

THE MAGAZINE OF SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

# seasons

FALL 2022



The Lasting Impact of  
Research and Scholarship

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## Research and Scholarship



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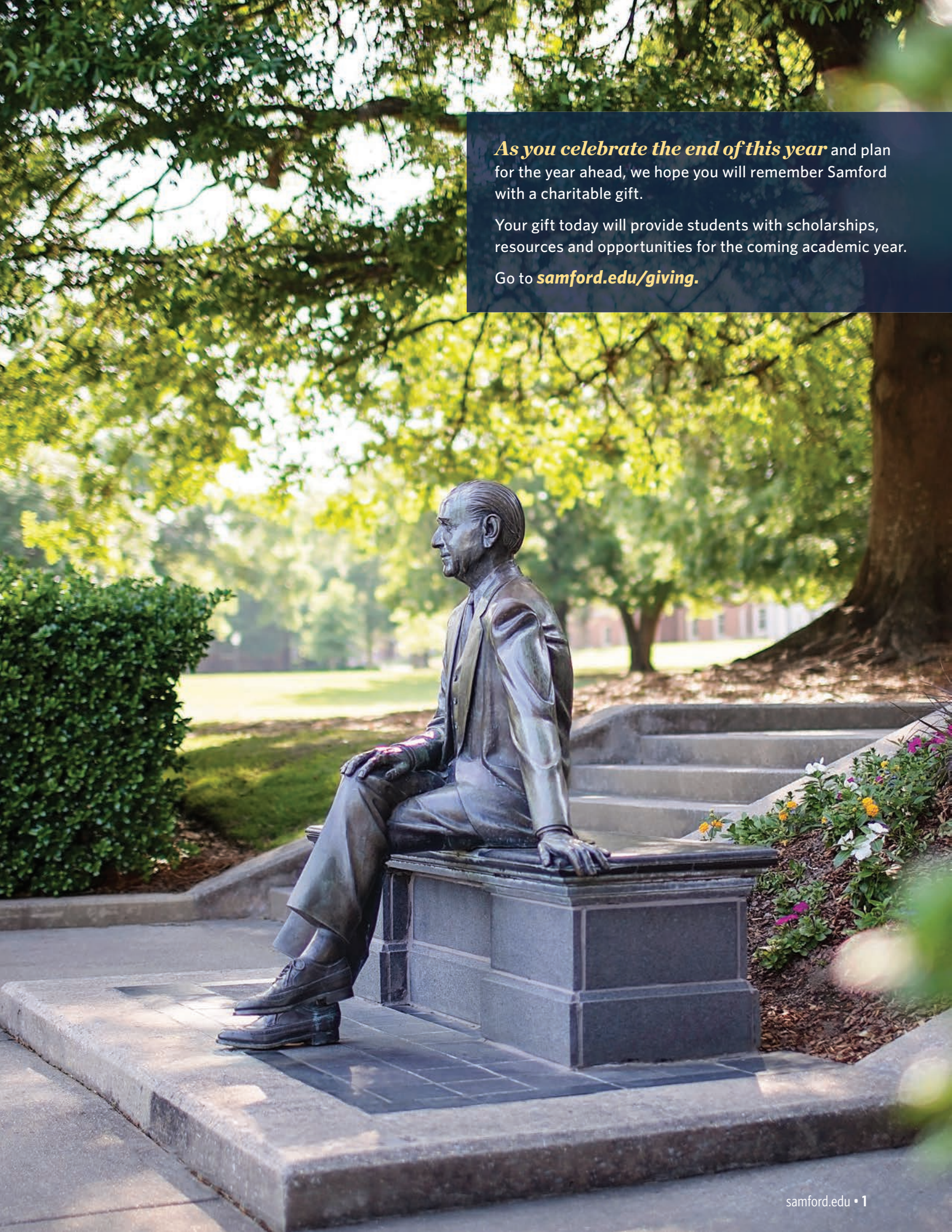
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# *From the President*



## Scholarly Impact

**Samford is known for its quality teaching**—our faculty members are among the best in the world at providing the kind of instruction and mentoring that transforms the lives of our students and, in turn, impacts the world.

What isn't always as apparent to the casual observer, but just as important, are the many ways Samford's faculty members contribute to society through research, creative activity and other forms of scholarship. It is well accepted that scholarship informs and strengthens what happens in the classrooms, laboratories and studios across Samford's campus. And increasingly, teaching and scholarship come together as more and more of our students partner with their professors to produce original and exciting contributions to their respective fields of study.

I'm excited for you to read about just some of the recent scholarly projects coming from Samford's faculty, students and alumni. From examining the ways African childbirth policies impact mothers' educational outcomes, to uncovering new mathematical models for disease spread, to developing empathy for the difficulties facing many of our neighbors through music and art, this issue is packed with inspiring examples of ways Samford scholars are contributing to the common good.

I know you will be impressed and proud of the many ways Samford's scholarly impact elevates the university's role and reputation as a Christ-centered university. The world is better for it.

**In the Samford spirit,**

Beck A. Taylor, Ph.D.  
President



# Samford Reports Record Freshman Class, 14th Year of Record *Undergraduate Enrollment*

By Holly Gainer

Samford announced the largest freshman class in the history of the institution with 972 enrolled first-year students. The total fall enrollment, which includes undergraduate and graduate students, is 5,683 students, with 3,672 undergraduate students and 2,011 graduate students. The students represent 47 states, Puerto Rico, Guam and 19 countries.

"We are excited about another year of record enrollment at the undergraduate level. Our first-year retention rate is over 91%, and the entering freshman class is the largest in our history," said Jason Black, vice president for enrollment management. "We are thankful for the trust our students and their families have in our institution."

The record fall enrollment comes at a time of growing national recognition and expansion across academic programs

at the university. Most recently, Samford was recognized as one of the best universities in the nation for undergraduate teaching. *U.S. News & World Report* ranked it as 66th in the nation on the Best Undergraduate Teaching list, placing it in the top 2% of colleges and universities in the country. It is the only university in Alabama to make this list. Samford is also ranked 1st nationally for student engagement, according to *The Wall Street Journal* and *Times Higher Education*. ▀





# Samford Recognized as National Leader in Undergraduate Teaching for Second Year in a Row, Best Value in Alabama

By Holly Gainer



**Samford has once again been recognized by *U.S. News & World Report* as one of the best universities in the United States for undergraduate teaching. According to the rankings, Samford is 66th in the nation for undergraduate teaching and is the only university in Alabama to make the list. Considering there are over 3,900 degree-granting postsecondary institutions in the U.S. recognized by the Department of Education, this ranking places Samford among the top 2% of colleges and universities in the country.**

The rankings were determined by college presidents, provosts and admission deans around the country. Each nominated up to 15 schools within their *U.S. News & World Report* ranking categories for which they believed faculty and administrators were committed to teaching undergraduate students in a high-quality manner. At least seven nominations were needed for a school to be ranked and listed.

"Our faculty are some of the best in the country, and I am thrilled that they have been recognized again for their hard work and commitment to providing an exceptional learning environment for our students," said Samford Provost Mike Hardin.

Samford also continues to be ranked as the best value for a college education in Alabama. In the list of national universities included in the best value ranking, Samford is ranked 104th, placing it among the top universities in the country. To determine which colleges and universities offer the best value for students, *U.S. News & World Report* factors academic quality and cost after accounting for total expenses and financial aid.

*U.S. News & World Report* ranks Samford 127th overall among all national universities, which includes the largest and most prestigious private and public institutions in the United States. The ranking criteria include academic reputation, graduation and retention rates, class size, faculty/student ratios and peer assessments from higher education leaders.

"Samford continues to be recognized as a leader in quality education, teaching and value, and we are pleased that it is ranked amongst the best universities in the country," said President Beck A. Taylor. "Although national rankings are just one measure of success, the recognition provides affirmation for our students, employees and alumni. As we continue to grow and thrive, we also celebrate the growing national reputation of our university." ■





# Pathway to a New Strategic Plan

**In February, President Beck A. Taylor announced the university's effort to develop Samford's next comprehensive strategic plan. Under the leadership of Taylor and Colin Coyne, vice president for Finance, Business Affairs and Strategy, the strategic planning process spanned 10-months and resulted in a plan that will be presented to the Board of Trustees in December.**

Guided by a commitment to transparency and constituent participation in the process, a newly created University Council composed of students, faculty and staff from across campus convened to guide the planning effort. Town halls and interviews over the last year with students, faculty, staff and other key stakeholders ensured input from on-campus constituents. Similarly, digital surveys, virtual listening sessions and visits to nine different cities captured insights from alumni, parents, community members and donors. All told, the leadership team conducted 17 town hall meetings and campus interviews, 15 city visits, two virtual listening sessions and received more than 3,000 survey responses.

"There are few things more exciting than envisioning and realizing the future for Samford University," Taylor said. "This process gave all of us an opportunity to dream about Samford's future and the ways we can continue to strengthen and improve this place that

means so much to us all."

Through the work of the University Council and feedback of Samford constituents, the process resulted in a plan that is mission focused, reinforces Samford's distinctive role as a Christ-centered institution and promotes aspirational goals for the university.

The 2022 Samford Strategic Plan is aligned along eight thematic lines with four goals under each:

- **Academic Distinction**
- **Student Engagement**
- **Employee Elevation**
- **Faith Formation**
- **Community Celebration**
- **Athletic Success**
- **Financial Stewardship**
- **Global Influence**

Upon adoption of the plan by the Board of Trustees, the University Council will develop and prioritize specific initiatives for each goal.

"We know that if people don't trust

**17**

**Town Hall Meetings and Campus Interviews**

**15 CITY VISITS AND 2 VIRTUAL SESSIONS**

**3000+ Survey Responses**

the process, they won't believe in the plan. Based on the breadth, depth and quality of participation, this is a plan we all can believe in," Coyne said. "When I look at this plan and I look to my colleagues, I've never been more optimistic about the future of Samford University." ▮

**Scan the QR code to learn more about the 2022 Samford Strategic Plan**







## THE RENOVATION OF BUCHANAN HALL

# Blending Historical Architecture with Contemporary Spaces

*by Ashley Smith*

Samford's School of the Arts began a new chapter in its history with the completion of a renovation of John H. Buchanan Hall, the home of the music program since 1958.

Construction, which took place over 18 months, was completed in August for the start of the fall semester. The building was named in 1960 in honor of a trustee and pastor of Birmingham's Southside Baptist Church. The project reimagined the space, providing areas for growth and, most importantly, access for all students and faculty members. Davis Architects, a firm that has guided Samford's campus design for decades, created plans to transform the interior of the building to meet student and faculty needs and prepare for the future.



Samford celebrated the reopening with a ribbon cutting on Sept. 1 in the Quad complete with performances by the A Cappella Choir and the Marching Band. Attendees included Board of Trustees chair William Stevens, Samford leadership, alumni, faculty, donors, students and friends of the School of the Arts.

The renovation of Buchanan Hall honored the historical architecture outside while creating more welcoming, contemporary spaces inside. With the inclusion of community gathering spaces for students and faculty, the new facility will encourage interaction and collaboration while training 21st-century musicians.

"The fresh modern space with advanced technology will provide renewed inspiration for creative learning and endeavors for both our students and faculty," said Cindy St. Clair, interim chair of the Division of Music.

The first floor is a student-centered zone with a student commons, instrument storage, practice rooms, a computer lab and a new recording studio. The new recording studio will allow production students to record and mix music coming from a classroom, practice room and eventually Brock Recital Hall. The second floor includes a School of the Arts welcome center, administrative offices, studios and classrooms. Classrooms and faculty studios are located on the third floor. The fourth floor has offices, a commons area and a smaller classroom/conference room space. Updates include a new elevator, additional stairs, sound proofing, technology-efficient classrooms and labs, and better-quality practice rooms and studios.

"Music has become much more technical over the years as technology has improved and our students need to be exposed to the best production and recording equipment. This facility will do that," said President Beck A. Taylor.

"The technology in all classrooms, teaching studios, practice rooms and student commons areas strengthens curriculum and learning. Theoretically, a student can participate in a conference or master class with professionals across the globe in any of these spaces," said St. Clair.

Classrooms are now multi-purpose rooms with furniture that easily folds down and moves out of the way to open up each space for opera and ensemble rehearsals. ▶

**Scan the QR code to watch a video from the ribbon cutting for Buchanan Hall.**







Committed to Encouraging Lifelong Learning Through

# >> Research *and* Scholarship

*By Holly Gainer*

The Greek philosopher Plutarch once said, “The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled.” At Samford, this sentiment is present in classrooms each day as professors aim to teach their students to see the joy in lifelong learning. One way they accomplish this is through sharing their love of research and their commitment to contributing to the discipline they teach.

“Our faculty enjoy and are passionate about their areas of expertise. If you love something, you want to give something back to it, and I think that is what research is for a faculty member,” said Samford Provost Mike Hardin. “It is showing how much you love and want to contribute back to that discipline. I hope the enthusiasm spills over into the students and they see that you never stop learning.”

Many have the misconception that a focus on research looks like a professor working in an office while a teaching assistant teaches the class. At Samford, this notion is far from the truth. Instead,

Samford’s faculty conduct research alongside students—giving their students hands-on experience as they work together to find answers to questions or solutions to problems that have not been asked or solved before. Students are often published alongside their professors, given the opportunity to present their work to their peers both on campus and at conferences around the nation, and brought into the field to conduct research.

“Students learn how to find answers to questions that they don’t know. Through research, we are teaching them how to solve new problems. We want





to prepare our graduates to answer the questions that haven't been asked, but to do it with the right methodology and care," Hardin said.

In the stories that follow, you will see examples of how Samford faculty and students conduct and apply research on campus and in the field. From researching climate change on a tiny Caribbean island to studying how one's gut biome may be connected to Alzheimer's disease in a lab in the College of Health Sciences, students are provided ample opportunities to work alongside faculty and experience firsthand the professor's passion for his or her discipline.

Faculty and students also collaborate across disciplines—something Hardin says is crucial when it comes to providing a well-rounded education and ensuring students succeed beyond graduation.

"The problems that our society has do not fit into unique categories. So many issues are multidisciplinary problems, and it takes a team of people from various backgrounds and areas of expertise to solve them," Hardin explained.

As rewarding as it is for a student to solve a problem or find an answer to the question he or she sought after, it is even more rewarding for the faculty member to witness the student succeed.

"One of the great joys of teaching is seeing the light come on in a student's eyes when they become

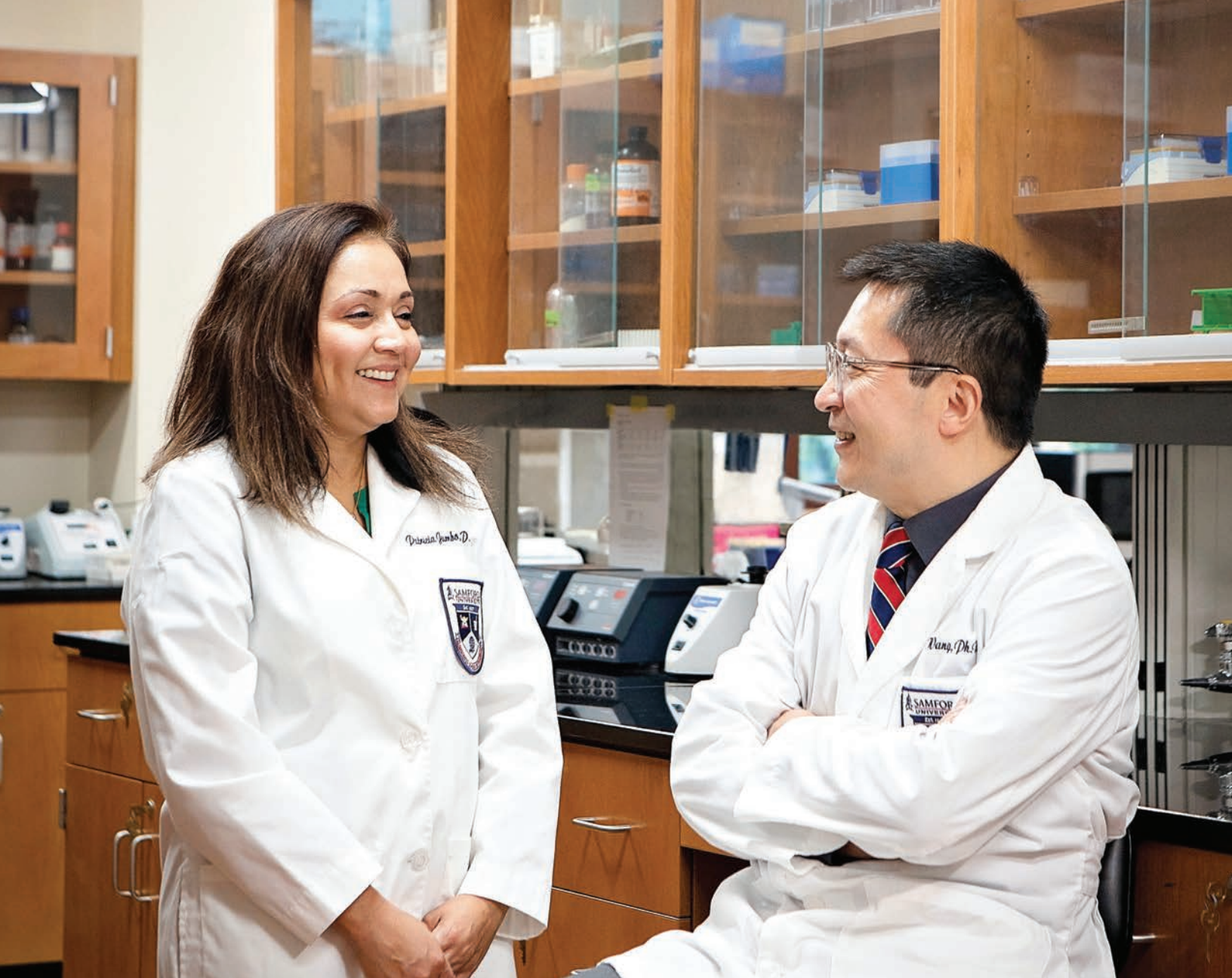
excited about something they didn't understand and now do," Hardin said. "Seeing them begin to dig and ask questions is extremely rewarding."

Last March, Samford launched the Research Advisory Collaborative to highlight research and scholarship on campus. The goal is to enhance these areas and find new ways to support faculty and students as they engage with their specific disciplines. One of the first initiatives was the Student Research Colloquia which was held in April where more than 60 students presented a wide array of research projects representing the breadth of student scholarship across campus today. ▀

"One of the great joys of teaching is seeing the light come on in a student's eyes when they become excited about something they didn't understand and now do."

*—Provost Mike Hardin*





# Research Seeking to *Save Lives*

*McWhorter School of Pharmacy faculty research targets Alzheimer's disease, cystic fibrosis*

*By Frank Ruggiero*

**M**cWhorter School of Pharmacy faculty are known to change lives, guiding and mentoring students throughout their Samford careers and beyond. For associate professor Patricia Jumbo-Lucioni and professor Robert Wang, that involves groundbreaking research into the treatment of major diseases, which could affect millions of lives across the globe.



Jumbo-Lucioni uses fruit flies as research models in her efforts to develop effective treatment for Alzheimer's disease, while Wang is applying two decades' worth of research toward fighting cystic fibrosis. And both have students to thank for contributing to their respective endeavors.

"This research has significant implications for future treatments in Alzheimer's disease and cystic fibrosis," said Michael Crouch, dean and professor at McWhorter School of Pharmacy. "Drs. Jumbo-Lucioni and Wang are research leaders in the school, and they also serve as outstanding exemplars for our Doctor of Pharmacy students interested in research careers."

"Science is my passion," Jumbo-Lucioni said. "When I get to share that with students and see their excitement when presenting research, that's it for me."

The fact that their research could save and improve lives? "It's a blessing," she said.

Jumbo-Lucioni's research employs fruit flies genetically modified to resemble the human phenotype for Alzheimer's disease, thereby expressing symptoms. And since fruit flies only live around 40 to 50 days, lifespan experiments can be conducted in a much shorter time frame.

She found that lisinopril, an FDA-approved hypertension drug, mitigated the decline in movement and memory in her fly model of Alzheimer's disease. This led to collaboration with faculty at the University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB) and the University of Florida, the latter of which developed a probiotic genetically modified to produce a protein with anti-inflammatory and neuroprotective properties. Their work was awarded funding from the National Institute of Health (NIH) and the UAB Nathan Shock Center for Excellence in the Biology of Aging.

Jumbo-Lucioni brought the probiotic to her Samford lab and tested it with her flies. The results were eye-opening. "Flies that were fed the probiotic performed better in terms of learning and memory," she said. "We later tested motor function... and it also improved. We've been approaching this disorder by just focusing on the brain. Here, we're targeting the gut to impact the brain. Findings in our flies can then be translated into larger organisms."

The help she's received from students has been

"My students become very independent and passionate about their research projects. I'm very proud of how fast they've learned."

*—Patty Jumbo-Lucioni, associate professor*

instrumental, and some have even co-authored publications with her, such as recent graduates Jimiece Thomas, Pharm.D. '21, Aaron Smith, Pharm.D. '22, and Haddon Smith, Pharm.D. '22. "My students become very independent and passionate about their research projects," Jumbo-Lucioni said. "I'm very proud of how fast they've learned."

As is Wang, whose former student, Adam Ambrosetti, Pharm.D. '18, helped uncover a major development in researching cystic fibrosis treatment.

Before joining Samford's pharmacy faculty in 2012, Wang had already devoted 10 years toward treating the disease, targeting the root cause over the symptoms. He's since garnered research grants from NIH and the Cystic Fibrosis Foundation, funding he's used to study new compounds to treat the cause and yield fewer patient side effects.

Ambrosetti had been studying B6, an anti-cancer agent developed by retired Samford professor Bobby Riggs. When Wang thought to combine B6 with an FDA-approved drug, they found that the drug's efficacy doubled. "Since then, we've looked at derivatives of that compound to see how they work with drugs currently approved by the FDA," Wang said. "The idea is to see if we can find an enhancer for existing drugs to increase their efficacy."

Research on the subject is ongoing. Meanwhile, Wang continues to aid in students' educational and professional development, even offering guidance in grant writing. "Our students have many career directions when they graduate," Wang said. "Aside from community and hospital pharmacy, some go into research, industry or academia. Given that Samford is first in the nation for student engagement, this is a great opportunity to engage them." ▀



# Songs of Hope:

## >>> UNVEILING DARKNESS

By Holly Gainer



Artina McCain, piano, and Carl DuPont, baritone

In 2017, Jason Terry learned about the devastating experience of a human trafficking victim who had suffered extreme abuse. Distraught by her story but motivated to share the stories of other groups who are often victims of injustice, Terry, an assistant professor of piano in Samford's School of the Arts, knew he could use music and art to help make others aware.

Five years later, he co-created *Songs of Hope: Unveiling Darkness*—a project that incorporates the stories of human trafficking victims, refugees, undocumented immigrants and marginalized youth, and sets their stories to music.

"I wanted to try to find a way to use my art as my voice to advocate for other social injustices," Terry said. "With each issue, we have partnered with organizations that advocate for and help support those in these areas. Through the partnerships, we have asked the organizations for four stories from people they support that we could take and set poetically to music."

Through grant funding from Samford's Office of Research and the Alabama State Council on the Arts,



(Left) "The Feet Full of Pain" and (right) "The Narrator" by Harem Jamal





(Left) "A Boy's Innocent Look" and (right) "A Little Santa Claus" by Harem Jamal



Jason Terry

Terry has partnered with artists and composers from around the world—many who are refugees and have experienced the plight of being a refugee firsthand. His hope is that others will be made aware of these issues and feel compelled to contribute to organizations that help these marginalized communities.

The first performance took place in Birmingham on Oct. 1 at the Birmingham Museum of Art and featured a variety of stories, including the story of Harem Jamal, an Kurdish refugee, who is also a visual artist. Jamal's experience of growing up in Kurdistan under Saddam Hussein's regime was depicted in paintings that were on display. The stories of these paintings were set to music by Afghani composer Milad Yousufi and were premiered at the event. Yousufi, who grew up in Kabul, Afghanistan, now lives in the United States as a refugee with asylum status.

In 2015, Yousufi was attending a summer camp for composers and musicians in New York City and was set to travel back to Afghanistan when the Kabul airport was bombed. His parents called him and told him he needed to stay in America due to the violence in his home country. He has not seen his family since.

"I had nothing. I didn't have a work permit; I didn't have money. I hardly knew anyone," Yousufi said. "I've experienced what it is like to be a refugee and what it

is like to grow up during a war. I want to make sure the world hears these stories. I believe music can express feelings when words cannot."

Yousufi eventually earned his bachelor's and master's degrees in the United States and today has composed music for and performed with The New York Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra, the Refugee Orchestra Project, the Kronos Quartet and more.

Terry has partnered with other artists and will perform across the country throughout the 2022-23 concert season. Each event will include performances of the songs Terry and his partners have created, as well as speakers from local organizations.

"We want people to take away that whether we want to believe it or acknowledge it, there is darkness in our world and in our communities, but there are ways to combat that together," Terry said. "We want our communities and our world to be a better place and sharing these stories through music and art is one way to help do that." ▀

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For more information about *Songs of Hope: Unveiling Darkness* or to book an event at your church or venue, go to [songs-of-hope.org/the-project](https://songs-of-hope.org/the-project).



# Geography Professor Tackles Climate Change on Caribbean Island

By Diamond Nunnally

**Saba is a small, five-square-mile volcanic island in the Caribbean, and for more than 20 years, Jennifer Rahn, associate professor of geography and sociology, has spent countless hours researching its coastal changes and educating the native people about her findings, while also immersing students in the experience.**



"It's a wonderful combination of serving Samford, doing something I love and serving the local people," Rahn said.

Rahn first fell in love with Saba during a diving excursion for her master's degree in college.

That trip inspired Rahn to spend an entire year and a half exploring Saba's wonders and developing close relationships with people on the island.

She worked as a rainforest trail tour guide and diving instructor and ultimately dedicated her Ph.D.

research to studying how climate change is impacting the island over time.

Off the coast of Saba, Rahn discovered rising water temperatures, among other factors, are threatening coral reefs.

Many of these threats stress corals, leading to coral bleaching. During this phenomenon, corals expel algae, which provide the majority of the coral's source of nutrients, resulting in a bleached appearance. The white exterior not only damages corals if the stress isn't alleviated, but it could also result in death.

"Bleaching is one of many factors affecting coral reefs," Rahn said. "Studies continually show a decline in coral coverage worldwide, with about 14% of the world's corals lost in the past decade."

Rahn works to save this species by recruiting Samford study abroad students to set up and maintain coral nurseries along the coast. Fragments of the main Caribbean reef-building *Acropora cervicornis* (staghorn coral) were hung on PVC pipes called "trees" while suspended in the water with buoys. It allowed the corals to grow for a couple of years before Rahn and students replanted them in a new home. Now, Rahn visits throughout the year to continue this effort.

"Coral nurseries have become a popular technique to help restore corals. In a nursery, corals mature at a much faster rate than without restoration efforts," Rahn said.

According to Rahn, this process is not guaranteed. It's a bit of trial and error, and not every coral replanted survives—but that's the beauty of research. She said it's about figuring out what works and what doesn't. Some





transplant sites work better than others. However, she said the information she's gathered along the journey is invaluable. From discovering a beach disappearing over time to coral reefs in deeper waters being a lot warmer in the winter, Rahn shares these findings with residents of the island to educate and help them plan for the future.

"It informs the local conservation foundation, and they can use that information to help maintain and protect the environment," Rahn said.

Whether that be creating infrastructure to support her findings or cultivating nurseries to save coral reefs, Rahn continues this work to make a difference for the people of Saba and Samford students.

"I find it rewarding," she said. "Teaching the next generation of scientists to preserve the ocean during a study abroad trip transforms an educational experience into community involvement." ▀

Rahn's research seeks to rebuild coral reefs off the coast of Saba by maintaining coral nurseries that include "trees" made of PVC pipes.

»» **"I find it rewarding teaching the next generation of scientists to preserve the ocean during a study abroad trip..."**

—Jennifer Rahn





# *Diké-Minor Finds Flaw* in U.S. Health Care Fraud Statutes

By Gail Allyn Short

**Health care fraud in the United States costs the nation tens of billions of dollars every year, according to the National Health Care Anti-Fraud Association. One common scheme used to commit health care fraud is kickbacks, which involve payments made to encourage physicians or other providers to, for example, prescribe a certain drug or medical device or send patients to a particular medical clinic, in exchange for cash.**

"The biggest problem with kickbacks is that they incentivize doctors to provide patients with unnecessary services, and those unnecessary services can result in physical harm to the patient and result in greater costs to the larger health care system," said Chinelo Diké-Minor, an assistant professor at Cumberland School of Law.

A former assistant U.S. attorney for the Northern District of Alabama, Diké-Minor served as the office's criminal division's health care fraud coordinator. Today, she is researching the legislative histories of kickback laws in the United States and argues that the current criminal kickback statutes are not enough to deter health care fraudsters.

She points to the Anti-Kickback Statute, which outlaws kickbacks for services covered by public, government-run insurers like Medicare and Medicaid, and the Eliminating Kickbacks in Recovery Act (EKRA), which bans such compensation for health care services covered by both public and private insurers. The problem, says Diké-Minor, is that although EKRA covers both public and private insurers, it applies only to opioid-related treatments and services.

"Imagine a prosecutor is looking at the person who is getting kickbacks for all these non-opioid related services, but because it's only paid for by private insurance, he or she can't prosecute that person using current kickback laws," she said.

To help, she says prosecutors are increasingly turning to the Travel Act that outlaws crossing state lines with the intent to bribe someone if the bribery violates state law. "It's a complicated law that rides or dies on what relevant state law exists. So, it's not used more because it's a difficult statute to apply to this," she said.

Diké-Minor argues that Congress should amend the Anti-Kickback Statute to cover medical services paid for by private insurers. "If you accept that kickbacks incentivize medically unnecessary services, what it will do is lead to greater deterrence and hopefully, eventually, help bring down health care costs," she said.

Diké-Minor discussed her findings at the 2022 Health Law Scholars Workshop co-sponsored by the American Society of Law, Medicine and Ethics and the Saint Louis University School of Law Center for Health Law Studies. ▀



# Denver Broncos Turn to Samford for Groundbreaking Digital Marketing Study

By June Mathews

When the Denver Broncos partnership marketing team wanted to understand how much the inclusion of the team's official logo and brand marks influence fans' actions when receiving a digital advertisement from one of their partners, they reached out to none other than Samford University's Center for Sports Analytics.



Through the center, Samford faculty and students have completed several sports business analytics projects for prestigious sport teams, leagues and brands, but this project set a new milestone. "This was a first of its kind study in a real-world setting, which produced valuable new knowledge about sports marketing and sports partnerships," said Darin White, the center's executive director.

The Broncos requested help developing a thought leadership study focused on the effectiveness of digital partner advertising using the Broncos' intellectual property. Specifically, the study sought to identify digital key performance metrics to establish audience and creative standards and to develop the most effective digital marketing strategies through advanced audience targeting.

Other partners in the study included Tigris Sponsorship & Marketing, Conoco/Phillips 66 and Marketing 360. The Broncos and participating brand partner Conoco donated everything needed to conduct the study, and the Center for Sports Analytics, with the help of Tigris, developed the guidelines to ensure that the findings would be academically valid. Marketing 360 executed the study sending the digital ads to thousands of Denver Broncos fans.

"To empirically demonstrate the power of the Broncos brand, we developed five campaigns using both the Conoco and Broncos' brand marks, interchanging them based on the amount of Broncos' content in each ad. We were able to prove that the Broncos' mark can significantly increase lift within the performance metrics of link clicks, conversions, post engagement and video views," White said.

Not only does the study develop new knowledge and insights around the area of sponsorship marketing, but it will also help Samford educate the next generation of sports

industry executives and assist brands and teams in forming effective partnerships. "It's really cool that Samford students were involved in the development of this new knowledge, which will allow sports properties and brands to more effectively leverage those partnership going forward," White said. ▶



Marshal Smith '22, a current M.B.A. student, assisted with the project.



# *Student Research on a Pre-Workout Stimulant Leads to a Published Paper and New Course*

By Eric Holsomback

After taking Ergogenic Physiology in fall 2021, Megan Barnes, a senior sports medicine major, and a handful of her classmates felt that it was so interesting, they wanted it to continue. This special topics class, led by Christopher Ballmann, associate professor in the School of Health Professions, focused on understanding the research behind how exercise performance can be enhanced through dietary supplementation.

Students in this course not only learned how to research in this area but were able to conduct their own study working as a class. They investigated a naturally occurring stimulant called yohimbine that is present in many commercially available pre-workout supplements despite there being little to no evidence that it improves performance, until this study. During the class, the students examined the effects of a single dose of yohimbine on anaerobic

exercise performance and characterized the physiological responses through blood testing.

When ingested, yohimbine blocks certain receptors which results in a greater release of chemical messengers that initiate the fight or flight response. The class hypothesized that increasing this response would allow for individuals to exercise harder and perform better. The findings showed that yohimbine improved anaerobic exercise

performance and decreased blood markers of fatigue.

"I enjoy learning how the body works when exercising, but I enjoyed this experience in particular because I was able to work hands on with the participants and my peers to do an entire study," said Barnes. "I also gained a deeper understanding of how I can apply what I am learning in lecture to research and further developments within the field."

It is rare in academia for undergraduate students to complete research and take it through the publication process, but this class's study was published in the *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* in January 2022. The original publication received over 1,875 full text reads and already has been cited five times in other publications.

"One of the unexpected takeaways from the class is the relationships I have established with my peers," Barnes said. "We are excited about the findings and can't wait to continue this line of research together."

Seven students from the class got their wish and are continuing their research on yohimbine by taking another research-based course this fall with Ballmann called Circadian Physiology. Exercise performance tends to suffer during morning times, which can have undesirable effects on training and competition. So, in this class, the students are taking their knowledge from their previous findings and attempting to understand if yohimbine can prevent decrements in exercise performance in the morning. ▀



Megan Barnes works on her research in the Exercise Biochemistry Lab.

# Doctoral Research Seeks to Establish Sustainable Asthma Care in Honduras

By Eric Holsomback

**In 2014**, Andrea Collins, a professor in Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing, began taking students on medical mission trips to Honduras. Her goal was to provide medical care to rural, impoverished areas through makeshift clinics set up in churches located in eight different villages.

After five years of annual trips, three graduate nursing students, Alyssa Bray Nicholas, D.N.P. '19, Taylor Ingram Holloway '16, D.N.P. '19 and Brittany Schoen Christian, D.N.P. '19, choose to participate in the trip in 2019—not only to serve the people there—but also to carry out a clinical research project about utilizing short-term medical missions to create sustainable asthma care for underserved populations.

“Our goal all along was sustainability—work that would continue far past our time,” said Nicholas. “I firmly believe that we were able to accomplish that.”

Most of their research came from screening the population of children and adults who may be suffering from asthma. Both subjective and objective data allowed them to focus on those who suffered from some type of respiratory impairment.

“We utilized spirometry devices to help us diagnose patients with asthma and used that information not only to provide breathing treatments for those in distress but also to form individualized asthma action plans that were discussed with each patient and their family members,” Nicholas said.

Along with patient awareness and knowledge, the group taught seven local pastors how to operate portable



Brittany Schoen Christian and Alyssa Bray Nicholas hold a spirometry device.

nebulizers.

“We left the nebulizers with medication appropriate for the number of individuals diagnosed with asthma in each village,” Collins said. “With an asthma action plan, the individuals knew when to seek urgent treatment which was now easily accessible.”

Collins returned to one of the villages in 2019 and 2022 to check on the nebulizer—which was still in use and functioning correctly.

Nicholas said her biggest takeaway was that knowledge is power. “By providing individualized education and



crucial instruction for medications, nebulizer devices, spacers, etc., we empowered the patient population to continue helping themselves long after our short-term mission was completed,” she said. ▀





# Antwi-Fordjour Collaborates with Students on Mathematical Research

By Diamond Nunnally

**Kwadwo Antwi-Fordjour, an assistant professor in the Department of Math and Computer Science, conducts mathematical research on epidemiology and ecology's effects on populations over time. His approach involves using predator-prey models to predict what will happen to these populations when interacting in real-world scenarios.**

"A predator-prey model is a mathematical model that describes the dynamics between two populations (prey population and predator population) as they interact in biological or ecological systems," Antwi-Fordjour explained.

Applying predator-prey models to reality has been the focus of Antwi-Fordjour's research for many years, but it wasn't until 2020 that he started to focus on COVID-19's impact on the world.

"I'm interested in measuring quantitatively what the fear of getting infected with an infectious disease does in our lives," he said. "We make a system of differential equations to

understand what is going on, and then based on the trend, we make a prediction."

After researching COVID-19 for a couple of years, Antwi-Fordjour has made a discovery.

"From the preliminary results obtained from my research in epidemiology, it's clear that the fear of getting infected with a disease has an adverse effect on the physiological behavior of a population," he said. "This adds to the body of literature in this field."

Antwi-Fordjour hopes that someday his findings will help policymakers and government entities like the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention make informed decisions when faced with similar issues.

"It is not only the fact that we're going to help policymakers, but we're also training students," Antwi-Fordjour said.

In March, Antwi-Fordjour received a Center for Undergraduate Research in Mathematics grant from the National Science Foundation to support an undergraduate research group at Samford this year. For Antwi-Fordjour, mentoring students through his research is one of the most rewarding parts of his job.

"It feels great when you have experts in your field agreeing with your work, especially when students are involved," Antwi-Fordjour said. "How happy they will be when their contribution has been accepted and disseminated all over the world. That is the joyous part." ▀

# THE HIGH COST OF Compassion

◀◀ *Benton Explores the Impact of COVID-19 on Clergy* ▶▶

By Leighton Doores and Kameron Brown

**The COVID-19 pandemic has sparked new conversations across various industries with the question, “How have we been changed by the pandemic, and should we keep doing things the way we always have?”**

Universities and colleges have not been strangers to the conversation. An introspective exchange between Amy Benton, associate professor at Samford’s Orlean Beeson School of Education, and her longtime friend and colleague, Angela Girdley with Grand Canyon University, spawned an idea for a study of compassion fatigue among clergy.

“We are hearing a lot about compassion fatigue among teachers, social workers, nurses and others, and my colleague questioned if the same applied to those in church ministry,”

Benton said. “So, we began diving into the literature. Is there a need for this study? Who would care about it? As it turned out, there is a huge gap where people are not looking at clergy as it relates to this conversation.”

Compassion fatigue, a condition characterized by emotional and physical exhaustion, is common among service-oriented professions that are frequently exposed to trauma and the subsequent treatment of that trauma. Sometimes referred to as the “high cost of compassion,” it has been most often attributed to health care professionals and frontline workers.

When comparing her research with existing data on other occupations, Benton found that clergy members ranked as the second highest group to experience burnout, just behind ICU nurses but ahead of trauma nurses, army chaplains, hospital chaplains, emergency room doctors and child protection workers. She also found that clergy members experience secondary traumatic stress the most among all of these groups.

Benton and Girdley have been thrilled about the outpouring of support for and interest in their research.

“We knew we wanted a robust sample size to communicate that this entire population was saying something. We sent the survey to clergy around the country and recruited on social media, and that was a

springboard. Many started asking us about the research and asking us to speak at their conferences,” Benton said.

The two received data from clergy members from across the United States establishing the finding that this group experiences extremely high levels of compassion fatigue, secondary trauma and occupational distress.

“One of the survey questions we asked was, ‘Did you attend seminary or have some kind of Bible training?’ The second question was, ‘Did you feel prepared to deal with these things in your ministry?’” she said.

Benton says most responded to the second question with “no,” they did not feel prepared. She says the implication of this finding is far reaching and applies broadly to institutions of higher education that prepare those entering professions where compassion fatigue is a risk factor for burnout.

“We want our work to be thought provoking for seminaries and higher education, in general; we hope our research will influence curriculum,” Benton said.

Benton and Girdley presented their work to the Disciple Leaders Network, a ministry of the Baptist Association of Christian Educators (BACE) that supports church staff members, denominational leaders and educators in their ministerial roles. Benton’s findings provide information on an understudied population and contribute knowledge about the importance of self-care as a personal resource. ▀



Amy Benton



# Cross-Disciplinary Project Results in Ongoing Partnership

By June Mathews

When Rachel Hagues, an assistant professor in Samford's School of Public Health, wanted to know the economic impact of a government policy that forces pregnant teens in Tanzania out of school, she naturally turned to Samford's economics department.

Sara McCarty, a professor of economics in Brock School of Business, had recently completed some projects and was considering new opportunities. So, when she heard about Hagues' Tanzanian research, her interest was piqued in more ways than one.

"I realized that, at this point in my career, I ought to work on big questions that mattered to me, and that interdisciplin-

ary work might suit this goal," McCarty said.

Thus, a partnership combining Hagues' expertise in global community development and McCarty's expertise in labor, experimental and behavioral economics was formed. And what a productive partnership it's been. Their collaborative efforts have so far produced three publications.

In 2021, the *Journal of Human Rights and Social Work* published "The Consequences of Forcing Pregnant Girls Out of School: A Study Focused on Tanzania." Their second paper, "Examining Policies Toward Adolescent Pregnancies Across Africa: What is the Relationship Between Religion and Education Policy?" has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Religion & Spirituality in Social Work: Social Thought*.

A third paper, "Attitudes Toward Immigration and Refugee Policy," which includes work by Jonathan Davis, a professor in the Orlean Beeson School of Education, will soon be published in the *Quarterly on Refugee Problems*. Two other studies, also in collaboration with Davis, are in progress.

Participating in cross-disciplinary work, said Hagues, contributes a broader base of knowledge to one's research and challenges researchers to think and act in different ways.

"I have a passion for qualitative research, and that has been my forte," she said. "I would not have known how to run the sophisticated statistical analysis Sara can do, and I have learned so much from her. Collaborating with Sara has made me a better scholar, and it has been fun to be able to ask the bigger questions and to understand the impact of different policies, life choices, etc."

As for McCarty, who previously focused on U.S.-based data, working with Hagues has expanded her horizons.

"I am interested in conducting research on other parts of the world but recognize my lack of knowledge on the history, culture and forces at work," she said. "This is where Rachel and I work so well together. She provides context and asks questions that help me design the analysis; I offer her a set of statistical tools. We complement each other, and this works very well in research." ▀



Rachel Hagues and Sara McCarty

# Refuge and Research

*Social Work Field Placement Helps Alumna Grow Professionally and Personally*

*By Frank Ruggiero*

**In fall 2021, Arianna Glover, M.S.W. '22, said goodbye to her comfort zone.**

Her field placement in pursuit of a Master of Social Work placed her in the thick of a global crisis—the resettlement of Afghan refugees following the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan.

Through the nonprofit organization, Inspiritus, Glover found herself working directly with refugees who were seeking resettlement in the U.S.

“Originally, it wasn’t what they had in mind for me, but things kind of shifted,” Glover said.

Although Samford’s School of Public Health offers an online M.S.W., Glover was attending school in person. But since Inspiritus had not yet established a refugee resettlement program in Birmingham, Glover, originally from Wheeler, Mississippi, relocated to the nonprofit’s nearest refugee services branch in Savannah, Georgia.

“In order to do what she felt called to do, she moved to Savannah and transitioned to our online courses,” said Jean Roberson, director of field education and assistant professor in the Department of Social Work. “She took full advantage of what our program offers.”

In Savannah, Glover focused on resettling Afghan refugees as quickly as possible, taking full responsibility for their cases, which often included finding housing, securing jobs, obtaining work visas, applying for social security and more.

Having desired to work with refugees, Glover found the work fulfilling. But it also provided valuable insight for her research, which focused on the importance of religion among refugee groups.

“In most situations, we see that religion is of the utmost importance and can help integrate refugees into a new



Arianna Glover

society,” she said. “But what I found is that a lot of the people in my group wanted nothing to do with it, as they had experienced harsh religious oppression where they came from.”

And while this development informed her research, it also led to personal growth.

Glover was admittedly apprehensive and far from comfortable when it came to the language barrier. She found that something as simple as a sewing class, for instance, could be more than a literal connection between one and another.

“Through my research, I learned that people can connect in many different ways,” she said.

With her graduate work complete, Glover now works as a counselor for low-income communities in Cookeville, Tennessee, addressing mental health issues and working primarily with children, many of whom are refugees. ■



# Diversity Development Grants Seek to Achieve Samford's Vision

By Kameron Brown

The Office of Diversity and Intercultural Initiatives annually allocates a designated amount of funds to support Samford's goal of creating a more inclusive and diverse campus community. In congruence with Samford's vision, the office also seeks to promote a diverse community, stressing vigorous learning and personal faith.

Julianne Sandberg and Taylor Cyr, both assistant professors in Howard College of Arts and Sciences, applied for a diversity development grant to see that vision accomplished.

"Samford strives to be a place where all students are valued and where they find community among their peers and support from their professors. And in many ways Samford achieves this goal," said Sandberg. "But we also know that not all of our students experience the same degree of belonging."

Their method was to form a faculty reading group on anti-racist teaching

where they would come together to read, learn and discuss pressing matters that face every college campus. Fifteen faculty members across seven departments in the college came together to read *How to be an Antiracist*, *Teaching to Transgress* and selected chapters from *Performing Antiracist Pedagogy*, meeting to discuss throughout the year.

"Our explicit goals for the Faculty Reading Group included learning from the expertise of teachers and scholars of historically oppressed or disadvantaged groups, and identifying conceptual resources and concrete practices that

could be integrated into our classrooms at Samford. We also hoped, and continue to hope, that the Faculty Reading Group might spur on more conversations about promoting equity in our classrooms," said Cyr.

Sandberg and Cyr believe their work speaks directly to the heart of Samford's unique mission, vision and values. "Through this work, we hope our students are equipped to thrive and connect. Positioned as a leader in Christian higher education, Samford can be an example of how predominantly white institutions can be mindful and proactive in shaping their campus communities and cultivating belonging in the classroom," said Sandberg.

Sandberg and Cyr were later invited by the Office of Diversity and Intercultural Initiatives to give a presentation on their work. Students, faculty and staff all came together to discuss the significance of keeping the classroom an equitable community.

"This work has made me mindful of how to cultivate inclusion and belonging in the classroom so that our students learn and grow together as members of a unified community who value one another's presence and listen to one another's voices," said Sandberg. ▀



Taylor Cyr and Julianne Sandberg



# Research Made Possible *Thanks to University Library*

By Holly Gainer

**Accomplishing the vast amount of research that takes place on Samford's campus would not be possible without the University Library and the team of librarians and staff who support it. The library is home to nearly 570,000 volumes, including hard copies, electronic books, periodicals and government documents and 75 databases.**

"Our purpose is to serve the institution and support the curricular, research and scholarship endeavors of our community. We are a great resource, and we are available for everybody when it comes to assisting their research, scholarship and information needs," said Kimmetha Herndon, dean of the University Library.

University librarians assist the campus community in many ways. These interactions included database searches, meetings with librarians, interlibrary loans, website visitors, checked out items and more. And while providing these resources is an important part of the job of a librarian, the most rewarding and valuable role is working with students to teach them research and information fluency to apply to their research projects.

"We consider ourselves as members of a helping profession. We purposefully seek to reduce potential barriers. It is thrilling when students find what they seek," said Carla Waddell, chair of the reference and research services department of the University Library. "We work to build these relationships intentionally."

With a team of 14 full-time librarians, there are countless opportunities for students and faculty to meet with these

experts and learn how to find the information they need. The librarians meet with incoming freshmen students and teach them how to explore databases, use keyword searches that garner results and become comfortable with all that the library has to offer. Each librarian is assigned as a liaison to a discipline that he or she communicates with and can assist with faculty and students based on the subject matter at hand.

"When we work with students, they will form a relationship with the librarian and come back to them repeatedly. They know they have someone who will listen to them and support them," Herndon said. "Learning also happens outside of the classroom and the library is and has long been one of those places."

The team also partners with faculty to create subject and course guides with information on the most relevant databases, e-books, print books and websites that may be valuable for the topic they are teaching.

"We are a great resource and we are here for everyone. We are pleased to be symbolically and physically at the heart of the institution, and we love that we are the intersection for learning and knowledge," Herndon said. ■



# >> *Mary Thompson:* Research Historian Emerita at George Washington's Mount Vernon

By June Mathews

After earning a Bachelor of Arts in history with a minor in folklore from Samford University, Mary Thompson, like most new college grads, went job hunting. Her version of the story goes like this:

"It was 1980, a bad year to be looking for work," she began. "I came to Mount Vernon that spring because it paid better than being a volunteer at the U.S. Army Ordnance Museum at Aberdeen Proving Ground in Maryland, where my family was living at the head of Chesapeake Bay. I agreed to work as an interpreter (tour guide/docent) at Mount Vernon until I found a 'real job'.

The punchline is that 42 years later, I still haven't found one, so I'm still here."

From that inauspicious beginning, at a job she considered temporary, Thompson advanced from tour guide to research historian, meanwhile filling a myriad of other positions at George Washington's home on the Potomac River. After retiring this spring as she recovered from COVID-19, Thompson returned to the office in mid-July as "research historian emerita" with plans to fully retire in two years.

Thompson credits "the opportunity to work for some amazing people" as one of the biggest reasons she has

remained at Mount Vernon so long. She also pays homage to Samford professors Wayne Flynt and James Brown, as well as the university's culture of experiential learning, for nurturing her love of history and folklore and helping her realize the value of historic preservation.

"Most of my professors in those fields were fantastic and loved their specialties, passing along their enthusiasm to their students," she said.

Preserving history, along with its associated artifacts and historic sites, said Thompson, is important "because they help make history real. There is nothing like holding a piece of hardware from one of George Washington's swords to help you understand that he was an actual person or to read one of the letters he wrote and learn about the ways his mind worked."

Relative to her work at Mount Vernon, Thompson is the author of numerous articles and three books: *In the Hands of a Good Providence: Religion in the Life of George Washington* (2008), *A Short Biography of Martha Washington* (2017), and *The Only Unavoidable Subject of Regret: George Washington, Slavery, and the Enslaved Community at Mount Vernon* (2019). ▀



(Left) Thompson shares a picture of a fake version of Martha Washington's Great Cake recipe, which was made to display in Mount Vernon's original kitchen. (Above) She prepares a version of the Washington family's Christmas Pie, which was a large and savory dish associated with the Christmas holidays in the 17th and 18th centuries.

# William Douglas Figg, Sr.: *NCI Cancer Researcher Began Journey at Samford*

By June Mathews

Douglas Figg '87 was attending Georgetown College in Kentucky when he decided to follow a girl to Alabama. She was headed to pharmacy school at Samford University, and Figg wasn't willing to let her go alone.

The move paid off in more ways than one. He not only got the girl—he and wife Jennifer will celebrate their 40th anniversary next year—but he reaped the benefits of being a student at Samford, one of them being the university's proximity to Birmingham's world-class medical community.

"Samford gave me a solid foundation in pharmacology, pharmaceuticals, pharmacokinetics and pharmacotherapy," he said. "But I also completed several extra clinical rotations during my time there. I had a strong interest in oncology and did clerkships focused on malignant hematology, medical oncology and surgical oncology that really changed my perspective. My subsequent education and training just added to the foundation I had received at Samford."

Since Samford offered only a Bachelor of Science in pharmacy at the time, Figg earned his Pharm.D. at Auburn University. He went on to complete a fellowship in drug development at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and later earned

a dual M.B.A. at Columbia University in New York and London Business School.

Though he initially expected to prefer the corporate experience over the laboratory, Figg ultimately discovered a love for academic research that spurred his future endeavors.

"I felt that financial considerations were driving the clinical development of drugs, rather than asking the critical questions that could impact patients' lives," he said. "Thus, my next move was to the National Institutes of Health/National Cancer Institute, where I could drive my own research program."

Now a tenured investigator at the NCI responsible for drug development within the intramural program of the NCI, Figg has way too many titles to put on an average business card, including associate director of the Center for Cancer Research, acting chief of the Genitourinary Malignancies Branch, co-director of the Office of Translational Resources, and head of the Clinical Pharmacology Program, among others.



Figg

But while Figg's titles are significant, they pale in comparison to the importance of his work.

"Anytime you see the research you have been doing translate into helping patients, you're then motivated and excited to go to work," he said. "I have been fortunate to have experienced that multiple times and thus am driven daily to utilize my knowledge of drug development to conquer cancer." ▮



**"Samford** gave me a solid foundation in pharmacology, pharmaceuticals, pharmacokinetics and pharmacotherapy." —William Douglas Figg, Sr.



# Alumnus Translates Fifth Century Work of Theologian Cyril of Alexandria

By Kristen Padilla

John Kegley '18, M.Div. '22, was first introduced to Cyril of Alexandria in Patristic History and Doctrine class during his first semester at Samford's Beeson Divinity School.

Master of Divinity students are required to read primary texts by theologians throughout church history in the school's History and Doctrine five-course sequence. "We take the time to read their works and the arguments they make and how they use Scripture to make their arguments, not just their conclusions," Kegley said.

That first class and its professor, Carl Beckwith, had a profound impact on him, capturing his interest in trinitarian theology and influencing the trajectory of his vocational goals.

A 2018 graduate of Samford with majors in history, classics and religion, Kegley already had a background in Greek

coming into divinity school and was able to go deeper in the language as an M.Div. student. By the end of his M.Div. studies, he knew he wanted to study a Greek-speaking church father who wrote on trinitarian theology for doctoral work. Beckwith pointed him to Cyril, a bishop of Alexandria who lived in the late fourth to early fifth centuries.

"Through the History and Doctrine course and conversations with Dr. Beckwith, I decided to focus on Cyril's trinitarian theology, which remains understudied and overshadowed by his Christological insights. Cyril's trinitarian theology has not been widely studied," he said.

As he began studying Cyril outside the classroom, Kegley discovered he had written three large works on the Trinity, two of which have not been translated into English. He narrowed in on one of the untranslated works, *Dialogues on the Trinity*, and began translating it into English.

"Growing up in a tradition that didn't spend a lot of time reflecting deeply upon the Trinity, I find a lot of joy and purpose in providing Cyril's theological writings for Christians in English," Kegley said. "I think in some of our churches the Trinity is something we easily give lip service to but also something we quickly move on from. Part of this work is personal and part of it is academic—to help the church think more deeply and biblically about the Trinity."

"John's work on Cyril brings together his deep love for the Scriptures and their faithful interpretation throughout the history of the church," said Beckwith. "This important exegetical work by Cyril has never been translated into English. I am delighted that John wishes to serve the broader church in this way and look forward to the day I can assign his translation in History and Doctrine."

Kegley, who currently teaches Greek and Latin at Westminster School at Oak Mountain in Birmingham, gives credit to Beeson Divinity School for its curriculum in having shaped him as a Christian, minister of the gospel and scholar.

"If it wasn't for Beeson, I probably wouldn't be doing this project," he said. "Beeson was the ideal place for me to grow not just as a scholar but also as someone who can think about the Trinity for the church." 📖







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## *Alumnus of the Year*

# Lynn Boggs '79

*By Holly Gainer*

In 2015, Lynn Boggs was in search of a particular gift to give as a birthday present—a gift card with a University of Alabama logo on it. After searching multiple stores in Birmingham and being unable to find one for Alabama—let alone any other university—he realized he had found a business opportunity, which led to the launch of his company, University Fancards.

Co-founded with his son Gregory '09, the company offers collegiate and professional sports branded gift cards and reloadable prepaid cards. Today the cards can be purchased in 20,000 stores around the United States and are affiliated with 32 universities around the country, as well as several collegiate football bowl championships.

University Fancards is the third startup for Boggs, who graduated from Samford with a Bachelor of Science in finance and insurance. The company reflects his close ties to Samford—having employed at least 15 employees and interns from Samford since it launched.

“Today it amazes me the quality of kids we get out of Samford—that’s why we keep hiring them. The quality and caliber of the students that come out of Brock School of Business astounds me,” Boggs said. “They receive a really

great education and are ready to work after graduation, which is a tribute to the school.”

Boggs, who was named the 2022 Alumnus of the Year, is a member of Samford’s Board of Overseers, the Bulldog Club and the dean’s advisory board for Brock School of Business. He says supporting the university is his way of giving back to a place that he loves.

“I am honored and humbled to receive this award. I was shocked when I learned about it. It means so much to be recognized because I love this school and think a lot of it,” Boggs said. “This honor means a lot to me, but I serve Samford not for the recognition, but because I love it.”

Along with Boggs and his son Gregory, his daughter-in-law and son-in-law also graduated from Samford. ■

## *Outstanding Young Alumnus of the Year*

# Chad Trull '05

*By Holly Gainer*

**Since graduating from Samford in 2005, Chad Trull has founded seven businesses—the first in 2008 just three years after he earned his undergraduate degree. Trull, who is the founder and managing partner of Krowten Capital and the founder and chief executive officer of HighFive Healthcare, was named the 2022 Outstanding Young Alumnus of the Year because of his career success and his commitment to give back to the university.**

“Samford has given me so much and has been very helpful throughout my life—both as a student and as a professional,” Trull said. “From the friends I made to the faculty who taught me, the community has been a source of support throughout my career.”

Trull, who earned a Bachelor of Science in accounting, has supported Samford with his time and generous financial gifts since graduating. In 2019, he sponsored the creation of the Data and Sports Analytics Lab in Cooney Hall. Today, he serves on the dean’s advisory board for Brock School of Business. He also mentors students who are interested in starting their own companies.

“I want to help Samford be successful, and it takes time and funding to do that in order to equip faculty and students with the things they need to succeed in today’s world,” Trull said. “I am extremely proud of Samford, and I wear that badge of pride every day. Anything I can do to help Samford, I try my best to do it.”

Amongst his favorite memories as a student include spending time with his friends, especially those he made as a member of Sigma Nu, and learning from recently retired professor Larry Harper, who taught several of Trull’s business classes.

Trull says Samford has helped him succeed in his career because of the community of students and faculty on campus.

“Majoring in accounting helped me understand how money worked and how businesses worked. I was surrounded by other ambitious and smart students at Samford that created a competitive environment that made me want to work harder and set my goals higher at a young age,” Trull explained. “Professors like Larry Harper took a personal interest in me and invested time in me. I appreciate that to this day and value the support and relationships I made.”





## *Humanitarian of the Year*

# Lindy Cleveland '14

*By Holly Gainer*

**When Lindy Williamson Cleveland moved into her dorm at Samford her freshman year, her older brother, Jordan, was upset because he said he wanted to go to college, too. Cleveland said this was another reminder of the lack of opportunities for her brother, who has Down syndrome, and other adults with developmental disabilities after they graduate from high school.**

"I thought, 'What if we created a college-like atmosphere for my brother and his peers?'" Cleveland said.

Throughout her time at Samford and through opportunities working with adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, the idea continued to grow in her mind, leading her to change her major to Human Development and Family Sciences to learn how to create a nonprofit organization, which would later become Unless U.

"I was able to gear my research, my internships and my classes toward services for this amazing population," Cleveland said. "I also took a grant writing class, and our class project was to build a nonprofit. I was able to put a business plan together and write a mock grant. I did all of the hard first steps in college and once I graduated, I had the tools and plans to start Unless U."

What began in her parents' home with six students in 2014 became Unless U, a nonprofit that is committed to serving adults with developmental disabilities and their families by providing continuing education, job training and life and social skills. Today, the organization has two campuses in Birmingham and serves 130 students.

Cleveland says Samford has continued to support her by hosting Dance for Down Syndrome, a community-wide event and fundraiser which she started as an undergraduate student. The university has also been helpful in recommending interns to work alongside Unless U students in the classroom and on-site at the ice cream shop, Unless U Scoops in Vestavia. However, the encouragement of her professors is what has meant the most.

"I am so proud of being a Samford graduate. I think the magic of Samford is unmatched—feeling seen and loved by



your professors," she said. "I am so blessed to have had the opportunity to go to Samford because it really shaped my vision and how we serve our students by making sure they feel seen, loved and heard." ▀



### *Humanitarians of the Year*

# Ken Berg '77, M.M.E. '81 and Susan Berg '77

*By Gail Allyn Short*

Ken and Susan Berg are passionate about helping boys find their voice. For 45 years the Bergs have led the Birmingham Boys Choir, a nonprofit, civic organization that trains boys ages 8 to 18 to sing choral music. With more than 140 members, the group has performed around the world since 1973.

Now Samford is honoring the Bergs as the 2022 Humanitarians of the Year for their service.

Ken, the choir's music director and resident composer, says the choir not only follows the Bible's command to worship, it encourages boys to be both academic and creative. "The choir gives boys permission to be good at this, and they enjoy it. They love performing, but they also like rehearsing, and when they finish singing, they know, 'We've just made something lovely,'" he said.

"Another benefit," said Susan, who is the associate music director and pianist, "is we have kids from all around the city, and they get to make friends with children who wouldn't ordinarily be in their circle of friends. They also learn personal responsibility and leadership, and it helps build the whole person."

The couple first met at Samford as freshmen and graduated together with music education degrees. Ken later returned to Samford and earned his Master of Music Education in 1981. Soon after, the Bergs accepted part-time

positions with the Birmingham Boys Choir. Susan started out as the rehearsal pianist, and by 1989, she was teaching and coordinating the music theory classes. Today, Ken is the full-time director while Susan directs the Junior Choristers for third through fifth grade boys.

The Bergs are now busy leading rehearsals for several upcoming performances. Those events include the annual Birmingham Boys Choir Christmas Concert that is set for Dec. 13 at Samford and will feature choir alumni and dads. The choir alumni includes the couple's two grown sons, David '09 and Michael.

While the Bergs say the Humanitarian Award is an unexpected honor, Ken says he believes the choir fulfills the mission of the award by helping to shape the next generation of men. "Part of our role is to be the training wheels in their lives as they go from being children and teenagers to adults," he says, "and to keep them balanced in what is right and true, noble and pure." ■





# *Celebrating* **HOMECOMING** **2022**



*By Kameron Brown*

The Samford family returned to campus for Homecoming weekend on Nov. 4-5. Despite rainy conditions, the Quad was once again covered in red and blue, as hundreds of alumni, along with their family and friends, came together.



The celebrations began Thursday night with the crowning of this year's Homecoming king and queen. Peyton Lankford, a senior finance major, was crowned king, and Ellen Conley, a senior early childhood special education, elementary and collaborative education major, was crowned queen.

On Friday night, the Samford University Alumni Association hosted the Samford Alumni Celebration. This event, formerly known as the Homecoming Candlelight Dinner, is now a reception for alumni to gather and kick off the weekend. Seibert Hall entertained guests with food, fellowship and music, courtesy of the Samford Jazz Band. The recipients of the 2022 Alumni of the Year awards were also recognized.

On Saturday, tents dotted the Quad, spanning from Reid Chapel to Hodges Chapel, as students, alumni, employees and friends braved the wet weather. To bring the weekend to a close, the football team defeated Virginia Military Institute, 34-15, securing a record-breaking victory for head coach Chris Hatcher, making him the winningest coach in school history. ▀







## HOMECOMING





# Alumni Events in Your City

*Samford alumni chapters and clubs hosts events throughout the country.*



The Montgomery Chapter attended a Montgomery Biscuits baseball game.



Alumni in Southern California gathered at the home of Samford parents Beth and Kris Davis.



Alumni gathered at a New York City Chapter event at The New York Athletic Club.



Ashley Goode '12 cheered on the Bulldogs with her sons at the UGA vs. Samford tailgate in Athens, Georgia.



Alumni reconnected at a Boston Alumni Club event at Southern Kin Cookhouse.



Alumni gathered at a Louisville Regional Club event at Rooster's Restaurant.

Find you local chapter or club at [samford.edu/alumni/be-involved](https://samford.edu/alumni/be-involved).



# Nursing's Centennial Celebration

Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing celebrated its 100th anniversary on Nov. 3 at the Lyric Theatre. The special event included food, fellowship and live music, as well as a presentation of nursing uniforms from throughout the school's history.



## Family Weekend 2022

Samford hosted Family Weekend on Sept. 23-25, and the weekend included events like the Samford Parents Association annual meeting and breakfast, Pops with the Pres, Family Academy and a night with alumnus and *New York Times* bestselling author, Jon Acuff '98.





# CLASS NOTES

*Compiled by the Office of Alumni Programs  
and Annual Giving.*

## 1950s

**Hoyt Harwell '53** has been designated one of the 50 Legends of the Alabama Sports Writers Association for his work with The Associated Press in Alabama.

## 1960s

**William Propst Sr. '61** has been selected for the Alabama Business Hall of Fame Class of 2022.

**Kenneth "Ken" Moore '66** has been appointed the municipal judge for the town of Woodstock, Alabama.

**Donald Cotton '68** has been selected for the Jackson County Sports Hall of Fame, in Alabama, as a part of the class of 2021.

## 1970s

**Ronnie Opolka Sr. '70** has received the Bowl of Hygeia Award at the Alabama Pharmacy Association's 141st Annual Convention and Trade Show.

**Ben Strength '70** has been named the new pastor of Monticello First United Methodist Church in Monticello, Georgia.

**Tommy Turner '74** has been selected for the Jackson County Sports Hall of Fame, in Alabama, as a part of the class of 2021.

**Lloyd Gatherings '76** has been recognized as a Lifetime Achiever by Continental Who's Who.

**Claude Rhea '76, '80** has joined Raleigh Avenue Baptist Church in Birmingham as the minister of music.

**Thomas "Tommy" Spina '78** has been appointed to the Birmingham Airport Authority board of directors.

**Buddy Bunch '79** owner of Bunch Pharmacy in Guntersville, Alabama, has been awarded the 2022 Health Mart Pharmacy of the Year.

## 1980s

**Jim Vann '81** has been named president of Dentons Sirote in Birmingham.

**Jerry Smith Jr. '84** has been appointed chief financial officer of Madison Core Laboratories, LLC in Huntsville, Alabama.

**James Turk Jr. '84** has been appointed to the Board of Visitors for Radford University in Virginia.

**James Moseley Jr. '87** was elected second vice president of the Maritime Law Association of the United States.

**Evan Jenkins '87** has been named as a West Virginia Bar Foundation fellow.

**Paul Vaughan '87** has been elected to serve as vice president and controller of Murphy Oil Corporation.

**Zeke Smith '88** has been named an Auburn University Trustee.

**Theodore "Ike" Gulas '89** has been elected AHEPA National Housing Corporation Board president.

**Amy Scarborough '89** has been selected to join Eastern Kentucky University as its chief government, community and corporate relations officer.

**Glen "Mark" Thompson '89** has been named one of Pennsylvania's 100 most powerful attorneys by the news organization City & State Pennsylvania.

## 1990s

**Walter Hutchens '90** has been appointed director and faculty member of a 400-student program in Qingdao, China by the University of Arizona Rogers College of Law.

**David Bush '91** has opened a new AccuRX Infusion Center location in Meadowbrook, Alabama.

**Eric Spivey '91** has been named the senior pastor of Vestavia Hills Baptist Church in Birmingham.

**Tracey Adams '92** has been instated as the 27th southeastern regional director of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated.

**J.C. Roper Jr. '92, '95** has joined Chartwell Law Offices as an attorney in Atlanta, Georgia.

**Melanie Patz '93** has been named president and CEO of The United Way of Northeast Florida.

**Angela "Ane" Debro '94** has been named associate general counsel for athletics at the University of Mississippi.

**Michael Ent, '94** has joined Raleigh Avenue Baptist Church in Birmingham as the pastor.

**Tracy Jessup '94** has joined Anderson University as vice president for Christian life and senior minister to the university.

**Michael "Todd" Jones '94** has been named principal of Parry McCluer High School in Buena Vista, Virginia.

**Brett Opalinski '94** has been named assistant dean of Methodist studies and assistant professor in the practice of spiritual formation and church leadership at Emory University's Candler School of Theology in Atlanta, Georgia.

**Richard Nickels '95** has joined Bradley Arant Boulton Cummings LLP as a partner in Birmingham.

**Jeff Tickal '96** has been elected Lee County Circuit Court judge in Alabama.

**Bradford "Brad" Medcalf '97, '98** has joined Bunnell Lammons Engineering as chief financial officer in Greenville, South Carolina.

**Kaylin Render '97** has received the 2022 Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) Tribute to Women Award in the "Empower" category.

**Elizabeth Sloan '98** has been named dean for humanities at Northeast State Community College in Blountville, Tennessee.

**Jeffery DeArman '99** has joined Morris, Manning & Martin, LLP as a partner in Atlanta, Georgia.

**Matthew Bardin '99** has been named senior vice president of operations for NeuroBo Pharmaceuticals, Inc.

**Frances Herring '99** was named Administrator of the Year for Lenoir County Public Schools by the North Carolina Association of Educational Office Professionals.

## 2000s

**Theodore "Ted" Alling '00** has been elected to Coca-Cola UNITED Board of Directors.

**Woodrow Hartzog '00, '02** has joined Boston University School of Law as a full-time professor.

**Robert Maddox '00** has been elected as a fellow of the American Bar Foundation.

**Jenny Waltman '00** has been named the newest FACE of Birmingham within StyleBlueprint's series. Waltman is the founder and CEO of Grace Klein Community.

**Justin Hardin '01** has been appointed vice president for academic affairs for Ouachita Baptist University in Arkansas.

**Ryan Buchanan '01** has been sworn in as the U.S. Attorney for the North District of Georgia.

**W. Lamar Whitaker '01** has been named vice president and plant lead at Honda's Alabama Auto Plant in Lincoln.

**Christi Hu '02** has received the John Hines Jr. Undergraduate Research Faculty Award at LaGrange College in LaGrange, Georgia.

**Murray Lee '02** has been appointed executive coordinator with Mission to North America.

**Michelle Richards '02** has been appointed vice president of global human resources with Astreya.

**Bill Lewis Jr. '03** has been appointed to the University of South Alabama Board of Trustees.

**Graham Pulvere '03** has joined Wilson Elser in Birmingham as a partner.

**John Collier '04** has joined Progress Bank as a senior lender and market leader for Shelby County in Alabama.

**Will Grogan '04** has joined Scotland Wright Associates as a partner in Atlanta, Georgia.

**Brian Kilgore '04** has been appointed city attorney for the city of Madison, Alabama.

**Lacy Smith '04** has been named one of the *Birmingham Business Journal's* 2022 Top 40 Under 40.

**Troy Lugo '05** has been named chief financial officer of O'Neal Industries in Birmingham.

**Kirby Howard Jr. '06** has joined Starnes Davis Florie LLP as a partner in Mobile, Alabama.

**Ben Edfeldt '06** has been named director of collegiate and student ministries for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

**Lindsey Harris '06** has been named one of the six 2022-2023 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Policy Fellows.

**Gregory "Greg" Kitchens '07** has been promoted to co-CEO with Artia Solutions in Tallahassee, Florida.

**Andrew Westover '09** has been appointed as the Eleanor McDonald Storza Director of Education with the High Museum of Art in Atlanta, Georgia.

## 2010s

**John Coke '10** has been named general counsel by the Tennessee Administrative Office of the Courts.

**Ashley Peinhardt '10** has been named partner with Hare Wynn Newell & Newton LLP in Birmingham.

**Alyssa Whitehead '12** has joined the Washington Spirit Reserves as a goalkeeper coach.

**Scott Foster '13** has opened his own veterinary practice, Constant Companion Animal Hospital, in Birmingham.

**Deana Goodwine '13** has been promoted to director of workforce development for the Sylacauga City Schools system in Alabama.

**Carita Venable '13** has been re-elected for another term as president for district 5 on the Jefferson County Board of Education.

**Lindy Cleveland '14** has opened Post Place, for students with multi abilities, a satellite campus of Unless U in Birmingham.

**Michael Lasserre '14** has been promoted to partner with Starnes Davis Florie LLP in Birmingham.

**Michael Yaworsky '14** has been reappointed to the Florida Gaming Control Commission.

**Julie Horton '14** has joined CHI Memorial Medical Group as a certified nurse practitioner in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

**Jason Asher '15** has joined the anesthesiology team of PeaceHealth Ketchikan as a certified registered nurse anesthetist in Alaska.

**Katie Fish '15** has joined Chamberlain Hrdlicka as an associate in Atlanta, Georgia.

**Tracie Turrentine '15** has been elected the first female superintendent of Morgan County, Alabama.

**John Parker '16** has joined Maynard Cooper & Gale as an associate in Birmingham.

**Mollie Hanson '16, '17** has been hired as an assistant coach for The University of Alabama at Birmingham's softball team.

**Elizabeth Barger '17** has opened her own primary care pediatrics office, Happy Camper Pediatrics in Tavares, Florida.

**Austin Billings '17** has been named head track and field coach at Black Hills State University in South Dakota.

**Alfonzo Fraizer '17, '19** has been named the assistant principal of Rome High School in Rome, Georgia.

**Riley Murphy '17** has joined Maynard Cooper & Gale as an attorney in Birmingham.

**Nisargkumar "Nisu" Patel '18** has been named one of the *Birmingham Business Journal's* 2022 Top 40 Under 40.

**W. McClendon "Mac" Lanier '19** has joined the senior management team of Brad Lanier Oil Co.

## 2020s

**Christian Matthew '20** has been drafted into the National Football League.

**Montrell Washington '21** has been drafted into the National Football League.



# IN MEMORIAM

**'45 Janyce "Jan" Ward French**, age 96, of Niceville, Florida, died on June 21, 2022.

**'47 Frank Donaldson**, age 100, of Homewood, Alabama, died on June 2, 2022.

**'49 Eugene Daughtry**, age 95, of Birmingham, Alabama, and Mary Esther, Florida, died on April 29, 2022.

**'51 Harold Moore**, age 94, of Wilsonville, Alabama, died on June 30, 2022.

**'51 Millard Oakley**, age 91, of Livingston, Tennessee, died on April 21, 2022.

**'52 Thomas "Tom" Jefferson**, age 90, of Huntsville, Alabama, died on June 17, 2022.

**'52, '80 Randall Lolley**, age 90, of Raleigh, North Carolina, died on March 21, 2022.

**'52 Marie Christopher Holley**, age 91, of Homewood, Alabama, died on May 1, 2022.

**'53 Kenneth Henson**, age 93, of Chatom, Alabama, died on March 30, 2022.

**'53 Mildred Mann Colgan**, age 91, of Avilla, Indiana, died on May 4, 2022.

**'53 Dorothy "Dot" Funderburk McCombs**, age 90, of Concord, Georgia, died on April 23, 2022.

**'53 Ray Scott Jr.**, age 88, of Hope Hull, Alabama, died on May 8, 2022.

**'57 James Landers**, age 92, of Hoover, Alabama, died on July 1, 2022.

**'57 LaNelle Moore Lester**, age 87, of Powder Springs, Georgia, died on May 2, 2022.

**'58 Mary Carol Grice Crippen**, age 84, of Montgomery, Alabama, died on June 19, 2022.

**'58 Albert Mahan**, age 86, of Montgomery, Alabama, died on May 23, 2022.

**'58 James Smith**, age 85, of Montgomery, Alabama, died on June 8, 2022.

**'58 Ellis "Leon" Sanders**, age 93, of Oneonta, Alabama, died on July 20, 2022.

**'58 Buddy Thorne**, age 86, of Jasper, Alabama, died on April 8, 2022.

**'58 Jackie "Gail" Reynolds Wisener**, age 84, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on May 10, 2022.

**'59 Lynn Gourley McGuire**, age 88, of Olathe, Kansas, died on July 20, 2022.

**'60 Joel Land**, age 84, of Richmond, Virginia, died on April 26, 2022.

**'60 Donald Marcus**, age 87, of Slidell, Louisiana, died on May 4, 2022.

**'61 Mae Lynn Todd McCardle**, age 82, of Havana, Florida, died on August 6, 2022.

**'61 George Raley**, age 82, of Ringgold, Georgia, died on March 30, 2022.

**'62 Peggy Guffin Trout**, age 80, of Auburn, Alabama, died on May 31, 2022.

**'62 Robert "Bobby" Payne**, age 87, of Spring, Texas, died on June 28, 2022.

**'63 Robert "Bob" Ross Jr.**, age 93 of Birmingham, Alabama, died on April 7, 2022.

**'64 Marshall "Butch" Boone Jr.**, age 79, of Vestavia Hills, Alabama, died on May 31, 2022.

**'64 James Elrod**, age 84, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on March 23, 2022.

**'64 John "Johnny" Shoemaker**, age 84, of Eufaula, Alabama, died in April 2022.

**'65 James "Jim" Floyd**, age 79, of Cleveland, Tennessee, died on June 13, 2022.

**'66 James Huston III**, age 78, of Lilburn, Georgia, died on June 2, 2022.

**'66 Mary Judith "Judy" Scott Maddox**, age 77, of Mobile, Alabama, died on November 21, 2021.

**'66 Robert McGehee**, age 80, of Gainesville, Florida, died on March 24, 2022.

**'66 William "Cary" Walker**, age 80, of Tarrant, Alabama, died on June 10, 2022.

**'67 Larry Keener**, age 78, of Gadsden, Alabama, died on April 14, 2022.

**'69 Phillip Laird**, age 79, of Jasper, Alabama, died on March 23, 2022.

**'69 Hugh Gourley Jr.**, age 77, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on April 14, 2022.

**'69 Donald Stewart**, age 81, of Sarasota, Florida, died on April 19, 2022.

**'71 Johnny Grubb**, age 81, of Athens, Tennessee, died on May 12, 2022.

**'71 Jack McNamee**, age 77, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on May 2, 2022.

**'71 Cecil "Wayne" Parker**, age 76, of Decatur, Alabama, died on August 9, 2022.

**'73 Mary Evelyn Waters Ward**, age 85, of Wedowee, Alabama, died on May 26, 2022.

**'74 Deane "Deanie" Summerford Coe**, age 72, of Hoover, Alabama, died on May 29, 2022.

**'74 George Jones**, age 78, of Montevallo, Alabama, died on July 2, 2022.

**'74 Fred McLean**, age 72, of Paris, Tennessee, died on July 16, 2022.

**'74 Kenneth Pinegar**, age 86, of Fayette, Alabama, died on April 24, 2022.

**'74 John Phillip "Phil" Simmons**, age 71, of Corryton, Tennessee, died on April 28, 2022.

**'74 J. Joseph Michael "Mike" Souders**, age 75, of Metropolis, Illinois, died on May 22, 2022.

**'74 Michael P.A. Williams**, age 76, of Charlottesville, Virginia, died on March 26, 2022.

**'76 James Bernard**, age 78, of Columbus, Georgia, died on May 6, 2022.

**'76, '81 Michael "Mike" Lawless Sr.**, age 69, of Trussville, Alabama, died on June 24, 2022.

**'76 Ben Robinson Jr.**, age 77, of Foley, Alabama, died on June 24, 2022.

**'77 James Steven "Steve" Nix**, age 67, of Leighton, Alabama, died on April 3, 2022.

**'77 Fred Leander "Andy" White Jr.**, age 69, of Auburn, Alabama, died on July 14, 2022.

**'79 Roger McGee**, age 65, of Alexandria, Virginia, died on April 19, 2022.

**'79 Stanley "Stan" Smith**, age 67, of Ozark, Alabama, died on May 22, 2022.

**'80 Brian Feldman**, age 87, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on June 1, 2022.

**'81 Ronald Higgins**, age 75, of Gadsden, Alabama, died on May 19, 2022.

**'81 Blanchard McLeod Jr.**, age 78, of Selma, Alabama, died on May 23, 2022.

**'82 Amanda Harris Lovelace**, age 65, of Decatur, Alabama, died on March 21, 2022.

**'82 George "Buddy" Majors Sr.**, age 81, of McCalla, Alabama, died on July 13, 2022.

**'86 Gregory Toth**, age 65, of Mishawaka, Indiana, died on May 16, 2022.

**'87, '97 Samuel Todd Evans**, age 57, of Abbeville, Alabama, died on April 7, 2022.

**'90 Norma "Nonni" Grubbs Demarco**, age 75, of Dora, Alabama, died on July 19, 2022.

**'90 Ronald "Ronnie" Ferguson**, age 74, of Dora, Alabama, died on July 1, 2022.

**'93, '99 Susan Lee Williams**, age 50, of Tallahassee, Florida, died on July 3, 2022.

**'95 Charles "Bart" North**, age 51, of Dothan, Alabama, died on September 9, 2021.

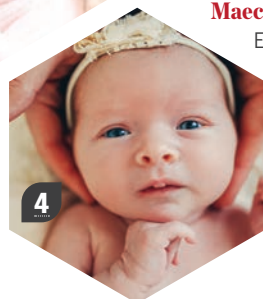
**'98 Patricia McLendon Baughan**, age 67, of Warrior, Alabama, died on May 3, 2022.

**'99 Timothy Forehand**, age 55, of Grove Hill, Alabama, died on March 28, 2022.

**'03 Henry "Hank" Smith**, age 51, of Daphne, Alabama, died on April 4, 2022.

**'17 Peter "Pete" Petro**, age 28, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on June 10, 2022.

## FUTURE BULLDOGS



**Bethany Lane Usry '99** and **Stephen Usry '01** welcomed a son, Samuel Nelson Usry. **1**

**Marlene Mann Cox '06** and **Jonathan Cox '07** welcomed a daughter, Elizabeth Jane Cox. **2**

**Maei Walker '08** and R.B. Walker welcomed a daughter, Georgia Elisabeth Walker. **3**

**Christine Taylor Boatwright '10** and **Lucas Boatwright '11** welcomed a daughter, Sophie Rose Boatwright. **4**

**John Shahawy '16** and Chelsea Shahawy welcomed a daughter, Berkley Ellen Shahawy.

Let us hear from you • 205-726-2803 • [sualumni@samford.edu](mailto:sualumni@samford.edu)



# Men's Basketball Takes Impactful Trip to Dominican Republic

By Joey Mullins

**In August, members of the Samford men's basketball program spent a week in the Dominican Republic serving local kids and ministries, playing a few basketball games and learning more about Dominican culture.**

Samford head coach Bucky McMillan said his program has benefited greatly from the experience.

"The Dominican Republic basketball mission trip was an amazing experience for our players, coaches and entire traveling party," McMillan said. "The trip was a great mix of education, basketball, cultural learning and serving others. I can say with certainty that our team made an impact that will be remembered in the Dominican Republic, and the experiences in the Dominican Republic will have a lifelong impact on all those associated with our program."

The group arrived in the Dominican Republic on Aug. 11 and spent four days in Santo Domingo. Samford partnered with Fundación Mauricio Báez, assisting with a camp that the foundation hosts each summer. They held a basketball clinic for kids, gave out basketballs and Samford T-shirts, and even played in the water with the group during recess.

"Being around those kids and seeing how the game of basketball can impact the lives of others in a positive way is what I loved most about the trip," said Samford junior forward Jermaine Marshall.

During the four days in Santo Domingo, the Bulldogs also played a pair of games. The team took on a professional team, Club Mauricio Báez, falling by a score of 101-97 in overtime, and then earned a 105-87 win over Club Rafael Barías.

The group spent the final three days of the trip in Punta Cana where they participated in a team beach volleyball tournament. The Bulldogs wrapped the trip up with one final game, defeating Club San Jose by a score of 94-63.

Samford senior guard Bubba Parham, a recent transfer from Georgia Tech, said the trip was a good way for him to get to know his new teammates and coaches better.

"The Dominican Republic was a great experience not only for me, but it really helped for me to get to know my teammates and coaching staff, especially since I just arrived here at Samford," Parham said. "On top of that we got to compete in three games and get a feel for each other's game against another team." ■



**"The trip** was a great mix of education, basketball, cultural learning and serving others."

—Bucky McMillan





# UNITE & THRIVE

A historic project is underway to create a recreation, wellness and athletics complex on Samford's campus. Collectively, these facilities will provide students with expanded opportunities to improve physical fitness and mental wellness as well as new spaces for recreation, events and community gatherings.

When we invest in the health and wellness of our students, we live out our mission to nurture students in the development of their personhood, addressing their mental, physical and spiritual needs.

Samford invites you to join us in support of this transformational project.  
**Learn more and make your gift today at [samford.edu/go/recreation](https://samford.edu/go/recreation).**

*"The announcement of renovated and new spaces dedicated to physical and mental wellness has sparked a new excitement throughout the campus community. Samford's investment in this infrastructure emphasizes the importance of self-care and personal development. This project will certainly have a transformational impact on students now and for generations to come."*

**Micaiah Collins, President,  
Student Government Association**



SAMFORD UNIVERSITY  
**CAMPUS RECREATION,  
WELLNESS & ATHLETIC COMPLEX**

Scan the QR code  
to learn more.





# Samford Parents Scholarship

## *Pays It Forward*

By Karen Templeton

*"This is where I want my daughter to graduate," was the comment Tina Amaechi's father made as they toured Samford together.*

Samford parents likely remember touring with their students and feeling this same way. There is something special about the university, and students feel called to the outstanding programs and welcoming community.

After being accepted into Samford, Amaechi moved to the U.S. from Nigeria and enrolled in Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing hoping to become the first college graduate in her family. Sadly, after she got to Samford, her father passed away. Grief and the associated financial

difficulties led Amaechi to consider leaving the program and moving back to Nigeria. Finding the path forward was difficult for her.

In her time of uncertainty, other Samford parents came alongside her to help. Through donations made to the Samford Parents Scholarship, Amaechi's financial burden was relieved, and she concentrated on the rigorous program ahead of her. She graduated in 2022 and is now working as an oncology nurse to honor her father after his battle with cancer.

"My sons ask me to 'check my heart rate, check it, you're a nurse,'" she said. "They are proud of me and want me to check their pulse and hearts all the time."

There are many more stories just like Amaechi's and that is why Samford parents are invited to participate in the Samford Parent Campaign. "Samford parents get to know each other in their students' Samford journey and the community they build is really inspiring," said Julie Boyd, director of parent and family programs.

As Amaechi's sons ask for their mother to check their heart rates, Boyd said she encourages parents to "check their own hearts, and then check that box" when the ask for scholarship donations arrives.

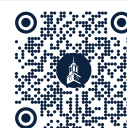
"Parents always check in on their students and their well-being, and they can do that for each other," Boyd said. "We find out who needs to be lifted up, their faith renewed, and through the Parents Scholarship, we are able to act on it."

The way Amaechi's church family and Samford community cared for her, she now cares for her patients—ensuring the generosity she received is lived out daily. "I hope they know what they did for me. God put them in my life," she said of Samford parents. "I could not have graduated without their kindness." ▀



Tina Amaechi (right) at her pinning ceremony.

**Scan the QR code to make a gift to the Samford Parents Scholarship Fund.**





# Judson College Archives Added to Samford's Special Collection

By June Mathews

Anyone familiar with Samford University and Judson College probably know the two schools share an Alabama Baptist heritage. But most will likely not know that they once shared a neighborhood. Both were founded in Marion, Alabama—Judson in 1838 and Howard College (now Samford) in 1841—and were located down the street from each other until Howard moved to Birmingham in 1887.

"Samford and Judson also share some of the same founders," said Jennifer Taylor, chair of Samford's Special Collection and University

Archives. "Our first president, Samuel Sterling Sherman, was Judson's second president. Our students and faculty attended Siloam Baptist Church in Marion, as did the Judson students and faculty. Students from each institution often went to the same events."

So, considering those common roots, when Judson College suspended academic operations on July 31, 2021, the loss became Samford's, too. A 181-year-old sisterhood had ended.

But even though the school has closed, Judson's history will remain intact. Last winter, the Judson Board of Trustees decided to place the Judson Archives with Samford, and the work of re-homing 660 boxes loaded with Judson's past began.

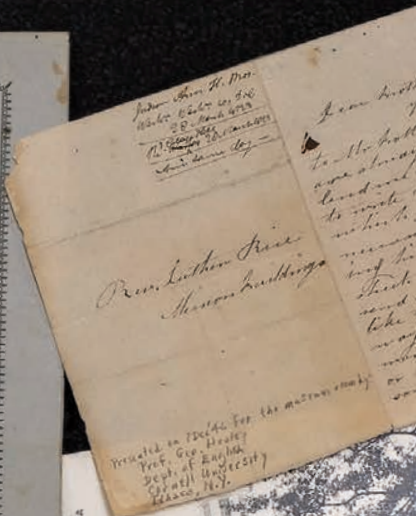
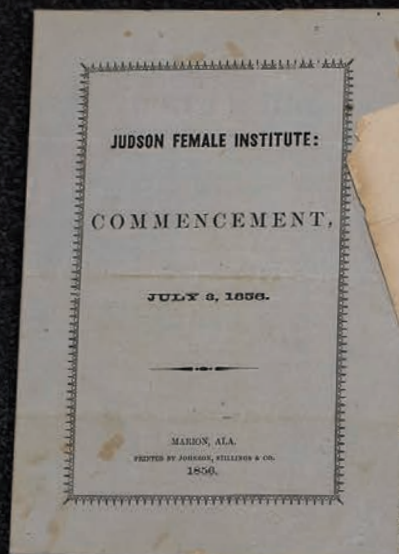
"The department put other projects on hold and invested more than 200 hours in the transfer of the materials," Taylor said. "We worked closely with Judson administration to plan the move and the receipt of their materials into Samford's Special Collection."

Judson's efforts to care for, protect and preserve their archive demon-

strated their love and commitment to preserving its history and legacy."

The decision to become the repository made perfect sense, said Taylor. The Special Collection department at Samford collects materials from Samford, Alabama and Baptist history. Samford is also the official repository for the Alabama Baptist State Board of Missions.

"It's a commitment Samford has backed with an investment of resources, made so the Judson archive can be used this year, in 50 years, and beyond," Taylor said. "The Judson story is an important part of the history of Alabama and education. And we hope the Judson Girls, as the alumnae call themselves, will share with us their stories from their time at Judson. We value each person's story as a part of Judson history." ▀







With a 34-15 victory over VMI during Homecoming weekend, head coach Chris Hatcher secured his 48th win, making him the winningest football coach in the university's history.

Samford soccer won the 2022 Southern Conference Tournament on Nov. 6, which marked the team's fifth conference title and earned the program its seventh trip to the NCAA Tournament.

