

COLLEGE OF HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES | THE SCIENCE OF IMPROVING LIVES

# REUNION

2021



# WELCOME BACK!





# MISSION STATEMENT

COLLEGE OF HUMAN ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

The mission of the College of Human Environmental Sciences is to empower individuals with knowledge and skills to bring about positive change in our world. Across multiple disciplines, we conduct advanced research, provide outreach, and prepare a new generation of professionals with a shared goal of improving lives of individuals, families, and communities.

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# Message from the DEAN

It warms my heart to see students back in our classrooms and faculty and staff back in our buildings. It is my fervent hope that these daily in-person interactions will continue to be the norm. We will work diligently to make that happen as we continue to follow up-to-date UA health guidelines. And I ask that everyone on campus does their part to keep each other safe.

We have come through challenging and often heartbreaking times over the last year and a half, but we have learned from these moments. At the College of Human Environmental Sciences, we found ways to ensure that our students continued to learn and succeed. We always enjoy sharing their accomplishments and those of our faculty, staff, alumni and friends in Reunion. In this issue, there is no lack of good news to celebrate.

I hope you enjoy learning how our fashion design students managed to pull off a first-rate fashion show within safe distancing guidelines. We've included stories, Mentoring is Key, Eat Local and Solving an Issue of Access, about the research faculty members and some of their students are doing that, without doubt, advance the College mission of improving lives. Highlights about the scholarly accomplishments taking place here are shared in our article, Faculty and Staff Accolades.

CHES students and alumni shine in stories about a literacy campaign that gets families outdoors and active, a creative way to connect during a pandemic, a financial planner helping clients make the most with what they have, and in a new Reunion feature, Alumni News.

With the good often comes the bittersweet, and we thought it important to remember those we lost in the past year who meant so much to our College because of their stellar contributions.

It has been a year full of ups and downs, but we have managed to finish another successful academic year at the Capstone. It took a great deal of hard work, cooperation and positivity to make that happen. I appreciate the contribution each and every one in our CHES family has made. Thank you all!

*Stuart Usdan*

Stuart Usdan, PhD





# Fashion for Life

## Tailored for the Times

by Jennafer Bowman



ideas, conducting customer research, executing garments, working with live models and then putting on a show," said Brian Taylor, instructor for clothing, textiles, and interior design. "They experience what it's like in the industry, so it was very important that the show happened."

That process, which began in May 2020, required students to create a collection with three-to-five looks which displayed not only the skills learned throughout their time in the program but also their own personal style.

Under a prehistoric whale skeleton, with the sounds of high heels on a wooden floor and camera clicks echoing through the museum in Smith Hall, apparel design seniors displayed their hard work in a runway show hosted by the Student Fashion Association (SFA).

Because COVID-19 precautions restricted in-person gatherings, the thought of putting on a live fashion show seemed impossible early last fall.

"The Fashion for Life show is an opportunity for students to go through the process of collecting



Due to requirements for distancing and safer-at-home recommendations, students had limited access to in-person instruction. "We met face-to-face one day a week, and then the rest of our meetings were virtual, they really had to use a lot of technology this year for this project.

"All of the content students created helped them become better managers of their time. When they get their first job, this is really going to help them because they will understand the importance of their timeframe. When things have to be completed to be able to share with the rest of the world, you've just got to do it," said Taylor.

Designer and 2020 SFA President, Grace McCoy, explains how COVID changed the way she approached the creative process. "Normally, you would go into class, show the class your sketches and your material, then use lab hours to create your looks. For anything you needed to do outside of class, the lab would have been accessible to you," says McCoy.

"At first, I was kind of like, oh my God, this is going to be so hard to create a collection basically by myself. Normally



you would have teachers around you in the lab and you'd have your other classmates. You could help each other along the way, which is what I've been used to.

"Because of COVID and everything, we could only use the lab like one day a week and sometimes that would get canceled. So pretty much everything I did, I did in my bedroom at home. We didn't get to do our normal critiques either, so we had to film our whole process, take pictures along the way and learn video editing," continues McCoy.

Once students completed videos, all designers were able to present their looks, explain process details and share the inspiration for their collection with instructors and classmates during a Zoom meeting. This was an important COVID work-around because feedback from teachers and other students has always been a vital part of the process of creating a collection.

Not only did students record their work process, the end results were captured by the College's Media Services team. Craig Graves and his four-person crew took over 2,000



photos of the designers' finished works. The photos were edited and available for the seniors to use in their portfolios.

"We had a circuit system set up, so there was a total of six cameras in different angles and heights taking photos when the models walked down the runway, and then we had a freelance photographer downstairs who took more still shots with a white background," says Graves.

"With the circuit we were able to have each designer and their models come in at different time slots and really be



able to get those perfect shots needed for their portfolios.

The 12 student designers were Jacob Brosky of Louisville, Kentucky; Julianne Dean of Birmingham, Alabama; Kate Floyd of Livingston, Alabama; Angelina Kim of Pike Road, Alabama; Faith Lowe of Mobile, Alabama; Jessica Lyerly of Birmingham, Alabama; Grace McCoy of Alpharetta, Georgia; Callie McKinnon of San Diego, California; Miya Michaels of Huntsville, Alabama; Shea Ochoa of Davis, California; Makenzie Tokes of Parkland, Florida; and Danbi Woo of Prattville, Alabama.

After their models walked down the runway, the student designers' seven-month project came to a close. The students reacted with a combination of relief and pride from being able to publicly show off their hard work.

Designer Jacob Brosky describes his feelings throughout the project. "I had two very different emotions leading up to the event and on the day of the event. Leading up to the event, I was extremely nervous. I wanted everything to be perfect and as the show kept getting closer and closer, I was getting extremely anxious that something would go wrong," he says.





"But, the day of the event, when I was waiting to have my models walk the runway, I just had this attitude of 'it is what it is', I couldn't change anything, like stitching or a pattern, my work was done and even if I wanted to change something the day of the event, I couldn't.

"I thought I was pretty calm because of that attitude," Brosky says.

interning under Maxwell in New York City, thought this year's process from brainstorming to putting on the show taught her how to work in the real world. "Everything I was learning felt like just one more thing I could add to my resume. All the skills that I learned throughout the whole process, I've been using in my internship. The COVID restrictions and the way the department worked around them were a blessing in disguise, even though we

had to work harder," says McCoy. "This overall process gave me the confidence that I needed to be a successful designer. I proved to myself that I could do it and it gave the confidence I needed to move to Manhattan, and it helped me get my internship with Brandon Maxwell.

"If I hadn't had the experience of putting on this year's show, I would have been a lot harder on myself,

**“ALL THE SKILLS THAT I LEARNED THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE PROCESS, I’VE BEEN USING IN MY INTERNSHIP. THE COVID RESTRICTIONS AND THE WAY THE DEPARTMENT WORKED AROUND THEM WERE LIKE A BLESSING IN DISGUISE, EVEN THOUGH WE HAD TO WORK HARDER.**

*Grace McCoy*

Other designers, like McCoy felt a mix of emotions. "The day of the show I was completing one of my garments to be used on the runway. I was extremely stressed, but I was a lot more excited to see my work and to show it to my parents who were in attendance," she says.

Each student was only allowed two guests due to COVID restrictions but were able to share their work with others virtually through video-sharing platforms such as Vimeo. Videos showed each designers' work collectively and individually.

Taylor and McCoy modeled the show after those of designers like Brandon Maxwell, making sure the opportunity benefitted students as best it could. McCoy, who is currently



especially when I'm surrounded by all these other students who went to fashion schools and have been doing this for years. But because of the program, I now have that confidence boost of 'I can do this,'" continued McCoy.

Taylor is gratified to know that his students appreciated the opportunities this year's version of Fashion for Life gave them. According to him, CHES was one of the only schools able to host an in-person fashion show. "Other schools did smaller versions of this, but they were pre-recorded and filmed from the students' homes. We were one of the few to actually mimic a runway show as close as possible and give our students this real-world experience," said Taylor.







# MENTORING IS KEY

## EDUCATING, TRAINING AND SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SCIENTISTS

In a recent Scientific American article by Harvard University professor Avi Leob, the author said, "... mentoring students enables scientists to promote the longevity of their academic DNA." Dr. Han-A Park is among the many CHES faculty whose scholarly DNA should have a long life.

Park has mentored 15 students since joining the human nutrition program in our College just four years ago. That role is important because Park knows that she is helping to build the future of science. She finds it gratifying to help create a community of people who appreciate, understand and expand science.

One of the students she mentors is Joe Jansen who has been working in Park's lab since February of 2020. He

is a junior from St. Louis, Missouri who is majoring in biology and minoring in nutrition and public policy. On the pre-medical track, Jansen's career goals are to get into an MD/PhD program and conduct translational research as well as practice medicine clinically.

Jansen has received funding from the scientific honor society, Sigma Xi, for his work on B-cell lymphoma-extra large (Bcl-xL) regulation of mitochondrial trafficking and energy retention in neurites of hippocampal neurons. Dr. Park is the project's primary investigator.

The study was motivated by research that Park and her research team had already been doing on Bcl-xL. Park and Jansen knew that Bcl-xL played an important role in energy metabolism,

and proper growth and development in neurons, but they did not know exactly how it accomplished this. Their research tested if Bcl-xL played a part in regulating the movement of mitochondria.

They observed that Bcl-xL depletion impaired energy metabolism, inhibited mitochondrial motility and indicated a greater susceptibility to neuronal death. The pair is finalizing a manuscript to submit their findings for publication.

Their research points to Bcl-xL as a potential therapeutic target for brain disorders that are associated with impaired neuron development or impaired energy metabolism.

## the best of both worlds

### Grad Student's Project Supports Health and Literacy



CASIE JONES

Families in Tuscaloosa had opportunities this year to stroll outdoors and enjoy story time too. Tuscaloosa County Park & Recreation Authority (PARA), in collaboration with the Tuscaloosa Public Library and the University of Alabama College of Human Environmental Sciences, kicked off Tuscaloosa StoryWalk® with an event on April 11 that featured walkable story displays at The Riverwalk.

Spearheading the project was Supervisor of Youth Programs for PARA, Casie Jones. An advocate for whole health through methods that promote active lifestyles and engaged minds, Jones looks for ways to develop innovative programs that achieve accessible and enjoyable modes of health within communities. Her expertise and experience encompass exploratory-based learning for youth, environmental and conservation education, outdoor recreation for all ages and holistic health and wellness.

In the process of completing a graduate degree in public health at

UA, Jones has taken on extra projects to satisfy her MPH applied practice experience. Says Jones, "I've been inspired by my mentors in the College of Human Environmental Sciences to create opportunities to be 'hands-on' in the community. For me, Tuscaloosa StoryWalk® serves as a pathway to connect my research, my CHES colleagues, and our similar passions for health and quality of life directly to local youth and families."

The opening StoryWalk® celebration included games and activities that involved others from CHES. Environmental Health classes completed a service-learning requirement by helping Jones with this project. At the kick-off event, our students promoted health, active



lifestyles and literacy with books and activities for children.

The StoryWalk® project was created by Anne Ferguson of Montpelier, Vermont and developed in collaboration with the Kellogg-Hubbard Library. StoryWalk® is a registered service mark owned by Ferguson.

Subsequent local events took place at Snow Hinton, Palmore and Jaycee Parks. Permanent locations for StoryWalk® trails are planned for a number of parks throughout the county.







## CHES Researchers Make a Difference in Local Community

Researchers from the College of Human Environmental Sciences recently examined factors tied to students' consumption of locally grown fruits and vegetables, then created a plan to increase their awareness and consumption of them.

With a grant from the Alabama Department of Agriculture & Industries, Yeon Ho Shin, PhD, Seung Eun Jung, PhD, RD, Kimberly Severt, PhD, and Alvin Nuih, MS, RD, may have changed the habits of a number of UA students when it comes to eating healthy and supporting the local economy.

"A long-term research goal of mine is to conduct community-engaged research that strengthens the well-being of the community by responding to local needs," said Shin, associate professor of hospitality management. "To accomplish this goal, my research team has conducted various local food consumption behavior studies over the past several years. Not only does consuming local food benefit the consumer, but it also benefits the community. When buying local, money is returned to the neighbor's pocket, resulting in a positive economic impact on the State."

Eat Local grant investigators brought years of expertise from varying fields into this project. "Interdisciplinary collaboration is a key component in my research. Because a wide variety of psychological factors influence food consumption, I believe it is essential for there to be interdisciplinary research. Nutrition and hospitality are two separate disciplines that both involve food. Having unique perspectives from two different disciplines helps construct a solid research design,

leading to richer results," elaborated Shin.

In Shin's previous research with Jung, they discovered that UA students generally lacked awareness about Alabama local food, were unfamiliar with locally grown crops, or did not know where to purchase them.

Out of those findings, the Eat Local study was born. "This study would provide education on the benefits of eating local food and also highlight the local food the State of Alabama offers," said Severt, director of the hospitality management program.

Associate professor of human nutrition Jung said, "I truly believe it is the responsibility of health and nutrition professionals to expand nutrition education to include ideas of environmental conservation and sustainability. Such a program could help students make informed food choices that not only preserve our natural resources, but also ensure food security for future generations."

Using study results, the team developed a theory-based program to educate students, increasing their awareness and knowledge of Alabama crops. With the help of students from both hospitality and nutrition, the Eat Local team delivered their message in person at Tuscaloosa River Market and online using social media. After recruiting UA students to participate in the study, the research team invited each to join a private Facebook Group where additional educational materials and videos were shared.

For their participation in the study, students were given incentive vouchers. Alvin Nuih worked with River Market management and local farmers to create a system where students then exchanged the vouchers for

tokens. With tokens in hand, students shopped River Market and purchased locally grown fruits and vegetables.

As with many endeavors, the journey can be as sweet as a successful result. Jung shared her experience during the study, "I absolutely loved working on this Eat Local project. It allowed me to utilize my research skills to develop an effective nutrition education program to improve sustainable and healthy dietary practices. In addition, I enjoyed mentoring my students and watching them develop new skills and showcase their creativity. The project helped them gain hands-on experience

conducting community needs assessments, developing educational materials, and implementing a program to change their target population's behavior."

Shin and colleagues considered the Eat Local project a resounding success. He said, "Our results were very promising because the study participants' knowledge regarding Alabama specialty crops was significantly increased. In addition, the participants' intention to consume Alabama specialty crops as well as their actual consumption of these crops during the study period increased considerably."



Left to right are Seung Eun Jung, Yeon Ho Shin, Kimberly Severt, Ellie Wright, Joy Bobo and Jacqueline Genito.



Left to right are Laine Strobel, Jacqueline Genito, Alvin Nuih, Seung Eun Jung, Yeon Ho Shin, Kimberly Severt, Ellie Wright and Joy Bobo. Not pictured are Raegan Thornton, Gabriella Wood and Haley Wright who joined the research team after COVID extended the study.



# CREATIVE SOLUTIONS POPPING UP EVERYWHERE

COVID-19 forced the College of Human Environmental Sciences to relate to students, faculty, staff and alumni in innovative ways. Aside from coming up with the practical means to accomplish online learning and practice social distancing, the College wanted to recreate some of the more joyful things about being a part of a collegiate community. Everyone at CHES needed a safe way to celebrate successes and interact with others. In our attempt to foster a welcoming atmosphere, we turned to online celebrations, social media interactions and pop-up events.

As restrictions began to ease, recommended precautions were put in place so hybrid classes (a mixture of online and in-person) could allow limited numbers of students back into classrooms. To welcome them and add a bit fun to student life, our events team turned to in-person pop-up events put on throughout the school year. Promoted through social media, each event featured grab and go goodies such as food, COVID-19 supplies and school supplies. CHES ambassadors hosted all ten pop-up events and interacted with students following safety protocols.

JT Love, an ambassador for CHES, appreciated the opportunity it gave students to get out of their dorms and explore the college. "I think the events helped students become more interactive with their environment. Due to the outbreak of COVID-19, many students had not been able to have fun with face-to-face activities, so I believe the events not only helped students appreciate on-campus activities but helped them gain a sense of relief that things are becoming normal again," said Love.

Love added that the events gave students something new and exciting to look forward to almost weekly. His favorite event was 'Let's Taco Bout Stress' which occurred late in Spring 2021. Students enjoyed free tacos while socializing in small groups with other students.

Larger events such as award ceremonies were hosted online.

Normally celebrated in the fall, the Jack Davis Professional Achievement Awards were celebrated virtually this spring through video announcements and social media posts. Dean Stuart Usdan introduced the awards honoring alumni who are excelling in their

chosen fields. Dee Davis, Jack Davis' widow, spoke words of praise and encouragement via video to the award winners. Each recipient also had an opportunity to express their thoughts about the honor they received.

Honors Day is a springtime tradition CHES was determined to celebrate safely. Held virtually through pre-recorded videos, Dean Usdan and department chairs recognized students who have excelled in academics, teaching and research. Usdan opened each of the eight videos, acknowledging students for their "outstanding service, leadership, citizenship, integrity and scholarship." Department chairs followed him, sharing the accomplishments of individual award-winning students.

Whether in person or virtually, the College of Human Environmental Sciences sought to make students, faculty, staff and alumni remember they had a place to call home within the college. "It was so important for CHES to host these events during COVID because it gave us a sense of hope that the world was moving a step in the right direction," said Love.



Couldn't have found a better person to man the Valentine's Day popup than CHES ambassador, JT Love (r)!



# Exceeding Expectations

## CHES Alumni Shine Professionally



Professional achievement is an expectation for our alumni and one we like to celebrate. Annually for over 30 years, we have hosted the Jack Davis Professional Achievement Awards which recognize the accomplishments of graduates who have distinguished themselves in their careers. This year, the College of Human Environmental Sciences honored Hannah Catalano, Josh Head, Michael J. Hudock Jr., Lee Johnson III, Jessica Judd, Greg McElroy, Jessica-Lauren Newby, Amanda Perna and Kyndal Smith.

The Jack Davis awards were named to honor Dr. Lewis Clifton "Jack" Davis, Jr., the first man to graduate from the College with a degree in nutrition. Davis set a standard of excellence as a dentist who was a pioneer in emphasizing the importance of nutrition in dental health.

We usually pay tribute to our outstanding alums in conjunction with Homecoming, but this year changed the way we celebrate. Because we couldn't miss an opportunity to honor stellar professionals who stand out in their fields, we celebrated with videos shared on social media. Please visit [ches.ua.edu/jack-davis](https://ches.ua.edu/jack-davis) to see the award presentations of each honoree in their entirety.

The department of health science recognized Dr. Hannah Catalano for her dedicated work in the field of health education. An associate professor of public health at the University of North Carolina Wilmington, her scholarship centers around child and adolescent health, quality school health education and the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) Model. Catalano expressed her appreciation for the award, "I was surprised to be nominated and I'm humbled to receive this award. I would like to thank the faculty members in the department of health science for their exceptional mentorship during my time at The University of Alabama. Specifically, I would like to thank Dr. David Birch, who I have known since I was a master's student. He encouraged me to apply to the PhD in Health Education and Promotion program at UA about 10 years ago, and I am so grateful he did. It's been one of the best decisions of my life."

The department of human nutrition and hospitality management recognized Josh Head for his success in the hotel industry. After years of work for Sandestin Golf and Beach Resort, then the Ritz Carlton in North Carolina, his elite hotel training caught the eye of the owner of Pursell Farms. Josh is now the assistant general manager of the luxury golf and leisure resort in Sylacauga, Alabama. Reflecting on his award Head said, "I'm among the fortunate who love what I do every day, and I'm grateful for the foundation I received at The University of Alabama and the College of Human Environmental Sciences. I've been blessed with some great mentors along the way, and I am thankful for the faculty and staff there. In particular, I want to recognize Mr. Alvin Niu, Ms. Kim Boyle and Dr. Roy Maize who was the head of the program during my time there."

The department of consumer sciences honored Michael J. Hudock Jr., of Williamsport, Pennsylvania for his success in the field of financial planning. He is the founding partner and president of Hudock Capital Group which provides comprehensive wealth management services. Hudock is also a philanthropist who has generously supported experiential learning opportunities for CHES students. Hudock said this about the Davis Award, "Above all, I see this award as an opportunity to say thank you to the amazing faculty I had during my time as a student with HES. Dr. Boschung, Ms. Brakefield, Dr. Abdel-Ghany are just a few of the names that were so important to the experience I had at U of A. I think part of the magic of HES is the faculty's ability to expect greatness while providing care and support as we go through the journey of education together. I hope all of the students that come through HES move on into the world and make you all proud."



DR. HANNAH CATALANO



JOSH HEAD



MICHAEL J. HUDOCK JR.

The department of human development and family studies conferred the Jack Davis Award on Dr. Lee Johnson III for his work helping to create meaningful change for young children and families at the state and national level. As a senior policy analyst at ZERO TO THREE in Washington, D.C., he collaborates with federal and state policy and advocacy leadership in developing and implementing policy positions supporting the well-being of babies and toddlers. Johnson felt honored and grateful to have received the award. He added, "I am fortunate that I've been able to take what I've learned through the College's great early childhood and public health education programs to fulfill my professional goals. One of which is in my current role, advocating for policies in the Nation's Capital that reflect education and health equity for children and families."

Jessica Judd's accomplishments in athletic training have earned her a Jack Davis award from the department of health science. She is one of only eleven women who serve as head athletic trainers for Division I college football teams. Jessica has been an athletic trainer at Western Kentucky University since 2015 and was promoted to head football athletic trainer in 2018. In accepting the award, Judd mentioned that although athletic training was usually a behind the scenes type of job, it was great to be recognized for the hard work that athletic trainers put into their jobs. She added, "...to this day, part of my heart still calls Tuscaloosa home. I would like to thank Dr. Deidre Leaver-Dunn and Dr. Jeri Zemke, who instilled in all of us some great one-liners and perfect education and development into this career of athletic training."

The department of human nutrition and hospitality management chose to honor an Alabama alumnus whose name is well-known for what he accomplished in football. Greg McElroy's efforts on the field helped our team earn its thirteenth national championship in 2010. McElroy's academic and business record mirrors his success on the gridiron. He currently serves as a college football analyst for Saturday games on ABC/ESPN. About his graduate degree from CHES McElroy says, "I'm so incredibly grateful and I cherish my time in CHES because I wouldn't be where I am at professionally, if not for all the information that I was able to pick up while studying sports management. I'm one of the few players that can diagnose

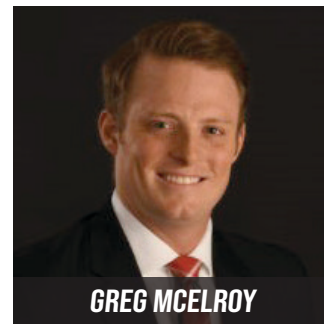




DR. LEE JOHNSON III



JESSICA JUDD



GREG MCELROY

what's happening on the field, but also have a decent understanding of what's going on from an athletic department standpoint on the business side of things. And I wouldn't have that perspective if not for my time spent in the sports management program."

The department of human nutrition and hospitality management has chosen Jessica-Lauren Newby as this year's recipient of the Jack Davis Award in human nutrition. Newby has been counseling clients on a journey toward food freedom, health and wellness for over a decade. She is currently in private practice with expertise in eating disorders, women's health, lactation and pediatrics. Reflecting on her time at CHES Newby says, "I had wonderful professors who believed in me when I didn't believe in myself. Some of those professors are still there today pouring into students and that includes Mr. Alvin Niuuh, Ms. Lori Greene, Dr. Jeannine Lawrence and Dr. Linda Knol. Because of the way The University of Alabama prepared me for my career, I do a job that I love every single day and that I can believe in. Thank you so much for this award and for everything you've done to prepare me for my career."

The department of clothing, textiles, and interior design recognized designer Amanda Perna for her success in the fashion industry. After honing her craft in New York designing for Oscar de la Renta and Calvin Klein, she launched her own brands, The House of Perna and Neon Bohemians, which have been sold internationally to retailers including Bloomingdale's and Nordstrom. She credits much of her success to our faculty saying, "I have worked really hard in my career and it's all thanks to the faculty and staff at The University of Alabama. In particular, I'd like to thank Dr. Sue Parker for believing in me as a student and pushing me to follow my dreams and go to New York and have my first internship. It laid all of the foundation for me to be able to learn and grow in the industry and then ultimately be able to run my own businesses."

The department of clothing, textiles, and interior design has selected cutting-edge interior designer, Kyndal Smith, to honor with this year's Jack Davis Award. Smith is a construction project manager and interior designer for DIRT Environmental Solutions which specializes in designing pre-manufactured interior construction solutions. She has climbed the company's corporate ladder and is located at DIRT headquarters in Calgary, Canada. In her current job, Smith consults with clients to determine their desired outcome for spaces, then develops detailed plans and 3-D models for them. Smith is passionate about doing the right thing for her customers and for the planet by using sustainable construction to create dynamic spaces. Expressing her gratitude, she says, "I'd like to thank them [CHES faculty] for providing me the education and skillset needed to prepare me for my career today."

As the stories of these standout professionals indicate, a Jack Davis Professional Achievement Award signifies to others the degree of dedication, drive and achievement honorees have had in their professional endeavors. The College thanks these exceptional men and women for being an inspiration to our students who follow in their footsteps.



JESSICA-LAUREN NEWBY



AMANDA PERNA



KYNDAL SMITH

# volunteering volunteering DRIVES CAREER CHANGE

## Former IT Specialist for NASA's Rocket Testing Program Now Safeguards Finances of His Clients

CHES family financial planning and counseling master's grad, Jeff Jones, shares our mission of improving lives. In fact, the satisfaction he gets from helping people motivated him to leave a successful IT job at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration and embark on a second career.

After earning his bachelor's degree in information systems from the University of Alabama in Huntsville, Jones became an IT specialist with the Department of Defense and eventually NASA. Jones' work focused on designing, implementing and maintaining computer systems that at times required high-level security clearance from the Department of Defense. Even though Jones had an established, successful nine-year career in the IT and engineering world, something was missing.

"I won't say I was dissatisfied with my work in IT. . . I was good at what I did. I enjoyed certain aspects of it, but it didn't scratch the itch of helping people like I thought it would," Jones said.

Jones turned to volunteering to fulfill his desire to give back and contribute to the community. Over the years, Jones donated his time to many different organizations and programs. One experience was with an Impact Alabama program which provides free tax preparation services for underserved communities. Using free training materials provided by the IRS's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA), Jones went beyond the required first level to do advanced training which opened additional opportunities to help people. He was dedicated to the tax prep program – the first year, Jones and his colleagues

completed 50 returns. The following year, the number of returns tripled.

Community service became a major part of Jones' life. At times, he spent up to 24 hours a week helping people with their taxes on top of his 40-hour work week. He even asked for reduced work hours at NASA to enable him to volunteer more. Knowing he couldn't continue volunteering at that level and start a family, Jones asked his wife, "What if I change careers?"

With her support, Jones began searching for a more fulfilling career. He reached out to people in the financial field, from CPAs to brokers. And that's when he found a local company, Longview Financial Advisors, Inc. and first discovered what a Certified Financial Planner® was. After learning more about what a





CFP® does and how they take a client-centered approach to financial planning, he knew he had found his path.

This new path, however, meant he would need to go back to school. Not wanting to get a second bachelor's degree, Jones' research led him to the one master's program in the state that was CFP® Board Certified at that time.

The family financial planning and counseling program at The University of Alabama's College of Human Environmental Sciences had everything he was looking for, including the option to take classes online, which allowed him to make a successful transition between careers.

"I had two children; I couldn't exactly just walk away [from NASA] and start over," Jones said. Because he didn't want to borrow money to become a financial planner, continuing to work allowed him to complete his master's without going into debt.

In addition to the flexibility of the program, he found a sense of community within the department. Eve

Pentecost, professor in the department of consumer sciences and contact for the program, sent Jones a variety of resources for navigating his academic journey, leading him to other students and connecting him to a Facebook group for the program.

Pentecost finds that the program's online features are beneficial to many students, including ones like Jones. "When we began a true online financial planning program with streaming video in 2006, it opened up a terrific opportunity for people in Alabama and across the nation. The most gratifying thing in working with a career changer like Jeff is to see him realize his dream in a satisfying position helping others. Jeff is always pushing the envelope to learn more," Pentecost said.

When Jones graduated from CHES in 2012, he knew that he wanted to work somewhere with fee-only fiduciary advisors, meaning advisors support a client's best interest and don't accept commissions or referral fees for their services. Finding a firm with this approach would align with his desire

to help people and make a difference in their lives.

After an internship and working part-time with Eugenias Advisory Group in Gadsden, Alabama, an opportunity at Longview Financial Advisors opened and he seized it. It is a fee-only wealth management company and its advisors renew their fiduciary oath annually. Longview places great emphasis on community service – giving employees two full days of paid leave to volunteer with an organization of their choice, as well as an additional four hours to do community service as a team.

Jones sees Longview as a relationship company that is good at financial planning. "...as I tell them [at Longview], 'I came home'. And that was it for me. That's where I knew I wanted to be long-term," Jones said.

Jones found a new passion when he attended his first National Association of Personal Financial Advisors (NAPFA) regional symposium in 2014. The organization is a leader for fee-only fiduciary advisor firms and an advocate for high professional and ethical standards.

"I walked into that event and we had pre-event networking opportunities, and I realized I had found my people. And the fact that there were thousands of them out there, I go, 'Yes. I love that piece,'" Jones said. "That's where my volunteer heart really lies right now – with NAPFA."

Through his job with Longview and his involvement with NAPFA, Jones finally found the fulfillment he had been missing at his IT job.

"It was [this] almost immediate sense of, 'Yes. I am helping people and I am making a difference in lives.' It was just

such a satisfying piece to add back into my career that had been missing for far too long," he said.

Jones currently serves as the Director of Financial Planning at Longview. His goals are to provide his clients with peace of mind during both easy and hard times.

"Peace of mind for an individual, for a spouse who is the money manager of the household, [is knowing] that if they pass away, someone can come alongside that surviving spouse and know where everything is, know how assets flow, know how to do things. Transitions come in a lot of different flavors, the way that you get to help people in this [field]," Jones said.

Jones says the most fulfilling part of the program isn't financial. "The financial planning piece gets all the glory, but it's the counseling where you sit down next to someone and help them through such an emotional, psychological transition that actually gives you some of the most satisfaction in what we do," Jones said.

Jones and his colleagues, four of whom are CHES grads, have given students at the Capstone an opportunity to learn first-hand about financial planning and counseling. This past summer, Mallori Gorham ('23) spent ten-weeks at Longview in a paid internship designed to give her real-world experiences. Not wanting her to just file, scan or organize spreadsheets, Jones had Gorham sit in on client meetings, allowing her to gain vital insight from a fellow CHES graduate. Jones relates to Gorham's path, and says it looked "very similar to what I was doing when I was looking for my path forward."

Outside of the office, Jones is active in his community. In addition to being a

father of three children, and coaching their soccer, baseball and softball teams, he continues to do volunteer work.

Donating his time and talent to NAPFA throughout the years, Jones has risen through the ranks of the organization. Since joining the regional board in 2013, he has chaired the South Regional Board of Directors and currently serves as chair-elect of the national organization. Starting Sept. 1, 2022, Jones will become chair of the NAPFA Board of Directors, which currently has approximately 4,000 members. By the time his terms are up, he will have spent eight years serving at the national and regional levels.

His goals for NAPFA align with the CHES mission of improving lives – Jones wants to continue cultivating the spirit of giving throughout the financial planning community while providing helpful services. He passes this mission on to his clients.

"We encourage clients to take a proactive approach in their giving, to find what's meaningful to them, identify their own values, marry it to their own goals, find the organization that fits what they're doing, and then engage that organization," Jones said. "We talk about giving of your time, your talent, and your treasure, there's multiple ways to give, it's not always about money."

• • • **By Ceara Burden**



# Remembering

Kathleen Stitt, Yasmin Neggers and Darryl Thornton

*Being a close-knit College where faculty and students form personal relationships makes it all the more difficult when we must say goodbye. The last several months have been hard on our college family with the loss of three remarkable faculty members who have all left their mark in different ways. However, the qualities they all had in common were a passion for teaching, dedication to their students, and a love for CHES. So, we take a pause from sharing the good news and events of the past year to honor their memory.*

**D**r. Kathleen Roberta Stitt understood the importance of building relationships and that belief drove much of her success. A passionate advocate of nutrition education for women and children, she guided hundreds of CHES students who carry on her work.

"Speaking for her former students and colleagues, Dr. Stitt was revered as a teacher, as a mentor, and as a friend. She brought out the very best in her students and inspired them to achieve at a level her students often thought impossible. She took great pride in their successes and was never too busy to help her students 'one more time,'" said Dr. Judy Bonner, past president of The University of Alabama and former dean of CHES.

Stitt joined the faculty of our College in 1955 as an instructor of nutrition, chaired her department for 15 years, and went on to become the director of research for CHES. It was during her tenure that the coordinated program for dietetics was established. Upon

her retirement in 1993, friends and family members honored her with an endowed scholarship to support undergraduate students studying nutrition.

"Dr. Stitt was a national dietetics leader who had the vision to establish, at CHES, one of the first coordinated dietetics programs in the nation. Skilled at networking, she used her many professional contacts to place students in internships across the country," added Dr. Milla Boschung, former dean of CHES.

Active in the American Dietetic Association, Stitt served on several national committees, and had terms on the board of directors and as president of the Alabama Dietetic Association. She was a contributing member of the American School Food Service Association and president of the Alabama Home Economics Association. In 1987, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics honored her with a Medallion Award, a national recognition of outstanding service and



**Kathleen Stitt, PhD, RD**  
December 27, 1926 – July 19, 2021

leadership in the Academy and the nutrition and dietetics profession.

"Dr. Stitt leaves behind a long and impressive legacy that represents the very best of what higher education is all about. Her life's mission was always reflected in the success of her students. She left us richer and better prepared to leave our own mark on the world," concluded Dr. Bonner.



**Yasmin Neggers, PhD, RD**  
August 24, 1949 – May 30, 2021

In 1978, a young instructor and promising researcher with master's degrees in chemistry and nutrition and a doctorate in epidemiology arrived on UA's campus. Finding a home in our department of human nutrition and hospitality management, Dr. Yasmin

Neggers remained a fixture for more than 39 years progressing through multiple promotions before retiring.

Neggers was a driving force behind the growth of the nutrition program and served as a mentor to graduate students making their way through the thesis and dissertation process.

Known as a gifted educator, Neggers' ability to communicate complex topics in a way students could understand earned comments that her highly challenging Energy Metabolism course was one of the best in the program.

Neggers maintained a dynamic research agenda, most recently studying the relationship of dietary factors with maternal, infant and adolescent health. She was a respected resource for junior research faculty, providing guidance on their research designs and trajectories. Her early

years in India provided a global perspective that sparked enlightening conversations whether about nutrition science, epidemiology or even global politics. Her voice will be greatly missed.

Away from work, Neggers was known as an excellent cook; infusing her dishes with the spices and flavors of her native India and her backyard garden. "She had the most amazing green thumb of anyone I have ever known", said colleague and current departmental chair, Dr. Kristi Crowe-White. "She was always prepared to walk us through her garden for tips on gardening."

Yasmin Neggers passed away in May but will be remembered as a treasured CHES faculty member whose distinguished and enduring research career continues our mission of improving lives.

The one word used consistently to describe CHES instructor Darryl Thornton was joyful. Whether talking to friends or teaching students, it seemed that every room brightened when Thornton walked in.

"Darryl was a natural people-person and was automatically comfortable in every venue" said Paula Robinson, clothing and textiles instructor, "Whenever he entered a room, he was spreading laughter and light."

After a 15-year background in the fashion industry, Thornton earned his M.S. in Human Environmental Sciences from CHES in 2006. He returned to UA in 2015 to work in the department of clothing, textiles, and interior design as an instructor and later taught HES 100 and HES 310, fundamental courses that all of our students must take.

"He was a very cheerful and giving person," said Dr. Virginia Wimberley,

graduate director for the clothing and textiles program, "Darryl was devoted to his students and friends."

His commitment to students led him to win two national Blackboard awards, a 2019 Exemplary Course Award for HES 485 Self-Managed Mentoring and the same award in 2020 for HES 450 Volunteerism & Civic Responsibility. "Darryl was very good at guiding students to be their 'best selves'," added Robinson.

His accomplishments didn't stop with the courses he taught or the awards he received, Thornton was also the brand director for the official tartan of UA called "We Are Crimson." He promoted the CHES student-designed pattern and helped create a range of fashion items that featured the registered plaid.

Like many of his colleagues, clothing and textiles instructor Brian Taylor



**Darryl Thornton, MS**  
September 5, 1965 – January 11, 2021

remembers Thornton's kindness, laughter and willingness to give to friends, students and peers.

Although Thornton passed away, his spirit and joyous nature will live on in all of the students he taught and the lives he touched.

• • • By Jennafer Bowman, Rosemary Klein and Tabby Brown



# NEWS

## Class of 1977

**Nancy Spraggins Hodges**, retired educator, was recognized as the Woman of the Year by the Alexander City Chamber of Commerce for her service to The University of Alabama Alumni Association and passion for helping young people attend The University of Alabama.

## Class of 1980

**Laura Cooper** was elected to the Board of Directors of Auburn Bank in Auburn, Alabama.

## Class of 1984

**Katrina Andrews Daniels** retired after serving as the standards and training officer for 30 years at the Jefferson County Youth Detention Center.

## Class of 1989

**Perrie Hixon-Tucker's** novel, "My Blood Runs Crimson," will be featured in the June 2021 issue of Tuscaloosa magazine. She has a final book in 'The Crimson Series' that is set to release in late December 2021.

## Class of 1992

**Kerry Harris-Nolan** was promoted to Key Makeup Artist on CBS's hit television series, Blue Bloods.

## Class of 1998

**Ripp Daniell** achieved tenure at Salem State University in Salem, Massachusetts.

**Dalisha D. Herring**, PhD, CFP® has accepted a full-time faculty position in the Finance Department of Florida State University's College of Business.

## Class of 1999

**Angie Smith** was hired as region 3 director of the Alabama Department of Early Childhood Education Office of School Readiness.

## Class of 2000

**LaShonda Kemp** has been appointed chief human resources officer for the City of Tuscaloosa.

## Class of 2000 & 2004

**Stacey Hill** was promoted to manager of global diversity and talent engagement at The Boeing Company. In 2021, she was appointed to The University of Alabama National Alumni Association Executive Council, as a regional vice-president. Hill is the immediate past president of the University of Alabama Black Alumni Association.

## Class of 2001

**Harold Fagan II** was promoted to senior director of operations for Drive DeVilbiss Medical and is responsible for the distribution hub of the organization which ships medical devices all over the globe.

## Class of 2002 & 2003

**Laura Purdin Lucas** was appointed the first infant and early childhood mental health director for the Georgia Department of Early Care and Learning. This is the first state level position that focuses on early childhood mental health in Georgia.

## Class of 2003

**Allan Gamble** was promoted to operations control center (OCC) duty manager for Endeavor Air, a wholly owned subsidiary of Delta Air Lines based in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

**Kendall Maygarden Hampton** works with United Cerebral Palsy of Huntsville and Tennessee Valley's Building Blocks Early Intervention Program. She is one of seven early intervention providers in the state who received intensive training in five intervention practices adopted by Alabama Early Intervention System for working with toddlers with Autism and their families. Hampton will assist and coach other providers in Region 1 of the Regional Autism Network (RAN).

## Class of 2004

**April Mize-Davis**, co-author of Women in Business: Leading the Way about women across the US who are successful entrepreneurs, recently came out with a series of Christian children's books available on Amazon which she wrote and illustrated.

## Class of 2006

**Kyle Whittington**, CFP® was named president of Meld Financial, Inc, a wealth management firm in Birmingham, Alabama.

## Class of 2007 & 2009

**Lacey Watts** was named 2020 Professional of the Year by The Arc of Tuscaloosa County for her supervision of an employee at the UA Speech and Hearing Center who works with her through The Arc's employment program.

## Class of 2008

**Caneeka Eleanor Miller** was featured in VoyageATL discussing the fall 2021 release of her book "In A High Place: Black Motherhood and Woman Rising Poetry and Essay Collection."

## Class of 2009

**Lindsey H. Deal**, CFP became a partner at Thornhill Capital Management in Tuscaloosa where she works as a financial advisor.

## Class of 2010

**Jia Chen** received a 2020 Women of Excellence Award from Baylor College of Medicine.

## Class of 2011

**Terry Hood**, a New York Life agent, obtained Million Dollar Round Table membership in 2020 and also qualified for the New York Life Executive Council.

## Class of 2014

**Major David Tosh** was recently promoted to the rank of Major in the U.S. Army, while deployed to Saudi Arabia with a combat support hospital. He received the Meritorious Service Medal for COVID-19 contact tracing and medical regulating functions.

## Class of 2015

**Daniel Borbolla** recently launched Thriv.ee, a free business listing website created during the height of the pandemic to help Florida businesses reach new clients.

**Kaira Klingler** was promoted to project lead at OMNI Youth Services in Buffalo Grove, Illinois.

**Shelby Smith** became catering sales manager at Valley Hotel in Birmingham in spring 2021.

**Jordan Kelsea Terry** has been named coordinator of events and annual giving for UA's College of Communication & Information Sciences.

## SHARE YOUR NEWS WITH US

We would love to share your professional accomplishments with fellow CHES alums. Please let us know about recent promotions, new jobs, awards, appointments and other honors. To consider news of your good works for inclusion in the next issue, send information to [chesnews@ua.edu](mailto:chesnews@ua.edu) and be sure to include the year you graduated and your major.

We enjoy sharing the great ways our alumni are fulfilling the CHES mission of improving lives!



## Class of 2016

**Deiondria Lee-Sanders**, science teacher of the month in August 2020, achieved the highest biology proficiency scores the Jackson Public School District in 2021.

**Shalyn Smith McKitt** joined Balch & Bingham LLP's Birmingham office as a litigation associate and member of the Health Care Law Practice Group.

**Hunter Stanfield** is an assistant professor of family science at Lipscomb University. He received the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Dean's Award for 2020-2021 for his teaching, leadership, service and scholarship.

## Class of 2016 & 2020

**Aimee J. McDonough**, two-time grad, recently added dietitian for Flowers Hospital Center for Metabolic and Weight Loss Surgery to her resume.

## Class of 2017

**Katie Crowe** has been named vice president of Palmetto Benefit Solutions and also qualified in the top 1% in sales for a fortune 500 insurance carrier.

**Serena Y. Jordan** successfully completed the registration examination for dietetic technicians.

**Debbie Safra** passed her state boards, becoming a registered dietitian. She is working as a clinical dietitian at her local hospital.

**Delaney Welborn** has worked at Mohawk Industries as a textile designer in the commercial department since graduation. She began a new position as a commercial field designer and helped open up her company's first field design studio, Mohawk Personal Studio, in Chicago, Illinois.

## Class of 2018

**Olivia T. Duffy** was promoted to program coordinator in the CATCH (Community Action to Combat HIV/Hep C) program at Argus Community.

**Dr. Ryan R. Fairall** was promoted to chair of Keiser University's exercise science department overseeing programs at eight Keiser University campuses throughout the state of Florida.

**Hannah Harris** has signed on with Hyster-Yale Group as their marketing events coordinator.

**Adam McLean** came on board as the associate merchant for baseball/softball in Walmart's home office in Bentonville, Arkansas.

**Taylor Ragan** has passed her exam to become a registered dietitian and is practicing at Erlanger Baroness Hospital in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

## Class of 2019

**Katie Blake**, child life specialist at Children's of Alabama, received UAB Medicine's Patient Experience Hero Award for 2021 for providing exceptional care for patients and families.

**Omar A. Gonzalez** was promoted to assistant general manager of the Port Royal Ocean Resort in Port Aransas, Texas.

**Kerri Heritage** received a promotion to an instructional technologist II at UA's Capstone College of Nursing.

**Grace Howington** accepted a position to serve as catering coordinator of the Paramount Group in Chicago, Illinois.

**Sammi Woronoff** passed NCIDQ licensing exams to become a registered designer in Alabama. She has been appointed to the Board of Directors of IIDA-AL as vice president

of student affairs and is membership director for the Alabama Interior Design Coalition (AIDC).

## Class of 2020

**Shaqueria Dial** secured a position as an interior designer for Cottage Supply Company in Pelham, Alabama.

**Caitlyn Joy Friedman** landed a job as a mortgage loan processor in the south Florida branch of NVR Mortgage.

**Madeleine West** followed her dreams and returned to the magical world of Disney. She works for Rix Sports Bar & Grill in Walt Disney World's Coronado Springs Resort in Orlando, Florida.

**Daniel Leavitt** was recently promoted to executive housekeeper for Le Pavilion Hotel. The New Orleans hotel received a Top 10 Reader's Choice Award from Condé Nast Traveler in 2020.

**Tiffany D. Harless** became a litigation paralegal in the Montgomery, Alabama office of Ball, Ball, Matthews & Novak.

**Traci Hurley** became a certified facilitator for Child Sexual Abuse Prevention Program at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta. She is also a member of Georgia's statewide task force to combat human trafficking.

**Mengting Su**, an MPH candidate majoring in epidemiology of microbial diseases at Yale School of Public Health, recently published a peer-reviewed article "Influence of Lab Adapted Natural Diet and Microbiota on Life History and Metabolic Phenotype of *Drosophila melanogaster* on Microorganisms" as a co-author.

## Class of 2021

**Donna Leigh Rush** has been hired as a project manager with the global emergency management company, Aspen Medical USA.

# Solving an Issue of ACCESS

**CHES Researcher and Therapist looks for innovative ways to deliver mental health services.**

By its very definition, evidenced-based mental health treatments are effective. "Evidence-based practices, or EBPs, are therapies that have been studied academically or clinically, proved successful, and replicated by more than one investigation or review, according to the National Alliance on Mental Illness."\* The National Institutes for Mental Health maintains that "...for many therapies, research involving large numbers of patients has provided evidence that treatment is effective for specific disorders. These 'evidence-based therapies' have been shown in research to reduce symptoms of depression, anxiety, and other disorders."\*\*

With EBPs, therapists, counselors and even students in practicums are armed with the tools they need to help people overcome mental health challenges. Access is more often the missing piece of the puzzle in the effective treatment.

Blake Berryhill, PhD, an associate professor in the department of human development and family studies and director of the marriage and family therapy graduate program, is working to solve this problem and has a number of tools to help him do so.

As a researcher, teacher and program director, Berryhill knows these interconnected responsibilities build upon each other and he is passionate about all of them. "Whether I'm teaching students to become competent and really strong mental health clinicians, working on grant-funded projects or conducting research, each helps increase access to mental health resources in communities we serve," says Berryhill.

"We know that, in Alabama, we are 50th in the country in access to mental health services. So, there is a need out there to provide resources. Part of increasing access is providing avenues for individuals, couples and families to

participate in services. One of those avenues is telemedicine or tele mental health," Berryhill points out.

In a project that has been funded by the Alabama Life Research Institute, an interdisciplinary team of researchers will try to reach more young people who have psychiatric symptoms and to close the gap on research needed to test the effectiveness of delivering psychotherapy for adolescent depression through telemedicine. Depression is one of the most prevalent psychiatric disorders in adolescents and because of a nationwide mental health provider shortage, schools may prove to be a key setting for youth to receive services.

Four Alabama schools located in provider shortage areas will participate in the study. Dr. Berryhill, one of the project's three primary investigators, will be working with colleagues from UA's Colleges of Community Health



Sciences, Social Work and Education, along with faculty in various disciplines from across the country. The team will evaluate coaching of school personnel to increase the delivery of evidence-based therapy through video-conferencing while students are at school. This delivery innovation could be a powerful tool to increase access to services by alleviating time and travel barriers and reducing costs. Investigators will also evaluate the effectiveness of coaching methods and adolescent depressive symptoms both pre-to post- videoconferencing delivery of psychotherapy.

Berryhill and colleagues from the School of Social Work, Drs. Laura Hopson and Cady Carlson, set out to increase the availability of therapeutic services for rural Alabamians while providing a vehicle for UA students to practice skills they have learned. In a grant funded by UA, "Increasing Behavioral Services in Pickens County:

A Collaboration with School SMART Clinics, Pickens County Primary Care, and Pickens County Medical Center," they will extend services provided by graduate social work and marriage and family therapy student interns. Students will work in SMART school-based health clinics in three schools and at two locations of Pickens County Primary Care medical practices. "That's where even more overlap occurs. We're teaching students these evidence-based practices, which they are then using in their internships and practicums," he adds.

Implementation science is yet another tool that Berryhill is passionate about incorporating into his research and practice. Berryhill says, "Implementation science has improved the delivery of mental health treatments and projects by helping us understand the processes that improve or hinder access to

services. For example, we interview students in order to understand their perceptions of receiving telehealth services, including using technology, feeling comfortable with the therapist, and timing of sessions during the school day. We will use this data to improve processes for delivering these services." Incorporating implementation science in projects he undertakes allows him to respond more fluidly to patient needs and delivery challenges.

He expects to put that tool to good use in another project recently funded by the NIH. An interdisciplinary team comprised of Berryhill and colleagues from UA's College of Community Health Sciences will collaborate with dental offices across the U.S. to develop, put into place and evaluate procedures for integrating mental health screening in their interactions with patients. Berryhill explains the

motivation for their work, "Research shows that adults go to their dentist more often each year than to their primary physician. In a National Dental Practice-Based Research Network (NDPBRN) quick poll conducted in 2018, 93% of dentists understood that dental and mental health were related, and a majority had a strong interest in getting training about screening for mental health issues and referring patients to services."\*\*\*

"For this project, we will utilize implementation science to guide understanding for our dentists, dental hygienists, and office staff perceptions of how to best implement mental health screening procedures into their dental practice. We don't want to cause more anxiety on the patient, and we want to work within a natural dental health workflow," he adds.

Implementation science became even more important to Berryhill during COVID-19. It helped him, and his students continue their practices during the pandemic. Incorporated into many of his current projects and sprinkled in his research are lessons learned because of the pandemic.

Berryhill explains how and why COVID

changed the delivery of mental health treatment in schools. "Mental health symptomology increased during the pandemic, specifically depression, anxiety, and trauma. As a response to the pandemic, schools transitioned to either a virtual model education delivery or an in-person/virtual hybrid model of school. Students were on-campus less than normal. We noticed through this process that the need for services increased but students and families were harder to connect with. We had to be more diligent in working with school personnel to be able to contact students and their families."

He and his students delivered therapy through telehealth more than ever

before. Berryhill found that one of the biggest challenges brought by COVID was making sure our clients were comfortable receiving telehealth services. "We trained our clinicians to emphasize comfortability to ensure that client care continued to be a priority," he says. Workarounds like these often turn into practice innovations.

Through his therapeutic practice, his mentorship of marriage and family therapy graduate students, his interdisciplinary projects and his research, Berryhill is making a difference in the mental health of Alabama citizens.

Tele mental health has become a big part of Dr. Blake Berryhill's practice.



Berryhill earned his PhD in Marriage and Family Therapy from Kansas State University, a Master of Divinity from Lubbock Christian University, a Master of Marriage and Family Therapy, a Master of Arts in Religion and a Bachelor of Arts in Youth and Family Ministry from Abilene Christian University. He is a licensed marriage and family therapist and approved clinical supervisor. His research interests include implementation and dissemination of mobile health technologies for the prevention and treatment of mental health symptomology in rural schools. Additionally, he examines the influence of family functioning on adolescent and emerging adult mental and behavioral health, self-compassion and systemic factors associated with parental school involvement. He has co-authored manuscripts in such journals as Telemedicine and E-Health, Family Practice, Personal Relationships, Journal of Child and Family Studies, Child and Youth Care Forum and Contemporary Family Therapy.

\*<https://dualdiagnosis.org/treatment-therapies-for-dual-diagnosis-patients/evidence-based-treatment-practices/>

\*\*<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/psychotherapies/>

\*\*\*[https://www.nationaldentalpbrn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Quick-poll\\_Feb-2019.pdf](https://www.nationaldentalpbrn.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Quick-poll_Feb-2019.pdf)





# Faculty & Staff ACCOLADES

Celebrating the accomplishments of our CHES colleagues.

College of Human Environmental Sciences faculty and staff members continually strive to maintain relevance and distinction, giving our students a rich academic environment in which to learn. We love to share their accomplishments.

The University of Alabama Board of Trustees has endorsed the appointment of two CHES faculty, **Dr. Lizzie Elder** and **Dr. Robert Nielsen**,

to named professorships for their excellence in scholarship, research and teaching. Nielsen, department of consumer sciences chair, has been appointed the inaugural Helen M. Goetz Endowed Professor. Elder, athletic training program director, will become the first Dr. A.E. Maumenee, Jr., Endowed Professor in Athletic Training. The appointments will strengthen the teaching and research efforts of Dr. Elder, Dr. Nielsen and

faculty in their respective programs.

Annually, the College recognizes faculty and staff members who are nominated by their peers or by their students for outstanding work. The following awards were presented at a faculty-staff end-of-semester Zoom meeting in late spring.

CHES recognized **Dr. Kimberly Blitch's** teaching skills by giving her



From left to right are Lizzie Elder, Robb Nielsen, Kimberly Blitch, Casey Totenhagen, Michelle Darabaris and Jenny Goddard.

the 2020 Joseph S. Rowland Teaching Excellence Award. Blitch is an assistant professor in the department of human development and family studies and the program director of the early childhood education major. She also coordinates and supervises student teaching experience for teacher candidates. Her nominator said, "Some would describe an excellent teacher as one who provides information in a way that resonates with students, one who is available to students and one who is passionate about their specialty. This year's recipient displays each of the characteristics and so much more. Her door, whether her actual door on campus or a virtual one, is always open to students to stop by to discuss course materials, career advice or difficult life situations."

Receiving this year's HES Leadership Board Excellence in Scholarly Research Award was **Dr. Casey Totenhagen**, human development and family studies associate professor.

Totenhagen's research program focuses on understanding relationship quality, particularly in the context of stressors that different types of couples' experience. In her studies, she includes a variety of couple types such as dating and married couples, same sex couples and military spouses in an effort to examine if there are unique stressors based on couple variability. National organizations have funded her work and she has over 23 peer-reviewed publications in top journals in her field.

**Michelle Darabaris**, Children's Program director, received the CHES Staff Distinguished Service Award for exempt employees. She runs a program that serves more than 100 children from ages 2 months through 5 years. Darabaris led her team to become the first and only 5-star rated early childhood program in the state of Alabama. She is always looking for ways to improve the experiences of the families of children enrolled in the

program and its students and teachers. She developed and teaches a course about putting theory into practice in early childhood settings. During COVID, Darabaris worked with officials on developing safety protocols for the program to continue to function. Her nominator concluded her nomination with this, "Helping to support each other, college students and families is what Michelle does best. . .we are thankful to have her."

Dean's office program assistant, **Jenny Goddard**, received the CHES Staff Distinguished Service Award for non-exempt employees. Goddard's faithful service to the College over the last 10 years earned her this award. As her nominator said, "If you work for CHES, chances are Jenny has helped you one way or another. . .always with a smile on her face." She is invaluable for being there when you need advice based on insider knowledge. She assists with anything from completing special projects to helping with





**DR. LINDA KNOL**

college events. With the neatest handwriting in the world, a gift for gab and a wicked sense of humor, she is counted on to add special touches to invitations, internal newsletters and inspirational signage.

Six CHES faculty received tenure this year. They are **Drs. Blake Berryhill, Shinae Choi, Seung Eun Jung, Melvin Lewis, Yeon Ho Shin and Libo Tan**. Each was promoted to the rank of associate professor. Tenured faculty members **Drs. Linda Knol, Jeannine Lawrence and Kimberly Severt** were promoted to full professor.

These faculty and staff members were recognized for providing outstanding academic guidance to CHES students. Each was nominated by students to receive UA's Outstanding Commitment to Advising Award: **Dr. Sherwood Burns-Nader, Lauren Creel, Diana Garrett, Lori Greene, Chartis Ivy, Dr. Cecile Komara, Melinda Lake, Dr. Heather Love, Kelly Schaefers, Martha Sears, Dr. Kimberly Stran, Brian Taylor, Janet Teer, Andrea**



**DR. JEANNINE LAWRENCE**

**Wilson, Kelly Wingo** and the late **Darryl Thornton**.

Organizations outside our College acknowledge the exceptional performance of our faculty and staff with awards, honors and appointments. Congratulations to these CHES notables.

**Carla Blakey**, hospitality management faculty, received a special recognition by the UA Division of Student Life. Through their Extra Credit program, family members of UA students nominate faculty and staff who have made a difference in the life of their student. Blakey's nominator said, "Ms. Carla Blakey was always spoken of very highly in our house. She gave my daughter great opportunities and really inspired her."

**Dr. Sherwood Burns-Nader**, human development and family studies faculty, was selected a fellow in the inaugural class of the Association of Child Life Professionals' Research Fellows Program.



**DR. KIMBERLY SEVERT**

**Karen Carpenter**, student services advisor and coordinator for Bama Bound, received UA's Dr. Minnie C. Miles Endowed Excellence Award. Recipients of this annual university-wide award must have performed in an exemplary manner, above and beyond their normal duties, to further the mission of The University of Alabama.

**Dr. Shinae Choi**, consumer sciences faculty, was elected to serve as secretary of the American Council on Consumer Interests (ACCI) from 2021 to 2024.

**Dr. Kristi Crowe-White**, human nutrition and hospitality management chair, was appointed an associate editor for the journal, *Annals of Medicine – Nutrition Division*.

**Drs. Kristi Crowe-White and Han-A Park**, human nutrition and hospitality management faculty, received funding from the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics to investigate the epigenetic influences of prenatal dietary nitrate on nutritional programming of

cardiometabolic outcomes in offspring. With approximately 50% of women entering pregnancy overweight or obese, there is critical need for research on nutritional programming of fetal outcomes.

**Dr. Lizzie Elder**, athletic training program director, received the R.T. Floyd District Award through the Southeast Athletic Trainers' Association for contributions to the District to advance the profession of Athletic Training.

**Erin Holloway**, adjunct human development and family studies faculty and CHES alumna, was elected 2021-2023 chair of the Alabama Marriage and Family Therapists Network (ALAMFT).

**Dr. Jennifer Humber**, student services director, received the 2020 Director's Award at the National Symposium on Student Retention virtual conference with "In Their Own Words: Student Engagement as Defined by Online Learners." The award was given for the

paper that best addressed an issue of current interest and need in the field of student retention and success.

**Dr. Haemi Kim**, hospitality management faculty, received the Best Poster Award at the 8th North East North American Federation of International Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (NENA ICHRIE) Conference in March 2021 with "Employee perception of innovativeness and adaptive behaviors."

**Beverly Kissinger**, interior design adjunct faculty and assistant professor emerita, was elected to the board of Alabama Chapter of the American Society of Interior Designers as financial director for a two-year term beginning in October 2021.

**Drs. Lingyan Kong, Libo Tan and Shatina Chen**, human nutrition and hospitality management faculty, and **Dr. Michelle Tong**, clothing, textiles, and interior design faculty, received a USDA 2020 Specialty Crop Block

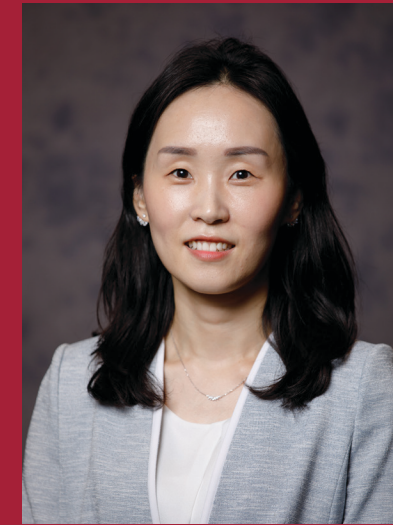
Grant. In this project, they aim to analyze nutrient composition and antioxidant characteristics of pecans grown in Alabama and disseminate the knowledge to local consumers.

**Dr. Jessica Wallace**, athletic training faculty, was named to the National Athletic Trainers' Association Public Health Taskforce. The goals of the task force are to advance the visibility and credibility of athletic trainers in public health venues and educate the NATA membership on the many commonalities shared with public health.

**Dr. Jeri Zemke**, athletic training faculty, was named to the Commission on Accreditation of Athletic Training Education's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Leadership Development Committee. The purpose of this CAATE committee is to recruit and develop volunteers and leaders to intentionally promote and ensure a culturally proficient environment throughout the organization.



**DR. JENNIFER HUMBER**



**DR. HAEMI KIM**



**DR. JERI ZEMKE**



Dr. Beth Chaney serves as a professor in the department of health science. She has served on multiple boards of directors for organizations within her field and has focused her research on instrument development and program evaluation in health education. Her educational background includes a BS in Biology and MA in Health Studies from The University of Alabama. She received her PhD in Health Education from Texas A&M University in August 2006.

**BETH CHANEY**



Dr. Don Chaney serves as chair of the department of health science. His research focuses on technology integration in health, and online learning and professional development. He has been an Editor-In-Chief of the American Journal of Health Studies and guest editor for The Health Education Monograph and the International Electronic Journal of Health Education. Chaney earned his PhD in Health Education and Promotion from The University of Alabama and is a Master Certified Health Education Specialist.

**DON CHANEY**



Dr. Michael Stellefson is a professor in the department of health science. His research focuses on health disparities in Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), electronic health (eHealth) literacy about chronic disease self-management, and the usability of health communication technologies. Stellefson has a BS in Psychology from the University of Pittsburgh, and both an MA and a PhD in Health Education from Texas A&M. He previously held faculty positions at East Carolina University and the University of Florida.

**MICHAEL STELLEFSON**



# NEW FACULTY SPOTLIGHT



**HUNTER JONES**

Dr. Hunter Jones is an assistant professor in the department of clothing, textiles, and interior design focusing on textile design, textile science, maximizing the use of social media and current issues in human environmental sciences. Her involvement on campus includes serving on the Homecoming Committee and as an advisor to the Mable Adams Society. Jones earned her doctorate at UA's College of Education specializing in Instructional Technology with a focus on student use of technology in the classroom. She leads our Fashion Retailing Internship Program.



**JESSIE JURGENSON**

Dr. Jesse Jurgenson is an assistant professor in the department of consumer sciences. He was previously an instructor at Iowa State University and the University of Missouri. He served as a graduate intern with the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) Office of Financial Education in Washington, D.C. His educational background includes an MS in Personal Financial Planning and a graduate minor in college teaching from the University of Missouri - Columbia along with a PhD in Human Development and Family Studies from Iowa State University.

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**Lee Johnson III, PhD**  
**Senior Policy Analyst**  
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