

VOLUME 1

# THE UNIVERSITY OF TENNESSEE CHATTANOOGA

---

## MAGAZINE

ISSUE 3



### **Arts and Sciences**

The arts and sciences foster valuable skills in creative problem solving and help graduates uniquely approach their work in an undisciplined world. *(see inside)*

< *Sculpture by Alea Coble  
This work combines her studies in studio art and environmental science, a testament to how the arts and sciences complement and inform each other.*

## University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Magazine

volume one, issue three • Summer 2018

[utc.edu/magazine](http://utc.edu/magazine)

- 4** Message from the Chancellor
- 5** Feature: UTC College of Arts & Sciences
- 6** Shaped by Struggle
- 8** Psychology Awards
- 9** Change Through the Tip of a Paintbrush
- 10** Community Conductor
- 12** Research - Josh Herndon
- 14** Power of Community
- 16** Toxic Takedown
- 18** Earned Promotion
- 19** Forest Kindergarten
- 20** Renovation—Lupton Library
- 22** Bricolage
- 26** The Son Shines
- 28** Entrepreneurial Excellence
- 32** More Than Meets the Eye
- 34** Terrell Owens Pro Football Hall of Fame
- 35** Men's Basketball
- 36** Katie Burrows
- 37** Alum Notes
- 38** Gavin Townsend

### EDITOR

**George Heddleston**

*Vice Chancellor, Communications and Marketing*

### CREATIVE DIRECTOR

**Stephen Rumbaugh**

### ART DIRECTOR

**Lynn Newton**

### WRITERS

**Laura Bond, Sarah Joyner,  
Shawn Ryan, Gina Stafford**

### CONTRIBUTING WRITER

**Chuck Wasserstrom**

### PHOTOGRAPHER

**Angela Foster**

### CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

**Dominique Belanger,  
Erinn Cutright, Billy Weeks**

### VIDEOGRAPHY

**Mike Andrews, Jacob Cagle**

We welcome your feedback  
[magazine@utc.edu](mailto:magazine@utc.edu)



## LARGEST GIFT IN UTC HISTORY RENAMES COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

## SPECIAL NEWS

The College of Business at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga has a new name, thanks to a \$40-million gift—the largest philanthropic contribution in UTC history—from Gary W. Rollins and Kathleen Rollins of Atlanta. The naming request was unanimously approved by the UT Board of Trustees at its June meeting, establishing the first named college at UTC: the Gary W. Rollins College of Business.

Gary Rollins is a 1967 UTC graduate who earned a bachelor's degree in business. Today, he is vice chairman and CEO of Rollins, Inc., a New York Stock Exchange corporation with holdings including Orkin, the world's largest pest control company. Rollins' decision to provide a history-making level of support to his alma mater, he said, is based on his belief that the College of Business is poised today for a future as a national leader.

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHANCELLOR

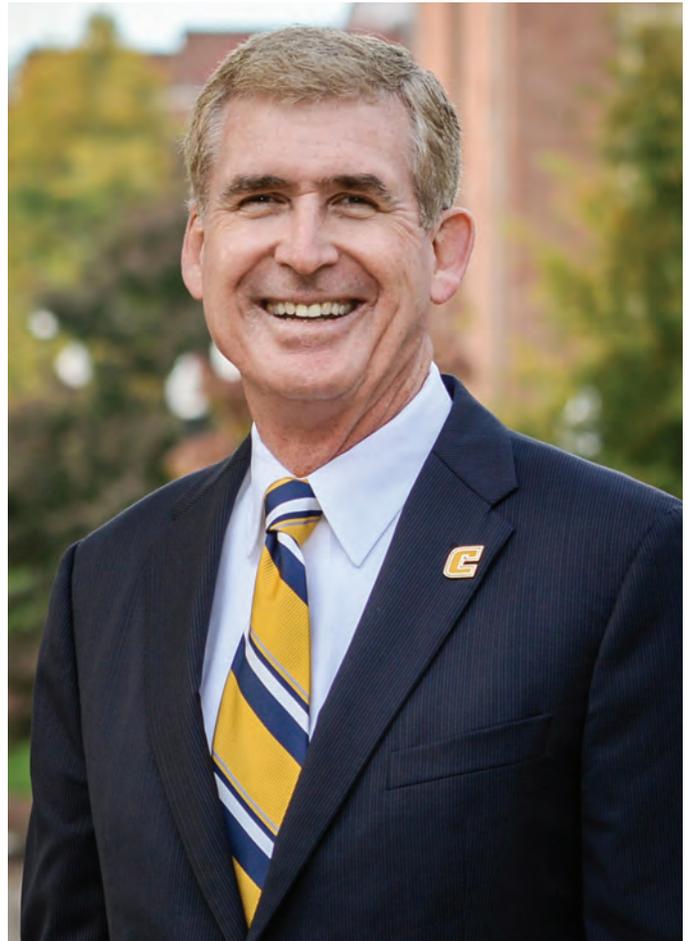
The summer 2018 edition of the *University of Tennessee at Chattanooga Magazine* highlights achievements and events from across campus, but a large number of the stories focus on our College of Arts and Sciences. We have a beautiful campus with first class facilities, but the people who are the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga define our institution.

This issue highlights accomplishments of UTC students, alumni, faculty, staff and community partners. I am proud of all the people featured in this issue, and I hope you will enjoy reading about their accomplishments.

We recently received the largest gift in the history of UTC. College of Business graduate Gary W. Rollins and his wife Kathleen made a \$40 million gift to name the UTC College of Business the Gary W. Rollins College of Business. The gift was officially accepted by the University of Tennessee Board of Trustees on June 22. We will be celebrating this wonderful gift with Mr. and Mrs. Rollins on September 13 as part of our Founders Week celebration.

In this issue you also will read about the planned transformation of the former Lupton Library to Lupton Hall, the future home of many student organizations, the college of Arts and Sciences Dean's office, academic departments and classrooms. The renovation will give Lupton Hall a new front entrance facing Chamberlin Pavilion. Move-in is planned for mid to late 2020.

Move-In-Day for new freshmen was August 16, and we happily welcomed the largest class of freshmen in the history of UTC. The new West Campus residence hall, a towering, seven story, 600 bed, structure on the corner of Vine and Houston, will open this fall and is completely full of student occupants.



UTC continues to strive to better serve our students and community. We remain focused on quality and excellence. We appreciate your engagement and support. GO MOCS!

**Steven R. Angle**  
Chancellor



## ABOUT THE COVER

UNTITLED  
**Alea Coble**

*Coble, a senior pursuing her BA in studio art with a minor in creative writing, finds inspiration in both the scientific and artistic areas of her studies. Her work explores environmental justice, female coming of age in the U.S. and poetry.*



# SO MANY CHOICES

**O**ne has to study just to learn all the departments in the College of Arts and Sciences at UTC. Following its liberal arts roots from its days as the University of Chattanooga, the College today offers a vast array of majors (62 in all), leading to countless career opportunities and other pathways to explore.

Its graduates spread out across the country and around the world, carrying the knowledge and experience they earned at UTC with them. This issue of the *University of Tennessee Chattanooga Magazine* features articles and success stories about Arts and Sciences, its professors, current students and graduates. The magazine takes a look at their accomplishments and hopes and dreams, and how UTC becomes a major influence in their lives, both personal and educational.

This issue includes a conversation with a soon-to-be-married couple in biochemistry and how the husband fought through an upbringing that would crush others. We highlight the award-winning Department of Psychology and interview biology researchers trying to understand why so many low birthweight babies are born in our region. We also profile students who have become major movers and shakers in Chattanooga, including an English graduate now in charge of helping small businesses in the city as well as music majors who are symphony conductors and Broadway performers.

The College of Arts and Sciences is an expansive and fascinating place to explore. Read along in many of the pages that follow.

---

*Photo: Erinn Cutright  
Honors College student Chris Davis hikes through the Sacred Valley of the Incas in Peru's Andes Mountains.*



# SHAPED BY STRUGGLES

2018 Graduates Overcame Adversities

BY SHAWN RYAN

**It was a good week** but a bad day for Beau Bolding. On the good side, he got engaged to Katherine Harlan, his girlfriend for most of his four years at UTC. They also were getting ready to walk across the commencement stage to accept their diplomas, both in biochemistry.

They're moving to Memphis in the next month or so, where both will enroll in dental school at the University of Tennessee Health Science Center. He wants



Photos: Dominique Belanger

to be in general dentistry; she's thinking about pediatric dentistry. "It is kind of strange," he says with a smile. "I mean you're working in somebody's mouth all day long. Who wants to do that?"

On the bad side, his treasured bonsai tree, which he'd been raising and shaping and nurturing for the past six years, was stolen off his porch on the North Shore. "It was maple," he says. "They stole my maple tree. I had spent so much time with that tree. I'm kind of frazzled."

Bad days are familiar to Beau. There were a good many of them when he was growing up in Jackson, Tenn. But he refused to let them drag him down, to turn him into a victim, to tell him that he's not capable or worth the effort. "It's hard to say and not sound conceited ... I would say I've had a harder life than most.

Everybody has hardship. Everybody. But as a young child, I decided that I wasn't going to let the hardships that I was brought into define what I would become."

Introduced by a mutual friend, he and Katherine met in Crossroads, a dining location at UTC. As they got to know each other, Beau began telling her about his life. "I was shocked," she recalls. "When I met him, I would've never thought that he went through a lot of stuff he had been through because he seemed really happy, and he was smart. He seemed just like any other normal college person that I met."

## Childhood despair

Being poor—sometimes desperately so—was an ongoing reality in Beau's life. "We've lived below the federal poverty limit since I was probably nine years old," he says. "I really shouldn't have been able to go to college socio-economically. If you were to look at my profile, I should've been working at a factory or something. I've been really lucky and blessed."

On the one hand, not having money is never a good thing when growing up, but on the other, he learned to make do with what he had at the time and his work ethic grew rock-solid and determined. At UTC, tuition and fees were offset by a Provost scholarship while further support came when Bolding was named a Grote scholar—"only three people get selected for that each year," Katherine says proudly. But to fill the gaps, he also worked as a supplemental instructor, a chemistry teacher's assistant and an office worker in the Department of Chemistry and Physics, formerly the Department of Physics, Geology and Astronomy.



### Katherine's challenges

In contrast, Katherine acknowledges that her younger years were “pretty different” from her fiancé’s. She was raised by both parents on a farm in Columbia, Tenn.—Harlan Farms, famous for its pumpkins. Both her parents went to college. Her mom is a teacher; her dad is director of business development at a hospital.

But Katherine still faced her own issues. In sixth grade, her high levels of anxiety forced her to leave school for an entire semester. A teacher came to her home to keep her up to speed on schoolwork. “They got me on medicine and got me back in school, but yeah, I mean everyone has struggles and stuff at points.”

Her teeth also were genetically flawed; she didn’t have enough of them. “It’s a condition called congenital missing teeth,” she explains; her sister had the same problem. Missing some molars, her teeth were in danger of moving “all around crazy,” she says, so when she was about 13, a metal rod was drilled into her jawbone, “so that my teeth could just stay in place.”

She also wore two sets of braces, a partial set in fifth grade for about a year, then she was braces-free for a year, then a full set was in place for about three more years. Braces usually are a one- or maybe two-year hassle. She acknowledges, though, that some of her dental problems were on her. “I sucked my thumb till I was 10, in my sleep, and they couldn’t break me of it,” she says. “Finally, I had to sleep with socks on my hands because that was the only way that I couldn’t put my thumb in my mouth. I had a really bad overbite; I could stick my thumb in my mouth with my teeth closed.”

As might be expected, those trials were one of the reasons she turned toward dentistry, she says. “I knew I wanted to do something medical my whole life. I never was sure what until I started having all my teeth worked; that’s when I started being interested in dentistry.”

### Beau, too

Beau’s interest in dentistry grew in much the same way. “I had to have dental work during high school. I had several trips to the dentist,” he says. “It’s not that I didn’t take care of my teeth or I didn’t brush them when I was a kid, I just had really bad teeth and bad genetics. I had plenty of time in the chair.”

In a few years, if all goes as planned, Beau and Katherine will be the ones standing next to the dentist chair, looking inside someone else’s mouth. They know dental school won’t be easy, but after four years of jobs, managing money, juggling full course loads and massive amounts of studying, they figure they’ll be able to handle it.

“We work hard, like really hard,” Beau says.

Dental school began this summer, so the couple had only a few weeks to move to Memphis after commencement at UTC. But they found some time for relaxation. “We went to the beach with my family, thankfully,” Katherine says.

Their wedding is set for the summer of 2019 and, yes, they’ll be taking a break from school at that point, a break they both badly need. Both say the same thing: “I’m really tired.” **C**

### Brutal mugging

He was an only child, like his mother, and so there were no brothers or sisters or aunts, uncles or cousins. His father was mostly out of the picture. When things got tough—and some moments were beyond tough—Beau and his mother had only each other to lean on. When he was about six months old, his mother was leaving a drugstore after picking up a prescription for his ear infection when she was mugged by two men. She ran; they tackled her and beat her so badly, did so much physical damage, it has since that day been a struggle for Bolding’s mother to find full-time work. “She did her best to make any type of money she could to raise me, so she’s a really great mom. She did whatever it took.”

His mother, Deborah, says that’s what a mother does. “I’m his biggest cheerleader,” she says from their home in Jackson. “Anything he wants to do, his mother will help him with.”

But problems didn’t stop with money. In elementary school, his earlobes were big, so kids called him “Dumbo,” a cruel reworking of his name. He went through a “significant” chubby phase, and he got beat up. He’s now six-foot-two, and no one tries anymore. “I guess I was always just picked on and bullied and that made me really critical of myself, unnecessarily so when you’re a kid,” he explains. “When kids get bullied constantly, it shows throughout their whole life; they’re affected. I guess I was, too. I wish I could say I wasn’t, but I definitely was. Maybe not now—but I guess still now since I was so hard on myself.”

# PSYCHOLOGY

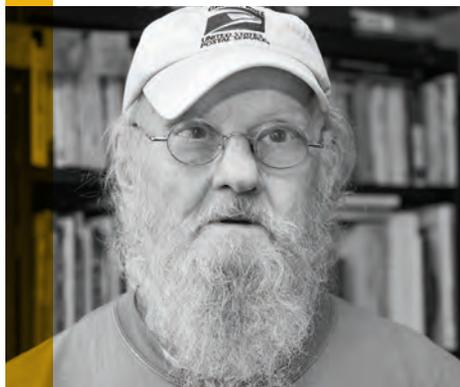
## Department Enjoys Banner Year

This was the year of psychology for UTC's College of Arts and Sciences. With all of the recognition the Department of Psychology received in recent months, it is no surprise they were named the college's Department of the Year this spring.

"These awards and recognitions affirm what I already knew—that the members of the UTC Department of Psychology are outstanding," Brian O'Leary, department head, says. "Our faculty are excellent teachers and accomplished researchers committed to student learning and development. Our academic advisor provides our majors the support they need to make steady progress toward graduation, and our administrative professionals ensure that the department runs smoothly—no easy task. It is a privilege for me to work with all of them and share in their individual and collective accomplishments."

Highlights from psychology's outstanding year include the master's in Industrial-Organizational Psychology program, recognized as one of the best by the Society for Industrial-Organizational Psychology. Collaborative faculty research received upwards of \$3.65 million in funding. The department's honor society, Psi Chi, won University Club of the Year.

A number of psychology faculty also were recognized—**Ralph Hood** received a University of Tennessee Alumni Association Distinguished Service Professorship, **Jill Shelton** was honored with the Dean's Award as Promising Researcher, and **Libby Byers** was honored with both the College of Arts and Sciences and UTC's Outstanding Lecturer Award.



*Photos from top:  
Jill Shelton,  
Libby Byers and  
Ralph Hood*

# CHANGE THROUGH THE TIP OF A PAINTBRUSH

BY SARAH JOYNER

**He sits on the patio** outside of Mean Mug, a coffee shop in Chattanooga's Southside. A copy

of his freshly minted book, *Souls of Free Folk*, rests on the table in front of him. As he talks, it's hard to not get excited about what he has to say. Obviously he's describing projects and ideas more meaningful than some lawn clippings. But with his charisma, he could get you excited about a blade of grass.

Josiah Golson '08 is a lawyer, artist and writer with a passion for Chattanooga and helping the city's people through tough, civic discourse with a paint brush.

He was helping with the 20/20 Visions mural on Chattanooga's Riverfront Parkway when he had a vision of how he could make art his job from nine to five. As he and other artists helped students from Howard High School paint the 2,500 square-foot mural, Golson realized that skill of working with young people, or anyone, to create a vision was something he could do full time. So he left a career in real estate law.

In 2015, the UTC communications graduate founded 800 Collective, fusing his knowledge as a lawyer and his work as an artist into a nonprofit organization. Through 800 Collective, he created a space where neighbors could communicate their ideas or frustrations for healthy conversations to initiate change in their backyards and city. "Instead of just coming and yelling in the microphone, angry about what we're justifiably angry about, we could think about it in a different way," he says. The collective regularly hosts events from interactive art shows to workshops where people can get involved with simple art-creating exercises that "require you to disarm yourself and be willing to think about the issues we're dealing with in a creative context," Golson adds.

Golson isn't shy about visiting his alma mater, where he hosts workshops with art students, says Jordan Amirkhani, assistant professor of art history. "What I love about Josiah is that he is incredibly upfront about what it takes to be a consistent, excellent, visible person in the community. That it is not easy. That it takes time. That it's about building partnerships and being kind and being professional."

Introducing art students to such models is "just as important as the slides of Cézanne and Picasso that we show to them," she says.

Inspired by the graphic novels, comic books and poetry of his youth, and with a not-so-subtle nod to W.E.B. Du Bois's 1903 publication, *The Souls of Black Folk*, Golson's *The Souls of Free Folk* has been dubbed a 100-page picture book for adults. The book

pays tribute to Du Bois's work "and all of the legacy of great black writers, musicians, singers and artists who have come from the tradition of Du Bois to the present day," Golson says.

*Souls* was over a year in the making. It, like a lot of his work, had strong local support. "Chattanoogaans like to see Chattanoogaans succeed. Chattanoogaans like to see other Chattanoogaans win," Golson says.

After graduating with a law degree from the University of Texas at Austin and returning to Chattanooga, he says that sense of community here, the tendency to lift each other up has intensified in recent years. But it was not always the case. "When I was a kid, I felt like I was going to need to move to Atlanta or New York or a bigger city that would be much more saturated, where I felt like I was going to be able to do what I was passionate about," Golson says.

"Here, the way the city has evolved, it's been incredible," Golson adds. "I feel like you don't have to wait for someone to come from New York or some big city to do something great. The greatness is here. I feel like Chattanooga has a lot of people that are looking for greatness to nurture. That's a beautiful thing." **C**

*Josiah Golson's favorite projects: working on the mural in Howard High School and the Art Show with 800 Collective inspired by Beyoncé's Album, Lemonade.*



**MORE ON THE WEB:**  
[utc.edu/GolsonSouls](http://utc.edu/GolsonSouls)

# COMMUNITY CONDUCTOR

## UTC Grad Follows Her Musical Roots

BY SHAWN RYAN

**In seventh grade,** Robyn Bell wanted to be a drummer in her elementary school band, but the band director wouldn't let her. "He said girls can't be drummers," she recalls.

So she picked up the trumpet instead and, while it wasn't her instrument of choice, it led Bell into a life of music that includes a 1997 bachelor's degree in music education from UTC. "All the lessons I learned in those classes are still with me today—rehearsal techniques, music literature, the music education classes," says Bell, now the conductor of both the Sarasota Pops Orchestra and the Bradenton Symphony Orchestra in Florida. One lesson in particular stands out.

In her final semester, the only class she was required to take was Conducting. When the semester was over, she recalls advice given to her by instructor Stephen Bird: "You know, you are pretty natural at this. You should really consider studying this further in graduate school."

"Because of his confidence in me, I did just that," she says. "I will always be grateful to all of the faculty at UTC who supported me along the educational journey."

The journey for Bell includes nine years as band director at Ridgeland High School in Rossville, Ga., and a year as band and orchestra director at Covenant College. Her career didn't slow after moving to Florida in 2009. In fact, it hit warp speed and the responsibilities have piled up.

### Texas roots

Musical roots for Bell—who bears a resemblance to the late Carrie Fisher of *Star Wars* fame—grow all the way back to Texas, where she lived until she enrolled at UTC. Genetically speaking, a career in music was a natural fit. "My mother was a drummer in high school and was given a full scholarship to Texas Women's University," Bell says.

From there, her mother went on USO tours with comedian Bob Hope and played in the band run by Doc Severinsen, music director at "The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson" for 25 years. "That's when I started living vicariously through my mother; I guess it's the opposite of what normally would happen," Bell says. "I knew I'd follow in Mom's steps."

She first came to Tennessee in 1991 to attend a summer music camp at University of the South in Sewanee. Loving the state, she returned to earn her bachelor's at UTC, then immediately enrolled in the University of Tennessee, Knoxville for a master's in instrumental conducting. Two years ago, she earned a doctorate of musical arts from Boston University.

### Full plate

Bell moved to Florida in 2009 to take a position as director of instrumental studies at State College of Florida, where

she taught five classes. The next year, she was approached by officials at the Sarasota Orchestra who, knowing her background at Ridgeland High and Covenant, asked her to take over as conductor of its all-student Youth Symphony. She agreed, adding it to her responsibilities at the college.

In 2011, the conductor of the Sarasota Pops Orchestra was retiring and, "at the last second I threw my name in the hat," she says. That job became hers, too, and eventually led to the creation of the Bradenton Symphony Orchestra.

The Sarasota area is a prime spot for retirees, including many retired musicians, Bell explains. Once the Pops was created, she began receiving phone calls from these musicians, who wanted to be part of the orchestra, "but we didn't have any more spots available, so I kept saying, 'No,'" Bell says.

Finally, frustration at not being able to use these professional players reached the boiling point and she decided to create a place for them to play. Cue the Bradenton Symphony Orchestra. Fifty percent of the musicians in the orchestra are State College students earning class credit and the rest "are community music makers that come and play for fun," she says. No one is paid.

She still teaches five classes at State College and, because she apparently doesn't feel like she has enough to do, she will take over as head of the Department of Music in 2019. Even then, she will continue to teach five courses.

She does have assistance, however. School administrators support her efforts "100 percent," she says, fundraising for the program and helping students find financial aid. They see our music program as a wonderful way to connect with the community and often take our smaller ensembles such as the Presidential String Quartet and the Presidential Jazz Combo to events where the groups perform for community members."

### Pops

Meanwhile, as conductor of the Sarasota Pops Orchestra, she is both the face of the ensemble and the behind-the-scenes sparkplug. "I put together all the concerts, pick the music for everything we do, pick the guest artists," she explains. "I'm personnel manager, so I'm in charge

of all the people. Who's going to be at rehearsal? Who do I need for each piece? Do I need to get a third bassoon?"

She chooses the guest performers for the performances and also is music librarian, in charge of getting the musicians' sheet music into their individual folders. She does the marketing for the orchestra, including social media, maintaining its website, buying ads for newspaper and magazines and doing interviews for newspapers, TV and radio.

She even sets up all the chairs and music stands prior to each rehearsal.

The physical difference between conducting for the two groups is nonexistent—"Conducting is conducting," she says—but deciding on the programming for each orchestra is "hugely different." While programs for the Bradenton Symphony Orchestra cover standard classical music, for Pops concerts, she chooses about 15 songs. "We talk to the audience at Pops; we get people smiling," she explains.

They also have what she calls a "champagne and dessert" reception before each performance where orchestra members and guest artists discuss the music that will be played in the concert. "We don't even call them 'concerts'; we call them 'shows.'" **C**



# RESEARCH TRIP

Engaging in Scientific Research in Spain



BY SHAWN RYAN

**UTC's** Josh Herndon has a bachelor's degree in biochemistry. The Honors College student has tentative plans for graduate school. He has ideas for a career, but he'll see how things go over the next few years. First, though, he's going to Spain.

It's not a pleasure trip, unless you consider that Herndon will spend two months doing scientific research, and that gives him a certain amount of pleasure. He's a little fuzzy on what exactly he'll be researching, although he knows it involves computational chemistry.

"I don't have all the details on that; I need to get in contact with my research director there," he says with a bit of chagrin. "You use software to model properties. It sort of goes hand-in-hand with empirical labwork. The software helps do some of the things you can't really do in the lab. You're basically simulating molecules."

While the work in Spain focuses on chemistry, Herndon has spent the last two years doing research on biochemistry. As an assistant to Steven Symes, UC Foundation professor of chemistry and physics, he worked with virulent bacteria such as *E. coli*, pneumonia and acinetobacter, all of which contribute to hospital-acquired infections, especially in intensive care units.

Herndon and Symes were trying to see whether these bacteria can be affected by certain fatty acids to reduce their ability to spread and to make it easier for antibiotics to get through their cell membranes. "Then you could make these bacteria more susceptible to treatment and hinder their ability to be virulent. That may be where all of this is heading," Herndon says.

Symes praises Herndon for how quickly he learned to use complicated lab equipment as well as his contributions to the research itself. "His questions were always insightful and soon made me realize that Josh has a fond affinity for knowledge and a curiosity for the natural world that is noticeably 'next-level,'" Symes says. "His results are contributing to our ideas regarding novel therapies for multi-drug resistant bacterial infections."

Herndon joined the research team in the summer of 2017 and says what he's learned will undoubtedly help his career goals. "I think just getting the experience, getting to participate in research like that is beneficial for anyone in the sciences," he says. "I want to go into research later on in life and getting to be part of a project like this as an undergrad is a real eye-opening experience.

It allows me to see the research process and be a part of it rather than just hearing about it."

Because the research in Spain is different than what he did at UTC, it will give him a totally different perspective and roadmap for the future. "If I like it, I'll probably try that area in grad school. If I don't

like it, then maybe I'll try to do something closer to what I've already done," he says.

Spain offers Herndon yet another event. After his two months of research is completed there, he and his girlfriend will spend a month traveling around Europe. Which proves research can lead to an exciting finish in more ways than one. **C**

**"...Josh has a fond affinity for knowledge and a curiosity for the natural world that is noticeably 'next-level,'"**

# DREAMS DO COME TRUE

Grad on Broadway



MORE ON THE WEB:  
[utc.edu/Motown](http://utc.edu/Motown)

BY LAURA BOND

**Six** different parts. Twelve costume changes. Forty musical numbers. One day's work for Matthew Keaton '16. The UTC grad recently landed the role of the lifetime in the touring Broadway production of *Motown: The Musical*.

As a self-professed "theater kid," Keaton practically grew up in the Orpheum Theatre, the legendary performing arts venue in his hometown of Memphis. Whenever he could, he attended shows and taught at the theater during summer camps. When he came to Chattanooga for college, he made a conscious decision to step away from the performing world. "It was more of a practical decision than anything. I wanted to learn to do something else just in case I got hurt and needed something to fall back on. Also, I've been singing and dancing my entire life and I thought to myself, 'I just want to be a normal person when I go to college,'" Keaton jokes.

Turns out, taking a break and learning new skills in his communication classes were just what he needed. "My experience at UTC was incredible. I felt very welcomed from the moment I got here, like whatever I wanted to do was available to me," he says. After graduation, Keaton was ready to pursue performing again, and he was accepted into a theater residency in New York City. He had just finished the residency when he heard about the auditions for *Motown*. "I knew I had to go. I saw the show a few years ago and I said to myself then, 'I want to be in that musical. I don't know how, I don't know when, but I need to be in *Motown*.'"

After a grueling process of several auditions and callbacks, Keaton received the exciting phone call at the airport on his way home for Thanksgiving. He had been cast in his first touring Broadway musical. "I was in the line about to hand over my boarding pass when the producers called. The first thing I said was 'So, should I get on my flight?' They laughed," he remembers. "I get on the plane, and I'm just screaming the whole way. I was ecstatic. I got home to see my family and hopped back on a flight six hours later to start rehearsals."

Since then, Keaton's life has been a whirlwind of learning lines, rehearsing dance numbers and traveling to more than a dozen states. His role is called a

"swing," which means he learns several different roles for the show and is able to step in at a moment's notice. "I cover six people, so I know the show six different ways. If any one of those people are out, then I swing in to perform," he explains.

For Keaton, *Motown* is special to him. Telling the story of Motown Records founder Berry Gordy's journey from featherweight boxer to the heavyweight music mogul who launched the careers of Diana Ross, Michael Jackson, Stevie Wonder and many more, the musical gives Keaton the chance to perform some of his favorite songs from childhood, including those of the five-member Temptations. "I grew up with the Temptations," he says. "My parents used to play them around the house all the time. Their movie is my favorite movie of all time. Now, being able to play one of them is just a dream come true."

He may have just finished his first Broadway tour, but Keaton already is working on big plans for the future. "This is only the beginning," he says. "My dream role is to play Seaweed in *Hairspray*. I will do that one day. I also want to win a Tony and an Oscar. After that, I'll be through." He pauses. "No, after that I want to publish a couple of books. Maybe write my own Broadway play," he says with a smile. "And then, you know, I'll be through." **C**

# POWER OF COMMUNITY

Willis Assumes Chamber Post

BY LAURA BOND

**Alexis Willis** '11 isn't someone who backs down from a challenge. She told her mentor that, if an Ironman competition was ever held in Chattanooga, she would sign up. The former high school track athlete was drawn to the idea of testing her limits. She wanted to know if she had what it takes to finish such a grueling race.

A few months later, in the fall of 2014, it was announced that Ironman was coming to Chattanooga. Staying true to her word, Willis signed up. She had never competed in a triathlon, let alone a race that includes a 2.4-mile swim, a 112-mile bike ride and a 26.2-mile run. She also didn't know how to swim. Undeterred, she quickly signed up for swim lessons at the local YMCA.



Less than nine months later, Willis joined more than 2,000 athletes at the starting line and dove into the Tennessee River. She was the last athlete to complete the swim. "It was a hard but beautiful day," Willis remembers. "I was the last out of the water, which was fine for me. I just wanted to finish the swim. That could've been the end of the race for me."

Willis didn't finish the Ironman that day, missing the cut-off time to complete the bike portion by less than 15 minutes, but she did gain a new appreciation for Chattanooga, the place she begrudgingly moved to with her family when she was a child. "While I was swimming, I heard people cheering from the Walnut Street Bridge, yelling, 'Go, Alexis, go!' There were hundreds of people," she says. "When I got to the end and stood up, their cheers were the loudest, most-deafening sound I've ever heard. It was like the whole city rejoiced. I looked around to see grown men crying tears of joy for me. It was a great day."

Willis now is a big believer in Chattanooga and the power of community. Having recently been named the director of Small Business and Entrepreneurship for the Chattanooga Area Chamber of Commerce, one of her goals is to support local entrepreneurs. She's in charge of the INCubator in the Hamilton County Business Development Center. Housing up to 70 start-ups in 127,000 square feet, it's the largest business incubator in Tennessee. "I think it's one of Chattanooga's most hidden gems," Willis says. "I always tell people that we have a gold mine at the corner of Cherokee Boulevard and Manufacturers Road. We have incredible people working here, from guys who make hot sauces to a team that makes 3D-printed walls to companies that work with NASA and the Oak Ridge National Laboratory," she says.

Willis hopes the INCubator becomes a place where people can not only grow their businesses, but lead full lives, making connections with others and raising their families. "They need to be able to work and grow the legacies for their families in a place where families are welcome," she says. Willis sets the example by regularly bringing her young daughter, Boom, into the office with her.

Willis got her start balancing work and family while getting her English degree at UTC. She regularly brought her daughter, then four months old, to class. "I just put her in one

of those little harnesses and went to class," Willis remembers with a smile. "I would bring a blanket and sit her in the aisle next to me. Sometimes she would sit on the lap of one of my classmates or the professor would hold her. It got to the point where my professors knew her name and some even had pictures of her in their office. She started walking and would walk down the halls to visit them. My professors were so welcoming and loving. They're still my friends.

"I learned that company culture starts from the top down. So when I want to see it, I have to be it first," she says.

After graduation, Willis knew she wanted to be a part of the growing local entrepreneurial scene in town. She's worked for The Company Lab and LAUNCH Chattanooga, advising and strategizing with entrepreneurs to help launch their ideas into successful small businesses. She's created two of her own ventures—Natural Beautiful Me, a platform to help women embrace their natural beauty,

and The Red Lipstick Experiment, a line of handmade, organic lip products.

Growing up with a father who has helmed his own carpeting and floor mat business for more than 20 years, she regularly advises other entrepreneurs on the importance of hard work and patience. "Success doesn't happen overnight. It's a marathon, not a sprint. I think people underestimate that," she says. "I've been featured on local magazine covers, but it took me 12 years to get there. It wasn't like last week they decided, 'You know what? That Alexis Willis is hot.' I put in over a decade of work, starting with my time at UTC."

Though she's regularly asked to do interviews and photo shoots now, Willis hasn't forgotten where she came from and is thankful for her struggles. "I was doing training to become certified to teach yoga and was really struggling one day, saying to myself, 'Where is the girl who competed in the Ironman?' I felt like I lost her. Then the instructor said, 'Step into your warrior,' and I went, 'Ah, that's who she was. A warrior.'

"I just needed to step back into what it meant to be a warrior. It's bravery; it's courage; it's vulnerability," she continues. "Warriors don't become warriors because they had it easy. They've gone to battle. People look at vulnerability as a weakness, but it takes a lot of courage to be vulnerable. And courageous people are strong people." **C**

**"When I got to the end and stood up, their cheers were the loudest, most-deafening sound I've ever heard. It was like the whole city rejoiced. I looked around to see grown men crying tears of joy for me. It was a great day."**

# TOXIC TAKE<sup>E</sup>DOWN

Research looks at Chattanooga's low birth-weight babies

BY SHAWN RYAN

**T**he Chattanooga mother-to-be started the garden so she would be sure to eat healthy food. After all, what she ate would be what the baby ate, too, right?

But when the baby was born, it weighed less than 5½ pounds; officially classified as “low birthweight.” What had she done wrong? What could’ve caused it?

Tomatoes.

The tomatoes from her garden were grown in lead-contaminated soil and by eating them she had absorbed some of that lead. The toxic metal had, in turn, crossed the placenta into the baby’s bloodstream and reduced its growth and weight gain. And it’s not uncommon in Hamilton County.

Each year, about 20 out of every 100 babies born in the county are low birthweight, a statistic that gives the county the dubious honor of having higher numbers of such babies than the rest of the country.

“Whereas, nationally, maybe eight or nine out of every 100 babies born are low birth weight, in our county it’s up to 20 out of 100,” says Steve Symes, a UC Foundation professor in chemistry and physics. “You can break it out by ZIP codes and we’ve looked at socioeconomic and, while it does explain some of that, it doesn’t explain all of it,” adds UTC Professor Sean Richards, a UC Foundation professor and toxicologist.

Since 2008, Symes and Richards and a team of researchers, physicians and UTC students have been researching the connection between low birthweight babies in Hamilton County and dangerous substances in the soil, many left over from the city’s history of steelmaking and metal smelting. Using tissue samples from placentas of mothers who had low birthweight babies, the team has found correlations between weight and such compounds as lead, PCBs, arsenic and other heavy metals in the soil of some areas of Chattanooga. But the professors immediately offer a caveat to that apparent connection, saying “science doesn’t prove anything.”

“It reduces uncertainty,” Richards says. “When you are researching, you are trying to reduce that uncertainty further, so we have correlations with things like lead and arsenic... but to say that this is the one smoking gun, the bullet ... we’re not saying this is what causes it.”

## Contaminated properties

When discussing the research, terms such as “metabolites,” “genomics” and “IUGR” (intrauterine growth restriction) are tossed about. But in regular English, the team is examining a host of reactions and functions in the body, seeing whether they’re working as they should and, if not, what may be causing the breakdown. “I am not, as I term it, a sky-is-falling type guy, but I will recognize when there is a potential for toxic interaction there,” Richards says.

The research team includes local obstetrician/gynecologist Dr. Dave Adair, UTC’s Peggy Kovach, UC Foundation professor in biology, geology and environmental science and, Colleen Mikelson, adjunct faculty in the same department. Also on the team is Italian chemist Jacopo Troisi from the University of Salerno. Since 2011, he has been analyzing placentas, checking for toxic metals and chemicals with technology not available at UTC.

In 2011, the EPA took a look at 82 properties in Southside Chattanooga and found 68 were contaminated, the *Chattanooga Times Free Press* reported. EPA officials said the average level of lead in the soil was from 400 to 800 parts per million. At 800, the soil should be removed under EPA standards and, in a few homes, the levels were more than 1,000, according to the newspaper.

This year, the EPA returned to test soil in Chattanooga’s Alton Park, College Hill Courts, Richmond and Mountain View neighborhoods. Organization officials told the newspaper that

**“...perhaps the mothers were exposed (to) these toxic metals, and that could affect their pregnancy...”**



the testing was “precautionary.” While paint and gasoline are common sources of lead contamination, foundry sand, which is used in the metal molding process and becomes a toxic waste product, is considered the main source of Chattanooga’s problem.

The city’s history of “legacy pollution” was a starting point for the research, says Adair, whose practice centers on high-risk pregnancies. With environmental toxins such as lead, arsenic and PCBs already well-documented in city soil by the Environmental Protection Agency and others, it made sense to examine possible links with the high number of low birthweight babies, he says. “Sean was the first one to think, ‘Well, maybe there’s a correlation with heavy metals,’ the idea being, of course, that perhaps the mothers—or future mothers—were exposed and carried a heavy burden of these toxic metals, and that could affect their pregnancy,” Adair explains.

### Educate the public

In the research, team members examine placental tissue to see whether it has efficiently utilized proteins, enzymes and various other substances passing through to the fetus. There always are hundreds of “metabolites” left behind by metabolism and they tell a biological story. “You’ve got a lot of different things going on and all of these functions are working together to break down the right things and keep the right things and get rid of the other things,” Richards says. “What we’re doing is teasing out which metabolites are most telling, which ones tell the story of what’s going on.”

With research ongoing, the end result from a practical standpoint is somewhat up in the air. Making a solid case that lead and other toxic metals are affecting the birthweights of babies could convince organizations like the National Institutes of Health to award grants for more research into



*From left, Jacopo Trois, Department of Medicine and Surgery and Dentistry at the University of Salerno in Italy, Steven Symes from UTC’s Department of Chemistry and Physics, Sean Richards from UTC’s Department of Biology, Geology and Environmental Science, and Giovanni Scala from Theoreo SRL, a spin-off company from the University of Salerno.*

the problem, especially if they’ve already given money to the project. The key, Adair says, is to have data that backs up your assertions that the research will have positive results with concrete applications. “What they’re real interested in is you saying, ‘I can benefit mankind in five years. I need money.’”

“‘Well, what have you done with the money I have given you?’”

“‘Well, let me show you. Here’s the list.’ That’s good return on investment, so that’s what they’re looking for.”

One plus already in hand is that research data from Chattanooga can be applied elsewhere, Richards says. “The uniqueness here is not that dissimilar to a California, Alaska, Ukraine, whoever,” he says, “so that knowledge base could be shared.”

And, from an anecdotal standpoint, there are steps that can be taken by pregnant women in Chattanooga to lessen the possibilities of low birthweight babies. “It’s education,” Richards says. If you live in an area where lead has been located, “don’t eat produce out of your yard.”

“It’s horrible to say, but you would rather find out than feed it to your kids.” **C**



# EARNED PROMOTION

Colston Named HHP Department Head

BY SHAWN RYAN

**Marisa** Colston

was on a bus when she received a phone call about a probable promotion. She didn't have time for it.

"I was in a conference in Orlando on the shuttle bus, going to the conference center, when I saw a call from the dean and thought, 'I can't take that call now.'"

When she did call her dean, Valerie Rutledge '74, '79 of the College of Health, Education and Professional Studies, Colston was offered the job as head of the Department of Health and Human Performance. She accepted.

"Going from not knowing anything to being looked to as someone to help lead the profession and how to manage it, it's just been an honor. It really has been. I'm humbled by it. Truly," says Colston, who earned a Ph.D. in philosophy with concentrations in biomechanics and injury prevention from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Gary Wilkerson, graduate-level professor for the athletic training program in health and human performance, was hired at UTC at the same time as Colston and says "there isn't any question" that she is the right person for the job. "She is very detail-oriented. She's good about implementation details, very good with policy, procedures, deadlines and organization

"She is unquestioned in her fairness. She very sincerely wants to see everybody succeed. I don't think there's anybody in this department who doubts her integrity and her fairness. It's very easy in some departments for people to feel like there is favoritism. I don't see how anybody could ever accuse her of that."

Colston's reference to "not knowing anything" is not a confession of her current abilities; she's referring to the first year she was a member of

UTC faculty. It was 1999 and she was fresh out of graduate school and, as she puts it, "green as green could get."

Brought in as an assistant professor for the graduate-level athletic training program, she interviewed for the job while in Kansas City. Hired, she moved to Chattanooga in a 2½-week period. "It was crazy. It was a wild ride. And honestly, the first year was such a train wreck, I really thought, 'One and done.'"

"That whole year I lived from my knees, saying 'Lord, please don't let me mess up these kids' lives because I'm very capable of doing it.'"

In 2001, she became director of a Health and Human Performance program that would help students earn their credentials to be a professional athletic trainer. She stayed in that position until 2014 when she left the directorship. "I stepped down simply because I needed a change," she says. "You reach a point where you say, 'That's all I got folks. We need some fresh ideas.'"

She moved to a "behind-the-scenes" position in which she helped the HHP administration with a master's degree program in physical activity and health. That morphed into the department's master of public health program, scheduled to begin in fall semester. Rutledge had asked Colston to step in as interim department head for HHP in 2016, a move that eventually led to her new, full-time role.

As interim department head, Colston says she was hesitant to institute any significant changes in the department. Now that she's officially behind the desk, she has several ideas she hopes to implement. "I was very selective of what changes I wanted to incorporate as interim for fear of a new person coming in and putting the faculty through many more changes," Colston says "There needed to be some continuity even though there were things I wanted to change.

"Now that it's permanent, I feel more confident in moving forward with some of these things without upsetting the apple cart too much."

One of her goals is to spread the word about HHP and its accomplishments. "I feel that HHP is the best-kept secret on campus, and I feel it's my responsibility that the campus, the community and the alumni truly understand the amazing things that our faculty, students and programs are accomplishing."

With the yoke of leadership resting firmly on her shoulders, she understands the weight of responsibility for a department with about 900 students and 20 faculty and staff members. "Am I worried about making mistakes? No, because I've made so many already. I just come to expect them and hope not to make the same ones over again." **C**

# FOREST KINDERGARTEN

BY LAURA BOND

**Samantha** Eaton '07, '10 never thought college was in her future.

Her parents had dropped out of high school and she, too, was struggling to find her place. It all changed one day when a teacher saw something in Eaton and gave her a chance.

"I wasn't great at applying myself in high school. I ended up in a remedial math class," she says. "I had a great teacher who realized not only could I do math, but I was also really good at teaching the other kids how to do it. So I ended up becoming her assistant and tutoring before and after school." Since that moment, Eaton knew she wanted to be a teacher. She finished high school and graduated with two education degrees from UTC. After researching Forest Kindergarten during college, Eaton was intrigued by the idea of taking her classroom outside and having her students learn in a self-directed, play-based natural environment. It took a few years to convince Haley Brown, the principal at Red Bank Elementary School, to give it go, but in 2016, Eaton started her own class. It was the first Forest Kindergarten of its kind in Tennessee.

Now, a typical day in Eaton's class has students putting on their rain boots and heading to the creek located behind the school. The students spend anywhere from an hour to half of the school day outdoors learning through exploration and hands-on activities. Eaton emphasizes that Forest Kindergarten is not all child's play. "We follow and meet the same standards that are expected of every kindergarten in the state," she says. "One way I make the standards work is I'll adapt what we're doing inside the classroom to fit what they're interested in during their outdoor time. It keeps them excited and engaged."

Often it's the smallest things that turn into big lessons for students. "We did a huge research project on slugs. Yes, slugs. They were so enamored with them. One day, they were building a small boat for a

slug they found. They wanted him to sail around the world, but the boat immediately capsized," she explains. "We were able to bring that back into the classroom. We did research on safe long-distance travel. They sketched designs for a new boat and made a list of what a slug would need to travel and how to protect itself from capsizing again. Forest Kindergarten is all about going with the flow and adapting their interests to the standards."

Eaton's students aren't just meeting state standards, they're also gaining new skills that will serve them long past the last school bell. "One thing other teachers are noticing about my students when compared to students in a traditional classroom is that their communication skills are better. They're better at problem solving and conflict resolution," she says. "Those are skills that colleges and employers are looking for and they're naturally developed through the program. In Forest Kindergarten, students are not only outside but with each other, communicating and working together."

Eaton has learned a lot from her



students, too. "I have learned to trust them more. I've had to step back a little bit and trust that they will make the decisions that will keep them safe, that they will be patient with their peers and solve their own problems. It's hard as a teacher because sometimes you just want to solve a problem, so you can move on and finish that day's lesson plan," she says.

Lovingly referring to herself as a "chaos coordinator," Eaton can't imagine doing anything else. Her passion shows. She was named one of the 2018 Teachers of the Year for the Hamilton County school system and the Forest Kindergarten program at Red Bank is flourishing, recently adding a second class. "It's just really cool to get up every day and be surrounded by my students, and to get to know them and their quirks," she says. "And you can't really have a bad day when they're so hilarious. They're always saying something that will make me crack up. My students are my people. My crazy, loving, tiny people." **C**



# THE NEXT LEVEL

Renovation Includes Renaming to Lupton Hall



**Lupton** Library, opened at UTC in 1974, is set to begin its next life as a much-needed academic building and with a new name, Lupton Hall.

Renovations are to yield more than 40,000 square feet of space for new classrooms with flexible layouts and furnishings, and equipment to enable distance-learning collaboration with sites across the state or across the world.

Classrooms designated “Technology Enabled Active Learning/ Student-Centered Active Learning Environments” will facilitate multiple group configurations and collaboration. These spaces can double as lecture halls with seating capacity ranging from 42 to more than 200. The building will feature eight conference rooms that also can serve as seminar classrooms with capacity from 10 to 24 seats. Ten additional meeting rooms can be configured to seat from six to 36 people.

The building will have nine student activity organization rooms, and each floor will have space set aside for small, impromptu student gatherings and study. An open concourse area with soft seating can be used for public

presentations, movies and concerts for groups of up to 100.

The first floor will house a Women’s Center, Multicultural Center and offices serving international students. On the second floor, a College of Arts and Sciences Student Success Center will be adjacent to expansive space for both the departments of communication and of modern and classical languages, literature, philosophy and religion. The third floor will house the office of the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, along with the departments of English and mathematics.

Located in the center of campus and home to multiple departments that offer general education courses, the renovated Lupton also is expected to begin serving as a central hub with high student traffic.

In 2015, a new campus library opened and planning began for renovations to Lupton, named for Thomas Cartter Lupton and his wife, Margaret Rawlings Lupton. **C**

## LEGEND

- COMMON
- DEAN'S OFFICE
- ENGLISH
- JANITORIAL
- MATH
- MECHANICAL
- REST ROOM
- SHARED
- STAIR
- TEACHING SPACES
- UNASSIGNED
- CAS STUDENT SUCCESS CENTER
- COMMUNICATIONS
- MCLL, PHILOSOPHY & RELIGION
- INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
- IT CENTER
- MULTICULTURAL CENTER
- STUDENT ACTIVITIES
- WOMEN'S CENTER



# BRICOLAGE

*[bree-kuh-lahzh]* A construction made of whatever materials are at hand; something created from a variety of available things. A piece created from diverse resources.

Project day at JoAnn Hughes's house.  
Left: Alexandra Hunt and Patrick Parker  
Below: Jessica Castroverde  
Right: Newly constructed ramp at Wanda Buck's home.



BY SARAH JOYNER **Bricolage** Studio is the name of the work performed by a multi-department group of UT Chattanooga and UT Knoxville students. The group used creativity and resourcefulness to bring bricolage projects to life in Chattanooga—making do with materials at hand, creating from diverse resources and showing success with makeshift handiwork. These students collaborated with community partners to revitalize low-income homes and community spaces throughout Chattanooga. It has been a heart warming development.

The following captures some of their results.

## Experiential learning project

Students and faculty from UTC's Department of Interior Architecture and Design and the College of Engineering and Computer Science teamed up with the UT Knoxville College of Architecture to update 10 low-income homes in Chattanooga and renovate a forlorn church in the heart of a Chattanooga neighborhood near UTC.

The cross-disciplinary, multi-university handiwork was created after the Tennessee Board of Architectural and Engineering Examiners awarded a \$20,000 grant to support the creation of a pop-up community design studio for low-income residents in underserved Chattanooga communities. Since work began in summer 2017, students have done such diverse jobs as rip out old toilets, build wheelchair ramps, repair roofs and much more, fulfilling completed projects for this grant-funded Bricolage Studio.

## Wanda Buck receives a ramp

Students stand on stools and chairs to replace light bulbs, crawl into cabinets to reconnect the plumbing for a kitchen sink, test new door handles and change out air filters in Wanda Buck's home.

Inside, as students focus on various tasks, Buck stands in the kitchen watching over them like a mother hen. "Oh baby, you be careful," she says to a student as she climbs up a ladder and reaches for the smoke detector, in need of new batteries, installed on the kitchen ceiling.

Buck points to her old round door knobs and kitchen sink faucet, "I can't grab those things," she says. The round knobs are replaced with lever-style handles, making them easier to use with the arthritis in her hands.

She has lived in this house for 37 years. Buck shares it with her grandson, who requires a wheelchair. For their first build of the fall 2017 semester, students designed and built a ramp leading up to her front door. Now she won't have to lift her grandson and his wheelchair up the steps into their home.

Raghda Abdainasir took the class last fall and helped build the ramp for Buck's home. A UTC graduate student in construction management, Abdainasir is excited for the opportunity to learn more about her field, but it's the community service aspect of the class that really puts a smile on her face. "We are doing community work, helping people. It's really beautiful to go in, see what people need and help them," says Abdainasir.

For two semesters, the scenes were similar in 10 different houses across town as students worked with a \$1,000 budget per house to improve the homes' accessibility and energy efficiency. Anyone who has ever renovated or simply tried to maintain a home knows \$1,000 isn't an ideal budget. "But it's a lot of money when you don't have \$1,000," says Dana Moody, graduate program director and professor of interior design.

Oftentimes, Moody says, low-income housing has the highest energy bills. "They don't have insulation. Their windows aren't getting fixed," she adds. "It's one of life's sad ironies. The people who don't have the money have the highest bills."

Bricolage Studio participates in community partnerships with nonprofits Widow's Harvest and Habitat for Humanity.

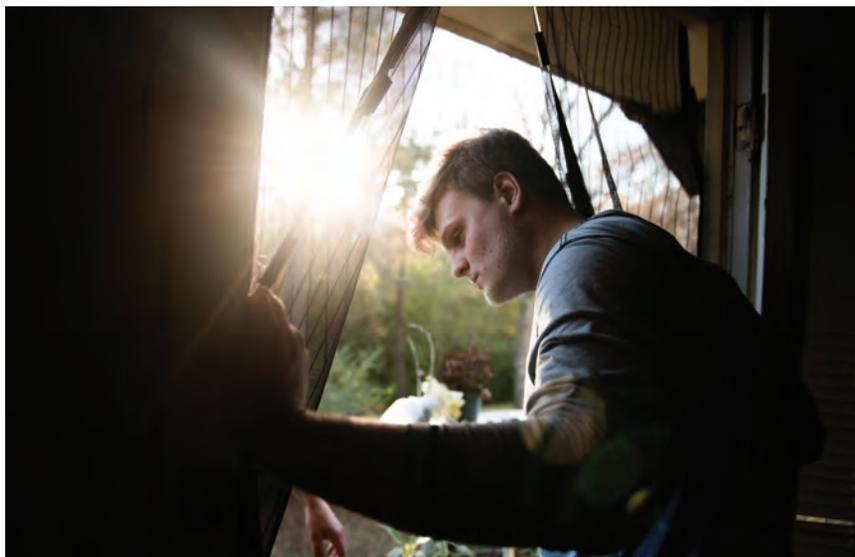
This arrangement serves to help students identify which homes to update. Dick Mason with Widow's Harvest and Daniel Gamble with Habitat for Humanity's Neighborhood Revitalization Program have been onsite for every project, helping students with the specifics of renovation projects and fulfilling the role of general contractor.

## Betty Ray's home project

The first time students from Bricolage Studio visited a project house, they were prepared with a checklist in hand. Compiled with information from community partners' home repair assessments, EPB's home energy efficiency audit and an accessibility inventory checklist created by a UTC Responsive Design class, the checklist creates a blueprint for prioritizing projects in



Top and middle: Cale Fagan and Hailey Batson; Lily DeCordova and Hailey Batson repaint the exterior of a home in East Chattanooga.  
Bottom: Darren Terrell



the homes. It helps students decide which projects they will complete with the modest budget that is available.

At Betty Ray's Chattanooga house, this system was used to choose repairs that included a wheelchair ramp, the conversion of all the home's lights to LED bulbs, to install a grab bar in the shower and replace the bathroom sink and exterior door hardware with easy-to-use levers.

Ray still takes care of her adult daughter with special needs, explains Sarah Hathcock, graduate student in interior design. "She spent all of her time cleaning houses and you can just see it on her hands," Hathcock says. "Her poor hands, the wear from all of the years of scrubbing."

### The I-never-did-move project

The checklist guided students to put all of their efforts into the back-breaking work of repairing the roof and installing gutters at Carol Van Mersbergen's home in Lookout Valley. Van Mersbergen bought the house with her late husband when they moved from California 40 years ago. "We bought that little house expecting to later get a nicer one." Van Mersbergen says, "But I've been here for 40 years and now it's being fixed up." She adds, "I'm just so grateful."

### The church project

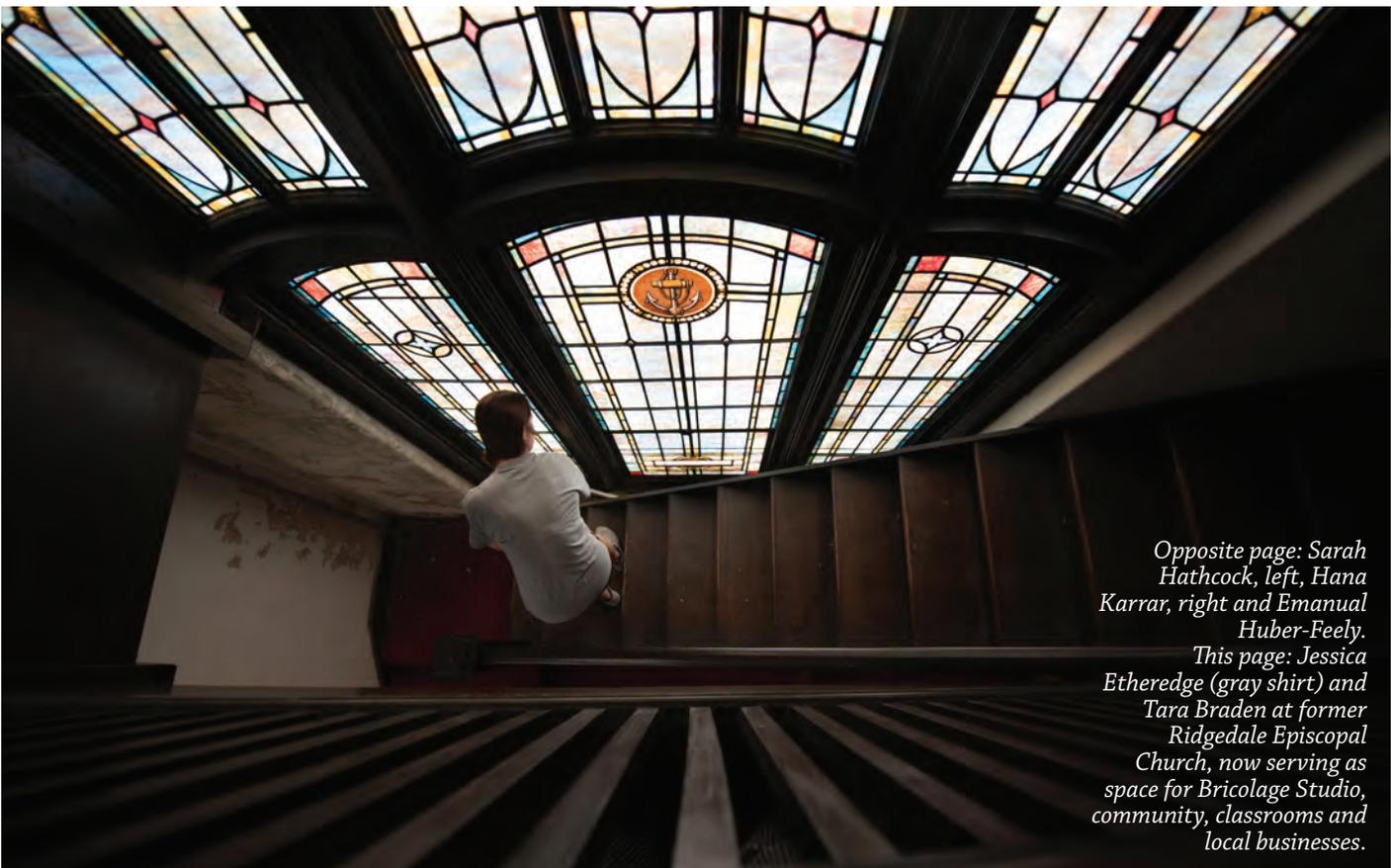
With the remaining grant money, Bricolage Studio helped renovate the building that houses the studio, among other businesses and UTC classes. The building, former Ridgedale Episcopal Methodist Church located near campus, gave students in several classes at UTC an opportunity for tangible coursework and research.

Engineering students priced renovations to make the bathrooms ADA compliant and then priced the needed repairs for the interior walls of the sanctuary. Interior architecture and design students used the building to perform a historic preservation study, take field measurements and convert them into CAD drawings for potential revitalization plans. Third-year architecture students from UT Knoxville created residential designs for the building's neighborhood. They also designed wheelchair ramp systems among other additions to the building.

With all of the hustle and bustle around this space, graduate students who led the Bricolage Studio class last spring continued to hope for how they can help the community moving forward.

Looking ahead, Hathcock describes a studio she visited on a recent interior architecture/design trip to New Orleans. She says the student-led studio project there was similar to what has been put together here. "As word spread, they had people coming to them requesting projects because of their fine work," she says. "The New Orleans students studied what was needed to build a store. What a cool project." **C**





Opposite page: Sarah Hathcock, left, Hana Karrar, right and Emanuel Huber-Feely.  
This page: Jessica Etheredge (gray shirt) and Tara Braden at former Ridgedale Episcopal Church, now serving as space for Bricolage Studio, community, classrooms and local businesses.

# THE SON SHINES

BY SHAWN RYAN

**Reginald** Gilmore walks down a hall at Orchard Knob Elementary School and, though school has let out for the day, a tiny first-grader tags along. Gilmore has promised to give him some Play-Doh and the youngster stays close, chatting away.

"I was in there and I didn't get into any trouble," the boy says, pointing to a glass-walled room on his right. "There" is the room where some students take their annual assessment tests, a room that demands silence. Without a word, Gilmore sticks out his palm, which the boy slaps so hard the whack! echoes off the walls.

When they enter Gilmore's classroom, he pulls out a desk drawer and hands the boy some Play-Doh. A fourth-grader who heard Gilmore mention Play-Doh asks, "Can I have some?"

"I don't have any more Play-Doh, but I'll give you some bubbles," Gilmore says as the thrilled boy's jaw drops like the tailgate of a pickup truck.

For the past three years, Gilmore has worked fulltime as a behavioral specialist at Orchard Knob Elementary, helping students who need help when it comes to following the rules. In doing so, he has cultivated deep connections with the students, he says. "I want to be a visual blueprint for the kids in the surrounding area. I love it. I love it," he says, sitting at his desk as another student sticks her head in the door and asks if he has any more Play-Doh.

But for Gilmore, the hours at Orchard Knob are just the beginning of his day.

When school is done, he drives to the home he shares with his mother and, most nights, studies for his master's degree in social work from UTC, which he'll officially earn in August. He and his twin sister, Requel, also are primary caregivers for their mother, Yolonda, who is 48 years old and has suffered from kidney disease for 20 years. "They are constantly checking on me, calling me or texting me during the day," she says. "How was your treatment? Do you need anything? Do you need me to go get something for you to eat? Have you eaten today? Mama you need to eat or drink this Ensure."

"They just try to keep my spirits up. They tell me, 'God ain't let you live this long to be on dialysis ...'"

"For no reason," her son says. "Yeah, for no reason," she adds.

Despite the energy and time it takes to care for his mother along with his other responsibilities, he says he's "grateful" for the experience.

"It has created a drive in me that I wouldn't have if my mother wasn't sick," he explains. "I know it sounds weird and a lot of people have a hard time understanding it, but it has been a blessing."

His mother, though, says he sometimes does too much. "He doesn't know how to say 'No' sometimes," she says. "Sometimes you have to tell him, 'Don't be putting too many

things on your plate; you try to do too many things.' He's always trying to help people out. He can't help everybody, but he wants to. He feels like that's his calling, his purpose."

## National situation

Gilmore and his sister are among millions of millennials who are taking care of their aging or ill parents, a trend that is almost guaranteed to rise. By 2050, it is estimated that there will be more people over the age of 65 on the planet than ever in history, a situation dubbed "The Gray Tsunami." There currently are 44 million caregivers in the U.S. and about one-quarter of them are millennials.

He was featured in "How Will Millennials Care for Their Aging Parents?," an episode of *Left Field*, an online news program from NBC. In the video, he says he must deal with "constantly worrying and making sure my mom's OK" while also having a fulltime job and working toward his master's.

He doesn't have a set time when he focuses on his master's, which he's been working toward over the past two years, "more of utilizing any downtime that I have," he says. "It sounds challenging but, lucky for me a lot of the content that UTC MSW program provided is very interesting."

And what he has learned at UTC has helped him become a better caregiver, he says.

"There have been several courses that have provided content that has increased my knowledge surrounding human behavior which has helped me embrace the gray days. Chronic illness is complicated to deal with, and my mother deals with it quite well.

"We all come across hurdles in life and, when it's her time to jump and overcome whatever challenges come about, I have been able to help her identify specific behaviors and symptoms which allows her to maneuver over complication," he says.

"The coursework and lectures have helped me to understand how the mind works and stages of the aging process, which has not only helped me interact better with my mother but individuals in general."

## Coming home

Graduates of Tyner Academy, Gilmore and his sister, a registered nurse, have been helping to care for their mother for years, but they became full-time caregivers in 2014, after graduating from Freed-Hardeman University in Henderson, Tenn. He attended on a basketball scholarship to the small college in a small town. ("We just got a stoplight and for fun we used to hang out at Piggly Wiggly," Gilmore says.)

He lived in Nashville for about six months after graduating and Requel stayed in Knoxville after earning her degree at UT Knoxville, but they both came home to help their mother. They divide the caregiving with his sister handling most of the



doctor visits because she understands medical terms, he says. On his side, he concentrates on what she eats, making sure her diet matches her medical condition.

“We also provide endless support, encouragement and the most powerful word in the universe: Love.”

He acknowledges that it’s difficult to juggle so many balls and keep them in the air, but he tries to remain upbeat. “I’ve just always been the type of person that tried to find the positive in things,” he says. “My sister’s kind of the serious one and I’m the joker. I love seeing people happy; it makes me feel good.”

When it comes to taking care of himself, he runs and hikes. “Exercise is healthy for our brains, and it keeps me in a good place mentally. Chattanooga provides tons of free space to create and decompress.”

### **Making people smile**

His mom’s happiness is foremost.

“I like going in there and making up something off the top of my head and she says, ‘You so stupid. That didn’t happen.’ To know that I have the power to do that is an incredible feeling.”

Gilmore has always had the ability to make people smile, his mother says. “He just knows what to say to you to perk you up. Ever since he’s been a little boy, he knows how.”

His mother is not completely debilitated. Though Gilmore and his sister sometimes accompany her, she can drive herself to her three dialysis treatments each week, which start at 6 a.m. and end about four hours later. She’s been taking the treatment so long, some of the veins in her arms have collapsed and formed scars, making it difficult to find a suitable insertion point for the dialysis needle. She’s also on

more than 10 medications which can have unpleasant side effects, Gilmore says, and have led to several hospital visits in recent months. “On Valentine’s Day, we had to go to the emergency room,” he says.

His mother feels guilty for putting her children through it, he says, “and I believe lately she’s been thinking about it a little bit more than normal because she’s had more problems and complications,” Gilmore says. “It bothers her, but it doesn’t bother us at all. We just love our mother and want to see her do well.”

One of the key lessons he’s taken away from his mother’s illness is patience, he says. There are times when she doesn’t want to burden him and won’t open up about any physical, emotional or mental problems she’s experiencing. “Eventually through conversations and encouragement, my mom will tell me what’s going on,” he says.

Having the patience to dig down to the “deeper root” of a problem is something he applies “to everything in my life” but especially at Orchard Knob. “The patience that I’ve learned from dealing with my mom shows up each and every day I’m able to come into this school and build this amazing rapport with these kids and talk to them,” he says.

It means not just reacting to a student’s bad behavior, but discovering the heart of the problem. “A kid comes in angry and upset first thing in the morning and it’s: ‘School just started. How is it that you’re this upset?’”

He recalls a situation when a student kept getting in trouble because he was taking his shoes off in every class. Gilmore finally asked why he wouldn’t leave his shoes on. “He said, ‘My Dad came over and threw all my shoes away. He and my Mom got to arguing, so these are the only shoes I have and they’re too small and my feet hurt.’” **C**

# ENTREPRENEURIAL EXCELLENCE

---

BY CHUCK WASSERSTROM

**When** they started out, it was your typical mom-and-pop operation. But there's nothing typical about how their tale has unfolded.

As their story goes, Mike and Amy Walden started a security company inside a Chattanooga squad car back in the early 1990s. Mike was a police officer, spending five years with the Chattanooga police department following an eight-year period as a search-and-rescue swimmer in the U.S. Navy. Amy was a police dispatcher, starting her career in law enforcement while attending UTC—where she majored in elementary education.

The company, first known as Metropolitan Security, literally was a word-of-mouth enterprise. The Waldens took on extra security jobs overnight as a way to supplement their incomes.

The Waldens saw a need for a good contract security company locally, and they felt momentum mounting as they added customers one by one. After a few years of building up their client base, the Chattanooga natives decided

to take the bold step of going at it full-time. They didn't know they would become wildly successful, but they knew they weren't going to fail.

That little business with its roots in a police cruiser—now known as Walden Security—has grown to nearly \$200 million in annual revenue with approximately 4,700 employees. Walden Security can be found in 32 states as the seventh-largest guard company in the nation.

The husband-and-wife team of Mike and Amy Walden are living, breathing examples of entrepreneurial success straight out of Chattanooga.

## Brave, new world

It takes a lot of courage to go out on your own and start a business. But how do you go from starting a business on the vinyl seats and in the trunk of a squad car to becoming a nationally known company?

According to Mike Walden, it all started with building connections.

“We've been able to do it one friendship, one relationship at a time,”



*Photo: Lanewood Studio*

he said. “When we got one customer, we did a good job and asked them to refer us to another customer, and refer us to another customer.”

Mike had come back home after serving in the Navy. His plan upon returning to Chattanooga was to go to UTC, get a degree, and probably go back into the military as an officer.

His father was a policeman, and he suggested that Mike do a ride-along.

“I had a great time. I enjoyed it,” Mike said. “The next Friday night I went back and said, ‘Hey, can I ride along again?’ So I did that a couple of weeks. Then I decided, ‘Hey, this is something I want to do.’ So I went and put in an application and applied to the police academy, and all of a sudden, I’m a policeman.”

Not long after joining the department, “One day I hear a pretty voice on the radio and it was Amy, and she was dispatching us. So I arranged where I could meet her at the headquarters,” he said. “I met her and talked to her, and we started dating. Our first date, she came to an extra job when I was working off-duty as a police officer. Matter of fact, I think she came to two extra jobs I had that night.”

Those extra jobs—first, keeping an eye on a car dealership, then a chicken plant, then a hotel—led to a belief that the side gig could become more profitable. The extra jobs also showed how well the two of them partnered together; it wasn’t long before they were married.

After a couple years of full-time shifts followed by working overnight security detail, the seeds were in place. The Waldens were ready to take the plunge professionally.

“There was a need for a good contract security company, and we just worked all the time. We knew that something had to give,” Amy said. “We needed to believe in ourselves and do that.”

So the plan was hatched.

“Amy and I decided that if we were doing as well as we were doing in the security business part-time, how well could we do if we dedicated 12 to 14 hours just to that? So we took the leap of faith,” Mike said. “We rented some office space, went into a room, closed the door, and started calling customers—asking them if they’d give us an opportunity to come and talk to them and tell them about our security company.

“We weren’t going to fail. We couldn’t fail. We did not have a plan B. Nobody told us we couldn’t do what we wanted to do.”

The Waldens built up their customer base in and around

Chattanooga for five years before expanding to the Nashville market. Around five years later, Walden Security opened a branch in Atlanta—and soon got its big break after landing a government contract to protect the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“For about four years we didn’t do anything but take care of the CDC,” Mike said. “9-11 had happened, and we were upgrading their security program. Then we won Army contracts in multiple states and multiple bases.”

From there, Walden Security grew and grew and grew. Today, the company is divided about 50/50—with 50 percent government contracts and 50 percent in the private sector.

“One of our sayings is ‘We protect those who protect the

**“This is a way that we can help them transition from a military career and give them the basic skillsets. They already have the motivation. They already have the discipline.”**

world,’ because we’ve guarded military bases in times when the soldiers and sailors were overseas,” Mike said. “We’ve guarded the Center for Disease Control, which protects the world. We’re one of the largest contractors for U.S. Marshal Service in the United States.”

But as it grew into a national company, Walden Security remained a mom-and-pop operation at heart.

“We’re the old story of a family where the father is the cook and the mother’s running the cash register,” Mike said. His title is president, while Amy is the chairman and CEO, overseeing all financial aspects of the company.

“The best business deal was when I married my wife,” Mike said. “She has the skill set and a demeanor that together we make a wonderful business person. I’m better with her, and she’s better with me—and we’ve worked together and been able to live together and build our life together. We’ve raised our family together and built one heck of a company. It’s been a great life. Our daughter (Taylor) has grown up in our business watching us. So it’s just been a great opportunity to work with my wife and to build a company.”

Along the way, Walden Security has been recognized with numerous honors, including *Inc. 5000*—America’s Fastest Growing Private Companies, *Business TN*—Hot 100 Fastest Growing Companies, the Mass Mutual Blue Chip Enterprise Award, the Sam Walton Business Leader Award and the

Better Business Bureau Torch Award for Marketplace Ethics. In November 2017, *Training Magazine*—a leading business publication for learning and development professionals—named Walden Security one of the top 125 organizations in the country for excellence in employer-sponsored training and development programs.

“We’re a family company,” Mike said. “Family values. Treating our employees the way they deserve to be treated. Investing in our employees, investing in leadership, training, benefits.

“And,” as he proudly pointed out, “we’ve grown without acquisition. We’ve done it one friendship after another without outside equity investors. Without private equity. Just bootstrapping. Get a customer. Do a good job. Pay your officers. And reinvest in the company over and over.”

### Veterans entrepreneurship

When the Waldens started out, they knew they had a concept, and they knew they were good at what they did, but there were so many things they didn’t know—such as contracts and proposals. They needed guidance to advance in the business world, and they had assistance along the way.

When the opportunity came to help others, they were more than happy to lend a hand.

In 2012, the Veterans Entrepreneurship Program (VEP) was launched at UTC. The VEP is a nationally acclaimed program of free training, mentoring and management expertise for small businesses founded by military veterans.

The VEP teaches Chattanooga-area veterans how to translate knowledge they acquired in the military into valuable entrepreneurial skills. There is no cost to veterans accepted into the program—which has produced more than 100 UTC graduates during its first six years of existence.

The program called out to the Waldens. Mike could empathize with transitioning veterans; as a seasoned search-and-rescue swimmer trying to make it in the civilian world, he needed finishing touches in connecting the business dots.

The Waldens were on board to provide support.

“It’s most important because we get to talk to the veterans and get to spend time with them—and listen to their success stories,” Mike said. “All you hear is they just want someone to give them the basic fundamentals that they don’t have. They have so many pieces of the puzzle already. Some of them just need to know how to write a business plan, how to read a financial statement and to hear from someone that it can be done. And to see how aggressive and eager they are to succeed, it just makes you want to help them.”

Late last year, the couple made a bequest of \$1 million to support the VEP. Walden Security also increased its lead gift

to the VEP to \$250,000, providing substantial funding for the next five years.

“This is a way that we can help them transition from a military career and give them the basic skill sets,” Mike said. “They already have the motivation. They already have the discipline. They want to start businesses that they can make a living, that they can employ and help others, and they can raise their families.

“When we first started doing this I said, ‘If this program is as successful as I think it will be, Amy and I will endow the program so that it will go on long after we’re gone.’ And because it was successful and we saw that it was successful, we were willing to put our money where our mouth is and pledge the money to make sure that the program will be around. We are glad that we have an opportunity to change some lives and to give them the skills that they need to be successful as they transition from military service.”

### Hard work and caring pay off

Twenty-five years after starting a contract security company inside a Chattanooga squad car, the Waldens are the definition of entrepreneurial triumph.

It might have started as a mom-and-pop tale—“The story is that we started on vinyl seats in a squad car. We’d cash the police check on Thursday, and pay four guards on Friday,” Mike said—and the Waldens haven’t forgotten how far their business has come.

It’s their narrative, and the story continues to build.

“People ask if we had any idea it was going to be this successful,” Mike said, “and the answer is ‘No.’ We knew we were going to work hard. We were going to do the right things. And as we could, we’ve hired additional people—and that’s what has made our company great, not Mike and Amy. We took the chance, and we’re part of it; maybe the hub. But there’s a lot of spokes on the wheel, and without them we’re nothing. We have to take care of our employees. If we take care of them, they’ll take care of our customers, and the rest of the stuff will take care of itself.

“The security officers that are at their posts seven days a week, 24 hours a day, 52 weeks a year, they’re the ones that are cold, wet, hungry and out in stressful conditions – and they are responsible for tens of millions of dollars in buildings and assets. It’s our responsibility to take care of them, and that’s the way the company’s been doing it from the beginning. It’s been about taking care of the security officers, the front line, the boots on the ground—because that’s where I came from and that’s where Amy comes from. We understand that. We didn’t have to learn the security aspect. We had to learn the business aspect. And we’ve never forgotten where we came from.” **C**

# MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

## Combining Environmental Rhetoric to English Composition Class

BY SARAH JOYNER

**What do** empty beer cans,  
fast food wrappers and area

Chattanooga creeks have to do with an English class?

A whole lot, it turns out.

Pulling up to the parking lot of a former Logan's Roadhouse restaurant on Gunbarrel Road, it's hard not to check the smartphone map app a few times to be sure you're in the right place. Is there really a creek right here in the middle of parking lots and strip malls? There is a cluster of cars along the back and side of the former restaurant which reveals that someone is meeting here. And the reason isn't to order steaks at 8 a.m. on a Friday.

In groups of threes and fours, students of the Environmental Rhetoric and Composition II class at UTC have descended upon a small creek at the bottom of a deep ditch. Some clamber down the steep banks, black garbage bags in rubber-gloved hands, while others hang back, typing items into an app on their phones as their partners call out what they've found before shoving the trash into their bags.

A box of beer cans, a sleeping bag, a cellphone, faded food wrappers, cups bearing logos of nearby chain restaurants. Oh, and a dead hawk. Out of the 12 different locations the general education class has visited the spring semester, this clean-up

effort proved to be one of the more littered. Other locations have included the Northshore's Renaissance Park, downtown's Carver Recreation Center and North Mountain Creek at the foot of Signal Mountain.

Thus, general education at UTC is revealed by one English class, a group of enthusiastic students working and learning beyond the classroom. General education courses have always been an important part of the higher education curriculum.

When Emma Kerley registered for spring classes, she assumed she was just adding another English class to her schedule—checking off another box on her general education checklist. She thought a rhetoric and composition class would command more nights of reading assignments and writing papers, not sifting through trash along local creek banks.

"I just signed up for a rhetoric class and then the first day I was like, 'Oh,'" Kerley says.

Obviously, the class entailed more than just picking up trash, but the literature—books, PSAs, videos, newspaper articles—was completely focused on one theme: environmental stewardship. Writing assignments followed along that same topic. When students dug into their research papers, they were writing about something tangible, something they were seeing and touching in person.

Summer Tomes, a freshman art major, is making art inspired



## “College should be a place where students are exposed to ideas and learn how to formulate solutions”

by what she has seen in this class. “I didn’t expect an English class to crossover,” she says. “At least, not an environmental one to cross over with my art classes.”

### Litter, data and the human spirit

Clayton Jones, the English lecturer who designed and teaches the course, has a background in environmental advocacy. He was executive director of New Echota Rivers Alliance, a conservation organization in Calhoun, Ga. Jones set out to design his course to emphasize research with the idea of stewardship.

His plans for the course picked up steam as he collaborated with UTC and Chattanooga resources: talking with Bengt Carlson, experiential learning coordinator for UTC’s ThinkAchieve program, and Rebecca Robinson, water quality supervisor for the City of Chattanooga Department of Public Works.

In 15 years teaching English to college students, Jones says he’s “not seen a group of students more engaged. Ever.” It’s the nature of the class that has inspired them, he adds. “When you are engaged in your community and its welfare, you begin to see the best parts of people, to see the human spirit.”

Jones’ students aren’t just cleaning up streams. They’re collecting data that will be used to study citywide littering trends and respond with targeted solutions like “providing reusable bags to convenience stores in areas underserved by grocery stores,” Robinson says.

The students also are beta testers for an application designed by the city’s water quality staff—the app students used to record items they cleaned up. The water quality staff now is enhancing the app’s software with student suggestions to make it more user-friendly in advance of making the app available citywide.

“I think Professor Jones came up with an excellent learning platform,” Robinson says. “It kept his students interested, engaged and motivated to affect change. The way the class was structured, it enabled students to ‘get out in the real world’ and see something (in the environment) that they most likely would never have thought about. College should be a place where students are exposed to ideas and learn how to formulate solutions,” she adds.

Jones’ class met that definition as the students were guided to see environmental issues and encouraged to come up with workable solutions. “I think this group of students has realized that we are all in this together, and to be a true steward of your community takes hard work,” she says. **C**

*Editor’s Note: A general education course re-imagines what can be done in one subject and how a classroom can impact a community. At UTC, all students are required to take general education courses.*



Students clean up trash from Friar Branch behind the former Logan’s Roadhouse on Gunbarrel Rd and the creek at Carver Recreation Center.

Opposite page left to right: David Parham David DeBerry.  
This page left to right: Alexander Segar and Summer Tomes.



## TERRELL OWENS' PRO FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME CELEBRATION IS "FOR YOU"



**MORE ON THE WEB:**  
[utc.edu/TO-HOF](http://utc.edu/TO-HOF)

You—the 1,000-plus fans gathered inside McKenzie Arena, where UTC hosted the celebration. You—the 100 UTC student-athletes in reserved seating on the arena floor. You—Owens' former Mocs basketball teammates also given places of honor alongside family and friends seated on the arena floor.

And you—former UTC coaches Frankie DeBusk, Mack McCarthy and Buddy Green, who recalled Owens' time as a Mocs wide receiver from 1992 to 1995. And of course, you, former San Francisco 49ers receivers coach Larry Kirksey and former Dallas Cowboys receivers coach Ray Sherman, who talked of Owens' work ethic, drive and passion.

Owens' remarks were a series of expressions of gratitude for people who touched or enhanced his life, beginning with a tribute to his mother, front and center in the VIP audience seating.

"Your belief in me has never wavered. You told me you always knew I would be something special," Owens said, his voice breaking. "Momma, you are the real hall of famer. Thank you for being the best mother you could be for me and for my sisters and brothers. I love you. And for that, this is for you."

Moments earlier, Owens' mother was on stage to present him with the signature gold-colored sportcoat given to Hall of Fame inductees.

Owens acknowledged his decision to celebrate his induction into the Pro Football Hall of Fame in Chattanooga, rather than in Canton, Ohio, where the traditional celebration happened. He cited his disagreement with the process for selecting inductees, then resumed thanking those who have been part of major milestones in his life.

"I greatly appreciate those who support my decision," he said, "and I'm glad to be here in Chattanooga, where it all started, and this is where I close this chapter."

Owens also thanked those in the audience "who have

traveled near and far," calling out—and getting responses from—fans of each of the NFL teams on which he played: the San Francisco 49ers, Philadelphia Eagles, Dallas Cowboys, Buffalo Bills and Cincinnati Bengals.

"Thanks for always having my back," he said. "This is for you."

Renee Davis isn't just one of those fans—she's a superfan. Davis, who lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, made her first-ever trip to Chattanooga just to attend Owens' celebration.

When she heard about Owens' selection for the Hall of Fame, Davis bought a ticket to the event in Canton. When she heard Owens' celebration was going to be at UTC, she sold her ticket to Canton and made plans to be in Chattanooga.

"There was no way I was not going to be here," Davis said, wearing a Mocs jersey with Owens' UTC playing number, 80, on it.

Asked at the post-event press conference how soon or how often he might return to Chattanooga, Owens said a visit to UTC homecoming a few years ago began what's become an annual tradition for him.

"I wasn't the best in high school, and I wasn't the best in college, but then I saw what I could be, and I got lost in trying to be the best I could be, and that was my whole focus," he said.

"Then I came back here to homecoming, and I really felt the love. I've been back the last three years for homecoming, and every year, it feels like it did that first time again. I've told the staff, (Chancellor) Steve Angle, this place is like home away from home for me.

"The first time I was back, I realized the impact I've made. I feel welcome, and it's special here."



*Superfan Renee Davis*

## MOCS MEN'S BASKETBALL TEAM UNDERGOES ROSTER TRANSFORMATION

The UTC Mocs Men's basketball team will have a virtually new roster under second-year Head Coach Lamont Paris in 2018-19.

Sophomore guard David Jean-Baptiste, selected to play this summer for Haiti's National Team in international competition, is the most experienced returnee from a year ago. Duane Moss played in seven

games last year and then was lost for the rest of the season to injury. Jerry Johnson and Ramon Vila sat out last year as transfers and Justin Brown because of an injury; but all three were in the program. The Mocs finished 10-23 in Paris' first season.

See [utc.edu/BasketballRoster](http://utc.edu/BasketballRoster) for more information.



Coach Lamont Paris

### UT-CHATTANOOGA MOCS MEN'S BASKETBALL ROSTER

NO.	NAME	POS.	HT.	WT.	CL.-EXP.	HOMETOWN HS/College
25	JUSTIN BROWN	C	6-10	205	FR.-RS	LANSING, ILL. <i>Marist</i>
7	A.J. CALDWELL	G	6-3	200	SO.-TR	SARASOTA, FLA. <i>Riverview/South Alabama</i>
4	MAURICE COMMANDER	G	6-0	160	FR.-HS	CHICAGO, ILL. <i>Curie</i>
34	KEVIN EASLEY	F	6-6	230	FR.-HS	INDIANAPOLIS, IND. <i>Lawrence North</i>
3	DAVID JEAN-BAPTISTE	G	6-1	190	SO.-1	MIAMI, FLA. <i>Norland</i>
2	JERRY JOHNSON, JR.	G	6-1	215	JR.-TR	MEMPHIS, TENN. <i>Houston/Fairfield</i>
11	ROD JOHNSON	F	6-7	195	JR.-JC	SUN PRAIRIE, WISC. <i>Sun Prairie/Highland CC</i>
22	KEIGAN KERBY	F	6-7	205	FR.-HS	HAMPTON BEACH, N.H. <i>Brooks</i>
21	DUANE MOSS	F	6-6	185	FR.-RS	MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. <i>Carolina Forest</i>
1	JONATHAN SCOTT	G/F	6-4	195	JR.-JC	MONUMENT, COLO. <i>Lewis-Palmer/Otero JC</i>
33	THOMAS SMALLWOOD	C	7-0	240	SR.-TR	BORDEAUX, FRANCE <i>Saint John Perse/UAB</i>
5	DONOVANN TOATLEY	G	5-10	160	FR.-HS	UPPER MARLBORO, MD. <i>Riverside Baptist</i>
15	RAMON VILA	F	6-8	240	SO.-TR	BARCELONA, SPAIN <i>Arizona State</i>

## Katie Burrows named women's basketball head coach

Katie Burrows was named head coach of the women's basketball program in May. Burrows becomes the sixth head coach in the history of Mocs' women's basketball after spending eight seasons as an assistant.

In her eight years as an assistant coach at UTC, Burrows served on staffs for both Wes Moore and Jim Foster. During that time, UTC advanced to the postseason eight times, with five trips to the NCAA Tournament following five Southern Conference titles. The Mocs posted an impressive overall record of 255-95 (.729) and a 160-34 (.825) mark in league play during her time as an assistant.

"I would like to thank Mark Wharton and the search committee for this opportunity," stated Burrows. "I have learned so much under both Coach Moore and Coach Foster, and I know I am ready to make the jump to head coach. I have a passion for my alma mater and the Chattanooga community. Everyone who knows me will agree that I will do whatever it takes to continue the winning history of this special program."

"Based on our long history of success in women's basketball, I felt it was necessary to conduct a national search for Jim Foster's replacement," said Athletic Director Mark Wharton. "I was pleased with the quality of individuals who were interested in our program, and Katie was a strong candidate from the beginning. That being said, she clearly distanced herself from a talented pool of coaches. She earned the opportunity to lead our women's program."

A native of the Chattanooga community Lookout Valley, Burrows came to UTC in 2000 and was an integral member of four consecutive SoCon titles. In her time as a student-athlete, the Mocs posted a record of 102-23 with wins over such teams as Florida State, Alabama and Louisville. UTC advanced to the NCAA championships

all four seasons. In her senior year, the women posted the nation's longest active winning streak at 27 games that culminated with a first-round win over Rutgers in the NCAA Tournament. In that game, Burrows sank perhaps the

her team was eliminated by Rossville in the Class AAA finals. Burrows also served as head coach of girls' basketball at Tullahoma High School in Tullahoma, Tenn., from 2005-07 where she taught health and physical education.

**I have a passion for my alma mater and the Chattanooga community.**



most memorable shot in Chattanooga history, nailing a 30-foot bank shot from the right side to spark a comeback win over the Scarlet Knights.

Burrows earned a spot among former head coach Wes Moore's top 10 players in the celebration of "Moore in McKenzie, a Decade of Dominance." She ranks in the top 10 in UTC history in 3-pointers made (107) and attempted (315). Prior to her return to UTC, Burrows was a coach and teacher at Ringgold High School for three years. She took over a program there that had just three wins in the season prior to her arrival. Under Burrows, the Lady Tigers steadily increased their win total in each of three consecutive seasons, culminating in Ringgold's first state playoff appearance in two decades when

Immediately following her graduation from UTC, she was named assistant basketball coach at Girls Preparatory School in Chattanooga from 2004-2005 under former UTC player Susan Lance Crownover '90.

As a schoolgirl player, Katie attended Lookout Valley High School where she was named the *Chattanooga Times Free Press* Best of Preps Female Athlete of the Year. She was a four-time, first team *Times Free Press* All-City selection, three-time Region Player of the Year and first team all-Tennessee. She was named a Tennessee Class A Miss Basketball finalist in back-to-back seasons. Katie learned her trade from her father Joe Galloway, her high school coach.

## UTC ALUMNI HERE AND THERE



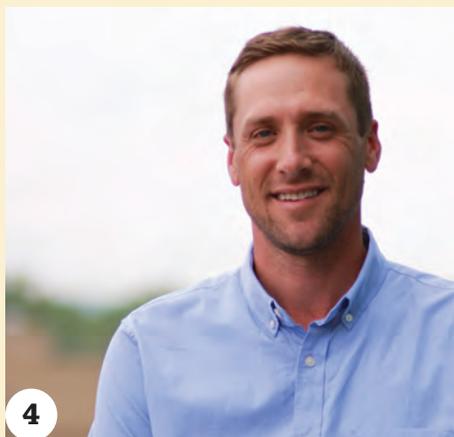
**Katie Galloway Burrows** '04 was named the sixth head coach of the UTC women's basketball program.

**Diane Grob Schmidt** '67 was inducted into *Tennessee Alumnus* magazine's 100 Centennial Alumni, joining such luminaries as former Senators Estes Kefauver and Howard Baker, legendary University of Tennessee women's basketball coach Pat Summitt and UT football standout Peyton Manning. *Photo 1*



**Greg Grisham** '83 was named to the 2018 list of Top 20 US Traditional Labor and Employment Attorneys by *Human Resource Executive* magazine and the website LawDragon. He is a partner in the Nashville office of FordHarrison LLP.

**Andy Harlen** '10 joined Bridge Connector as vice president of sales. The company helps healthcare organizations develop and streamline communications between computer systems such as customer service and electronic medical records. *Photo 2*



A licensed internist and emergency medicine physician, **Dr. James C. Howell** '80 has written two self-published novels—*Strange Love in America* and *Sentio*—available at [www.authorichowell.com](http://www.authorichowell.com) and [amazon.com](http://amazon.com), among other online sites. *Photo 3*

Former pro golfer **Derek Rende** '10 has been hired as vice president of sales for E!SPACES, which offers office and meeting spaces in Chattanooga and the Nashville area. *Photo 4*

UTC Athletics Assistant Director of Communications and Media Relations **Anne Wehunt** '96 won second place in the Event Writers contest in the 2018 Tennessee Sports Writers Association. *Photo 5*



**Joshua Mensch** '01 recently had his first book, *Because*, a book-length poem, published by W.W. Norton & Co. *Photo 6*

**Jesse Banks** '15 has been hired to work on the sales events management team for Walt Disney World, Disneyland, Disney cruise lines and Aulani, Disney's Hawaiian resort.

**Danielle Hanson** '94 just published her second book of poems, *Fraying Edge of Sky*. She also was a finalist in the Poetry Full-Length Book category in the 2018 Georgia Author of the Year awards for her first book, *Ambushing Water*. *Photo 7*

**Laurel Snyder** '97 was nominated for a 2017 National Book Award in the Young People's Literature category for *Orphan Island*, published by HarperCollins.

**Patsy Thrasher** '13 has completed a Ph.D. in biomedical sciences and has been hired as a research assistant at Rho Inc. *Photo 8*

**Rachel Fuller** '17 spent the summer working with baboons and vervet monkeys in a primate rehabilitation center in South Africa. *Photo 9*

**Simone Madsen** '13 is director of Southeast Tennessee Resource and Conservation Development Council, a nonprofit whose focus is on community enrichment and resource conservation and operates in 12 regional counties.

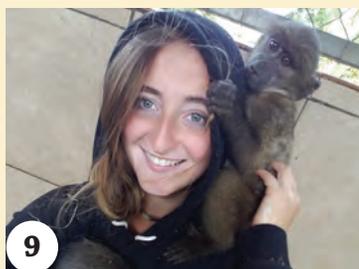
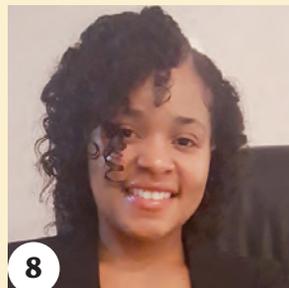
**David Paschall** '08 has launched Transparency Health, an investment group that focuses on growing health-care technology companies. *Photo 10*

**Stefan Moss** '05 is working with the U.S. National Park Service through his company, Solomon's Minds, which he founded in 2000. Through the program, he leads inner-city youths into forests for exploration. *Photo 11*

**Amanda Plecas** '04, '06 has been named manager of communications for Volkswagen Chattanooga. She will lead external and internal communications for the factory. *Photo 12*

**Nathaniel Harlan** '14 is a Corporate Overhead Controller at Volkswagen Chattanooga and is responsible for the control, formation, forecasting and reconciliation of budgets that total more than \$130 million. *Photo 13*

VISIT [UTC.EDU/ALUMNI](http://UTC.EDU/ALUMNI) FOR ADDITIONAL ALUM NOTES, PHOTOS AND MORE.



# MEMORIES OF A WORLD TRAVELER



BY CHUCK WASSERSTROM

**Generation** after generation of UTC students will tell you that Dr. Gavin Townsend

was an amazing teacher. He was zealous about art history—taking great pride in introducing novices to the world of art—and was particularly passionate about architectural history.

Students and faculty left for summer break not knowing that it would be the last time they would see Dr. Townsend, who had taught art and architectural history at UTC since 1986. Just days after being diagnosed with late-stage pancreatic cancer, Dr. Townsend died June 3 at his home, surrounded by his family. He was only 61 years old.

During his time at UTC, Dr. Townsend served as Faculty Senate president, director of the UTC Honors Program and gallery coordinator for the George Ayers Cress Gallery of Art. He also was a great representative of the university as a longtime member of the Southeast Chapter of the Society of Architectural Historians (SESAH).

Those who knew him were stunned by the devastating news. The tributes about what he meant to UTC flowed—and they came from the heart. “He was an A-plus-plus faculty member,” said Theresa Liedtka, UTC’s dean of the library. “He was the kind of guy you could disagree with, then go out and have a beer afterward.”

Yes, Dr. Townsend was a professor and a long-time leader on campus—but he was so much more. He opened up the world to those around him. “Gavin Townsend was an exacting, brilliant, curious, kind, and dedicated faculty member,” said Linda Frost, dean of the Honors College. “His work with the University Honors Program, the Brock Scholars Program and the Honors College was critical to building the honors community and experience we have today. He was an originator of the Brock Scholars May Travel Seminar in order to give students a wider

understanding of art and culture across the world.

“Widely knowledgeable and committed to the notion of global education, Gavin was an intrepid traveler, leading students on detailed urban explorations and ambitious hikes—sometimes very ambitious hikes—always at the ready with his map and travel guide. It is fitting that Gavin was hiking Machu Picchu with honors students just days before he passed away. Thoughtful, patient and always intellectually vibrant, Gavin will be missed terribly by all of us in the Honors College.”

Gregory O’Dea, associate dean of the UTC Honors College, called Dr. Townsend an extraordinarily gifted teacher. “Gavin never diminished in his enthusiasm for his subject and never tired of teaching others to see and contemplate what he liked to call ‘Objects of beauty and wonder.’ He brought that vision and visual literacy to thousands of students during his career. As those he mentored have testified again and again in the days since his death, he helped shape their understanding of the world around them and changed their practical and intellectual lives for the better.

“Gavin was a great traveler and a believer in travel as a critical component of one’s education and understanding. I traveled with him every year for a couple of decades and can say that no one I know could walk farther or longer or faster than he. More importantly, no one could notice more—and help others truly to see more—along the way.”

Debbie Bell ’76, ’90, associate director of the Honors College, recalled

that “some of my best memories of Gavin come from the many honors trips we took together over the last 20 years. I’ll always think of him with a map in his hand, pointing ‘That way’ as he guided a group of students through some of the most important sites in Europe. He opened up the world of art for me on those early trips. When I realized how much he could teach me I took his art history survey course and came to appreciate him as more than a friend and colleague; I experienced his role as a gifted teacher who influenced the lives of so many in the way they travel and view the world.”

Dr. Townsend’s love of architecture also played a critical role on the UTC campus.

“Gavin was always very sensitive about preserving the historical integrity of all the campus buildings,” said Richard Brown, ’82, ’90, executive vice chancellor for finance and administration. “He was instrumental in saving the facade of Chamberlain Field’s South Stadium building when it was razed in 2011. The South Stadium building had been condemned for several years prior to its destruction but, with the advice of Townsend, its bricks and architectural elements were saved and turned into the Chamberlain Field Pavilion that now stands on the east end of the field.”

Dr. Gavin Townsend may have passed away, but his legacy will go on. He left lasting memories on those he taught, and his stories will be told to future generations. A travel scholarship has been established in his name in the UTC Honors College.

Condolences are extended to his wife, Bonnie; his son, Evan; his brother, Bryan; and his mother, Ruth. He will be profoundly missed. **C**



*Photo: Billy Weeks  
The Tennessee Riverwalk runs from  
the Chickamauga Dam to downtown  
Chattanooga, a distance of 13 miles.*

Office of Communications and Marketing  
Dept. 5655  
615 McCallie Ave.  
Chattanooga, TN 37403

Nonprofit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Permit No. 26  
Chattanooga, TN

**Save the Date**

**HOMECOMING 2018** OCT. 21-27  
[utc.edu/homecoming](http://utc.edu/homecoming)



**Their productions are stirring  
and thought-provoking.**

*Don't miss UTC Theatre  
Company's upcoming season!  
Visit [utc.edu/theatre](http://utc.edu/theatre) for latest schedule.*