

THE MAGAZINE OF SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

seasons

FALL 2023



Outstanding Alumni
Speak to the Power of Relationships

Contents



Samford Reimagines Dining Experience with Caf Renovation

Over the summer, Samford completed a 20,000-square-foot renovation to its largest dining area, affectionately known as the Caf. The project included a complete transformation of the entire dining area, the Howard room and restrooms.



At the Top of Their Game

In 2020, the NCAA granted extended eligibility for the season impacted by COVID-19. As a result, Samford has seen a historic increase of student-athletes enrolled in graduate programs who are using the opportunity to accelerate along their chosen career paths.



Relationships that Matter

During Homecoming Weekend, Samford celebrated its 2023 Alumni of the Year recipients, and here, each honoree takes a moment to reflect on the people who made an impact on their lives while a student at Samford. For in the end, it's the relationships that make all the difference.

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As we enter a season of giving and excitement for the year ahead, we hope you will remember Samford with a charitable gift.



Your donation today can provide students with scholarships, resources and opportunities for the coming academic year.

Go to ***samford.edu/give/seasons***.

From the President



It's All About Relationships

We have a lot going on at Samford—record enrollment, big construction projects, growing academic programs and renewed energy and excitement.

But at the end of the day, what makes Samford so special? At the core of Samford's Christ-centered educational mission is a deep commitment to relational learning. It's the people of Samford who make this place unique. We still believe the best learning for our students occurs in the context of meaningful relationships with peers, faculty members, mentors and coaches.

As we honor some of Samford's most outstanding alumni in this issue, you will hear those same themes in their voices. Each of them is quick to recall that special person at Samford who made their journey significant. And they're not alone.

As you read their stories, I encourage you to recall those people who made your Samford experience shine. And if you're able, reach out to them and say thanks.

In the Samford spirit,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Beck A. Taylor'.

Beck A. Taylor, Ph.D.
President

Samford Announces Largest Total Enrollment in University History

by Holly Gainer

Samford University announced its largest total enrollment in the history of the institution with 5,791 students. It also set new records for the largest class of first-year students and the largest number of undergraduate students. This fall, 1,080 first-year students enrolled at Samford, which is an increase from last year's record number of 972. The total number of undergraduate students is 3,832.

The students represent 49 states, including Alaska and Hawaii, Puerto Rico and 16 countries.

"We are thrilled to report our largest total enrollment in university history. This is a testament to the hard work of our entire campus and the strong desire our students have for a Samford education," said Jason Black, Samford's vice president for enrollment management.

The university also set a record for the total number of new students with 1,163 matriculating this fall. At a time when many universities across the country are experiencing declines in enrollment, Samford is blessed to be setting new records. ■



News and Notes



PHOTO CREDIT: MAINDRU PHOTO

Computer Science Professor Completes Historic Cycling Event

Brian Toone, professor of computer science in Howard College of Arts and Sciences, completed the 2023 Paris-Brest-Paris in August. The historic cycling event is a 761-mile self-supported ride from Paris, France, to the French city of Brest, then back to Paris. It is one of the oldest cycling events in the world, first run in 1891, that is still in existence today. Toone completed the ride in 58 hours and 41 minutes.

"I am so grateful for the chance to ride with people from all over the world," he said. "What an amazing experience. I'm so thankful to have had this opportunity and to bring the experience home to share with all my colleagues and students."



James Briscione Named Culinary Advisor

Samford has named chef and TV personality **James Briscione '01** its culinary advisor. The role will allow Briscione to contribute to staff training, new menu options and even develop a teaching kitchen in the Caf. He showcased this new teaching kitchen during Family Weekend, whipping up dishes of butternut squash gnocchi. This culinary collaboration with the two-time *Chopped* winner follows a massive renovation of the Caf as well as the implementation of a new food services provider. Briscione is the executive chef and owner of Angelena's in Pensacola, Florida, as well as the author of multiple cookbooks, including his latest, *Flavor for All*.



Experiential Learning and Simulation Center Earns Full Accreditation

The College of Health Sciences' Experiential Learning and Simulation Center is now one of four accredited academic health care centers in Alabama and one of only 300 accredited centers in the world. The center was granted full accreditation for teaching and education from the Society for Simulation in Healthcare. The center, which plays a critical role in the development of clinical skills, prepares students in health professions, nursing, pharmacy and public health to be competent, compassionate and innovative practitioners through experiential learning and simulation experiences.



Bowdre Elected as Samford's Trustee Chair

Judge Karon O. Bowdre '77, J.D. '80, senior judge of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Alabama, was elected this fall as chair of Samford University's Board of Trustees. Bowdre, who has served as a trustee since 2008, previously served as the vice chair of the board, chair of the Student Affairs and Enrollment Management Committee and as a member of the Executive Committee. She joined the federal court in 2001 after being nominated by President George W. Bush, and she assumed senior status on April 25, 2020. She served as chief judge of the Northern District of Alabama from 2013 to 2019. Prior to her judicial appointment, Bowdre was a member of Samford's Cumberland School of Law faculty from 1990-01. She succeeds William J. "Bill" Stevens as chair. Stevens was elected by the board as a Life Trustee, having served on the board for more than 20 years.

Leadership Samford Empowers Employees

In August, Samford announced the first cohort for a new initiative that will provide an avenue to further empower its employees. The innovative program, known as Leadership Samford, will develop and implement organizational leadership competencies among its faculty and staff. Throughout the 11-month program, members will explore unique features of Samford and get a deeper understanding of its role as a leading institution in Christ-centered higher education.

LEADERSHIP SAMFORD



New Commercial Real Estate Lab Primes Business Students for Careers

Brock School of Business, in partnership with Fairway Investments, opened the Fairway Commercial Real Estate Lab in September. Equipped with leading data analytics software, the new lab provides a dedicated workspace for students to collaborate with each other and with industry professionals for case analysis and applied research projects. In addition to the physical space, Brock School of Business' new real estate concentration can be added as a complement to any business major.

Wall Street Journal Ranks Samford #10 for Career Preparation

Samford is ranked #10 of all colleges and universities in the United States for the quality of career preparation provided to its students according to a new ranking in *The Wall Street Journal*.

The ranking is based on a national survey conducted for the WSJ/College Pulse 2024 Best Colleges in the U.S. ranking. It asked more than 60,000

students to share information on career preparation, educational opportunities and learning facilities at their schools. It also asked them whether they were happy with the value they received for the experiences provided.

This most recent *Wall Street Journal* ranking concurs with yet another respected national report in 2022,

this time from the National Survey of Student Engagement. That data showed 99% of Samford graduates from the class of 2022 participated in at least one high-impact practice related to positive student learning outcomes, such as completing an internship or studying abroad.

University Mourns Passing of Buck Brock

Beloved former Samford University trustee and executive vice president **Harry B. "Buck" Brock III** passed away Nov. 3 after a long illness. Just three days earlier, Brock's work with the university had been celebrated with the renaming of an area of the Ralph W. Beeson University Center in his honor. That portion of the center, now known as Buck Brock Commons, is the space on the second floor used frequently by students to study, pray and enjoy community. Brock joined the Samford administration as the executive vice president and vice president for business and financial services in 2007 and retired last year. Under his leadership, several milestone projects were accomplished, including the construction of Cooney Hall and the transformation of the former Southern Progress corporate headquarters into the College of Health Sciences.



Provost Shares Plans to Pursue Classroom Calling

Following nine years of service as Samford's provost and vice president for academic affairs, **J. Michael Hardin** announced his plan to return to the classroom. Effective June 30, 2024, Hardin will step down from his role, and, after completing a sabbatical, he plans to return to teaching quantitative analysis and biostatistics in Brock School of Business. "I am grateful for the faithful service to God's kingdom work I have seen during my service as provost, and I am also grateful that I will be able to continue to enjoy the privilege of being a part of the Samford family," Hardin said.



To find his replacement, a search committee, chaired by President Taylor and Angela Thomason, professor of pharmacy and chair of the Faculty Senate, was assembled in October. The search will be assisted by CarterBaldwin, a leading search firm in higher education.

FOOTBALL STADIUM RENAMED IN HONOR OF PETE HANNA



President Taylor presented Hanna's family and friends with a key to the stadium to mark the occasion.

by Joey Mullins

Samford renamed its football stadium in honor of alumnus Pete Hanna '59, in a ceremony at the Oct. 14 football game against Furman. The designation honors Hanna for a lifetime of support and another major financial commitment.

"Pete Hanna is one of Samford's most generous supporters of Samford athletics," President Beck A. Taylor said. "Hanna made history in the stadium that will now bear his name, and his continuing generosity to Samford will allow us to continue to make history for years to come. We couldn't be more grateful for his dedication."

The facility, which is now known as Pete Hanna Stadium, bears the name of two Samford graduates and former football players, as the field was dedicated as Bobby Bowden Field during the 2021 season. It has played host to many significant moments in Samford football history, including last year's first-ever

NCAA playoff game. It's also the place where Hanna scored one of the first touchdowns ever in the facility, in 1958. At that time, the stadium wasn't even complete as the team practiced on the old Samford campus in East Lake but played games at the new Homewood site.

This marks the second Samford athletics facility to be named in honor of Hanna, who is the chairman of Hanna Steel Corporation. The Pete Hanna Center, which opened in late 2007, is home to the Samford men's and women's basketball and volleyball teams among other activities.

"Pete Hanna has had a tremendous impact on the growth and prosperity of



Samford University as well as our athletics department," said Martin Newton, director of athletics.

As for the former name of the stadium, F. Page Seibert will continue to grace Samford's campus. The newly renovated Seibert Hall will serve as the centerpiece of the university's new Campus Recreation, Wellness and Athletic Complex scheduled to open in the fall of 2024. ▀

EMPOWERING MINDS

New university fund encourages institutional innovation

by Morgan Black

In fall 2022, Samford launched a new initiative called the Innovation Fund to promote creativity among its academic and cocurricular programs. The effort is funded through an allocation of \$1 million annually, and accepts proposals from faculty, staff and students who have innovative concepts that will advance the university's mission and strategic plan.



During its first year, the Innovation Fund received numerous proposals through an extensive application process. From these initial applicants, three concepts were selected to receive two years of funding, which began July 1, 2023.

One concept selected was a new London study abroad and professional development experience for Master of Accountancy (M.Acc.) students. Through the funding, international program fees are removed, and marketing dollars are allocated to encourage enrollment from other institutions.

The inaugural trip to London in July aligns with Fidelitas, the university's new strategic plan, by supporting the goals of academic distinction and global influence. The once-in-a-lifetime opportunity allowed students to immerse themselves in the culture, history and professional atmosphere of one of the world's most dynamic cities.

While there, students met with executives at the international headquarters of Google, Coca-Cola, Amazon, Lloyd's Insurance and Ernst & Young. They participated in workshops focused on networking, personal branding and transferring internationally with an accounting firm, experienced numerous cultural excursions, and had the unique opportunity to connect with several Samford alumni.

For the Master of Accountancy program, the university's investment is

already paying off, as student enrollment for the fall 2023 semester exceeded previous years.

Cam Pearce, instructor of accounting, said, "The Innovation Fund made our first immersive London experience possible for the M.Acc. students. The trip, filled with visits to worldwide business headquarters, professional development and international service experiences and camaraderie, has already proven to attract even more students to our highly successful graduate program."

In addition to funding this initiative, the university selected two additional projects to support through the Innovation Fund. A joint project between Academic Affairs and Enrollment Management will rejuvenate continuing education programs led by a new Office of Continuing Studies, and the construction of a new collaborative space will allow individuals or groups to separate from campus while remaining in the heart of it.

"The Innovation Fund is about empowering our people to think entrepreneurially and strategize about how we can reinvent ourselves," said Colin Coyne, vice president for finance, business affairs and strategy. "I'm very proud of these innovative projects that are underway, and I look forward to seeing how they impact Samford's bright future." ■



Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing Leads the Nation in Federal Grants to Train Future Nurses

by Eric Holsomback

The United States continues to experience a nursing shortage, but Samford's Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing is leading the way when it comes to training future health care providers. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) awarded the school more than \$26 million over the past five years in grant funding to help cover the tuition of advanced nursing education.

Of those total funds, two programs have made a significant impact on the lives of students as well as the communities they serve.

Samford's Nurse Faculty Loan Program (NFLP) is the largest in the country and the only one to receive an award that exceeds \$3 million. Designed to help address the shortage of nurse educators, students who receive these loans can qualify for up to 85% of the NFLP loan to be forgiven in exchange for service as full-time nurse faculty members or advanced practice registered nurse preceptors.

Additionally, the award of \$2.6 million from HRSA for the Advanced Nursing Education Workforce program supports the training of Samford's graduate students enrolled in primary care nurse practitioner programs, helps build

academic-clinical partnerships for clinical training, and develops and sustains clinical faculty and preceptors. Using evidence-based guidelines, the students are prepared to provide primary care, mental health and substance abuse disorder services. Students are eligible to apply for stipends to help defray expenses during their practical experience in high-need and in-demand health care settings.

"These funds have assisted us in our ongoing commitment to training and developing career leaders for the next generation of nurses to improve health outcomes and health care delivery throughout our community," said Stephanie Wynn, associate dean of scholarly activities for Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing. ▀



PURSUING

RACIAL JUSTICE

Prestigious scholarship sets up law student for success

by Morgan Black

Prior to starting law school in August, Tristan Gardner was one of only 10 law students from across the nation selected for the NAACP Legal Defense Fund's Marshall-Motley Scholarship program. Named for Thurgood Marshall, the first Black U.S. Supreme Court justice, and Constance Baker Motley, the first Black woman to become a federal judge, the program aims to equip the next generation of civil rights advocates.

"I believe we are made in the *imago dei*, and as Christians we have a duty to stand up to racial injustice. This scholarship aligns with my faith and encapsulates who I am as a person," Gardner said.

The more Gardner learned about this program, the more he realized how well it aligns with his upbringing and his hopes for his future career.

"I have a desire to see a more equitable America and I have a heart for people, especially the underserved," he said. "There was no scholarship that I found that was more perfect for me. Through the application process, I was interviewed by Justice Marshall's granddaughter, Cecelia Marshall, which was an incredible experience."

Among many benefits of the program, Gardner received a full tuition scholarship, will be eligible for summer internship opportunities with national and regional civil rights organizations, a two-year postgraduate fellowship at civil rights law organizations in the South, and access to special Legal Defense Fund trainings.

Gardner is Cumberland School of Law's second consecutive Marshall-Motley Scholar in the program's three-year history, following Malik Moore who was selected in the 2022 cohort. He believes this exemplifies Cumberland's culture and values.

"The school's desire to see a more diverse student body—not only in skin color, but in thoughts and ideals—is something I'm proud to be a part of. I know I will be prepared to pursue my passion after I graduate. I've made the right choice," he said.

Gardner credits his family for instilling in him his beliefs and fostering his passion. After graduating, he plans on staying in the South to continue to pursue racial justice, particularly in the areas of civil rights litigation, nonprofit, criminal defense, juvenile justice and family law. ▀

STUDENT USES BIOCHEMISTRY TO STUDY ANCIENT ARTIFACTS IN ISRAEL

by Diamond Nunnally

There are not many universities where students can find ancient artifacts on an excavation on the other side of the world and then bring them back to campus to study them. Yet, that is exactly what senior William Spanier experienced last summer after studying abroad in Israel.

Spanier, a biochemistry major, traveled to the ancient site of Shikhin in Israel with biblical and religious studies professor James Strange for four weeks in June. He then brought the artifacts found at the site back to Samford where he spent eight weeks researching their elemental and chemical composition under the guidance of chemistry and biochemistry professor Brian Gregory.

"This trip was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," Spanier said. "I established a deep understanding and connection to Israel, created lifelong friendships and grew in my faith. Participating in living history and holding artifacts that likely haven't been seen for almost 2,000 years was exciting."

Gregory's group has been researching pottery found by Strange's excavation groups at the site of Shikhin for years. He and students like Spanier have been trying to dissolve small pieces of the pottery to determine what the artifacts are made of to help researchers know how broadly the Shikhin pottery was distributed in the late first century to the second century.

"In the 1990s, a team from Bar-Ilan University concluded that Shikhin's potters made and distributed a type of storage vessel that was being called the 'Shikhin jar' long before we started digging," Strange said. "In the three decades that have followed, no one has confirmed, revised or challenged their conclusions. Based on our excavations, we think we'll be able to show that Shikhin distributed more than storage jars because we've found wasters from all the most common Galilean forms, including oil lamps and tablewares that imitated expensive imported pottery."

Each day in Israel, Spanier and Strange excavated in what they think was a synagogue wall built over an ancient cistern. They found numerous artifacts and uncovered a plaster floor.

Spanier had actually been researching the ceramics with Gregory for two years before visiting the site for the first time last summer.

Not only did Spanier become a certified archeologist by the end of the dig, but he also grew as a scientist since joining Gregory's research group. Spanier now operates most of his experiments independently with little assistance from Gregory

and says he learned more about chemical techniques to dissolve Shikhin ceramics.

"We combined science and religion and saw God's beautiful design in both," Spanier said. ▮



Spanier holds up an artifact found on the excavation site, Shikhin, in Israel.

Lessons Learned While Meeting Community Needs

by June Mathews

In mid-June, about 30 volunteers from across the United States gathered in Mount Vernon, Alabama, to conduct a Vacation Bible School for the children of the MOWA Band of Choctaw Indians. (The name MOWA comes from the tribe's location on the Mobile County-Washington County line.) Three nutrition students from Samford's School of Public Health were there to help.



Samford nutrition students (L-R) Lily Miller, Mary Kellison Thorne and Katy Hewitt prepared meals for the MOWA mission trip volunteers.

According to Suresh Mathews, professor and chair of Samford's Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, nutrition students and dietetic interns first participated in the MOWA project in 2019, skipping 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They returned in 2022 and again in 2023.

"This serves as a rotation where they learn how to provide nutritional services within a community," Mathews said. "It's a fantastic way for them to learn about the Native American culture and the needs of that community, how they can be culturally sensitive to those needs, and how their education can be translated based on the cultural environment."

Dietetic intern and Master of Public Health student Lily Miller was one of the Samford students who participated in the 2023 mission trip by providing food for the VBS volunteers.

"My main takeaway was how important community is," Miller said. "One day, the weather was bad, and the side of the church where the kitchen was had no power for about a day and half. So, we had to improvise."

At that point, the community stepped in, bringing air fryers for cooking and an offer from one man to prepare food for the volunteers in his home.

"I learned to think on my feet and how to shift a plan based on circumstances," Miller said. "I also learned how to work with a team, producing cohesive ideas and solutions."

The students also learned about budgeting for groceries and meeting specific dietary needs for the volunteers.

"They additionally engaged in a nutrition education session, where they answered questions from community members related to their food and dietary patterns," Mathews said. "I've heard of churches and groups going to do the vacation bible schools but not quite with a twist where students can learn hands-on like this." ■



A group of volunteers and MOWA community members met to talk about health and nutrition.

LEMONS to Lemonade



How one Samford graduate student pays for college

by June Mathews

Fresh out of high school in 2019, Elizabeth Williams knew where she was going. The Kentucky native had set her sights on becoming a pharmacist, and she had chosen Samford as the best place to help her get there. She enrolled in McWhorter School of Pharmacy's prepharmacy program as a freshman, which set her on a path to earn her Doctor of Pharmacy in just six years. But the immediate problem was how to afford the tuition.

"I knew my parents wouldn't be paying for my schooling, but I didn't want to graduate from pharmacy school with any debt," Williams said. "So, I knew I would have to come up with a plan to make this happen."

Her solution? Starting a mobile lemonade business she named Squeeze-E's.

She chose lemonade because of its great profit margins, simple recipes and potential for being a fun, creative experience for customers. "Another factor in this decision was my family's experience in owning food businesses," Williams explained. "Their expertise assisted me in learning the ropes far faster than if I was doing all the trial and error myself."

In her first year, she sold lemonade and limeade-based drinks during the summer under a tent at events in and around her hometown of Owensboro, Kentucky. But after a year, she upgraded the tent for a converted horse trailer, which her grandfather helped her build.

Overall, the business has grown throughout Williams' five summers of running Squeeze-E's. Upgrading from hand smashing to electric smashing equipment in year two helped significantly boost sales.



This past March, she released a course that teaches others how to start their own lemonade businesses. Since then, hundreds of students have taken the course, and Squeeze-E's became even more profitable as a result.

And it's those profits that allowed Williams, now a third-year pharmacy student, to remain debt-free while at Samford.

As she moves closer to fulfilling her goal of becoming a pharmacist, Williams looks forward to combining her medical knowledge with her business knowledge in ways that will benefit others.

"I can use the business lessons I have learned to help a whole population of patients," she said. "There are many different avenues of pharmacy I can pursue, but no matter which I choose, I know I will be working toward the betterment of patient outcomes." ▮



Samford Receives \$1.2 Million Grant to Promote Compelling Preaching

by Neal Embry

Samford received a grant of \$1.2 million from Lilly Endowment Inc. to help establish The Spirit and Power Project, a new preaching initiative which will involve the university's Beeson Divinity School and other parts of campus.

Lilly Endowment, which currently funds the divinity school's Robert Smith Jr. Preaching Institute, is funding the grant through its Compelling Preaching Initiative, which aims to foster and support preaching that inspires, encourages and guides people to come to know and love God and to live out their Christian faith more fully.

The Spirit and Power Project will be coordinated by the Robert Smith Jr. Preaching Institute and will, in addition to benefiting Master of Divinity students, bring in other schools and programs at Samford, including the Center for Worship and the Arts, the School of the Arts Department of Christian Ministry and Howard College of Arts and Sciences Preministerial Scholars program.

The project will equip both aspiring and active preachers to proclaim the gospel faithfully and wisely, relying on the power of the Holy Spirit to preach sermons which glorify God and build up the body of Christ. The project derives its name

from the apostle Paul's letter to the Corinthians, when he says he did not proclaim the word of God "with lofty speech or wisdom ... but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might not rest in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Cor. 2:1-5).

The Spirit and Power Project has three primary objectives:

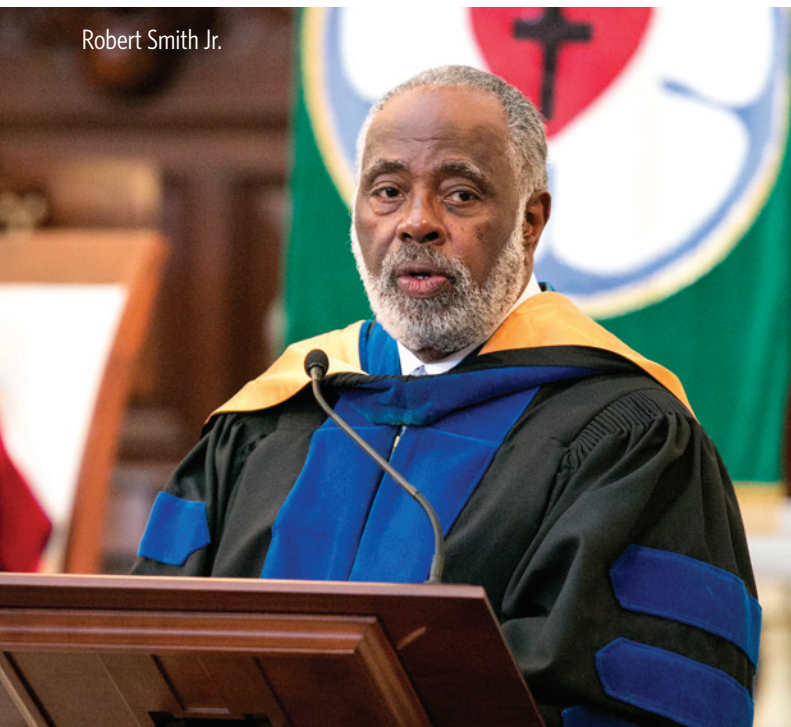
1. **To enrich the training and formation of aspiring preachers through existing educational programs.**
2. **To engage current preachers with programs and services that enhance their spiritual vitality and theological judgment.**
3. **To exhibit and celebrate exemplary preaching and preachers for the benefit of current and future preachers alike.**

"There is nothing more important in the ministry of pastors than the preaching of the Word. We at Samford and Beeson Divinity School take this job with the utmost seriousness, as the work of our Robert Smith Jr. Preaching Institute attests so well," said Douglas A. Sweeney, dean of Beeson Divinity School. "It is with deep gratitude to our friends at Lilly Endowment that we make this announcement about our Spirit and Power Project. We promise to steward this new gift with excellence as we form the next generation of preachers."

"Beeson Divinity School has long been known for its preparation of those who are called to proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. This generous grant will equip the school to prepare the next generation of preachers, and we are grateful for Lilly Endowment's sustained commitment to our efforts," said President Beck A. Taylor.

"Throughout history, preachers often have needed to adapt their preaching practices to engage new generations of hearers more effectively," said Christopher L. Coble, Lilly Endowment's vice president for religion. "We are pleased that the organizations receiving grants in this initiative will help pastors and others in ministry engage in the kinds of preaching needed today to ensure that the gospel message is heard and accessible for all audiences." ▮

Robert Smith Jr.





True Community Theatre

Samford program integrates local schools for performance

by Anne Madison Adcock

This September, several Birmingham area schools gathered for an exclusive showing of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, sponsored by the Emma Taylor Theatre for Youth Series. The production faithfully recreates C.S. Lewis's beloved story of the magic and mystery of Aslan, the great lion, his struggle with the White Witch, and the adventures of four children who inadvertently wander from an old wardrobe into the exciting land of Narnia.

Well-known puppeteer Jesse Mooney-Bullock came to campus in August to lead students in puppet-making workshops to build giant, life-sized mystical creatures for the show. From bunnies and birds to centaurs and unicorns, these highly functional structures ranged in size. The massive Aslan puppet towered over seven feet tall and required three people to operate it.

"I'm excited about the puppets and the opportunity for imagination it gives," said Laura Byland, professor and director

of the Theatre for Youth program. "It was a joy to share that with the audience and see their reaction to it."

Byland began the Theatre for Youth program and has served as director since its approval by the National Association of Schools of Theatre (NAST) in 2019. Producing one show each year, the program offers Samford students comprehensive training experience including academics, studio training, performance opportunities and outreach.

After the show, the audience of school children joined the cast for a meet and greet outside Harrison Theatre. The children enjoyed seeing their favorite characters up close, sharing high fives, hugs and laughs.

"The puppets were fantastic," said Kelsey Manley, a language arts teacher from Berry Middle School in Hoover, Alabama. "After reading the book to my students, it was really neat to see the story come to life." ■



Samford Reimagines Dining Experience with **CAF RENOVATION**

by Holly Gainer

Over the summer, Samford completed a 20,000-square-foot renovation to its largest dining area, affectionately known as the Caf. Still located in the Ralph W. Beeson University Center, the project included a total renovation of the entire dining area, the Howard Room and two restrooms. New kitchen and beverage stations were added as well as a new dishwashing room with an automated dish system.



"We have recreated the dining experience at Samford," said Jeff Poleshek, assistant vice president for operations, planning and construction. "It is really now a food hall—a place and space where people can gather and enjoy each other's time and company."

"We now have an open concept that will increase the opportunity for students and employees to have a space for fellowship, without having to swipe in to enter," said Wade





Walker, director of business services. "The space is meant to be more than just a place to eat. There are several televisions to entertain as well as a big screen projector system. We plan to utilize the projector for Samford athletic events as well as any other event that could benefit from a watch party."

Additional cuisine options have been added, including a chef's teaching kitchen where guest chefs are able to cook special dishes for students. The first guest chef was Food Network star James Briscione '01, who was recently named Samford's culinary advisor. Another station, called True Balance Allergen Solution Station, offers innovative meals without nine of the most common food allergens: milk, egg, peanut, tree nut, soy, fish, sesame,

wheat and shellfish. Gluten-containing ingredients, like barley and rye, are also eliminated for those with celiac disease or gluten intolerance.

James Jefferson, a junior and president of the Student Government Association, said students are thrilled with the updated Caf. In a recent survey that asked students what they thought of the renovation, one student wrote: "It's modern, but true to Samford. It's big enough where I feel as if I'm not missing out on a 'caf experience,' like being at a major state school, but it's small enough to where I feel as if I can still make lasting and meaningful connections."

The renovation coincided with the launch of the partnership with Aramark as the university's food services provider. ■





First Phase of Campus Recreation, Wellness and Athletic Complex is Complete with Focus on Physical and Mental Health

by Holly Gainer

Phase one of Samford's Campus Recreation, Wellness and Athletic Complex has been completed and is open to students and employees. The first floor of the Dwight M. and Lucille S. Beeson Center was renovated and now serves as the new home for University Health Services and the Samford CARES office, which includes student counseling, wellness program and the CARE team.

Construction and renovations are underway on the rest of the 165,000-square-foot complex which will be made up of two existing buildings—Seibert Hall and Bashinsky Field House—and a new building under construction behind the end zone of the football field. The \$65-million venture is the largest capital project in the university's history.

"The inclusion of the Samford CARES office in the new Campus Recreation, Wellness and Athletic Complex is another expression of our Samford mission to nurture persons—whole persons. The proximity of the Samford CARES offices to the recreation facilities and the University Health Services clinic reflects the reality that our best health

is integrated health that promotes our physical, mental and emotional well-being,” said April Robinson, assistant vice president for student development and support.

The Samford CARE (Communicate, Assess, Resource, Educate) team is a group of faculty and staff members from across campus who exist to help students remain successful in and out of the classroom. The CARE team connects students who are experiencing unusual stress or challenges with a variety of resources to help address their concerns and needs. These resources include, but are not limited to: University Counseling Services, Academic Success Center, Disability Resources, Public Safety, Residence Life, Title IX Office, Student Involvement and the Office of Spiritual Life.

“The dedication of this new space communicates to students that Samford cares about their health and wellness and is committed to providing resources and support to help them heal, grow and thrive as students and as people,” Robinson said. “We are hopeful about the positive impact this space will have on students and are committed to being good stewards of the resources and opportunities that come our way.”

The space is also home to the Samford Pantry, which provides free food and personal care items to students in need. ■



At the Samford CARES office, students can schedule appointments with licensed therapists.

*For more information about the
Campus Recreation, Wellness and
Athletic Complex, scan this QR code.*



In partnership with MedHelp, the University Health Services clinic is accessible to all students and employees.



Access to the Samford Pantry is available by request through the Samford CARE team.

AT THE TOP OF THEIR GAME

Historic number of graduate students playing Samford sports

Story by June Mathews • Photography by Deidre Lackey

The transition to graduate school can be tough. The courses are harder, the expectations are higher and the demands are greater. And for student-athletes who make this transition, they walk through these challenges in addition to meeting the demands of playing a NCAA Division I sport.

In 2020, the NCAA granted student-athletes extended eligibility in light of a season that was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of this, Samford has seen a historic increase in the number of student-athletes enrolled in graduate degree programs. For the 2023-24 season, 46 athletes are graduate students.

Peyton Ringer '22 and Noelle Mauro are two students who did just this. Their choice of graduate programs not only allows them to maintain eligibility as student-athletes, but it also accelerates them along their chosen career paths.

Ringer, a wide receiver on the football team, and Mauro, a member of the women's tennis team, have participated in their respective sports since they were children. Forfeiting college playing time was largely unthinkable.

For Ringer, there was never any doubt that he would take this extra year of eligibility.

"Sports have been a part of my life ever since I could walk. I want to enjoy every moment that I can because sports

won't last forever," Ringer said. "I have enjoyed every minute of Samford football, and I think continuing to play is





“IT GAVE me the opportunity to receive a world-class education, it allowed me to fulfill my dream of playing Division I athletics, and it helped me further my spiritual walk with the Lord.” — *Peyton Ringer '22*

“AS I WALK

*around campus
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for this unique
opportunity to be
a student-athlete
at Samford.”*

— Noelle Mauro



the best decision I could have made because I'm getting the best of both worlds. Samford has given me the best experience possible academically and athletically."

Mauro agreed with Ringer's assessment, especially in terms of the balance between academics and athletics she has found at Samford.

"I saw the chance to work with some exceptional people while continuing to pursue my passion for science and nutrition," Mauro said. "But the warmth and support I received from the Samford administration, particularly in

aiding me to plan for my post-college athletic career, significantly influenced my decision."

In his sixth and final season of playing football at Samford this year, Ringer is two semesters away from completing his Master of Business Administration and aspires to a career in entertainment marketing. Playing football for Samford, he said, has taught him time management skills, communication skills and the cooperative skills of being on a team.

"These skills have transferred straight from the field to the classroom," Ringer said. "I can confidently say they have aided my success in earning my degree and soon-to-be graduate degree."

Mauro, who earned an undergraduate degree in biochemistry at Middle Tennessee State University, is on target to complete her Master of Science in Nutrition by mid-2024. With plans to become a registered dietician, she has not yet decided on a specialty. Her primary career goal, however, is to serve others.

"Initially, I had not planned on

taking a fifth year," Mauro said. "But as my senior year came to an end, I realized just how much I would miss being part of a team, building friendships, attending practices and tournaments, working out together and striving to achieve our goals."

As someone who tends to look for the silver lining in life's challenges, Mauro said she realized the pandemic is what gave her the extra year she needed to pursue her college athletic career beyond the undergraduate level.

"I knew that I wanted to pursue my master's degree, and the decision to combine that with another year at a school like Samford was an easy one," Mauro said. "Meeting my teammates and visiting the campus filled me with excitement for the year ahead and the opportunity to reach new goals."

And for the chance to experience graduate school at Samford, Mauro is tremendously grateful.

"As I walk around campus during classes or to practice," she said, "I'm overwhelmed with gratitude and feel truly blessed for this unique opportunity to be a student-athlete at Samford."

Ringer is just as appreciative, noting Samford has given him all he had hoped to find in his college experience.

"It gave me the opportunity to receive a world-class education, it allowed me to fulfill my dream of playing Division I athletics, and it helped me further my spiritual walk with the Lord," he said. "Also, Samford has a welcoming environment, which allowed me to excel socially. I've formed great relationships during my years here." ▀





Celebrating HOMECOMING 2023

By Dakota Rice

Marked by blue skies and warm weather, Samford's Homecoming Weekend was a grand success, complete with traditional festivities like reunions, tailgating and football. The Bulldogs were victorious over the Citadel, 37-7.

Alumni, students, employees and friends enjoyed these activities along with new ones. On Friday, faculty members gave community lectures on topics ranging from the future of AI to Samford's architecture. Later that night, at the Homecoming Quad Party, kids and adults alike enjoyed fellowship along with food trucks, inflatables and music. At the same time, this year's Alumni of the Year were honored during a reception at the President's Home.

Casey Ramey, executive director of alumni and philanthropic engagement, offered her heartfelt gratitude for everyone involved in making the weekend a success.

"We hope everyone who attended Homecoming enjoyed connecting with other alumni and friends as well as seeing all the exciting updates that are happening on Samford's campus," said Ramey. "On behalf of the Samford University Alumni Association, we look forward to connecting with alumni throughout the year and again during Homecoming 2024." ▮





RELATIONSHIPS THAT MATTER

Stories by Holly Gainer and Dakota Rice • Photography by Deidre Lackey

Each year at Homecoming, Samford presents its highest honors to distinguished alumni. These awards include the Alumnus of the Year, Outstanding Young Alumnus of the Year and Humanitarian of the Year. They are presented with intentionality to nominated alumni who have gone above and beyond in their careers, community involvement and Christian service.

As this year's honorees gathered, we asked them a simple question: ***Who made an impact on your life while you were a student at Samford?***

All three alumni, Eric Motley '96, Isaac Cooper '12 and Jenny Waltman '98, paused in a moment of thought, and then, the stories began to flow.

For no matter the degree they earned or the year they graduated, every Samford alum has a story to share. Samford is a community where relationships are fostered, and friendships stand the test of time. The story may be about a professor whose words of encouragement opened new doors, or a staff member whose kind smile lifted downcast spirits. It may be centered around a friend whose presence made a challenging experience fun, or a mentor who inspired a newfound calling. In the end, it's these relationships that matter. And when they take root at a place like Samford, they thrive.

Learn more about this year's Alumni of the Year at [**samford.edu/alumni/awards**](https://samford.edu/alumni/awards).

ERIC MOTLEY

ALUMNUS OF THE YEAR

It all started with a phone number written on a paper napkin.

This gesture took Eric Motley '96 from Montgomery to Birmingham to attend Samford, then on to Scotland and eventually, the White House. Today, Motley, who is Samford's 2023 Alumnus of the Year, is the deputy director of the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C. He says his journey started with the simple action of Thomas Corts, then president of Samford, giving his number to an acquaintance at a dinner party.

"To my good fortune, a high school teacher of mine, Mrs. Joan Watterson, was seated across from Dr. Corts at a dinner and told him about me. Dr. Corts scribbled on a napkin and asked for Mrs. Watterson to reach out to him so he can learn more about this special student," Motley said. "A high school teacher and president of the university—all of these small incremental steps resulted in my finding my way to Samford and eventually to who I am today."

Motley says there are several people from Samford who were instrumental in his success, but there are four who especially stand out to him: Thomas Corts, Roderick Davis '58, Steven Epley and Don Wilson.

"Some of the glorious and brightest days of my life were my years at Samford University. It was during these years that I came to more fully know myself and to understand my place in the world," Motley said.

Upon arriving at Samford, Motley met Davis, who was the dean of Howard College of Arts and Sciences at the time. Davis died earlier this year. Motley not only gave the eulogy at his funeral, but he also was by his side during his final days.



Eric Motley and Steven Epley

"One of the most powerful and transformative moments of my life was when I flew down to sit with him in the hospital during his final days. He was coming in and out, but I was able to talk to him about the ideas he had taught me," Motley said. "I had the incredible opportunity to share with someone who poured so much into me, and what all of that has meant to me in my life. Here I was feeding and helping care for this man who had fed me such an abundance of knowledge over the last 30 years."

Motley also met Epley early in his freshman year. Epley was a first-year professor, teaching English. Their friendship has only deepened through the decades. Epley edited Motley's book, *Madison Park: A Place of Hope*, which was published in 2017.



"We ended up being thrown into each other's lives and he is still very much part of my life today. My freshman year English teacher went on to edit my book and read the entire manuscript. I was able to write and publish a book thanks to the help and guidance of a man I met in my first year of college," Motley said.

Epley said it is this mutual love for writing and language that has kept them connected all these years. "Eric has been a constant in my life, and his passion for writing has been a hinge point in our relationship. He goes beyond the call in his dedication to his work and his commitment to his friends, and for me, it has been extraordinarily rewarding," he said.

Another professor who presented an opportunity that Motley says opened the world to him during his senior year

of college was Don Wilson, a history professor. One day, Wilson pulled Motley aside after class and said he wanted to nominate him to be a Rotary International Ambassadorial Scholar to attend the University of St. Andrews in Scotland to earn his master's degree. Motley applied, was accepted, and the rest is history.

After earning his master's in international relations, he stayed in Scotland to complete his Ph.D. in the same field. Those degrees eventually led him to the White House in 2003 where he served as special assistant to President George W. Bush for presidential personnel and managed the appointment process in the White House for over 1,200 presidentially-appointed advisory board and commission positions.

"If it hadn't been for Dr. Wilson, I would have taken an altogether different path," Motley said.

From the White House, he went on to serve as the director of the U.S. Department of State's Office of International Visitors within the Bureau of Public Diplomacy and later as an executive vice president and corporate secretary at the Aspen Institute where he was responsible for institutional advancement and governance.

Today, as the deputy director of the National Gallery of Art, Motley is responsible for developing and deploying a national strategy for the museum through civic, cultural and philanthropic partnerships, and advancing the National Gallery's renewed mission in tandem with its operational and revenue-generation plans.

And for all of his success, Motley says it began with a phone number written on a paper napkin. "Dr. Corts became an incredible guiding force in my life up until the very end of his. In so many ways, indescribably so, I found myself modeling my life after his. Seldom does a week go by where I am not reminded of his indelible mark on my life."

"We infrequently slow down and look in the rearview mirror, failing often to connect all the dots that have led us to where we are today," he continued. "All four of these men taught me so much—both while I was a student and throughout my career. They each decided to support me and invest their time in me, but it all started with Dr. Corts." ▀



Isaac Cooper and Dana Basinger

ISAAC COOPER

YOUNG ALUMNUS
OF THE YEAR

She saw something of value in me that I didn't see in myself.

As a community activist and philanthropist, Isaac Cooper '12 walks through life with a motto to "find a need and fill it." That's exactly what he's done as founding partner and CEO of IMC Financial Consulting. Cooper helps families create and leave a legacy through smart financial decisions. He also partners with Birmingham City Schools to teach financial literacy in the classroom. Those accomplishments, with many others, have earned him the title of Samford's Young Alumnus of the Year.

Cooper, who majored in business and played defensive back on the football team, says he came to the university as a football player, but graduated with a dream and the confidence needed to succeed in his career. Much of that assurance was thanks to one faculty member who took him under her wing.

"Ultimately that's Dana Basinger," Cooper said. "Specifically, with my journey coming into Samford as a football player, your original family is your team. I was at school to play football; I didn't necessarily think about the academic portion. She taught a class on communication, whether it be through writing or public speaking. She recorded our speeches, and after one speech she acknowledged me as a good communicator. I had always just been an athlete. But her encouragement opened the door for a different relationship with Samford."

After seeing that Cooper's potential just needed a bit of direction, Basinger walked him down to the Career Development Center where she had him take an aptitude test. His results showed that studying finance in Brock School of Business may be a good fit.

"She saw something of value in me that I didn't see in myself," Cooper said. "This exchange allowed me to be more vulnerable and open to other relationships with my professors. That's really the secret sauce at Samford with the smaller class sizes. You have the ability to communicate during or after class with professors to process your thoughts and impressions. She changed the way I engaged with the university."

Dana Basinger, assistant dean for Howard College of Arts and Sciences, says she will never forget that Communications Arts class in the spring of 2009. "It was jammed with big personalities, and Isaac was one of the biggest. One of his God-given gifts is communication. I'm happy I was there to point out the obvious to him, and I continue to be his biggest cheerleader as he makes Birmingham a better place."

Cooper's knack for communication and finance came in handy during his time at Samford, and ultimately led him to develop IMC Financial Consulting's mission to educate others on financial issues. He recalls being influenced greatly by Brock School of Business professor Betsy Holloway, who today serves as vice president of advancement and marketing.

"She was critical to how I transitioned into the professional world," Cooper said. "There were moments of greatness she called out in me that I didn't see myself."

Still to this day, Holloway is a great source for advice for Cooper. "I've called on her over the years to gain her insights in areas like fundraising, board oversight, corporate buy-in and more."

IMC Financial Consulting's latest initiative is the Financial Freedom Project, realized in partnership with the City of Birmingham, Birmingham City Schools and Goalsetter. This September, the Birmingham City Council approved \$1 million for this financial literacy initiative that would provide in-person instruction on monetary topics in six Birmingham city schools.

"Financial literacy is not just a skill, it's a bridge," Cooper said. "For students, it's the path to informed decisions and dreams realized. For parents, it's the foundation for security and a legacy built. And for faculty and staff, it's the tool to guide the next generation while ensuring their own stability. In every stage of life, understanding money is understanding opportunity."

After graduating from Samford, Cooper saw a need for Black alumni to have an organized way to connect in Birmingham. After speaking with President Emeritus Andrew Westmoreland about this issue, they established the Samford Black Alumni Association (SBAA). Today the SBAA provides scholarship assistance, career mentoring and cultural advocacy.

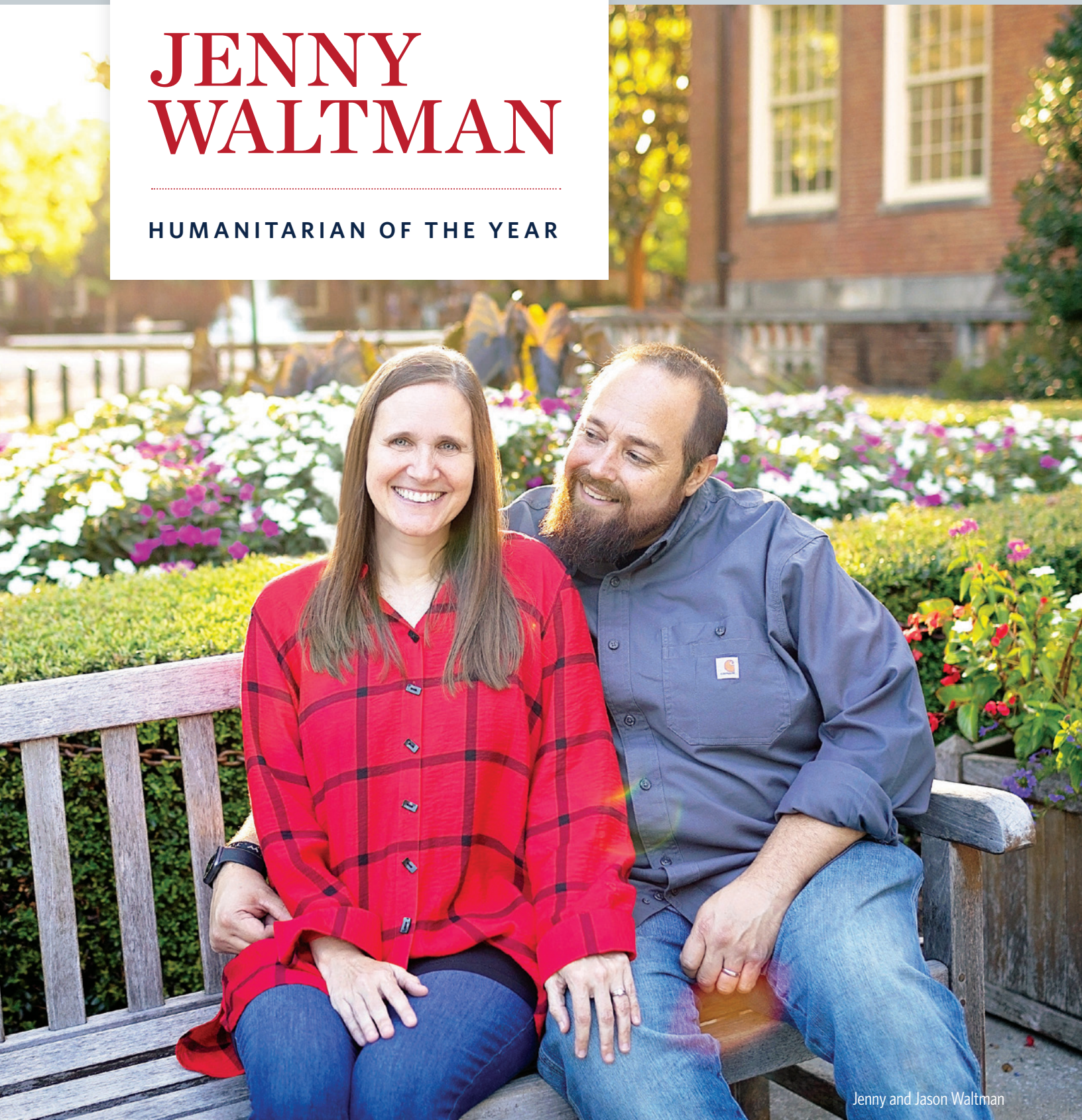
"The fact that Dr. Westmoreland was a part of those conversations meant a lot," Cooper said. "He supported us in getting the SBAA established, and he helped connect us with alumni in the Birmingham area to get it started. He knew how important this was for Samford."

Cooper is passionate about creating a fruitful experience for students of color and has carried that experience into serving as the chairman and youngest board member of the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute. He helped lead the institute through the pandemic and other tough circumstances. All the while, the football star who transformed into a pillar of the community hasn't forgotten the sense of community he experienced as a student at Samford through relationships with faculty and staff.

"There are certain people in life—based on what they've been able to accomplish—that when they recognize something in you, you take it to heart," said Cooper. ■

JENNY WALTMAN

HUMANITARIAN OF THE YEAR



Jenny and Jason Waltman

What do you major in when all you want to do is love people?

Jenny Waltman '98 decided to come to Samford on the advice of a trusted friend without ever stepping foot on campus. This giant leap of faith would forge her into a career of helping others. "God used Samford to equip me to advocate for those who cannot advocate for themselves," she said.

Waltman is the founder, CEO and chairman of the board for Grace Klein Community, a Birmingham-based nonprofit that feeds thousands of people across the state of Alabama each week, and she is this year's Humanitarian of the Year.

While Grace Klein has a global reach, it's largest endeavor is FEEDBHM, a large-scale food rescue initiative that empowers volunteers to rescue good food from local restaurants, grocers and cafés and redistributes it to individuals and nonprofits in need. In 2022 alone, the ministry rescued more than two million pounds of food to serve almost 400,000 people within 40 counties in Alabama.

At Samford, Waltman earned a degree in Human Development and Family Science from the Orlean Beeson School of Education, which laid the groundwork for areas of her job that she performs every day. Waltman says the writing skills she gained as a student have especially served her well as she leads Grace Klein—from writing speeches, fundraising appeals, even her own book. (In 2021, Waltman published *God Chose the Wrong Person: Surrendering to His Plan and Not Mine*.)

Relationships are critical to Waltman's everyday life and ministry—relationships with people as well as her personal relationship with Jesus. "Jenny spends countless hours working for the betterment and welfare of people. Ninety percent of what she does is in the background. No one really knows the amount of time she spends praying with and over people," said her husband Jason Waltman '00. "She cares deeply. Everything we do is about relationships... that is what keeps Jenny going."

Waltman met her husband while they were both students. She describes them as Samford lovebirds. "As we walked down the Quad to the Brooks Hall computer lab, he wooed me by asking a simple, but profound question: What

do you major in when all you want to do is love people? I was thankful it was dark outside, as I am sure I was blushing. He captured my heart," she said.

It was this Samford relationship—plus countless more—that established her path into ministry.

As a native of South Alabama, Waltman appreciated how Samford gave her numerous opportunities to build relationships with people from various places and backgrounds. "For maybe the first time, I met people who had other worldviews than myself, and I was able to study abroad through Samford," she said. "I'm so grateful because we are more impactful for God's kingdom if we can understand those different worldviews, not just from where we grew up."

Today, Waltman maintains strong ties to her alma mater. She serves on Orlean Beeson School of Education's advisory board, and Grace Klein encourages student involvement through internships. "We also rescue food from the Caf, and we collaborate with the Samford Pantry for support of food insecure students," she said.

"Jenny has always been a tender-hearted woman who cares for the least of these. Since we've met, I've only seen her love and care grow. Jesus has pushed her to go beyond what any one person can do to achieve things only Jesus can do," Jason Waltman said. "Jenny has always been sensitive to what the Lord is saying, but over the years, her hearing has gotten so much better. She knows the voice of our Father, and she's grown to recognize it and pay attention even more as the years go by."

While the relationships she has created as a student and an alumna have been life impacting, there's one that Jenny values the most.

"Our relationship with Jesus is our most powerful relationship. The more connected we are to Him, the more capable we are to live in relationship with one another," she said. "Samford's motto is 'For God, For Learning, Forever.' God is intentionally in front as we cannot respect, nurture and learn from one another without our hearts aligned to God's purpose for our lives. He is the special ingredient to every meaningful relationship." ▮

PHARMACIST SHARES PASSION *for Community Health Care*

by Holly Gainer

To Lea Wolsoncroft '94 and thousands of other community pharmacists around the nation, providing pharmaceutical care to their patients is more than just dispensing medicine. It also answers a need for public health services.

Community pharmacists are local health care problem solvers who can customize solutions to local health challenges for groups and employers. Wolsoncroft says the role she and other pharmacists play in their communities is essential for improving the lives of others.

"Community pharmacists not only provide medicine, but we vaccinate, we test. We are able to catch patients who may have high cholesterol for example, but aren't going to the doctor regularly," said Wolsoncroft, who owns Remedies Pharmacy in Hoover, Alabama. "We can intervene and steer them to their doctor and help them lead healthier lives."

As the president of the National Community Pharmacists Association, Wolsoncroft said her goal is to amplify the mission of the organization and the work of these health care providers. Founded in 1898, the National Community Pharmacists Association (NCPA) is the voice for independent pharmacy, representing over 19,400 pharmacies that employ over 240,000 individuals nationwide.

Wolsoncroft also uses her time to teach and train Samford pharmacy students. She has employed former students and currently has one student working at Remedies Pharmacy part time.

"I do guest lectures for Samford's compounding classes on a regular basis, and I come and speak to the NCPA chapter. We have students come and tour the pharmacy to learn about what a compounding pharmacy is," Wolsoncroft said. "I want to be there to give my perspective and show them a different view."

She says her time at Samford taught her the importance of nurturing oneself physically, spiritually and mentally—something she tries to help her patients accomplish every day.

"Samford was such a great experience. All students had to take prerequisite classes about the Old and New Testaments and go to chapel and attend convocations," Wolsoncroft explained. "We were also required to take courses that involved physical activity. And the support of my professors—all of whom knew my name—gave me the confidence to pursue my dream of becoming a pharmacist." ▀



DATA FOR Disney

Alumnus reflects on how Samford prepared him for his career

by Sofia Paglioni

George Chamoun '19 always wanted to work for a Fortune 500 company and says Samford played a significant role in achieving this dream. Today, Chamoun is a senior digital analyst for The Walt Disney Company. Had it not been for his professors, he says he may not have had this opportunity.

"When I was a student, I wanted an internship with a big company. I took a phone interview for Disney. From there, I kept on moving up through the interview process and had professors help me prepare for the different interviews. One professor gave me a book about Disney, another professor helped me connect with someone who worked at Facebook," Chamoun said. "I say this all to show this is not something I did alone."

Chamoun, who graduated from Brock School of Business, says the faculty's commitment to the success of their students had a major impact on his life. Associate professor Kevin Pan, who teaches quantitative analysis, is one of the professors who supported him.

"Having someone who believes in you goes a long way," Chamoun said. "And, I had a lot of people believing in me."

He also says the university guided him in developing himself as a person. "The values Samford instilled in me prepared me for my career. Samford's purpose is to help you discover what your values are, and I believe I found mine there," Chamoun explained.

As a senior digital analyst at Disney, he says he uses data to tell stories.



"I make meaning out of all of the numbers," he said.

Over the last few years, Chamoun and the analytics team have helped drive Disney's business objectives when it comes to products such as shopDisney and Disney World. He also helped the company navigate the COVID-19 pandemic through analyzing data.

"I worked my way up from intern to senior digital analyst over the past four years. The leaders of the company are all very vocal about making data-first decisions. This leaves my team with a huge responsibility of interpreting the data and then directing guest-facing changes based off what we find," Chamoun said. ■



Education Alumna's Servant Leadership Makes Impact on Alabama Schools

by Kameron Brown

Autumm Jeter Ed.S. '06, Ed.D. '12, is impacting the state of Alabama's school systems at the highest levels through her vital work as assistant superintendent with the Alabama State Board of Education.

While Jeter was a graduate student in Samford's Orlean Beeson School of Education, her vision for leadership in the field of education began to center around the idea of service—an idea that prepared her for her current role.

As assistant state superintendent of support services, Jeter helps oversee areas such as school safety, specialized treatment centers, charter schools, compliance monitoring and school nursing. Additionally, she serves as the liaison for areas such as the Alabama School Board Association, military families, and the Purple Heart Compact group, and helps address parent concerns.

"My goal is to serve as a true support system for our schools, and to be the best educational leader possible for the areas I oversee, serving as a role model for future leaders, and continuing to collaborate with other educators to implement best practices in Alabama's schools," said Jeter.

Her work in the field of education prepared her for her current role and to address the needs of those she serves in efficient and high-level projects that make Alabama schools a better place.

"The legislature recently provided a onetime allocation for

all school systems to use for enhanced safety measures," Jeter said. "Because this was a onetime sum of money, it was vital for us to create a seamless process that provided guidance on the possible safety resources needed in the districts. This initiative is extremely important and rewarding because it is providing updated and enhanced safety measures for our families and children."

Jeter says her goal is to meet the various needs of all of the state's school districts. Though these vary across the state, many of Alabama's schools are facing holistic teacher and labor shortages, shortages in mental health and wellness resources, achievement gaps in mathematics and reading and shifting demographics.

"On behalf of the state superintendent, Eric Mackey, I am pleased to work to execute the vision, mission and strategic plan that he has outlined for all of our Alabama schools," Jeter said. "Through our work within the support services section of the Department of Education, we will carry out the state superintendent's vision for bettering the lives of Alabama's students, educators and families." ▀

SAMFORD ALUMNUS MOVES UP TO THE SEC

by Eric Holsomback

After serving as Samford's team physician while he was a fellow with Andrews Sports Medicine & Orthopaedic Center in Birmingham, Hunter Haley '13, has been named the team physician for Ole Miss Athletics. Haley says his time as a kinesiology student in Samford's School of Health Professions gave him the foundation to become the doctor he is today.

Haley's journey into the world of sports medicine began with his first introductory kinesiology class as a freshman. These initial experiences exposed him to the practical applications of exercise science and fueled his aspiration to become a sports medicine physician.

"I'm deeply grateful for the unique educational experiences I received at Samford," Haley said. "Dr. Petrella and Dr. Hensarling's challenging courses in Research Methods and my senior seminar helped prepare me for the rigorous demands of medical school and graduate medical training."

Haley says the Department of Kinesiology is an ideal path for aspiring medical professionals. He attributes his success to the program's unique approach of bridging the gap between classroom theory and practical application. At Samford, he and his peers learned to translate scientific knowledge into real-world solutions. For instance, during their Exercise Testing and Prescription class, they implemented exercise and diet changes within the local

community by being paired with adults in the area who wanted to improve their fitness and lifestyle habits. To do this, the students discussed diet and performance goals and met with the participants throughout the semester to track their progress.

During his time as Samford's team physician, Haley said he had many memorable experiences. One was a thrilling football game against Tennessee Tech, resulting in a resounding 52-14 victory, and another unforgettable moment was the team's trip to the University of Florida where the Bulldogs kept the Florida Gators on their toes until the very end.

As well as serving as the team physician for the University of Mississippi, Haley practices in a private orthopaedic clinic in Oxford, Mississippi, offering musculoskeletal and sports medicine services to the North Mississippi region. He also serves as a team physician for Delta State University, providing clinical care and on-field coverage for athletic events. ■





CELEBRATING FAMILY WEEKEND 2023

by Kameron Brown

Samford hosted a record number of families during Family Weekend, Sept. 21-23. Thousands of parents, extended family members and their students enjoyed a weekend full of events.

From athletic events and tailgates to social events and worship services, Family Weekend provided many opportunities for the Samford community to come together in fellowship.

The weekend is spearheaded by Samford's Office of Parent and Family Programs alongside the Samford Parents Association, a group of dedicated parents who affirm Samford's mission and seek to inform, support and connect parents and families.

"We are delighted to welcome families to campus for this special weekend every year," said Julie Boyd, director of parent and family programs. "It is a time to bring people together in this place we all love to celebrate our students' success and confirm their choice to make Samford their second home." ▶





▶ FOR THOSE WHO ARE IN NEED

by Dakota Rice

Family Weekend also marked the beginning of this year's Samford Parents Scholarship campaign, an annual drive to raise money for students who find themselves in unexpected financial need.

The Samford Parents Scholarship, established in 2017, has awarded more than \$150,000 to 17 students who have experienced unexpected financial hardship that threatens their ability to complete their degree. Its annual campaign runs from September through December, and gifts of any size make an impact. Students' gratitude was best expressed by one recent recipient who said, "I'm amazed that people will blindly give to students like me and allow us to complete this experience. It's such a blessing."

In addition to this scholarship, Samford's Legacy League also works diligently to ensure negative circumstances do not prevent a student from graduating from college.

The Legacy League, an auxiliary of Samford, works collaboratively with its 800 members to support students

who face challenges either before or during their time on campus. It has started more than 40 endowed scholarships in addition to its organizational scholarship fund.

Volunteers raise money throughout the year through special events such as the annual Christmas Home Tour, restaurant nights and scholarship luncheons featuring special guests. Since its founding, the Legacy League has awarded \$1.5 million in scholarships, impacting more than 200 students. ▶

Scan this QR code to learn more about the Samford Parents Scholarship.



UNITE



SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

CAMPUS RECREATION, WELLNESS & ATHLETIC COMPLEX

John Brady and Bucky McMillian



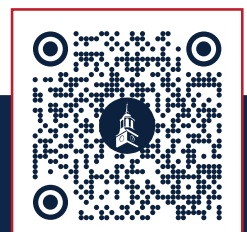
"This facility just enhances the opportunity for student-athletes to identify and connect with students."

John Brady, former head coach (1991-97), men's basketball

Brady Ball Meets Bucky Ball

During John Brady's tenure as head coach, Samford basketball was simply known as Brady Ball. Today, as the men's program enters a new season as the defending Southern Conference basketball champions, it's all about Bucky Ball, inspired by head coach Bucky McMillan.

The two men came together this fall to reflect on the history of the men's basketball program and look to the future and the important role the new Campus Recreation, Wellness and Athletic Complex will serve. Designed to be a space where student-athletes and the general student body intersect, the complex will present new opportunities for all students to gather as a community and engage in enriching activities like never before.



**SCAN THE QR CODE TO WATCH THEIR FULL CONVERSATION
AND LEARN HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT THE COMPLEX.**



A DIVINE GAME PLAN

by Joey Mullins and Sarah Waller

Jake Riddle thought his football career was over. While attending Louisburg College, a junior college in North Carolina, he walked into his head coach's office and told him he was done. His fiancée had gotten a job at Protective Life in Birmingham, and he knew he wanted to transfer schools to be closer to her. Little did he know the plans the Lord had in store.

Riddle is a veteran, having served five years of active duty with the U.S. Marines Corp. During this time, he was deployed twice, serving in Spain, Israel, Morocco, Bahrain, Kuwait and Jordan. When looking at colleges in Alabama, he decided to transfer to Samford after learning that the university is a yellow ribbon school, which means Samford will pay for any remaining costs that his GI Bill does not cover.

"I had just gotten back to my dorm room after talking to my head coach when I saw an Alabama number was calling me," he said.

It was assistant coach Kurt Kennedy asking if he wanted to join Samford's football team.

Riddle said he called his fiancée immediately after. "I was crying," he said. "I told her, 'You're not going to believe this. Samford just called.'"

Having joined the Marines at 19 years old, Riddle was a bit nervous about coming to Samford and being older than other typical undergraduates, but he said this has not been a factor in the friendships that he's made. "I'm not that mature," he said with a laugh. "But it's a good community here. The guys are really cool, and I've made a lot of good buddies so far."

Riddle is a junior majoring in public administration. "My classes are a little more difficult than the junior college I was at, but that is to be expected with this being such a prestigious school," he said. "Being at Samford is definitely a blessing and a great opportunity."

When talking to Riddle, it's easy to perceive his humble nature. "I'm just happy to be here," he said. "Everything happens for a reason." ►

CLASS NOTES

Compiled by the Office of Alumni Programs and Annual Giving. Share your updates via sualumni@samford.edu or 205-726-4808.

1960s

Gary Fleming '69 has been inducted into the Henry County Sports Hall of Fame in Dothan, Alabama.

1970s

James Rane '71 has been inducted into the Alabama Business Hall of Fame.

Michael "Mike" Bolin '73 has been elected as a representative on the Jefferson County Commission for District 5.

James "Jimmie" Stephens Jr. '73, '75 has been included on Birmingham's Power 60 list as one of the most influential executives for 2023 by the *Birmingham Business Journal*.

Julian Mann III '74 has been named chair of the American Bar Association's Judicial Division.

Virginia Vinson '74 has been selected for the 2023 class of Positive Maturity's annual Top 50 Over 50 Awards.

Susan Warren '74 has been selected for the 2023-24 Momentum Executive Leadership Class.

Larry Sewell '78 has been inducted into the African American Credit Union Coalition Hall of Fame.

Brian Barksdale '79 has been selected as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Who's Who in Accounting for 2023.

James "Buddy" Gray '79 has been named one of the two 2023 Southwestern Seminary Distinguished Alumni.

1980s

Michael "Mike" Gilbow '80 has been appointed to the Mississippi Board of Pharmacy.

Clark Watson '81 has joined Balch & Bingham LLP as counsel.

Tracy Morant Adams '82 has been selected as a member of the 2023-2024 Leadership Alabama class.

Russell Allison '84 has been selected as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Who's Who in Law for 2023.

Scott Donaldson '84 has been named general counsel for DCH Health System in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

J. Frank Porter '85 was named chief judge of the 20th judicial court in Florida.

Vicki Davis '87 has been selected to serve as a judge on the Mobile County Circuit Court bench.

Edward Scott '87 has been included into Marquis Who's Who biographic registry for excellence.

Craig Webb '87 has been named executive director-treasurer of the Hawaii Pacific Baptist Convention.

Kevin Kynerd '89, '91 has been selected as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Who's Who in Building for 2023.

J. Steven Layton '89 has been named the discipleship pastor of Double Oak Community Church in Birmingham, Alabama.

Bret Rich '89 has been hired as an assistant circuit attorney for the St. Louis Circuit Attorney's Office.

1990s

Perry Carroll '90 has been selected for the 2023-24 Leadership Birmingham class.

Paul Storey '90 has been appointed executive administrator of Urology Centers of Alabama.

Jennifer Hogan '91, '07 has been named the principal of Hoover High School in Hoover, Alabama.

Suzanne Marsh '92 has joined the International Association of Defense Counsel (IADC).

David "Jeff" Roberts '92 has been selected as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Who's Who in Financial Planning and Wealth Management for 2023.

Janet Otts-Watson '92 has been appointed vice president of sales and marketing with Radioisotope Life Sciences, Inc.

Wendy Byerts '93 has been named as an assistant principal for Dalton Junior High School in Dalton, Georgia.

Bob Methvin '94 has been selected for the 2023-24 Leadership Birmingham class.

Rusha Smith '94 has been selected as a member of the 2023-2024 Leadership Alabama class.

Brian Edwards '95 has been selected as a member of the 2023-2024 Leadership Alabama class.

David Rausch '95 has been selected as a 2023 recipient of the President's Award within the University of Tennessee system.

Edward "Ted" Hodges '96 has joined Davenport Energy Incorporated and First Piedmont Corporation as chief legal officer.

John "Drew" Langloh '96 has been included on Birmingham's Power 60 list as one of the most influential executives for 2023 by the *Birmingham Business Journal*.

Andrew Rueff '96 has joined the TennGreen Land Conservancy's board of directors.

Paul Wells '96 has been selected for the 2023-24 Leadership Birmingham class.

Carrie Tillis '96 has been cast in the filmed stage production of *The Hiding Place*.

Kary Wolfe '96, '99 has been selected for the 2023-24 Momentum Executive Leadership Class.

Helen Harwell '97 has been awarded the Dick O'Brien Award, the highest honor of a chapter member of SCORE Charlotte.

Nolanda Hatcher '97 has been selected as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Who's Who in Building for 2023.

Gary Ingle '97, '99 will retire as executive director and CEO of the Music Teachers National Association.

Joshua "Josh" Reidinger '97 has been selected as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Who's Who in Financial Planning and Wealth Management for 2023.

Mike Reasons '97 has joined WM Coffman Resources, LLC, as director of sales and marketing, in Atlanta, Georgia.

Beau Bevis '98 has been selected as a member of the 2023-2024 Leadership Alabama class.

Brett Sheedy '98 has been selected as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Who's Who in Accounting for 2023.

Sheena Virji '98 has been appointed to the Georgia Ovarian Cancer Alliance board of directors.

Jonathan Williams '99 has been named Community Bank president for the Spring Hill Financial Center.

Nathan Lott '99 has been named executive director of the Historic Macon Foundation.

Derek Meek '99 has been recognized on Lawdragon's 2023 500 Leading Bankruptcy & Restructuring Lawyers list.

Lori Stinson '99 has been inducted into the Atmore Hall of Fame.

2000s

Mary Wyatt Crenshaw '00 has been selected as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Who's Who in Building for 2023.

Embree Deason '00 has been selected for the 2023-24 Momentum Executive Leadership Class.

Robyn Felton '00 has been named chief operating officer for Knight Eady.

Katherine "Katie" King '00, '08, '10, '15 has been named the director of curriculum and

instruction with John Carroll Catholic High School in Birmingham, Alabama.

Robert "Rob" Tims Jr. '00 has been affirmed as the senior pastor of Beech Haven Baptist Church in Athens, Georgia.

Katherine "Kitty" Rogers Brown '01 has been selected for the 2023-24 Momentum Executive Leadership Class.

Jason Byrd '01 has joined Spencer Fane Bone McAllester as an of counsel attorney in Nashville, Tennessee.

Fred DeLeon Jr. '01 has joined DSLD Land Management as vice president of engineering.

Matt Fridy '01 has been appointed to the University of Montevallo Board of Trustees.

David Hedges '01, '02 has been selected as a member of the 2023-2024 Leadership Alabama class.

Tim Howe '02 has been named chief of staff for Alabama Senate President Pro Tem Greg Reed.

John Browning '03 has been selected as a member of the 2023-2024 Leadership Alabama class.

Tina Hammonds '03 has joined the Alabama State Department as associate general counsel and government relations director.

Shannon Cazzavillan '04 has joined Maynard Nexsen as shareholder.

David "Brad" Stockton '04 has joined Eagle Christian Tours as general manager of the Rome, Georgia, location.

Leigh Davis '05 has been selected as a member of the 2023-2024 Leadership Alabama class.

Eric Hollis '05 has been named assistant principal of Mountain Brook High School.

Matt Simpson '05 has been selected to participate in the 2023 CSG Henry Toll Fellowship.

Alejandro Pascual IV '05 has been promoted to lieutenant colonel at the Clay National Guard Center in Marietta, Georgia.

Circe Starks '06 has been selected for the 2023-24 Momentum Executive Leadership Class.

Jennifer Egbe '07 has been selected as a member of the 2023 class of fellows with the Alabama Law Foundation.

Roderick "Rod" Evans '07, '10 has been appointed as a municipal judge with the city of Bessemer in Alabama.

Kat Lyles '07 was named general counsel for Aethon Energy Operating, LLC.

Jonathan Robinson '07 has been selected as a fellow for the Birmingham Founder Fellowship program with Endeavor.

Lisa Taylor '07, '08, '15 has been hired as the director of the Institute for Spiritual Health with the nonprofit, CHRIS 180.

Randall Woodfin '07 has been included on Birmingham's Power 60 list as one of the most influential executives for 2023 by the *Birmingham Business Journal*.

Kevin Maddox '08 was named superintendent for Hoover City Schools in Hoover, Alabama.

Allison Campbell '09 has been approved as the instructional supervisor for Shelby County Schools in Alabama.

Brooke Dunham '09 has been named principal for Inverness Elementary School in Birmingham, Alabama.

2010s

Lewis Brooks '10, superintendent for Shelby County Schools, has been named District Superintendent of the Year for district five of the State Superintendent's Association in Alabama.

Monica Cosby '10 has been named the principal of Oak Park Elementary School in Decatur, Alabama.

Clay Huffaker '10 was named 2023 Tennessee History Teacher of the Year.

Greg Hughes '10 has been appointed the pastor of Lake Tahoe Community Presbyterian Church in Lake Tahoe, California.

Joshua Hornady '10 has been named as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* NextGenBHM 2023 honorees for law.

Amanda Senn '10 has been selected as a member of the 2023-2024 Leadership Alabama class.

William "Trey" Taylor III '10 has been appointed to serve as a judge in the Dublin Judicial Circuit in Georgia.

Amy Touart '10 has been appointed to the Arapahoe County Court in the 18th Judicial District in Colorado.

William "Richie" Fordham '11, '13 has been promoted to senior manager at BMSS Advisors & CPAs in Birmingham, Alabama.

Jerry Screws '11 has been selected as the principal of Harvest Elementary in Harvest, Alabama.

Margaret "Meg" Clements '12 has been selected as one of the Rotarians of the Year by the Pell City Rotary Club.

Isaac Cooper '12 has been selected as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Who's Who in Financial Planning and Wealth Management for 2023.

April DeLuca '12 has been named the 2023 president of the Hoover Area Chamber of Commerce.

Katie Kimbrell '12 has been named the women's initiative chair for Balch & Bingham. Kimbrell has been named as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* NextGenBHM 2023 honorees for law. Kimbrell has also been selected for the 2023-24 Momentum Executive Leadership Class.

Lauren Hyde '13 has been named one of Birmingham's emerging influencers for 2023 by the *Birmingham Business Journal*.

Kenneth "Scott" McMickin '13 has been selected as the principal of Madison County Virtual Academy.

Alicia Roth '13 has joined the University of Pittsburg volleyball team as an assistant coach.

John "Arthur" Strauss '13 has been selected as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Who's Who in Financial Planning and Wealth Management for 2023.

William "Trey" Bolling III '14 has been named as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* NextGenBHM 2023 honorees for law.

Jana Flinkow '14 has been announced as Homewood High School's assistant principal in Birmingham, Alabama.

Christopher Friedman '14 has joined Husch Blackwell LLP as a partner in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

E. Alexandra "Alex" McFall '14 has joined Husch Blackwell LLP as senior counsel.

Stephanie Palmer '14 has joined Stewart/Perry as a project coordinator.

Benjamin "Ben" Perry '14 has joined Ogletree Deakins as counsel.

Christy Atkinson '15 has been named executive director of Workshops Empowerment Inc.

Layton Jackson '15 has been named assistant athletic director for athletic communications at the University of West Alabama.

Brian Ellis '16 has been named the principal of Danville High School in Hartselle, Alabama.

Jessica Hornbuckle '16 has joined Burr & Forman LLP as an associate attorney in Birmingham, Alabama.

James Parsons '16 has been appointed chief operating officer of Schoel, a civil engineering firm in Birmingham, Alabama.

Marcy Burroughs '17 has been selected as superintendent of schools for the Sumter County School District in Alabama.

Alexis Crutchfield '17 has joined Chambliss, Bahner & Strophel, P.C. as an attorney in their estate planning practice area in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Jared Paschall '17 has been named principal of Athens Middle School in Athens, Alabama.

Dulce Rivera '17 has been named one of Birmingham's emerging influencers for 2023 by the *Birmingham Business Journal*.

Greg Buszka '18 has been named as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* NextGenBHM 2023 honorees for accounting.

Taylor Pruett '18 has been named as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* NextGenBHM 2023 honorees for law.

Joseph "Joe" Timberlake '18 has been named as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* NextGenBHM 2023 honorees in money.

Haley Ward Young '18 has been inducted into the McMinn County High School Sports Hall of Fame in Athens, Tennessee.

David Wisdom Jr. '18 has joined Gilpin Givhan PC as an attorney in Montgomery, Alabama.

Memory Smith '19, has illustrated a children's book, *Let's Roll Oliver!*

Jordan Weaver '19 has been named as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* NextGenBHM 2023 honorees for real estate and construction.

2020s

Charity Brown '20 has joined the Samford University women's basketball team coaching staff as an assistant coach.

Theo Edwards-Butler '20 has been selected as a 2023 honoree for the *Birmingham Business Journal's* Alabama Inno Under 25 award.

Conner Gayda '21 has received a Silver ADDY Award from the American Advertising Federation.

Karen George '21 has been named Faculty Member of the Year for 2023 by Mississippi University for Women.

Blair Inabinet '21 has been named principal of Liberty Park Middle School in Birmingham, Alabama.

Alexander Makarenko '21 has joined Hall Booth Smith as an associate attorney.

Elizabeth Weyerman '22 has been included into Marquis Who's Who biographic registry for excellence in the field of law.

FUTURE BULLDOGS

David Oakley '03 and Mallory Oakley welcomed their son, James Nolan. **1**

Rachel McWhorter-Rush '04 and Benjamin McWhorter-Rush welcomed their daughter, Laurel Joyce. **2**

Emily Anderson '10 and **Brett Anderson '11** welcomed their son, Noah Kent. **3**

Lexie Agan '11 and **Payton Agan '12, '13** welcomed their son, Watson Keith. **4**

Jude Thompson '11 and Paige Thompson welcomed their son, Pierce Manning. **5**

Charles "Cameron" Collins '13, '16 and Laura Collins welcomed their son, Shepherd Joseph. **6**

Laura Foshee '13 and Patrick Foshee welcomed their daughter, Lilly Jean. **7**

Emileigh Campbell '14 and Patrick Campbell welcomed their daughter, Elleigh Ruth. **8**

Brooke Graham '14 and **James Graham III '14** welcomed their daughter, Remi Kristine. **9**

Casey Curtis '15, '17 and Brendan Curtis welcomed their son, Harrison Riley. **10**

Caitlin Hammond '15 and **Taylor Hammond '12, '13** welcomed their son, Stetson Benjamin. **11**

Emmy Hobbs '16 and **Chris Hobbs '18** welcomed their daughter, Elizabeth "Eliza" James. **12**

Meredith Bishop '16 and Chandler Bishop welcomed their daughter, Jane Collier. **13**

Sara Cross '18 and **Cameron Cross '16** welcomed their son, David McArthur "Mac." **14**

Jessica DePaolantonio '18 and Jordan DePaolantonio welcomed their daughter, Presley Jean. **15**

Caroline Phillips '20, '21 and Scott Phillips welcomed their daughter, Frances Elaine. **16**



IN MEMORIAM

'48 Terry DeFoor, age 95, of Hueytown, Alabama, died on June 18, 2023.

'49 Billy Shepherd, age 93, of Rock Hill, South Carolina, died on August 10, 2023.

'51 Roy Anderson, age 96, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on June 18, 2023.

'51 Cecil Etheredge, age 98, of Loganville, Georgia, died on August 18, 2023.

'52 Earl Tew, age 93, of Vestavia, Alabama, died on April 26, 2023.

'53 Jean Cox, age 90, of Guin, Alabama, died on July 11, 2023.

'54 James Tucker, age 93, of Oneonta, Alabama, died on August 15, 2023.

'55 Katie Graham Phillips, age 92, of Oxford, Alabama, died on May 14, 2023.

'56 Doris Dunlap Dickinson, age 87, of Tuscaloosa, Alabama, died on July 6, 2023.

'58 Amos Levi "A.L." Courtney, age 88, of Pell City, Alabama, died on May 15, 2023.

'58 John "Rod" Davis, age 86, of Vestavia, Alabama, died on April 1, 2023.

'58 William "Bill" Morrison, age 90, of Tampa, Florida, died on March 12, 2023.

'58 Fred "Douglas" White, age 87, of Waynesboro, Mississippi, died on July 26, 2023.

'59 Jo Ann Short Harvey, age 85, of Decatur, Alabama, died on May 1, 2023.

'60 Robert Sullivan, age 90, of Pelham, Alabama, died on July 25, 2023.

'61 Charlotte Thompson, age 83, of Spartanburg, South Carolina, died August 17, 2023.

'61 Cecil Ray Vincent Sr., age 85, of Muhlenberg County, Kentucky, died on August 15, 2023.

'62 James Croushorn Jr., age 83, of Tallahassee, Florida, died on June 17, 2023.

'62, '66 Claiborne Seier, age 82, of Hoover, Alabama, died on July 22, 2023.

'63 Charles Cook, age 83, of Vernon, Alabama, died on June 21, 2023.

'63 Joyce Rothe Farr, age 81, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on May 16, 2023.



Judge John Carroll, J.D. '74, former dean of Samford's Cumberland School of Law, died on Aug. 14. Carroll served as dean from 2001 to 2014 and continued to serve as a professor until his retirement in 2022. In the law school, he taught courses related to mediation, evidence, trial practice, ethics and professionalism and e-discovery. But his true passion was his commitment to serving the public. A U.S. Marine Corps veteran, Carroll co-founded and served as the supervising attorney for the Cumberland Veterans Legal Assistance Clinic (C-VETS). Since the program launched, it has positively impacted the lives of countless veterans in Alabama. In his career, Carroll was the legal director of the Southern Poverty Law Center in Montgomery, Alabama, and served as a U.S. Magistrate Judge for the Middle District of Alabama. He also served on the Judicial Conference's Advisory Committee on Civil Rules, a group who analyzes and makes recommendations to the U.S. Supreme Court and the U.S. Congress on possible changes to the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure.

'63 Johnny White, age 86, of Tuscumbia, Alabama, died on July 31, 2023.

'64 Jack Collins, age 92, of Cullman, Alabama, died on July 14, 2023.

'64 James Tidwell, age 82, of Cullman, Alabama, died on July 17, 2023.

'66 Frederick Crabbe, age 81, of Huntsville, Alabama, died on May 18, 2023.

'66 Kathleen Threadgill, age 78, of Anniston, Alabama, died on May 30, 2023.

'67 Clinton Graham, age 81, of Pisgah, Alabama, died on August 3, 2023.

'67 Hewlett "Chervis" Isom Jr., age 84, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on May 18, 2023.

'68 Delores Hobbs, age 80, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on July 6, 2023.

'69 Julie Nall Knowles, age 81, of Webb, Alabama, died on May 17, 2023.

'70 Douglas Dutton Sr., age 81, of Vestavia, Alabama, died on June 3, 2023.

'71 Charles "Eddie" Burns, age 75, of Franklin, Virginia, died on April 29, 2023.

'71 Deborah "Debbie" Sparkman, age 76, of Mountain Brook, Alabama, died on August 19, 2023.

'71 Thomas Spurrier, age 77, of Melbourne, Florida, died on July 24, 2023.

'72, '75 Barry Vaughn, age 73, of Sylacauga, Alabama, died on June 17, 2023.

'73 Debra Rogers Fortenberry, age 73, of Hoover, Alabama, died on June 1, 2023.

'74 Stephen "Steve" Arnold, age 75, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on May 26, 2023.

'74 James Bach, age 78, of Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, died on July 14, 2023.

'74 John Carroll, age 79, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on August 14, 2023.

'74 Richard Railey Jr., age 74, of Courtland, Virginia, died on July 4, 2023.

'74 Archie "Alec" Jones, age 79, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on April 23, 2023.

'75 Shirley Jarman Brymer, age 87, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on July 4, 2023.

'75 Frances Darnell Robertson, age 83, of Gadsden, Alabama, died on July 29, 2023.

'76 Donald Glenn, age 71, of Taylor, Alabama, died on May 4, 2023.

'77 Susan Reid, age 71, of Carmel, Indiana, died on January 29, 2023.

'77 Gloria "Jeannie" Payne Stolk, age 73, of Brandon, Mississippi, died on June 25, 2023.

'78 Cynthia Sandlin Schuessler, age 72, of Florence, Alabama, died on July 23, 2023.

'79 Portia Foster, age 69, of Gadsden, Alabama, died on August 15, 2023.

'80 Alan Bryson, age 67, of Anderson, South Carolina, died on July 3, 2023.

'82 Virginia Bedford, age 77, of Columbia, South Carolina, died on June 8, 2023.

'82 Robert Pierce, age 67, of Zebulon, North Carolina, died on June 16, 2023.

'83 Charlie Jessee, age 79, of Abingdon, Virginia, died on June 4, 2023.

'84 Karl Cook, age 61, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on May 28, 2023.

'84 Jeff Thomas, age 79, of Sylacauga, Alabama, died on August 1, 2023.

'85 David King, age 64, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on July 4, 2023.

'85 Charles Stakely IV, age 64, of Evans, Georgia, died on July 19, 2023.

'86 Rachel Cork Hubbard, age 92, of Mountain Brook, Alabama, and Thomasville, Georgia, died on June 9, 2023.

'87 Harry "Clay" Barber III, age 58, of Newnan, Georgia, and Birmingham, Alabama, died on June 22, 2023.

'88 Stephen Jordan, age 71, of Rockland, Maine, died on June 17, 2023.

'89 James "Jimmy" Pope III, age 59, of Pikeville, Tennessee, died on July 10, 2023.

'89 Scott Schirrmann, age 61, of Deerfield Beach, Florida, died on June 3, 2023.

'89 George "Wally" Walker III, age 59, of Auburn, Alabama, died on July 25, 2023.

'90 Melinda "Mindy" Wren Franklin, age 63, of Helena, Alabama, died on August 3, 2023.

'90 Martha "Erline" Spiller Taylor, age 55, of Frisco, Texas, died on May 30, 2023.

'91 Thomas Bailey III, age 54, of Saraland, Alabama, died on May 13, 2023.

'91 James Kennamer, age 73, of Irondale, Alabama, died on August 20, 2023.

'93 Craig Ethridge, age 62, of Columbia, Tennessee, died on May 24, 2023.

'94 Craig Hyde, age 50, of Vestavia, Alabama, died on April 20, 2023.

'95 Anne Lamkin Durward, age 54, of Mountain Brook, Alabama, died on May 27, 2023.

'99 Carol Hendricks Taylor, age 85, of Lake Jackson, Texas, died on July 13, 2023.

'04 Joey Floyd, age 45, of Albertville, Alabama, died on July 26, 2023.

'12 Benjamin "Drew" DeVine, age 33, of Hoover, Alabama, died on May 31, 2023.

'20 LaTasha Daniels, age 44, of Bessemer, Alabama, died on May 25, 2023.



Over the Moon FOR SAMFORD

by Anne Madison Adcock

Rickie Moon played the saxophone. MaryAnn Buffington Moon played the clarinet. And in 1973, 50 years ago this fall, their love for music would become the spark for their own love story.

The two Samford alumni recall how they first met at band camp during their freshman year. Though their relationship more formally began a few years later, it was during their time in Samford's marching band where they found community and each other.

"Everyone needs a group, a community. Being in the band gave us a family," said MaryAnn '76, who majored in history. "We did everything together. Looking back, that's what I remember the most from my college experience—my friendships."

Their group of friends called themselves the Samford University Band Reading Club and Card Sharks. Rickie and MaryAnn still reminisce about playing cards, splitting McDonald's meals and going on trips together. To this day, they keep in touch with their band family, many of whom reside in Birmingham where they also live. What they found in these friendships and deep connections is what continues to motivate them to give back to the university's marching band and athletic programs.

The Moons have a firsthand understanding of the

immense amount of discipline and commitment that it takes to be part of the marching band. And while many of these students' majors are unrelated to music, their dedication and sacrifice to fulfill their role in the band along with their schoolwork is no small feat.

"For me, band was a release," said Rickie '77, M.S.E.M. '97. "It was my time to get out of the library and do something that I enjoyed."

One of their favorite ways to give back to the marching band program is by volunteering at band camp. This summer, they stopped by their old stomping grounds and handed out popsicles to give students a break from the heat. "I want them to know that somebody really appreciates the time they spend preparing for the games," said MaryAnn. "It's not just walk in and walk out."

The Moons also are steadfast supporters of Samford Athletics, attending every home game they can to cheer the Bulldogs to victory. And their daughter, Laura Jean, graduated from Samford in 2013 with her Doctor of Pharmacy. This year, the Moons celebrated their 43rd wedding anniversary. ▀

HISTORIC TREASURES

The Woman Behind *Thanksgiving*

by Sarah Waller

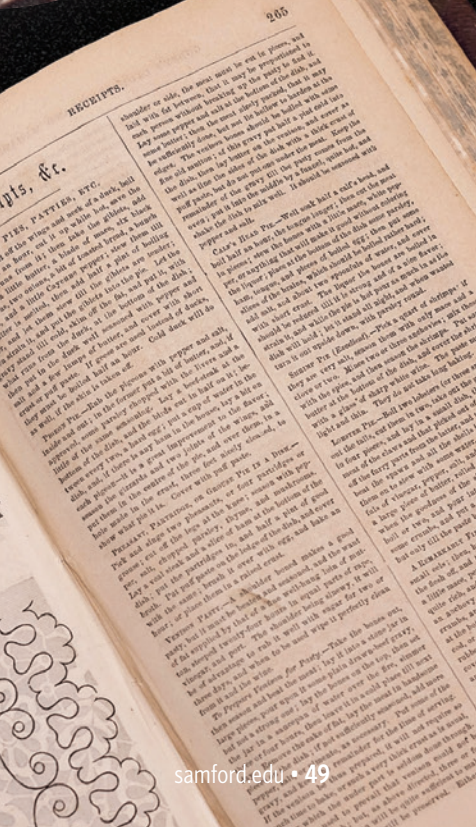
Among the treasures preserved by Samford's Special Collections and University Archives, one can find an original copy of *Godey's Lady's Book*, a popular women's magazine from the mid-1800s.

Its editor, Sarah Hale, who is credited for writing the nursery rhyme "Mary Had a Little Lamb," used the magazine to urge national leaders to unite the country by making Thanksgiving a national holiday. Within its pages, Hale wrote numerous editorials and recipes in support of the holiday.

From 1846 to 1863, Hale petitioned Congress and five different presidents. Finally, she found success. On Oct. 3, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln declared that Thanksgiving would be a national holiday every year on the last Thursday in November. Lincoln's proclamation urged the nation to heal its wounds and restore "peace, harmony, tranquility and union."

Samford received this copy of *Godey's Lady's Book* through a gift from the Shook family prior to 1965, according to the book plate included in the front cover. ▀

Godey's Lady's Book published a wide variety of content for its readers to enjoy, including sheet music, recipes, editorial columns and more.



The beloved Samford tradition, Lighting of the Way,
kicks off the Christmas season on campus.

