and growth of the campus.

As it was known then, Christopher Newport College was located along Shoe Lane because of a controversial decision by the City of Newport News in 1961. History Professor Dr. Phil Hamilton has written: "The sixty acres themselves were owned by a small community of African Americans. Thus many Blacks across the Peninsula thought the City Council was attempting to use the college as a way to remove these Black landowners and halt further African American migration into this section of town."

The decision and the land seizures that followed are controversial to this day and have been the focus of recent news media coverage. "Understanding and acknowledging our past is important to moving forward in a transparent and thoughtful way. Christopher Newport is committed to this work," President William G. Kelly said in the news release announcing the formation of the task force. Its first meeting was held in April.

The creation of the task force follows several other events aimed at strengthening connection with the neighborhoods surrounding the University. In November 2023, the University organized a discussion about its history. Hamilton was one of the panelists for the event, along with Geography Professor Dr. Johnny Finn and three voices from outside the campus: Norfolk State University Professor Cassandra Newby-Alexander, Hampton historian Audrey Perry Williams, and Pastor William Spencer of First Baptist Church Morrison. Regina Brayboy '84, chair of the President's Council on Diversity, Equity and Inclusion and a member of the Board of Visitors, served as the moderator.

The discussion was illuminating and, at times, emotional. The audience included current Shoe Lane-area residents and the descendants of homeowners displaced by the city's decision. The panelists and members of the audience thanked the University for exploring a painful chapter in its growth.

Several in the audience criticized the Walker's Green historic marker on Shoe Lane that is a tribute to one former Shoe Lane family. They said it doesn't fully depict the struggle in the 1960s and the pain that followed. They urged University leaders to better educate students about CNU's complicated history and to do more to assist the uprooted families. The task force is a step in that direction.



The city and the University are also literally taking steps.

In November 2023, about 200 University and Newport News leaders were joined by students, faculty, staff, and local residents for a Community Walk. The group set off from campus and strolled along Shoe Lane to Riverside Elementary School. President Kelly leads popular early-morning weekly walks around campus. The Community Walk took that idea in a new direction. The goal was to demonstrate to residents along Shoe Lane and nearby streets that CNU strives to be a good neighbor. Another goal was to give students, faculty and staff an opportunity to learn more about the people and the places close to campus.

Kelly was joined by Newport News Police Chief Steve Drew, uniformed officers, city officials, and representatives of Newport News Public Schools. Captain Chris was at the front and University staff pulled a cart full of sidewalk chalk at the rear.

That chalk was a gift to the students of Riverside Elementary School, the turn-around point midway through the walk. Riverside Principal Tim Edwards welcomed the group and the Boomin' Bears Drumline brought music and spirit to the gathering. Kelly joined the children in a "Go Bears" chant, quickly followed by his trademark, "Go Captains!"

A similar walk was held in March, with Hidenwood Elementary School as the turn-around point. 🐻



A Captain's Commitment

Freshmen sign Honor Code, begin process of discovering their “why”

BY KELLEY MCGEE

THE COMMUNITY OF SCHOLARS Honor Convocation is more than just a welcome for the freshman class; it's an introduction to the values that will define students' time at Christopher Newport.

“Mark Twain was quoted as saying, ‘The two most important days in your life are the day you are born, and the day you figure out why.’ Today we come together with our dedicated faculty to begin the process of helping you define your why,” said President William G. Kelly, who joined the incoming class in signing the Honor Code. “This is a serious, even solemn occasion because we are asking you to do serious work, to look inside yourself, to consider what matters to you, what you stand for, and to boldly define your commitment to something greater than yourself.”

“The morals and values instilled in you have guided you to your destiny to become a Captain at Christopher Newport University,” Board of Visitors Rector Lindsey Carney Smith, Esq. '01 told the class. “Discover who you are, learn and decide how you want to make a difference in our world. We know that you will achieve your goals without ever forgetting the core values within you that enable you to be here with us: selflessness, compassion, honor, truth, determination, and commitment to service.”

“I know you have learned the basic tenets about not lying, cheating, or stealing,” said Dr. Kevin Hughes, Vice President of Student Affairs. “Our community of honor is more than that. It means you think not just about yourself, but about the common good. It means that you are committed to acting

honorably in everything you do. It means you embrace the highest standards of honesty and integrity. It means you accept personal responsibility for all of your actions. It means you will create an environment grounded in trust of others and respect for them. It means that you have an obligation to help your fellow Captains, and anybody else that you know who needs extra care.”

Provost Quentin Kidd told students in the incoming class the ceremony is significant in that it symbolizes the beginning of their academic journey.

“Ceremony and ritual are important because they connect us deeply to one another and give us a feeling of belonging and purpose within a community,” he said. “They create unity instead of separation and help us understand the common thing we are striving for. That community you will join today—the common thing we are all a part of—is not just a community of scholarship but a community of honor, and this Honor Code Induction Ceremony is your first step into this community.”

After standing and reciting the Honor Code, all members of the class came forward and signed the Honor Code Registry. After, they were given a “lucky penny,” which they will hold until graduation day, when each senior tosses their penny into the fountain for good luck.

Following the ceremony, the freshmen took part in another cherished tradition: ringing the Bell Tower. This class was in good company, as President Kelly also rang the bell for the first time. 🍀

A LEGACY OF HONOR

Dr. Theodore R. Reiff, M.D. and Dr. Anthony R. Santoro (Christopher Newport President Emeritus) were honored as recipients of the 2023 Humanitarian Award by the Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities for their lifelong dedication to promoting respect and understanding among diverse communities. The award recognizes Reiff and Santoro's exceptional work in Holocaust research, genocide studies, and National Socialist German History, as well as their commitment to preserving history and educating future generations. The Reiff-Santoro Professorship at Christopher Newport University will continue their legacy of impactful teaching, and dedication to inclusivity and human rights.

The Reiff Center for Human Rights and Conflict Resolution at Christopher Newport is named in honor of Dr. Reiff, a retired physician, medical educator, researcher and founding president of the Genocide Education Project. The center applies historical, political, social and international perspectives to initiatives.



MARCH 13, 2024

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“This Is Your Moment. Make it Count!”

*Christopher Newport’s musical theatre
students shine in New York City*

BY KELLEY MCGEE



TUCKED BENEATH the legendary Studio 54, the once iconic hub of 1970s nightlife, lies 54 Below, a Manhattan venue showcasing a new era in musical entertainment. Known as “Broadway’s Living Room,” the club features a mix of established and emerging Broadway talent performing in an intimate and welcoming setting.

Echoes of the club’s colorful past linger within the venerable space, including its infamously selective door policy, although it now serves more as a nostalgic nod to the past than a barrier to entry.

On this particular night, proud parents of Christopher Newport’s performers “on the list” mingle on the rain-soaked sidewalk with Broadway industry professionals until the door finally opens, signaling the start of an unforgettable night.

Guests descend down the steep stairway and take their seats at the small, cabaret-style tables surrounding the stage. The venue’s interior exudes an old New York, speakeasy-style ambiance, and the stage is illuminated by dissolving shades of gold, orange and blue, evoking an intimate and sophisticated vibe.

In a quiet corner backstage, freshman Kylee Bates tries to ignore the rising din of clinking glasses and excited chatter. She steadies herself by mentally reviewing her performance one last time while the band warms up. It’s her debut performance in New York—a goal she could have barely fathomed a year ago in high school. Yet here she is.

“I would be lying if I said I wasn’t a little nervous,” she says. “But we have all been rehearsing the show for weeks, and I’m ready to share that hard work with the world!”

Nearby is senior John Byrd, who is also silently rehearsing his stage movements and lyrics. It’s not his first time here, and in some ways that makes it more stressful. Tonight, he’ll be performing a challenging improv number with fellow students Jimmy Grimes ’25 and Katie O’Shields ’24.

“I’m trying to remain calm by keeping myself distracted right now. We only had a few hours to work with the producers on the piece’s structure. But it will be fine...I know it will. There’s something magical that happens on stage when you are simultaneously energized by the crowd in front of you, while at the same time forgetting they even exist. The stage lights blind you a bit, so your practice and training just kicks in and you drop into the zone. As they say, ‘art is not art unless it’s dangerous,’” Byrd said.

A brief drumroll gets the crowd’s attention, and the hosts for the show, Christopher Newport Musical Theatre alums Peyton Townsend ’22 and Madison Raef ’23 hop on stage. Showtime has arrived—the crescendo of a long, opportunity-filled day for the students that began early that morning, appropriately enough, in a rehearsal studio.

“

*The stage
lights blind
you a bit, so
your practice
and training
just kicks in
and you drop
into the zone.*

JOHN BYRD ’24

Open Jar Studios 1600 Broadway, NYC 9 a.m.

"Five, six, seven, eight... hats off, scoop, layout and turn. Let your movement express the story!"

THE DAY BEGINS for students with a master dance class from Broadway choreographer and performer Parker Esse at Open Jar Studios, a newly-built, modern rehearsal space on the corner of Broadway and 48th that provides both new and seasoned performers with intensive, one-on-one training with some of the industry's biggest stars and casting directors. John, Kylee and all 20 of the musical theatre students have the unique opportunity to learn new choreography, ask questions and seek advice from a Broadway veteran who has been in the business for decades.

"When you go to an audition, you need to really show up. Make an impression," Esse says. "That casting director may not see you in that role, but they are frequently booking several shows at once and might see you in another role. Always 'show up.' Believe in yourself tonight at 54 Below. Because all you have is this night. This is it. This is your moment. Make it count."

John and Kylee have both positioned themselves near the front of the class to take full advantage of the opportunity to soak up advice from someone who has done everything they hope to do.

"We've received so much terrific advice this week that's both useful and inspiring," John said. "Among what I heard was 'assume everyone can play a role or sing a certain note. What sets you apart is your genuine self, and your willingness to be vulnerable and connect with an audience. That's what the audience craves. They want genuine connection. They want to see you.'"

The opportunity for students to perform at 54 Below is an extension of the University's New Musicals Lab program, which provides space and resources for new musical ideas to be developed and brought to life. The lab serves as a launching pad for aspiring performers, giving them the skills and experience



they need to succeed in the competitive world of musical theatre.

"The New Musicals Lab and the Musical Theatre Program's annual 54 Below performance are the result of an incredible collaboration between the Ferguson Center and an academic program that truly defines what makes CNU special," says Bruce Bronstein, executive director of the Ferguson Center for the Arts. "Participating in the creation of new musicals and then showcasing that work in New York as an extension of a college academic experience is a one of a kind opportunity that is only available at Christopher Newport."

The New Musicals Lab allows students to gain practical experience while creating relationships with exciting, upcoming composers. The chance to perform these new works at 54 Below is the perfect finale to the creative process.

"Introducing these young actors to this space at an early stage in their careers is truly a unique and special opportunity because performing at 54 Below is a dream for so many in the theatre community," says Colin Ruffer, director of the Musical Theatre Program. "It is my hope that this once-in-a-lifetime dream becomes a first-in-a-lifetime of many for these students."

The main objective, Ruffer said, is for CNU students to "make their New York City debut. As the song lyrics say, 'if they can make it here, they can make it anywhere.'"

An offshoot of all this success has been the growing number of Christopher Newport Musical Theatre graduates who have taken advantage of the contacts and experience garnered from performing at 54 Below and with the New Musicals Lab, and moved to New York after graduation. Together, these Captains are building a network of support in the Big Apple, helping to lift each other up in a notoriously competitive industry.

“

It is my hope that this once-in-a-lifetime dream becomes a first-in-a-lifetime of many for these students.

COLIN RUFFER, DIRECTOR OF
THE MUSICAL THEATRE PROGRAM

Faces & Names Bar and Lounge 54th Street 6 p.m.

*It's just a few hours
before showtime.*



SEVERAL BLOCKS AWAY from 54 Below, many of the New York City-based alums gather together for a pre-show, happy hour celebration. Some are now working professionals in the city, others are finding their way. All credit the Musical Theatre Department with providing a path for their dreams.

"I won't lie. It's hard at first. But we have been well prepared for this," says Ty Norris.

Norris, a 2020 graduate and Virginia native, now lives in Harlem Heights. Two of his three roommates are fellow CNU grads. "We are forming a strong community here, to help those coming after us and to support those of us here. Yes, most of us are still wandering, but we're wandering together."

Renee Kaufmann '23 is part of that network. A year ago,

she was a Christopher Newport student taking the stage at 54 Below. Now, she is a performer working in the city, including an upcoming gig at 54 Below.

"I'm so grateful CNU prepared me for these opportunities," she says, quickly adding, "One of the things that really helped me when I moved here after graduation was knowing I had former classmates and friends here to lean on, and grow with."

"Trips like this are fundamental in training students," says Ruffer. "The relationships they form both with the New Musicals Lab producers, as well as with each other, will help them to flourish. Not many college-age students have the opportunity to do this level of relevant training before they enter this competitive business."



Featured performers included: Kylee Bates, Emma Brooks, John Byrd, Taylor Cannon, Hannah Cecil, Ireland DiBacco, Jimmy Grimes, Anthony Hearn, Alexis Holland, Tim Johnson, Mia Kennedy, Lizzy Maisel, Makenna Mitchell, Sara Moore, Katie O'Shields, Kimberlie Pagán, Maryann Richardson, Bella Schaub, Audrey Shoop and Fiona Sullivan

PHOTOS © JOSE MIRANDA



“

It was so surreal to be able to share new music with the world while simultaneously living out one of my dreams.

KYLEE BATES '27

54 Below 9:25 p.m.

The club is completely sold out.

The audience is filled with a mixture of industry professionals and supportive family members. President and Mrs. Kelly, along with Provost Quentin Kidd were also there to cheer the students on.

At 9:30, the lights dim. Students gathered at the side of the stage take their positions.

“These students are feeling great,” Ruffer says, his expression reflecting an equal mix of excitement and pride. “It’s all in their hands now. They’ve worked so hard to get to this moment, so let’s press play!”

One by one, the students take the stage, confidently singing and interpreting new musical compositions, many of which had never been performed publicly.

If there are nerves among them, it’s hard to tell. Ireland DiBacco ’25, Alexis Holland ’24 and Audrey Shoop ’25 all say their excitement surpasses most other emotions when they enter the spotlight. Their top-notch performances on this night backs that up.

It’s now time for Kylee, and then John to take the stage. Neither one hesitates. Like all of the theatre students, they make the most of their moment and shine brightly.

“It felt amazing to be on stage performing. I have known since I was nine years old that I wanted to perform in places like 54 Below, so this is really a dream come true,” says Kylee. “It was so surreal to be able to share new music with the world while simultaneously living out one of my dreams.”

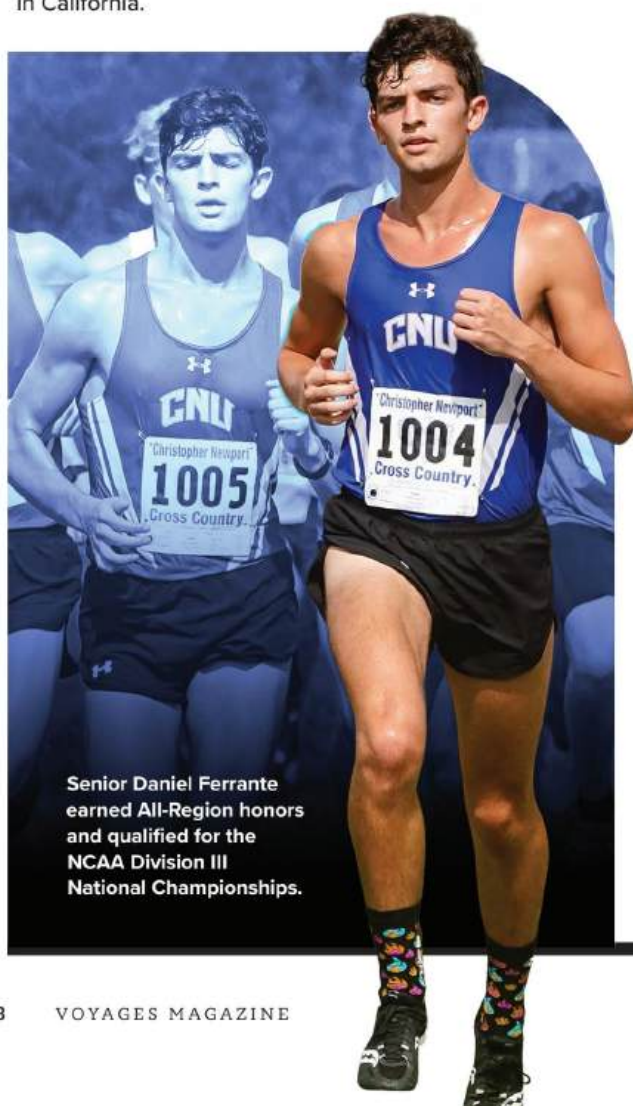
“It was the most rewarding experience I’ve had,” says John. “Colin trusted us to do complicated pieces, and pushed us out of the nest, because he knew we’d fly. And we all did!” 🐦



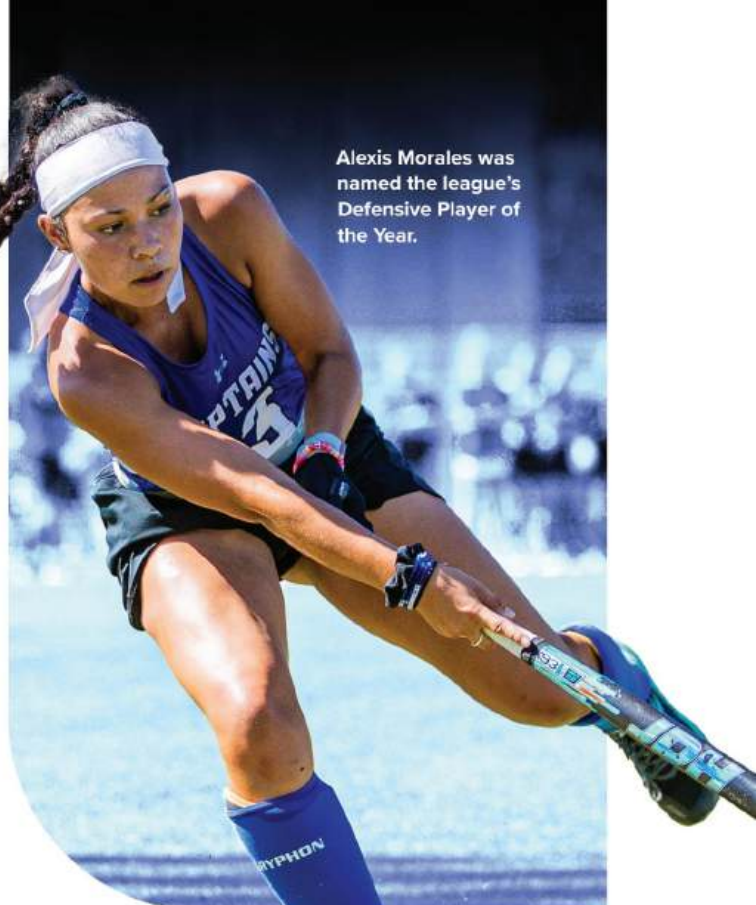


CROSS COUNTRY

- Senior harrier Daniel Ferrante earned All-Region honors and qualified for the NCAA Division III National Championships this fall to lead the way for the CNU cross country programs.
- Ferrante placed 18th at the NCAA South Regionals in Georgia with a time of 25:28.12 to become just the 10th Captain in school history to register three top-20 efforts at regionals.
- On the women's side, Senior Madi Rawlings led the way at the NCAA regional meet with a time of 23:35.46, ranking 36th best in the area.
- Six CNU runners were named All-League selections after both the men's and women's programs finished second at the Coast-To-Coast Athletic Conference Championships in California.



Senior Daniel Ferrante earned All-Region honors and qualified for the NCAA Division III National Championships.



Alexis Morales was named the league's Defensive Player of the Year.

FIELD HOCKEY

- Powered by first team All-Americans Abby Asuncion and Alexis Morales, the field hockey team put together one of the finest seasons in program history.
- Carrie Moura, Region Coach of the Year, led the Captains to a 17-1 overall record while knocking off six nationally-ranked opponents.
- CNU captured the Coast-To-Coast Athletic Conference regular season and tournament championships while finishing the 2023 season ranked third in the NFHCA National Coaches Poll.
- The Captains ranked third nationally in scoring defense with a 0.55 goals-against average while also ranking eighth in offense, averaging 4.17 goals per contest.
- Asuncion capped off her career as CNU's all-time leader with 52 career goals, 125 points and 14 game-winners.



FOOTBALL

- Under the direction of second-year Head Coach Paul Crowley '09, the Captains finished the year with a 7-4 record and captured the program's first ever New Jersey Athletic Conference Championship (NJAC).
- CNU advanced to the NCAA Tournament for the 11th time in the 23-season history of the program and the first time since 2014.
- Powered by one of the best defenses in program history, the Captains ranked 15th nationally in Division III, allowing just 251.5 yards of total offense per game.
- The offense was led by Gunner White, the NJAC Offensive Player of the Year, and quarterback Matt Dzierski, a two-time Player of the Year in the conference.

Senior Kindrick Braxton was named Virginia's Linebacker of the Year by the Touchdown Club of Richmond after leading the Captains in total tackles with 73.

VOLLEYBALL

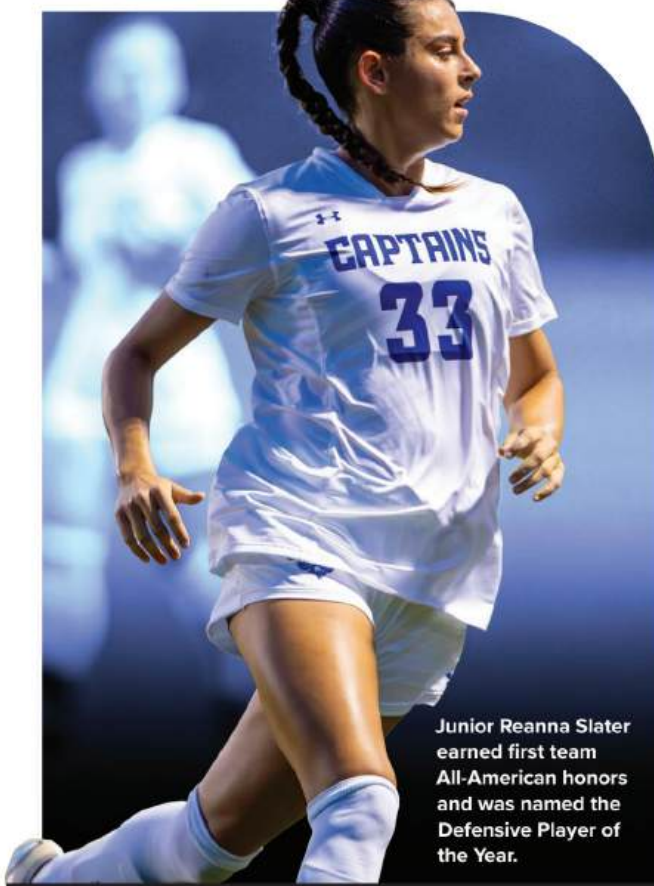
- Sophomore Alyssa Dozier put together a record-setting season for the Captains' volleyball program in 2023 after helping lead CNU back to the NCAA Tournament Regional Semifinals.
- Off the court, Dozier had a perfect 4.0 GPA after her first two semesters. On the court, she was named a second team All-American for her performance after collecting C2C Player of the Year accolades. She piled up 345 kills and 118 total blocks while hitting at a team-high .345 clip.
- The Captains eclipsed a number of accolades this season, including Head Coach Lindsay Birch collecting her 600th career win.
- Fifth-year senior setter Sammy Carroll earned honorable mention All-American honors after becoming just the second CNU player to ever reach 5,000 career assists.
- As a team, CNU reached the NCAA Tournament for the 16th consecutive year and 20th time in program history.

Sophomore Alyssa Dozier became the second CNU student-athlete in any sport to earn first team Academic All-American honors from the College Sports Communicators.



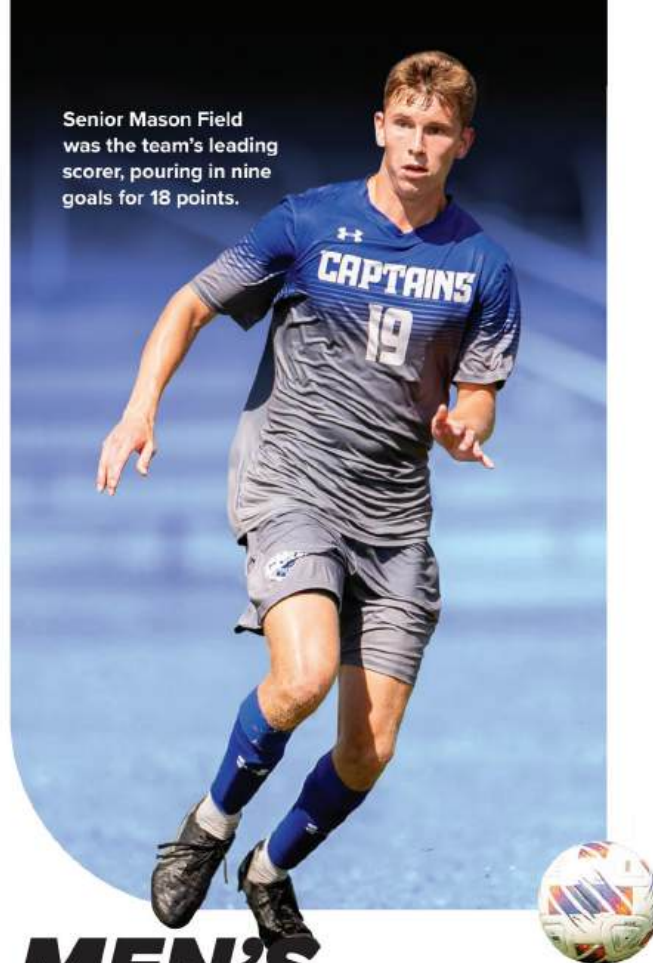
WOMEN'S SOCCER

- After going 19-0-3 in 2023, the Captains have remained unbeaten through the entire three-year coaching career of Jamie Gunderson, registering an unprecedented 67-match streak without a loss (60-0-7).
- Gunderson and his coaching staff were honored as the C2C Staff of the Year along with the Region VI honors from the United Soccer Coaches as the Captains reached the NCAA National Quarterfinals for the third straight year and finished the year ranked No. 5 in the nation.
- Powered by the nation's top defense, CNU set nearly every statistical record in the book while leading Division III in goals-against average (0.22) and shutout percentage (.818).
- Offensively, newcomer Hanna Heaton led the way alongside fifth-year star Sarah Smith as the duo each collected All-Region plaudits. Freshman goalkeeper Amy Sidaway led the nation in GAA and hauled in C2C Rookie of the Year honors.



Junior Reanna Slater earned first team All-American honors and was named the Defensive Player of the Year.

Senior Mason Field was the team's leading scorer, pouring in nine goals for 18 points.



MEN'S SOCCER

- Three CNU players earned All-Region honors in 2023 after leading the Captains' men's soccer team to the NCAA Tournament for the fourth consecutive year.
- The Captains earned the 50th career coaching win for Head Coach Justin Chezem and finished 11-5-2 overall.
- CNU earned a 4-1 win over Manhattanville in the first round of the NCAA Tournament after earning an at-large berth to compete in the postseason for the 14th time in program history.
- Kyle Stenzel earned his second straight All-Region certificate after leading the defense to a 1.10 goals-against average, allowing just 20 goals in 18 games this season.
- Sophomore Barry Jones, who logged the most assists in a season since 2014 while adding one goal to finish the year with 10 total points, rounded out the All-Region honorees.

WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

- Under the direction of three-time WBCA National Coach of the Year finalist Bill Broderick, the Captains put together another outstanding season in 2023-24 after finishing with a 27-2 overall record.
- During the season, Broderick became the all-time leader in coaching victories for CNU Women's Basketball.
- The Captains advanced to the NCAA Tournament for the eighth straight season and the 10th time in 11 years. Leading the way were a pair of All-Region forwards in junior Hannah Kaloi and senior Alivia Giles.
- Kaloi was a first team All-C2C selection and was also named the C2C Tournament MVP. She led the team in scoring, averaging 12.1 points per game, and ranked second in rebounding.



Senior Alivia Giles ranked second on the team in scoring with 11.5 points per game while leading the squad in rebounding with 6.4 per game.

Junior Wade Dunkelberger competed at nationals for the second straight year.



INDOOR TRACK & FIELD

- Christopher Newport Track & Field swept the Coast-To-Coast Athletic Conference Indoor Championships for the fourth straight year with a dominant overall performance by the Captains.
- CNU amassed 12 individual titles during the conference title meet and was led by Daniel Fox and Sydney Trussell as the Track Athletes of the Meet and Katie Stevens, who was named the Women's Field Athlete of the Meet for a second straight year.
- The winter Indoor season culminated in three Captains qualifying for the NCAA Division III Indoor Track & Field Championships.
- Stevens became just the second CNU athlete to qualify in the weight throw, while C.J. Reeders earned a trip to the championships in the triple jump and Wade Dunkelberger leapt into the final meet in the high jump.



MEN'S BASKETBALL

- The defending national champions put together another sensational season in 2023-24 after finishing the year with a 24-7 overall record while advancing to the NCAA Tournament for an eighth straight season.
- The Captains became just the fourth program in NCAA Division III history to advance to four consecutive national quarterfinals after capturing a third C2C crown in as many years.
- Senior All-American Jahn Hines continued to etch his name in the CNU record books with a fantastic year overall.
- Hines became just the second Captain in the 56-year history of the program to earn All-American honors in three consecutive seasons and moved up to 11th on CNU's all-time scoring list with 1,509 career points in 94 games played (16.1 ppg for his career).
- Freshman Toa Hollenbeck was named the C2C and Region VI Rookie of the Year while Head Coach John Krikorian, who recorded his 300th career win at CNU this season, was named the D3hoops.com Region Coach of the Year for a third time.

Senior Jahn Hines was selected the C2C Player of the Year for the second time and averaged a team-high 15.5 points and 5.2 rebounds per game this season.



2024 Outstanding Faculty Awards

For 23 years, **DR. TAREK ABDEL-FATTAH** has been imparting his chemistry knowledge and expertise.

His passion for science has fortified generations of college students who have graduated from CNU and gone on to do big things in the science world. He thrives on being a mentor and professor, and is focused on helping young people find their calling and achieve greatness.

"I am very proud of my work and my achievements at CNU," said Abdel-Fattah, who recently received the state's Outstanding Faculty Award.

"My commitment to students, passion for teaching, and dedication to the community are evident in my collaboration with research students from CNU, Abdel-Fattah said. "This collaboration extends to various institutions within Virginia and globally, including Old Dominion University, Norfolk State University, Virginia Commonwealth University, UCLA, Universidad de Oviedo (Spain), Alexandria University (Egypt), University of Kitakyushu (Japan), and Hanyang University (South Korea). Additionally, this professional network facilitates collaborative learning and work among scholars and students from diverse backgrounds, promoting increased inclusion and diversity within our research group."

The Outstanding Faculty Award is the second esteemed honor Abdel-Fattah has recently received. He was also named a Fulbright Specialist in December, a prestigious designation reserved for top scientists. The tenure for the role is three years, meaning he can be called to work on any Fulbright project anywhere in the world until 2026.

Helping students succeed in the classroom is Abdel-Fattah's top priority. He works diligently to build a foundation that he hopes will allow them to thrive.

"I like to motivate students first, helping them at every stage. After a certain point, I give them a chance to get their self-confidence and learn, even with mistakes. It is amazing to see what they can do," he said. "I'm very, very pleased. The impact I have on them is most important for me. My students are flourishing, and that makes me very happy."

It's not that **DR. JOHN FINN** wasn't excited about being selected for the Commonwealth's highest teaching honor. He simply didn't know—at least not right away. The chair of the Department of Sociology, Social Work and Anthropology was out of the country, this time in Cuba. It's one of the many places Finn's research has taken him over the years in an effort to understand the social, cultural, economic and political processes that shape our world—a quest that ultimately brought him this distinguished recognition.

"It was amazing news to receive when I reconnected to the world a couple days later," said Finn. "It's a huge honor to be selected for this award. I'm actually quite shocked, given the high caliber of faculty both at CNU and around the state. I'm feeling really very humbled."

Finn's research examines racial capitalism, critical landscape studies and environmental justice focused on providing a better understanding of the ongoing economic, environmental and health impacts of persistent racial segregation. For the last four years, he has directed a project that has garnered widespread public interest, entitled, "Living Apart: Geography of Segregation in the 21st Century." Featured in galleries at both the Virginia Museum of Contemporary Art, the James Wise gallery at Norfolk State University and the Mary M. Torggler Fine Arts Center, "Living Apart" uses oral history interviews, experimental photographic methodologies, historical and archival research and interactive mapping to trace the history of how overtly discriminatory federal housing policy created structures of racialized inequality in housing that continues to produce and perpetuate profoundly unequal urban and environmental outcomes.

"It is only through unearthing and truly contending with our history that we can see the oftentimes invisible forces that maintain and perpetuate our unequal reality," said Finn. "The civil rights activist and writer James Baldwin wrote that 'History is not the past. It is the present. We carry our history with us. We are our history.'"

Administered by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, the Outstanding Faculty Awards is a coveted honor that goes to a handful of faculty of Virginia schools who have risen to the top. Each recipient receives \$7,500 gift from the Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation.



DR. PETER MONAGHAN, associate professor of physics, has been awarded a \$542,000 National Science Foundation grant that will provide students with the opportunity to do research at the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility (Jefferson Lab), a preeminent Department of Energy lab located near campus.

The grant will allocate funding over a three-year period for five students to conduct research at Jefferson Lab. The students will work with Monaghan, whose research on nuclear physics is focused on the interaction of neutrons and protons.

The grant also funds a postdoctoral researcher to work at the lab, overseeing the research program and mentoring the student researchers.



DR. MICHAEL MULRYAN, professor of French and French literature, not only wrote a book about 18th-century philosopher and urban chronicler Louis Sébastien Mercier, he often refers to his timeless insights and ideas to help navigate his own daily life.

Mercier's keen observations about people, society and politics are as pertinent today as they were hundreds of years ago, Mulryan said.

Mulryan wove the extensive research he has done on Mercier, also a journalist and dramatist, into a new book entitled, "Louis Sébastien Mercier: Revolution and Reform in Eighteenth-Century Paris." The book, researched in large part at the French National Library, is a monograph of Mercier's life.



DR. DAE-HEE KIM has received the prestigious O'Hara Leadership Award in Education from the Direct Marketing Association of Washington and its educational foundation (The DMAWEF).

Kim, who joined the Luter School of Business faculty in 2012, was nominated for the award by his peers from colleges and universities across the Mid-Atlantic region. He was selected for the award based on published research in direct and indirect marketing, his innovative teaching in the areas of Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC) and marketing analytics, and for his mentoring of several winning student competition teams, said Matt Hettche, associate professor of management and marketing in the Luter School of Business.



A new professorship has been established at Christopher Newport by local entrepreneurs Jim and Cynthia Crawford.

The inaugural holder of the Crawford Professorship is **DR. NATHAN BUSCH**, Distinguished Professor of Political Science, Co-Director of Christopher Newport University's Center for American Studies, and director of the minor in U.S. National Security Studies.

A prominent author, Busch has published six books and numerous articles on topics ranging from the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to homeland security.

The Crawford Professorship focuses on Department of Defense priorities, including nuclear policy, U.S. force projection, international terrorism, military policy and combat training and cybersecurity.

CLASS NOTES



Kylie Meyer '19 married
Marcus Carter '19 on
December 16, 2023,
in Charles City. The couple
resides in Midlothian.

Career Announcements

1970s

Barbara Hill '73 has been elected President of the Board of Directors of Habitat for Humanity of Monroe County, PA.

Sheila Majka '75 is still enjoying retirement after 33 years of teaching English in Hampton. Her latest project is making driftwood Christmas tree plaques with proceeds going to a scholarship fund for aspiring teachers.



Kevin Callanan '78 has been recertified as a Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE). Kevin, Principal at CES, LLC, is one of over 7,700 professionals around the world who hold the CFRE designation.

Paul Turner '79 retired from the U.S. Air Force in 2019 after 44 years. He has started a mediation business called Moving Forward Today. He provides mediation and facilitation services to the general public and government entities.

1980s

Warren Power '84 graduated from the University of Pennsylvania School of Arts and Sciences.

Kevin Lyles '85 celebrated one year in his role as Community Education Coordinator for LifeNet Health. In the role, he is responsible for discussing and educating everyone on the need to be a registered organ donor.

N. Scott Millar '85, former Rector of Christopher Newport's Board of Visitors, has been elected President of the Board of Trustees for the CNU Education Foundation. The Education Foundation is a nonprofit corporation that functions as a charitable foundation to assist, support and foster the mission of the University.

Tami Somervold Nunn '85 has accepted the role of Director of Human Resources in local government working for Gloucester County.

Timothy Wahlstrom '86 was promoted to Executive Assistant for Someone To Tell It To in August 2022.

Julia Guenther '88 was named Archdiocesan Elementary School Teacher of the Year at School of the Incarnation in Gambrills in Maryland.

1990s



Suzanne Gavenus '90 began working at the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics in August 2022 as the Director of Counseling and Wellness on the Morganton campus. She is a Licensed Clinical Social Worker and also holds a North Carolina Standard Professional I Educator's License as an Advanced Level School Social Worker (Grades K-12).



Dr. Raymond Haynes '92 was unanimously approved by the Hampton School Board as the Superintendent for Hampton City Schools.



Samuel Sanders Jr. '94 has been appointed Charlottesville's new City Manager.

Lance Smith '95 was promoted to Director of Compliance for St. Peter's Health Partners Medical Associates in Albany, NY.

Felicia Kemp '97 accepted the position of assistant coach for the women's basketball team at Central Connecticut State University.

Amy Westermann '97, a Licensed Mental Health Counselor and owner of Different Directions Counseling LMHC, was named in Marquis Who's Who for Excellence in Mental Health.

2000s

Christopher Truscott '00 has been promoted to Director of Executive Communications for Target.

Sarah Bowman '01 was promoted to Communications and Marketing Manager for the City of Newport News. She serves as Chief Storyteller for the City and manages the overall direction and leadership of marketing activities related to the City of Newport News brand and communications initiatives.

David Horne '02 was promoted to vice president of trades at the Newport News Shipbuilding division.



Michael Mullin '04 joins the Virginia Beer Wholesalers Association as in-house general counsel. He is a former Virginia legislator.

Career Announcements



Priscilla Spencer '04 has earned a doctorate (EdD) in Exceptional Education Executive Leadership from Regent University (2022), and now serves as an Assistant Professor of Special Education in the School of Education at Norfolk State University.

Eric Gambardella '05 graduated from Reformed Theological Seminary in May 2023 with a Master of Arts in Biblical Studies. He is the Scripture Engagement Coordinator for the Virginia Region and serves as Campus Minister at Virginia Peninsula Community College and Christopher Newport.



Julee Mitsler '05 was named the Assistant Vice President of Communications and University Spokesperson at Lindenwood University in St. Charles, MO. She is also serving a one-year term as President of the Collegiate Information & Visitor Services Association.

Elliott Petry '05 has been named the Head Girls Cross Country Coach for the Salem Spartan High School.

The Honorable Jonathan Judkins '06 was reelected to a second term as Commissioner of the Revenue for Surry County. Judkins achieved the designation of Master Commissioner of the Revenue through the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service and currently serves as Chairman of the Central District for the Commissioner of the Revenue Association.

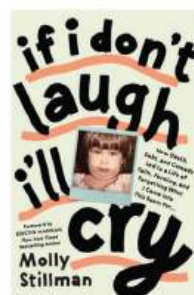
Matthew Martin '06 and his wife, **Julie Martin '05** won Best of Hampton Roads Gold for Best Photographer in 2023.



Tiffany Wiggins '06 joined North Carolina Central University's School of Education as an Assistant Professor of Higher Education, teaching courses in the Master of Science in Higher Education Administration Program.



Latasha Eley Kelly, PhD '07 was one of three recipients of the Tiny News Collective Wichita Info Challenge Grant competition.



Molly Stillman '07 released her debut memoir, "If I Don't Laugh, I'll Cry: How Death, Debt and Comedy, Led to a Life of Faith, Farming and Forgetting What I Came into This Room For..." in March 2024.

2010s

Rebecca Hagen '10 accepted the position of Director of Collections and Archives at the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation, which oversees his homes and studios in Arizona and Wisconsin.

Emily Baucom '11 is the first employee of the Virginia Beach Police Department to hold the title of American Board of Forensic Entomology Certified Technician.



Verity Wilson '12 has been named partner at Ruggerio, Wilson & Associates in Dover, DE.

Amber Holland '13 graduated with a Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Communication, Rhetoric and Digital Media from North Carolina State University (NCSU). She is a Senior Research Associate and Communications Strategist at Duke University, and teaches as a Lecturer in the Department of Communication at NCSU.

Paul Keene '13 has been named the Assistant Rector at the Christ Church in Short Hills, NJ.

Christina Sincere '13 has joined American University's Career Center as a Career Advisor. She supports the professional development of AU's School of Communication students.

Ethan Smith '13 was named Associate Director of Communications Advancement at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS).



Dazmine Capel '14 was promoted to lead Low Voltage and Fiber Optic Service Technician. His responsibilities include installing, programming, and servicing security cameras and accessing control networks for Gwinnett County local Government in Atlanta.



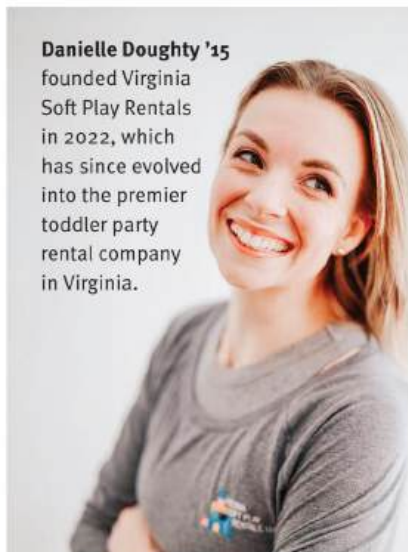
Brandon LaReau '14 is an Assistant Professor of Theatre Studies at Florida State University.

Nicholas Sherwood '14 graduated with a PhD in Conflict Analysis and Resolution from George Mason University's Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution, the top conflict resolution program in the world. He will be starting a new position at the State Department.

Georgina Warren '14 completed her first year of employment at the Library of Congress. Her book, "Tales of Virtuous Stepmothers," is now available in paperback.



Jerry Brown Jr '15 is President of the Virginia Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (VACRAO). His duties include assembling agendas and chairing the Executive Committee, supervising all activities of VACRAO, and presiding over general meetings. Jerry will also play a crucial role in implementing provisions outlined in the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws.



Danielle Doughty '15 founded Virginia Soft Play Rentals in 2022, which has since evolved into the premier toddler party rental company in Virginia.

Zachary Martin '15 was appointed to oversee and manage the operations of the new Golftec store located in Henrico County.

Lauren May '15 accepted a position as a tenure-track Assistant Professor of English Education at Longwood University.

Taylor Horner '17 accepted a job as Certification Exam Editor for NICET, the certification department of the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE).



Madeline Leach '17 is a Physician Sourcing Recruiter for Bon Secours Mercy Health.

Alexis Spain '17 is the Director of Operations for a full-service, deep-work space for teams in Richmond called Lost Office Collaborative.

John Cowley IV '18 has accepted a position as a Field Producer at Court TV.

Ralph Marinaro '19 was hired as a Postdoctoral Research Associate at CNU. He graduated with a PhD in Experimental Nuclear Physics from University of Glasgow (Scotland, UK).

2021

Hannah Epps '21 was recognized as a 2022-23 Beginning Teacher of the Year by Chesterfield County Public Schools.

2022



Owen Burnett '22 was named volunteer assistant coach for the Virginia Tech men's soccer team.

2023

Jacob Sheffield '23 was named Altavista Combined School's new band director for the 2023-24 season.

Weddings





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13

1. Molly Camaioni '04 married Christopher Camaioni on November 8, 2023, in Hayes. The couple resides in Hayes.

2. Desirae Diehl '06 married Albert Contreras on October 1, 2022, in Chicago, IL. The couple resides in Chicago.

3. Marissa Neal '13 married Kyle Cunningham on July 1, 2023, in Haymarket. The couple resides in Locust Grove.

4. James Swindell '13 married Katie Piemontesi on April 15, 2023, in Virginia Beach. The couple resides in Virginia Beach.

5. Timothy Hares '14 married Mackenzie Hares on May 28, 2023, in Smithfield. The couple resides in Newport News.

6. Megan Canny '14/'15 married Christopher Wynne on November 19, 2022, in Yale. The couple resides in Hampton.

7. MacKenzie Masterson '15 married Kyle Byrd on November 11, 2022, in Norfolk. The couple resides in Norfolk.

8. Laura Kate Genevish '16 married Heath Lee on January 2, 2021, in Carrollton. The couple resides in Newport News.

9. Casey Hall '17 married Macon Boyce on June 10, 2023, in Nashville, TN. The couple resides in Old Hickory, TN.

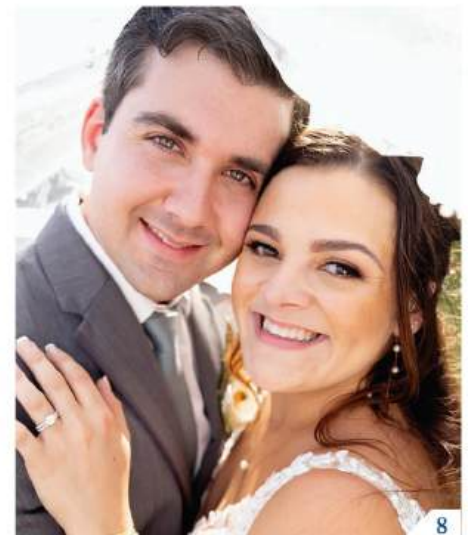
10. Lindsey Tate '17/'18 married Michael Baugh on December 3, 2022, at The Virginia Cliffe Inn. The couple resides in Henrico.

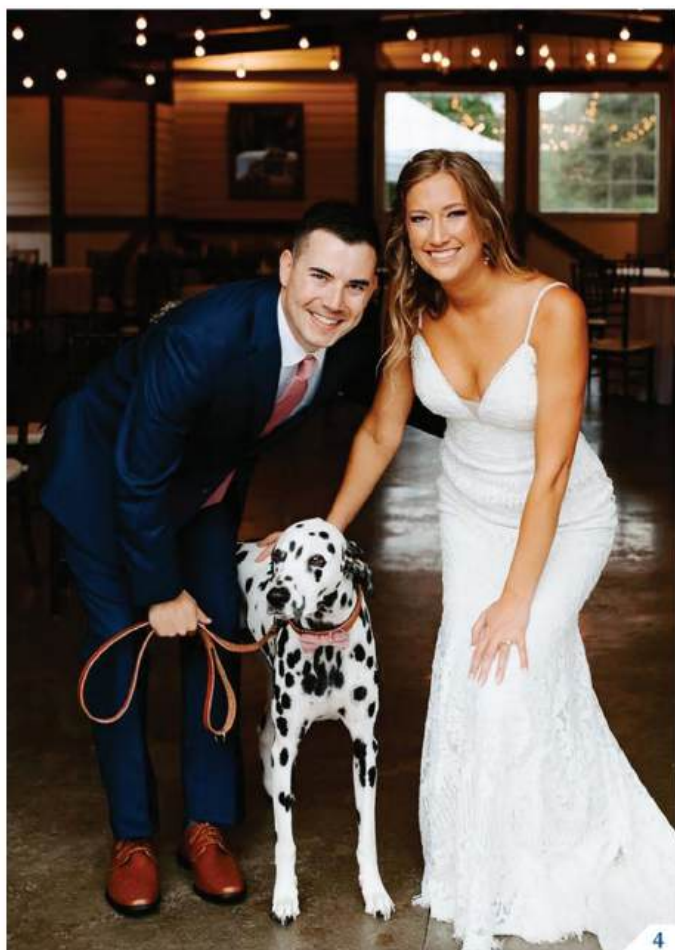
11. Catherine Boyle '19 married Narayan Taterway on December 30, 2023, in Norfolk. The couple resides in Virginia Beach.

12. Chelsea Bhargava '20 married Quintin Tallian on May 28, 2023, in Ashburn. The couple resides in Tulsa, OK.

13. Janessa Hill '20 married Edward Dillon on November 5, 2022, in Cumberland. The couple resides in Ashland.

Captains Marrying Captains





4

1. Alicia Riley '00 and Kenny Reyes '00 renewed their vows on April 27, 2023, in Sedona, Arizona. The couple resides in Williamsburg.

2. Audrey Trussell '11 married **Derek Morse '11** on December 31, 2022, in Richmond. The couple resides in Richmond.

3. Hannah Ronan '14 married **Teddy Pekalski '14** on November 10, 2023, in Leesburg. The couple resides in Leesburg.

4. Nikki Brackley '16 married **Adam Brackley '17** on September 30, 2022, in New Kent. The couple resides in Richmond.

5. Kathleen Horning '16 married **Jacob Tunney '16** on March 19, 2022, in Berryville. The couple resides in Leesburg.

6. Megan Hall '16/'17 married **Gerald McAlister '14**. The couple resides in Seattle.

7. Micaela Cochrane '18 married **Evan Flournoy '18** on March 18, 2023. The couple resides in Fredericksburg.

8. Nicole Gamboni '18 married **Trey Walter '18** on August 5, 2023, in Virginia Beach. The couple resides in Chesapeake.

9. Emily Luttrell '18 married **Kyle Luttrell '17** on April 15, 2023, in Lunenburg. The couple resides in Chesapeake.

10. Caroline Hawkins '19 married **Kylon Callaway '19** on June 3, 2023, in Leesburg. The couple resides in Ashburn.

11. Elizabeth Mothershead '19 married **Samuel Sklopan '19** on April 29, 2023, in Colonial Williamsburg. The couple resides in Annandale.



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Captains Marrying Captains





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12. Rachel Shulmister '19 married **Andrew Billingsly '19** on June 3, 2023, on the Eastern Shore. The couple resides in Norfolk.

13. Erin Cassidy '20 married **Andy Mason '20** on March 25, 2023, in Stanardsville. The couple resides in Greensboro, NC.

14. Tiffany Huddleston '20 married **Andrew Noyes '20** on September 23, 2023, in Smith Mountain Lake. The couple resides in Henrico.

15. Michael Jenkins '20 married **Olivia Wilbur '20** on April 22, 2023, at the Apple Blossom Inn. The couple resides in Midlothian.

16. Jessica Parker '20 married **William Hayden '20** on August 21, 2022, in Gordonsville. The couple resides in Lynchburg.

17. Katherine Routon '20 married **Carter Stanton '20** on April 22, 2023, in Virginia Beach. The couple resides in Suffolk.

18. Taylor Broset '21 married **Irene Martin '22/'23** on July 16, 2023, in the Christopher Newport University Pope Chapel. The couple resides in Newport News.

19. Malik Dickens '21 married **Kalyn Bell '21** on September 23, 2023, in the Christopher Newport University Pope Chapel. The couple resides in Alexandria.

20. Elaina Marcucci '21 married **Landon Crafton '20** on October 29, 2022, in Woodbridge. The couple resides in Stafford.

21. Makenzie Wolf '22 married **Christian Harter '22** on September 24, 2023, in Hampton. The couple resides in Newport News.

22. Malory Matty '23 married **Nicholas Demcheshen '23** on June 3, 2023, in the Christopher Newport University Pope Chapel. The couple resides in Newport News.



20



21



22

Future Captains



1



2



3

1. Lacey Grey Hunter '08 and Henry Hunter announce the birth of their son, Thomas "Wade," on December 13, 2023.

2. Frank W. Garmon Jr. '09 and Ekaterina S. Garmon announce the birth of their daughter, Victoria Safronova, on April 19, 2023.

3. Amber Mungavin '12 and Thomas Mungavin announce the birth of their daughter, Amanda Marie, on April 2, 2023.

Announcements

William Mann Jr. '71 and Elizabeth Mann, a great grandson, Oliver Elyas Mann, born January 12, 2024.

James West '75 and Margaret West, a 65th wedding anniversary celebration, on September 6, 2023.

Robert May Jr '05 and Mary May, a son, Jared Johnston "JJ," born November 24, 2023.

Todd Shockley '08 and Rachel Shockley, a son, Dane, born June 7, 2023.

Katherine Simulcik '09 and Jason Simulcik, a daughter, Avery Brooke, born October 18, 2023.

Jennifer Ketron '10 and Matthew Ketron, a son, Walker.

Maxwell Plarr '11 and Kerstin Plarr '11 a son, Camden Jordan, born April 25, 2023.

Angela Wagner '12 and Neal Wagner, a daughter, Olivia, born July 5, 2021.

Caitlin Chamberlin '13 and Kevin Chamberlin, a son, Elliott, born August 25, 2023.

Taylor Quinn '13 and Sarah Quinn, a daughter, Sadie Davenport, born January 5, 2024.

John Sims '13 married Matthew Fitzpatrick on October 21, 2023.

Amy Tiedemann '13 and **Ryan Tiedemann '12**, a son, Claude, born March 11, 2022.

Olivia Ehrbar '14 and **John Ehrbar '15**, a daughter, Eloise Ann, born July 7, 2023.

Monica Hurd '14 and **Alexander Hurd '14**, a son, Theodore Francis, born November 10, 2022.

Rita Loya '14 and Jacob Loya, a son, Jackson Albert, born August 17, 2023.

Brooke Mohle '14 and **Zachary Mohle '14**, a son, Carter, born January 18, 2023.

Mary St. Jean '14 and Matthew Clevenger, a son, Wesley, born November 17, 2023.

Lindsey Finch '15 and **Brandon Finch '15**, a son, Conor William, born June 3, 2023.

Mckenzie Bowles '16 and **Cory Bowles '16**, a son, Mason James, born March 7, 2023.

Samantha Durling '16 and **Joseph Durling '16**, twins, Amelia Evelyn and Elliot Otto, born September 13, 2023.

Katie Gray '16 and **Jeff Gray '15**, a daughter, Carter, born August 5, 2023.

Harley Hicks '16 and Terry Radford, a daughter, Georgia Jean, born October 16, 2023.

Hannah Pede '16 and **Nate Pede '17**, a daughter, Hallie Blair, born June 23, 2023.

Jordan Imoehl '17 and **James Imoehl '15**, a daughter, Charlotte, born June 4, 2023.

Sondra Roescher '17 and **Adam Roescher '17**, a daughter, Adelaide Brooke, born December 11, 2023.

Holly Saraniti '17 and **Justin Saraniti '17**, a daughter, Sophie Jean, born December 18, 2023.

Rachel Dymond '18 and **Ethan Dymond '18**, a daughter, Hayden, born July 1, 2023.

Madi Harrelson '18 and **Logan Harrelson '19**, a daughter, Rory Joleen, born April 23, 2023.

Andrea Risher '21 and Buck Risher, a daughter, Magnolia, born August 10, 2023.

Madison Taylor '21 married Adam Stillabower on September 7, 2023.

Olivia Baldwin '22 and Justin Baldwin, a son, Mason Daniel, born January 5, 2024.

Jasmine King '23 married Jared Nees '23 on October 22, 2023.



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In Memoriam

'Outgoing and Vivacious'

*University community mourns the passing of
Christopher Newport's first First Lady*



**First Lady Cecil Cary
(nee Waddell) Cunningham**

First Lady Cecil Cunningham was a cherished member of the Christopher Newport family, known for her vibrant spirit and unwavering dedication to garnering support for what was then a young, fledgling Christopher Newport College. As the wife of the University's first president, H. Westcott Cunningham, Cecil Cunningham played a pivotal role in shaping the early years of Christopher Newport College, now the thriving University we proudly call home.

Cecil Cary (nee Waddell) Cunningham, passed away on August 31, 2023. She was 97 years old.

Cecil Cunningham's support and her deep involvement in various organizations, including being a founding member of the Peninsula Fine Arts Commission, exemplified her commitment to the growth and success of the University. Alongside her husband, Cecil Cunningham's passion for education and the arts enriched the lives of countless individuals and helped lay the foundation for the vibrant academic and cultural community we enjoy today. We are grateful for her countless contributions and the lasting impact she and the late President (emeritus) Cunningham had on Christopher Newport.

FACULTY, STAFF AND FRIENDS

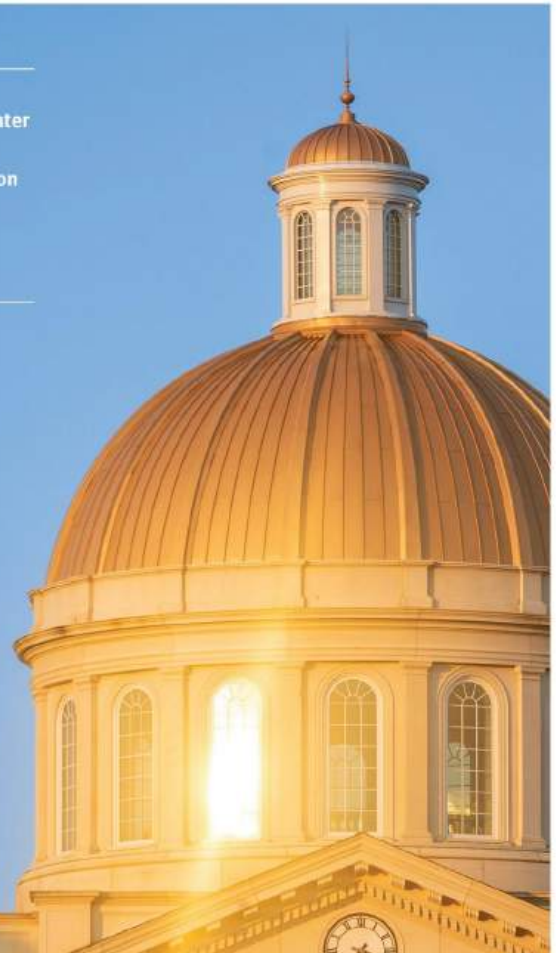
Sylvia Howe Berry
Ann M. Engle
David Geithman
Dr. Arthur Gudikunst
Sidney Warren Kernodle Jr.
Jeffrey Leiffer

Professor Emeritus Sanford E. Lopater
Joanne Carol Paul
Professor Emeritus Mary Pendelton
Flora Randall
Raymond Joseph Riha
Susan Stallings

ALUMNI

Walter H. Grizzard Jr. '72
John Adams '73
George W. Cooper Jr. '73
William Dorneman Jr. '74
Robert Warden Jr. '74
John C. Horsley '75
Joan Betting Mars '75
Richard Fox '76
Rebecca Richerson '76
William Wright Jr. '76
Robert Mosby III '77
Dianne Brooks '78
Gregory N. Gardy '78
James Healy '78
Dorothy H. Zehmer '78
Elizabeth P. Green '79
Solomon Keene '79
Jennifer Poole '82
Katherine Stewart Smith '83
Alice Langford '85

Marguerite Lindsay '85
Alex Stern '85
Elizabeth Walz '85
David Barnes '86
Lovona Brantley '86
William H. Irby Jr. '86
Jeffery Nuckolls '86
Cheryl Kelly '87
Ray Thomas Wildeson '87
Muriel Millar '88
Joanna Allen Simonsen '89
Thomas Thorpe '92
Thomas Arsenault '97
Mark Royal '97
Todd DeForest '99
Robin Sadler '99
Maria Booker '10
Geoffrey Seitz '12
Joseph Edward McCauley '16



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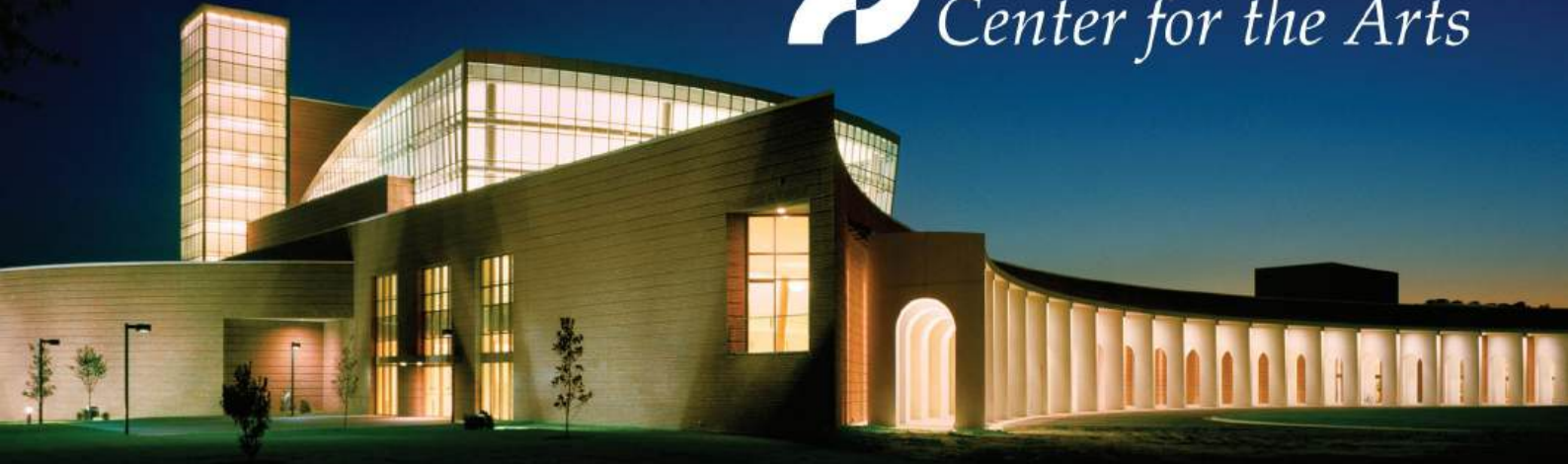


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LEAVE A LASTING *Legacy*

DR. REBECCA WHEELER regards Christopher Newport's English Department as home, the supportive foundation that has helped her teaching career flourish for decades. Her academic life has also thrived well beyond the University's walls, in countries as diverse as Scotland, Italy, India, Nepal and Tajikistan, where she served as a Fulbright Scholar in 2016.

As retirement approaches, Dr. Wheeler has created two gifts in areas deeply meaningful to her: supporting her colleagues' work in the English Department and assisting CNU students with traveling abroad.

"The English Department is my home—we all do such fine, committed work. Sometimes the research

inspirations of the faculty cost more than the University can support, so I wanted to create a fund that would endow the research of the English Department. I also want to affirm the signature Christopher Newport experience of traveling abroad. Travel is so important because it breaks us out of habits, pulls apart our assumptions, and requires us to see afresh. Travel can bring us a new understanding of what it is to be human."

Dr. Wheeler hopes you will consider including Christopher Newport in your wills and estate planning.

"Your bequest helps to create the world you see, the world you envision," she said.



Learn how you can leave a lasting legacy at Christopher Newport by contacting Keith Roots at (757) 594-0581 or keith.roots@cnu.edu.

