

THE MAGAZINE OF SAMFORD UNIVERSITY

seasons

SUMMER 2023

BOBBY BOWDEN FIELD



**Data-driven Performance
Leads to a Historic Season**

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Project SAMson, which brings together the latest technology, data analysis and sports medicine practices, has transformed the training regimen of student-athletes.



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In a plot fit for the big screen, Samford's baseball team won three-consecutive elimination games in an all-day marathon on Saturday, May 27, to take home the program's fourth Southern Conference Tournament Championship. Due to inclement weather, the tournament was forced to move to a Saturday championship day. In a contest that began at 8 a.m., the Bulldogs bested UNCG 9-5 and then knocked off Wofford 7-2 to force a winner-take-all 13th game of the tournament, where they beat Wofford 5-2 to claim the tournament championship. Read more about Samford's historic athletic season on page 16.



From the President



Food and Fellowship

Each month, Julie and I host a meal for employees who are celebrating birthdays. It's a chance to gather faculty and staff members from across campus who don't always know each other, to celebrate what each brings to our collective work, and to eat birthday cake!

One question I've asked celebrants to answer when introducing themselves is the location of their favorite spot on campus. A common answer is the Caf—that iconic space on the top floor of the University Center where students and employees have gathered for decades to eat, fellowship and form community. Current students and alumni also report that memories from the Caf are top of mind when they reflect upon their time at Samford.

This summer, as part of a new and aspirational plan to elevate Samford's already wonderful campus, the Caf is undergoing its most comprehensive renovation since its opening in 1973. The improved facility will be ready for the start of the fall semester, which means construction crews had to get started immediately after spring commencement. Students and employees are excited about the new space and its open, accessible and modern design.

Even though the space will look and feel different, I'm sure that Bulldogs will continue to lovingly refer to the space in the same way we have for nearly 50 years. "Hey, let's meet up at the Caf," will still be a common refrain heard around campus for decades to come.

In the Samford spirit,

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Beck A. Taylor'.

Beck A. Taylor, Ph.D.
President



The Caf is undergoing

its most comprehensive renovation since its opening in 1957. Designed to be more like a food hall, the space will be accessible to the entire Samford community—whether one plans to purchase a meal or use the space to gather with friends.



Recognizing Faculty and Student Achievement



Brock School of Business graduate **Lauren Dumar '23** won first place in the Association of Private Enterprise Education's 12th Annual Undergraduate Research Competition. Her research consists of a direct analysis of the effectiveness of performing both monetary unit sampling as well as audit data analytics to determine which method catches more

fraud and which method is more cost-beneficial when catching fraud.



In March, **Samford Gives Back**, coordinated by the Frances Marlin Mann Center for Ethics and Leadership, mobilized 534 students and involved 25 local community partners for a day of service and engagement across the Birmingham area.



Timothy George, the founding dean of Beeson Divinity School, was named the president of the Evangelical Theological Society, which is made up of more than 4,000 scholars, teachers, pastors, students and others dedicated to the oral exchange and written expression of theological thought and research.

Cumberland School of Law's **National Trial Team** competed in the national finals of the American Association of Justice's Student Trial Advocacy Competition in New Orleans, Louisiana, this spring. One team finished the competition ranked 2nd in the nation, the other ranked 5th.

Christopher Metress, who holds the rank of university professor in recognition of his interdisciplinary teaching and scholarship at Samford, was among a select group of individuals to receive an invitation to the White House for the screening of *Till* last month. Metress has spent nearly 30 years researching Emmett Till, publishing several books and essays on the case.





In February, Brock School of Business students competed in the **National Collegiate Sports Sales Championship**. For the second year in a row, a Samford student, business major Emma Williams '23, won the Speed Sell Challenge in which she was tasked with securing a follow-up appointment in a 60-90 second pitch.

Samford Debate competed in The American Debate Association's national tournament at Georgetown in Washington, D.C., in March. Sophomore Sarah Chew and freshman Ella Ford took second place in the novice division. Chew won third speaker at the tournament, and Ford won top speaker, giving her a legitimate claim to being the best first-year debater in the United States.

McWhorter School of Pharmacy established a new school record with 63 students and graduates matching with an American Society of Health System Pharmacists-accredited pharmacy residency, along with three additional residencies and one fellowship.



Alumnus and current Doctor of Physical Therapy student **Nathan East '20** signed with the Los Angeles Chargers during the NFL Draft in April. As a linebacker, East played 53 games for the Bulldogs and recorded 361 total tackles with 18.5 TFLs, four sacks and one interception.

New Faces

J. Caleb Clanton

has been selected to lead Samford's Frances Marlin Mann Center for Ethics and Leadership as its new director and serve as the Mann Family Professor in Ethics and Leadership.



Clanton will join the Samford community from his current role as the Distinguished University Chair in Philosophy and Humanities and professor of philosophy at Lipscomb University. As director, Clanton will manage the strategic operations of the Mann Center, as originally envisioned by beloved alumnus and donor, Marvin Mann '54.

Beeson Divinity School has hired **Joshua Chatraw** as its next Billy Graham Chair of Evangelism and Cultural Engagement. Chatraw, who served as the executive director of the Center for Public Christianity in Raleigh, North Carolina, is an award-winning author in the fields of evangelism and apologetics. As the school's Billy Graham Chair, he will teach courses in evangelism and apologetics. Chatraw will join Samford this fall. ▶



Introducing Lance Beaumont

New dean for the School of the Arts



by Ashley Smith

After a nationwide search, Samford welcomes Lance Beaumont as the new dean of the School of the Arts. Beaumont came to Samford in July from California Baptist University, where he served as professor of music, associate dean of program development and program director of commercial music. His teaching and administrative experience has included an emphasis on collaboration among the arts as well as cross-disciplinary initiatives, from partnerships with CBU's School of Education to its Sports and Performance Psychology program.

Beaumont earned his Doctor of Musical Arts in Music Education from Boston University and his Master of Music and Bachelor of Music in Guitar Performance at Texas Christian

University. His love for the guitar, he says, started in the fourth grade. "I watched Eddie Van Halen play guitar on MTV. I was so blown away by what I heard that I knew I had to play guitar," he said.

What excites you about becoming the dean of the School of the Arts?

I'm most excited about the people. The School of the Arts has an excellent faculty and staff that support student success in impressive ways. And ultimately, I'm really excited to see how our students will impact the world through the investment our faculty and staff make in them.

Why Samford?

I love Samford's student-centered focus. The main reason I am involved in higher education is due to a faculty member in my undergraduate studies mentoring me. This interaction completely changed the trajectory of my life. I believe that type of faculty/student interaction is the heartbeat of Samford University.

What do you love about the arts?

Picasso said, "Art washes away from the soul the dust of everyday life." Art has a way of realigning the soul toward its Creator like nothing else. I love how a beautiful melody or perfectly executed brush stroke can change my experience of the world instantly.

Why is an arts education important?

An artist typically sees the world as it should be, not as it is. Arts education helps us reframe our current experiences of life through the act of creation. Since I believe we are made in the image of God, the very act of creating is a way that we honor God and participate in the ministry of reconciliation.

How does your faith impact your teaching, leadership and artistry?

My faith is the essence of who I am. I want the expression of my faith in my teaching, leading, and artistry to be seamless, it is simply who I am.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Bridge City, Texas, which is on the coast and the border of Louisiana. To get in and out of town you have to cross a bridge, thus the name Bridge City.

Tell us about your immediate family.

My wife, Brandy, and I are high school sweethearts. We've been married for 25 years. Brandy is an educational therapist. We have three children: two daughters and a son. My oldest, Eme, is a student at Texas Christian University, studying political science and international relations. Kennedy, our second child, will be joining her big sister at TCU this fall to study business. Max, the baby of the family, will start high school at Briarwood Christian School this fall. ■



Beaumont with his wife and three children

Meet Dawn McCormack

New dean for Howard College of Arts and Sciences

by Sarah Waller

Having led teams in Egypt and on college campuses, Dawn McCormack is now the first female dean of Howard College of Arts and Sciences. She came to Samford in July from Middle Tennessee State University where she held numerous leadership positions, including associate dean of its College of Liberal Arts and then College of Graduate Studies.

McCormack earned her B.A. and Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. She is an Egyptologist and has led numerous archaeological excavations. She said these experiences sparked her passion for teaching and leadership.

Why Samford?

Initially, I was drawn to the academic quality of the institution as well as its Christian mission. As I learned more, I fell in love with the students and the faculty. The beauty of the campus is inspirational, and the community itself is strong in a way that creates a unique atmosphere whether someone is a freshman, alumnus or faculty member.

What excites you most about becoming dean of Howard College of Arts and Sciences?

Higher education is changing rapidly, and there are opportunities to create new programs and initiatives that benefit our students in ways that were not even conceivable previously. We can also ensure that traditional disciplines prosper as these are critical for our students to become well-educated individuals and contributing members of society.

Why is a liberal arts education important?

A solid liberal arts education provides students with a platform to learn multiple ways of approaching challenging problems, experience intellectual growth, gain maturity and obtain skills and tools required for success in long-term career pathways. Today, graduates must be creative and adaptable



(Left) McCormack at an archaeological site in Egypt



problem solvers who can work both independently and in teams.

Where did you grow up?

I grew up as an only child on a small farm in Central Texas, and I was a competitive gymnast. My parents made lots of sacrifices so that I could train, travel and follow my dreams to become an Egyptologist.

Tell us about your archaeological fieldwork in Egypt.

It involved both pharaonic and Coptic Christian projects. I excavated a small royal tomb and studied kingship in the 13th dynasty. I have also worked on projects related to early Christianity in Egypt from large monastic cities to hermitages deep in the desert. In some of these projects, I led teams of students and researchers and contributed to the knowledge of little-known aspects of ancient Egypt.

Tell us about your immediate family. Do you have any pets?

I am married with two boys, Hayden and Dawson. My husband, Jim, and I have been foster parents as well. We have varying numbers of cats, as we seem to be feline magnets, but our official pets include Xander, Felix and Pearl. 🐾

Faculty Retirements

Seven faculty members retired from Samford this year, and through their multiple decades of service, they each leave an impact that will last for generations.

Alan Blankley | *Brock School of Business*

Alan Blankley joined the faculty of Brock School of Business in 2015. He most recently served as professor and chair of the Department of Accounting. He also taught financial accounting. Prior to joining Samford, he was on the faculties of the University of North Carolina at Charlotte, Miami University (Ohio) and Western Michigan University. He has worked as a financial and economic consultant for several companies and has trained securities analysts in accounting at First Union, Wachovia Securities and Wells Fargo.



Blankley

Paul House | *Beeson Divinity School*

Paul House retired from Beeson Divinity School after serving 19 years as a faculty member. He regularly taught Old Testament and Hebrew, and he is the author or editor of 15 books, including *The Unity of the Twelve*, *Old Testament Survey*, *Old Testament Theology*, *Lamentations*, and *Bonhoeffer's Seminary Vision*. He also has served as a member of the Translation Oversight Committee for the *English Standard Version*.



House

George Keller | *Howard College of Arts and Sciences*

George Keller joined Samford's faculty in 1993 as an associate professor for the Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences. He also served as assistant dean for Howard College of Arts and Sciences. A leader of the university's problem-based learning initiative, he often used case studies to help students learn more actively. Keller helped establish the Center for Science and Religion, directed the Samford Undergraduate Research Program and served as director of the Alabama Governor's School.



Keller

Jim Reburn | *Brock School of Business*

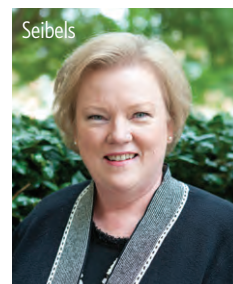
Jim Reburn retires after 41 years of teaching in higher education. He joined the faculty of Brock School of Business in 1996 as an assistant professor of accounting. He served as associate dean of Brock School of Business from 2005-2010 and then acting dean from 2010-2011. Prior to working at Samford, he was on the faculties of Centenary College and the University of Missouri-St. Louis.



Reburn

Donna Seibels | *School of Public Health*

Donna Seibels first joined Samford's faculty in 1986. A third-generation teacher, Seibels worked in full-time and part-time positions for about 24 years before returning full time as the clinical coordinator in 2010. She was named director of the didactic program in dietetics in the School of Public Health in 2013. "My greatest joy at Samford has been getting to know students—who they are and what they want and in that to help train students to become registered dietitians," she said.



Seibels

David Shipley | *Howard College of Arts and Sciences*

David Shipley, professor in Howard College of Arts and Sciences' Department of Communication and Media, retired after a 30-year tenure at Samford. He formed and served as faculty advisor for Samford's Public Relations Student Society of America (PRSSA) chapter, and he received the PRSSA Southeast District Faculty Advisor of the Year in 1995. Encouraging students to think outside cultural borders, Shipley taught mass media courses in London on nine occasions. Additionally, he served as Samford's director of international studies from 2008-2013.



Shipley

Delane Tew | *Howard College of Arts and Sciences*

Delane Tew served as a professor of history in Howard College of Arts and Sciences. She taught classes on Southern history, women's history and church history. She is also a former missionary. Tew contributed chapters to two books which examined the history of notable Baptists who challenged the denomination to become more progressive and the role of women in the Southern Baptist church. ▀



Tew

A RETURN TO HIS **Alma Mater**

Hunt Named General Counsel

by Holly Gainer

A 1982 alumnus, Joseph H. “Jody” Hunt returned to Samford on March 1 as its new general counsel.

Hunt, who was co-valedictorian of his class, received his Bachelor of Science in Public Administration from Howard College of Arts and Sciences. He then went on to earn a Master of Arts from Florida State University in 1984 and his Juris Doctor from Columbia University Law School in 1989.

Most recently, Hunt was a member of Alston & Bird’s Litigation Group, having joined the law firm in 2020. Prior to that, he served as assistant attorney general for the United States Department of Justice where he led its civil division. As head of the division, which operates as the government’s law firm and is the Department of Justice’s largest litigating component, he oversaw a team of more than 1,000 lawyers representing federal agencies and administrative policies in litigation at the trial level. He also served as chief of staff to the attorney general in 2017. He worked for the U.S. Department of Justice for 21 years, serving under both Republican and Democratic administrations.

“I have had what feels like an almost lifelong relationship with Samford, which holds a special place in my heart. I care deeply about Samford’s mission as a Christian university, and I am excited for the opportunity to contribute to it,” Hunt said. “Samford is a vibrant academic community that has been blessed with outstanding leadership over time, and it is particularly meaningful to return to Samford at a time like this when there is such a sense of renewed energy and enthusiasm under the direction of President Taylor.”

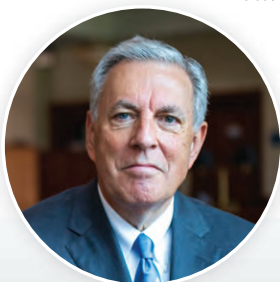
“Beyond Jody’s remarkable career and numerous professional accomplishments that will serve Samford well, I’m most excited about his deep



connection to and love for all things Samford, and his strong commitment to the university’s Christ-centered educational mission,” said President Beck A. Taylor. “As Samford embarks on its next season of growth and impact, Jody Hunt will protect and serve Samford’s interests well as he serves all who love this institution. It’s a thrill to welcome him into this important role.”

Hunt replaces Clark Watson, who retired after serving as general counsel since 2015. Watson, a graduate of Cumberland School of Law, previously served on the university’s Board of Trustees from 2003-2011 and served as its chair from 2007-2011.

“Clark Watson has served Samford with distinction as general counsel. During his years in the role, Clark has not only protected and strengthened Samford’s mission, he has also expanded the role and scope of the Office of General Counsel to serve the needs of a growing and complex institution. We will all benefit from Clark’s dedicated service for decades to come,” Taylor said. ▀



“We will all benefit from Clark’s dedicated service for decades to come.” — *President Beck A. Taylor*



A Cappella Choir Wins **International Choral Competition**

by Ashley Smith

The Samford University A Cappella Choir swept the top awards at the CantaRode International Choir Festival in the Netherlands in May. With a score of 95 points out of 100, they won first place among 13 choirs. They also won two other significant awards: the Audience Award and Best Conductor for professor Philip Copeland, who has led the A Cappella Choir since 2010.

Samford competed against 12 other chamber choirs from 10 different countries including Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, Malaysia, Slovakia, Germany, Hungary and Estonia.

"This was a validating moment to realize that high standards are still valued, and that hard work pays off," Copeland said. "But there is a step beyond the hard work, where passion, creativity, nuance and artistry win the day."

This competition win is especially significant because of the high quality of the choirs that were involved, including the Sophia Chamber Choir from Ukraine and the University of Houston Concert Chorale. "I was honored that Samford was on the same stage as the Ukrainians and the University of Houston. To best them in competition was an unexpected and remarkable accomplishment for our size school," Copeland said.

The judges for the competition were highly accomplished conductors from five different countries. A look at the judge's scores shows that Samford was ahead in points during both rounds of the competition. Conductors had an opportunity to discuss their performances with the judges on the last day of

the competition. "The judges were overwhelmingly positive in their feedback to us. It was a real moment. I realized that our choir had arrived at a new level of performance and musicianship," Copeland said.

"As ambassadors for Samford, the A Cappella Choir exemplifies what it means for our students to achieve at the highest level of musical artistry. One of the concert hosts, Dirk Vande Woestyne, commented that the ensemble 'performed at a quality level unknown to us,' resulting in 'a concert about which we will talk and refer for a long time to come,'" said Joel Davis, interim chair of the Division of Music.

The competition was the final stop of a 12-day international tour to Belgium and the Netherlands, its first international tour since 2018. The group toured and performed in Bruges, Ghent, and Antwerp, Belgium.

This competition was the third international win in a row for the A Cappella Choir. In 2018, they won the Laurea Mundi Competition in Budapest, Hungary, and the Šiauliai Cantat in Lithuania in 2016. "International tours and competitions have been a hallmark of my time at Samford," Copeland said. "The competitive element helps us become a better musical ensemble, but that isn't my primary motivation in these trips. Our hope is that Samford students gain a new perspective about the world and their place in it. These gatherings teach us all that we are more alike than we are different, a perspective that is sorely needed in the world today." ■

Samford Arts Set to Premiere TWO ORIGINAL PRODUCTIONS by Ashley Smith

The School of the Arts has commissioned two original works for the 2023-24 performance season. In the fall, Samford Opera will debut *Dragon's Breath*, a family opera created by the team of composer Evan Mack and librettist Joshua McGuire. In the spring, musical theatre students will premiere a new work, *Tomorrow, the Island Dies* by Ryan Scott Oliver.

Dragon's Breath is the second collaboration between Samford Opera and Joshua McGuire and Evan Mack. In 2016, Kristin Kenning, director of the Samford Opera program worked with McGuire and Mack to produce *The Ghosts of Gatsby*. The creative team has been working with opera students and the Samford Orchestra throughout this past year to fine tune the new opera which will be presented in Harrison Theatre, Nov. 16-19.

"Having worked with Kristin, Samford and its students before, it allows us to be freer to take more risks and dig in with the students," said McGuire. "We are excited about creating the experience and setting the stage for a personal connection with the audience."

Written for parents and children, the opera tells the story of Alan, an 11-year-old boy who is struggling with his feelings. During an argument with his parents, Alan slips into an internal realm where he confronts a dragon (his own anger) and learns how to manage his emotions. It is written for four singers and chamber orchestra.

Auditions will be held for the new musical, *Tomorrow, the Island Dies*, in the fall. Students will then workshop the play with the creator during the rehearsal process. Chelsea Nicholson, director of the musical theatre program, first connected with Oliver as a college student when she ordered his sheet music. After following his successful career, she reached out to him about collaborating on a musical, knowing that they shared a lot of common interests. "When I reached out to him in 2021 about writing a new musical for our department he responded with resounding positivity. His work has been produced on the West End and Off Broadway, and this is an incredible opportunity for us," Nicholson said. "The 90-minute musical will be in Scott's incredibly unique, complex folk/pop/Sondheim-ish writing style."

The musical will premiere in Harrison Theatre, April 11-14, 2024, and tells the story of island residents trying to salvage their community after a series of devastating hurricanes.

Nicholson is excited about this opportunity for her students. "Embarking on a new work is an incredibly important educational experience for students. We will be creating these characters for the very first time and building the first production design for the show," she said. "I am most excited for our students to have a voice in the musical theatre canon. Ryan plans to continue carrying this piece beyond our production, so this production will be a crucial step in seeing what elements need to be further developed. Samford Theatre and Dance will forever be attached to this piece as the original production and commissioning body," Nicholson said.

Kenning shares this enthusiasm for her students to be part of the creative process for *Dragon's Breath*. "The opportunity to sing new music is everything. Being able to have the librettist and composer in the room is an exceptional opportunity for our students," she said. ■

Last fall, students participated in a run through of *Dragon's Breath* with composer Evan Mack and librettist Joshua McGuire.



Scan the QR code to learn more
about ticket and show information.
samford.edu/arts/events



Beeson Divinity School Announces New Ph.D., Master's Degrees

The number of degrees at Beeson Divinity School continues to grow. In December, the school announced the creation of the Doctor of Philosophy in Theology for the Church, which is the first research doctoral degree offered by Samford in its 180-year history. This spring, Beeson Divinity added a Master of Arts in Christian Counseling and a Master of Theology Degree.

The Ph.D. in Theology for the Church will equip graduates for theologically robust ministry in and for the church of Jesus Christ. The program's focus is not restricted to ecclesiology; rather, it attends to theology broadly understood as rigorous scholarship in service to the church.

The program will require the completion of a common set of courses focused on both the Old and New Testament, historical theology and practical theology, successful passage of comprehensive exams, and dissertation research and writing. Students will work closely with a faculty member, who will act as a resource and guide for students' research and supervise them in their dissertation work.

Douglas A. Sweeney, dean of Beeson Divinity School, said his prayer is that this program will be a gift to the church.

"We believe that the clergy ought to be the most influential biblical and theological leaders of God's people," Sweeney said. "So, we've designed the only Ph.D. program we know of to equip them for just this ministry. Our goal is to underwrite ecclesial theology—theology done in, with and for the church of Christ to the greater glory of God—on the part of its pastors and denominational leaders."

Starting in the fall of 2024, Beeson will offer its first counseling-focused degree program, the Master of Arts in Christian Counseling. Students will take courses in biblical and theological studies as well as in counseling theory and practice, helping them learn to integrate the two.

"This is one of those fields of ministry in which demand outstrips supply," Sweeney said. "Under the guidance of the Lord and the leadership of our own professor, Gordon Bals, we hope to graduate a steady stream of biblically and theologically informed Christian counselors who will step into the gap and serve those who want care."

The Master of Theology program will launch in the spring of 2024. The curriculum will provide advanced



theological study beyond Master of Divinity studies as further preparation for ministry and/or as preparation for research doctoral studies. The goals of the program are to sharpen students' skills in biblical exegesis, historical theology and/or preaching and pastoral care; to form students further in spiritual maturity; and to help students develop competence in research and writing, preparing some for doctoral work. ▶

Scan the QR code to learn more
about these new degrees.
samford.edu/beeson-divinity/degrees



Education Students are Set Apart in Unique Partnership with Local School

by Kameron Brown

When the United States Department of Education and national accrediting bodies began touting the need for high-quality clinical partnerships in educator preparation, Orlean Beeson School of Education took this call seriously and transformed its teacher preparation program through what is now a long-standing partnership with Trace Crossings Elementary School in Hoover, Alabama.

The partnership was designed to provide a unique professional development opportunity for Samford's early childhood special education, elementary and collaborative education students. Principal Quincy Collins detailed how the partnership has been mutually beneficial for both parties as Samford's teacher education candidates have been able to gain experience in a real classroom and to develop skills that can't be learned from a textbook.

"We know that when students finish the program at Samford, they're going to be ready," said Collins. "It's an investment on the front end by having this partnership, but then it's also beneficial to us on the back end because we know we've prepared these students, we know what they're capable of and they're going to be ready when it's time for them to step into a classroom and help our students, our families and our school community."

The partnership has had a positive impact on recruitment and retention for Trace Crossings Elementary School, as 26% of the teachers are Samford graduates.

"Learning from course work laid the foundation for my education," said Emily Shabo '23, a recent graduate of

Samford's elementary education program. "But it was the student teaching experience that gave me the opportunity to practice and develop what I learned in the classroom. This piece of my education was invaluable, and this program gave me the confidence and preparation I need to start

my teaching career in the fall."

Samford's teacher education program is the only undergraduate major in Alabama with four different teaching certifications within the program. The efforts of Trace Crossings Elementary School and Orlean Beeson School of Education complement the other in providing a rigorous and robust learning experience for the Samford students.

"Classroom learning is only one piece of the puzzle," said Anna McEwan, dean of Orlean Beeson School of Education. "Our students are set apart by the high quality, practical experience this partnership provides." ▶



Yerkes Named Inaugural Holder of the Thomas J. Adams Sr./AutoTec Endowed Professorship in Risk Management and Insurance

by Morgan Black

In April, Rusty Yerkes, an associate professor in Brock School of Business, was named the Thomas J. Adams Sr./AutoTec Endowed Professor in Risk Management and Insurance (RMI).

The establishment of the professorship is part of a multipronged initiative to prepare students for careers in the risk management and insurance industry. Understanding the current and projected need for new talent in this field, leaders in Brock School of Business, with Yerkes at the helm, created a strategic plan to launch the program with a vision for long-term student success.

A major part of ensuring that success is the newly established professorship, endowed by the Adams family. It is named for Thomas J. Adams Sr. who attended Howard College and was instrumental in the continued growth and expansion of AutoTec, a sixth-generation insurance and technology company that started in Birmingham in the late 1880s and continues to thrive.

The Adams family has many historic connections to Samford. Richard and Tom Adams Jr. are the great nephews of Chapman Fuller Manly, who was instrumental in securing the Homewood, Alabama, property for Howard College. They are also the grandsons of William Hester Manly, for whom a long-standing business scholarship is named.

Richard M. Adams, vice president of AutoTec, said, "Samford is a vital part of the community where our employees live and where our business has thrived. We applaud and share Brock School of Business' emphasis on integrity and ethics and are honored to support the university and the business school in this way."

The appointment of Yerkes will ensure sound leadership of the program which aims to produce high quality professionals in risk management and insurance for many generations.

"I am grateful to Richard Adams and Tom Adams Jr., Chuck Redden, Charlie Adams and the entire Adams/AutoTec family for their generosity in supporting this program," Yerkes said. "Thomas J. Adams Sr. launched, in Birmingham, Alabama, what has become an industry leading provider of data and insurance products and services for the automotive and numerous other industries across the country and around the world. I am honored to be associated with the Adams/AutoTec legacy." ▮



Yerkes with Richard A. Adams



Cumberland School of Law Ranks 4th in the Nation FOR TRIAL ADVOCACY BY U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT

by Morgan Black

As part of U.S. News & World Report's 2023-2024 Best Law Schools rankings released May 11, Cumberland School of Law ranked 4th in the nation for Trial Advocacy.

Over the last year, the success of the program has been displayed through the achievements of its National Trial Team. In the fall, they placed 5th in the Flash Trial Competition, 3rd in the Battle of the Experts and were semifinalists in the Syracuse National Trial Competition. In the spring, the teams swept the regional round of the American Association of Justice Student Trial Advocacy Competition, which advanced them to the finals. During the finals, two Cumberland teams won 2nd and 5th place. Additionally, student advocates reached the quarterfinals of the Trials and Tribulations Competition and the final four of the South Texas Mock Trial Challenge. During many of these competitions, Cumberland students have been the recipients of outstanding advocate and professionalism awards.

In addition to competition success, recent curricular additions have expanded the reach of the program. A new experiential course, Alabama Criminal Practice and Procedure, teaches students to excel in the courtroom in non-trial contexts such as preliminary hearings, bond hearings, sentencing

hearings and more. Additionally, more offerings of existing courses such as Jury Selection, Negotiation, Depositions, and Pre-Trial Practice and Procedure, and the addition of two sections to the Basic Skills in Trial Advocacy, has created an additional 80 seats in advocacy courses. These will prepare graduates to enter litigation fields ready to advocate for their clients effectively and ethically.

"This ranking is a true testament to the dedication of our students, faculty, staff and coaches," said Blake Hudson, dean of Cumberland School of Law. "Our trial advocacy program has always been one of the best in the nation. We are

proud to once again be in the top echelon of law schools preparing students to engage in trial advocacy from the moment they graduate and pass the bar. We look forward to continuing to build out our advocacy programs through new fundraising initiatives to make sure that we remain a pillar of trial advocacy training in the United States."

Cumberland School of Law's National Trial Team also ranks 4th in the nation in the Trial Competition Performance Rankings from 2016 to present, and 2nd in the nation since 2019 in the newly established GAVEL Rankings. ▶



Samford's 2022-23 National Trial Team

A HISTORIC SEASON

Celebrating a year of incredible success for Samford Athletics and its 17 Division I Teams

by Sarah Waller and Joey Mullins

Samford Athletics' 2022-23 season was one for the history books. With nine of its teams winning 11 Southern Conference championships, this achievement sets the record for most conference championships in a single season in Samford history.

"Winning 11 championships in one year is a remarkable achievement by our student-athletes, coaches and support staff," said Martin Newton, Samford's director of athletics. "It is truly a team effort, but it does not define us or mean we are unsuccessful when we come just short of our goals. How they represent our university in the classroom and in the community gives me a great sense of pride and comfort in knowing they will graduate from Samford equipped to make a positive impact in this world."

In the fall, with football, soccer and volleyball claiming SoCon championships, Samford became the only NCAA Division I school in the country to win conference championships in all three sports.

The football team earned its first outright SoCon championship after winning all eight of its conference games. The only losses were to the University of Georgia in September and to North Dakota State in the quarterfinals of the NCAA Division I Football Championship Subdivision playoffs.





Additionally, the soccer team won its ninth-straight SoCon regular season title with a record of 11-3-7, and the volleyball team had its most successful season since 2019 with a record of 19-13. Both teams won the SoCon Tournament and progressed to their respective NCAA tournaments but lost in the first round.

With track and field, Samford's teams continued to dominate, sweeping both the SoCon Indoor Championships (for a fourth-straight year) and the SoCon Outdoor Championships (for a third-straight season).

In February, the men's basketball team was named SoCon regular season champions, which marked the team's first conference championship since Samford joined the SoCon in 2008. Coach Bucky McMillan led the Bulldogs to a second-straight 20-win regular season, marking the first time in program history that the feat has been accomplished.

The baseball team claimed the regular season SoCon championship and the SoCon Tournament title to bring the total number of the championships to 11. And while the softball team didn't claim the trophy, the team finished second in the SoCon Softball Championship.

Off the field, Samford's student-athletes posted an impressive 3.25 grade point average. Additionally, Samford continued its stellar performance in the NCAA's annual Graduation Success Rate (GSR) report, scoring a 98%, the highest score in both the SoCon and the state of Alabama.

Finally, at the conclusion of the season, when the all-sports awards were released by the league, Samford was announced as the winner of both the Commissioner's Cup, which goes to the top all-around men's athletics program in the SoCon, and the Germann Cup, for the SoCon's top overall women's athletics program. ▀



SOUTHERN CONFERENCE CHAMPIONSHIPS 2022-23

Soccer, regular season

Soccer, tournament

Volleyball, tournament

Football

Men's Indoor Track

Women's Indoor Track

Men's Basketball, regular season

Men's Outdoor Track

Women's Outdoor Track

Baseball, regular season

Baseball, tournament





BOBBY BOWDEN FIELD

DATA-DRIVEN

PERFORMANCE

Coaches and student-athletes credit successful seasons to Project SAMson

by Holly Gainer • Photography by Chase Cochran

Bringing together the latest technology, data analysis and sports medicine practices, Project SAMson has transformed the training regimen of all Samford student-athletes across the university's 17 NCAA Division I programs.

Launched in 2021, Project SAMson is a combined initiative by Samford, its athletic programs, Andrews Sports Medicine, American Sports Medicine Institute, Brock School of Business, the College of Health Sciences and the Center for Sports Analytics to create a new approach to sports performance. The goal of the initiative is to enhance athletic performance through improved strength and conditioning training, reduced injury risk, advanced injury prediction and treatment, and data-driven return to play protocols.

Athletes wear wearable technology that tracks a wide array of performance metrics. The data is then analyzed by Samford students in Brock School of Business and the Center for Sports Analytics. Students from various areas within the College of Health Sciences then work with coaches and athletic trainers to develop unique training regimens and nutrition plans for each athlete.

Coaches credit Project SAMson for providing new insights for both injury prevention and performance and helping student-athletes compete at higher levels of play.

"Project SAMson has been a complete game changer for our football team. The equipment and technology have allowed our players to train more effectively and efficiently. Our team became faster and stronger. It allowed us to keep our team in excellent shape while not fatiguing them," said head football coach Chris Hatcher. "The difference in us being near champions in previous years and conference champions this year is directly related to the benefits our team received through Project SAMson."

"We have been able to look at the data and implement it around what we needed. We eliminated the guessing game and started being specific with our training methods every single day in order to match what our student-athletes needed on the field," said Zach Mathers, assistant athletic director for sports performance and Project SAMson.



The soccer team utilized Polar watches and heart rate monitors during games and practices to collect data.

The athletes are also invested in the program, especially since they can see how their performance is improving by wearing the wearable technology and understanding the data and insights generated.

"I was able to see what the program was like before Project SAMson and what it is like now. You don't know how good it is until you look back and see what you came from," said Nathan East, a star linebacker who was recently signed by the Los Angeles Chargers. "In order for us to go to the next level, Project SAMson has been a vital aspect. Also, Coach Mathers coming in—everything he does is data driven and research based—so when you pair his expertise with the equipment and data from Project SAMson, it is a recipe for success."

Through its partnership with faculty and academic programs in business and health sciences, Project SAMson also provides real, hands-on experience for students across Samford's campus. Students from Brock School of Business and the Center for Sports Analytics work with faculty to analyze the data and present it to the coaches and athletes. For Austin Streitmatter, a 2023 graduate who majored in marketing and management with concentrations in sports marketing and data

analytics, interning with Project SAMson was one of the most meaningful experiences of his time at Samford.

"I attribute everything I've been able to accomplish at this point to Project SAMson. Being able to be a student who can analyze an incredible amount of data has given me the opportunity to apply the skills I've learned in the classroom outside of the classroom and that is an amazing résumé booster," Streitmatter said.

According to Streitmatter, they collect hundreds of thousands of data points from each team workout. The data comes from the EliteForm equipment in the weight room, which tracks the amount of power and weight of each exercise, and the wearable technology, which tracks heart rates, exertions, sprints and more. He then compiles the data and creates an individual profile for each athlete that is then shared with their coach.

Streitmatter has worked closely with Samford's soccer and football teams for the past two years. He says while he is not an athlete, he feels very much like he is part of the team. Celebrating the football team's win against Southeast Louisiana last December was a full circle moment for him.

"As a kid I always dreamed about being a

professional athlete, but I very quickly realized I did not have the build or the genes to do so. However, I still wanted to be involved in sports. And, now, here I am on the field hugging our strength coach because some of the work I did helped the team to win,” Streitmatter said. “I may not be competing on the field, but the work I have done off the field has enabled us to get just a little bit better every day to the point where we are winning games and titles.”

Students from the College of Health Sciences also intern with the teams. By using the data collected during workouts, student interns help create individualized nutrition plans and training regimens for the athletes.

Hannah Futrell, a junior majoring in nutrition and dietetics in the School of Public Health, has worked closely with the football team over the past year. She creates pre-practice and pre-workout meal plans, makes protein shakes for the athletes after workouts, packs snack bags for when they travel for away games and travels with the team to assist with nutrition-related needs while on the road. Because of her experience with Project SAMson, she hopes to pursue a career as a sports dietitian for a college or professional football team.

“The experience I have had with Project SAMson is going to help me excel in my career more than anything else I have done. The connections that I’ve been able to make and the knowledge I’ve gained about how sports teams work has been huge,” Futrell said.

Last summer, Futrell interned with Vanderbilt Athletics where she worked with the men’s basketball team. This summer she will intern with the University of Tennessee’s football team. She credits both internships to her work on campus through Project SAMson.

“Project SAMson has connected so many parts of our campus. Through it, we are taking an athletic venue and making it part of the educational experience, too,” said Martin Newton, Samford’s director of athletics.

And this is just the beginning. The second phase of Project SAMson is already underway, involving the latest wearable technology and expanded training systems.▶

New this year, the football team practiced with 1080 Motion equipment, allowing the coaching staff to analyze data from each repetition.



Scan the QR code to learn more about Project SAMson. samford.edu/go/samson



Celebrating the Class of 2023



Samford awarded degrees to 1,217 students during six commencement ceremonies held on campus April 28-29. Ceremonies for Beeson Divinity School, Brock School of Business, Orlean Beeson School of Education, and the undergraduate College of Health Sciences commencement were held on Friday, April 28. Graduates from Cumberland School of Law, Howard College of Arts and Sciences, the School of the Arts and graduate students from the College of Health Sciences were honored during commencement ceremonies held on Saturday, April 29. President Beck A. Taylor presided over each one.

Three awards were presented to students, including the John C. Pittman Spirit Award, the President's Cup and the Velma Wright Irons Award.

This year, five students received the Pittman Spirit Award. The award recognizes graduating students who consistently exhibit Christian character in community life. The recipients were William Mouchette, Ella Anderson, Cole Powers, Cooper Shull and Mya Scarlet Rose Stearns.

Gregory Young received the President's Cup. This award is given to the graduating senior with the highest grade point average. Lauren Dumar received the Velma Wright Irons Award, which is presented to the graduating senior with the second highest cumulative grade point average. ▶



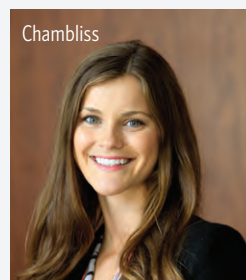
(Above) Gregory Young, an engineering physics major, was this year's President's Cup recipient, given to the graduating senior with the highest grade point average.



2023 GRADUATE SPOTLIGHTS



Interior design graduate **Joe Turner '23** recently collaborated with Crate & Barrel as one of the company's featured artists. The retailer saw Turner's paintings on his Instagram page and asked to partner with him. Now, his work is available on the website, and he plans to continue to work with Crate & Barrel now that he has graduated. Turner credits Samford for providing him with a strong foundation in interior design along with assisting him through his business endeavors.



Chambliss

Haleigh Chambliss, J.D. '23, and **Abigail White, J.D. '23**, will clerk for Associate Justice Greg Cook of the Supreme Court of Alabama during the 2023-24 term. At Cumberland School of Law, Chambliss served as editor-in-chief of the *Cumberland Law Review* and was a Caruthers Fellow, supporting the Lawyering and Legal Reasoning program. White served as managing editor of the *Cumberland Law Review* and was director of mediation for the trial advocacy board.



White

Lawson Crib '23, a graduate of Orlean Beeson School of Education with a degree in elementary education and a concentration in Christian missions, is working in Costa Rica as the volunteer coordinator for WinShape Camps International. Owned by Chick-fil-A, WinShape Camps International unites local churches and communities outside the United States with the message of Jesus Christ through the experience of camp. As the coordinator, she travels to different communities in Costa Rica to train the local volunteer teachers on the curriculum she created as an intern with WinShape last spring.



Bill Mouchette '23 became the third consecutive Samford student to be selected for the American Enterprise Institute's Young Scholar Awards Program. Mouchette, who graduated with a degree in economics and finance, was chosen as one of six undergraduate students in the country to participate in this prestigious program. In April, after months of work, Mouchette defended his research in front of a panel of AEI scholars and fellows at the organization's headquarters in Washington, D.C. In his research, Mouchette analyzed the effects of career and technical education on factors affecting male high school graduates and their communities.

Four graduates were commissioned as officers in the U.S. Air Force. **Brayden Banner '23** will begin his career in pilot training as he attends flight school at Vance Air Force Base in Oklahoma. **Jake Moultrie '23** will begin his career in cyberspace operations at Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi. **Carson Roberts '23** will begin his career at Joint Base in Charleston, South Carolina, as an aircraft maintenance officer. **Evan Wagner '23** will begin his career in drone pilot school. ▀



Disabled Doesn't Mean Unable

by Holly Gainer

Photography by Deidre Lackey

Ever since Emma Chambers was a child, she knew she wanted to pursue a career in health care. On April 29, her dream came true when she graduated from Samford's School of Health Professions with her Doctor of Physical Therapy, making her one of the few blind physical therapists in the United States.



Emma Chambers, D.P.T. '23, and her guide dog, Jetta



Born with Achromatopsia—a genetic condition that affects the cones of the eyes, making it so she cannot see color, does not have any depth perception, is extremely sensitive to light and has poor distance vision—Chambers did not let being blind prevent her from achieving her goal.

“To me, anything can be accommodated. If I am willing to be flexible and my employer is willing to be flexible, I think I can get anything done,” Chambers said. “My vision has never been an issue that crosses my mind when I have considered my job.”

Having grown up in Rome, Georgia, she graduated from Berry College, also in Rome, in 2020. Moving to Birmingham to attend Samford was the first time she had ever lived away from her family, but she wasn’t alone for her journey—her guide dog, a golden retriever named Jetta, was by her side, accompanying her to every class and clinical.

Chambers was matched with Jetta in 2017 after applying through the Guide Dog Foundation for the Blind. Initially she was reluctant to even pursue a guide dog.

“I knew I wanted to go into the health care realm, but there is a lot of stigma against disabled health care practitioners. Knowing what I wanted for my future, I was hesitant to outwardly identify as a disabled person,” Chambers said. “I am no longer a person in a



Chambers completed her final clinical rotation at Grandview Medical Center in Birmingham, Alabama. Jetta looks on as she works.

room. I am now a person with a dog. I didn't know if I wanted to be identified as a disabled person every time I enter a space."

Despite her misgivings, she says Jetta has not hindered her independence, but given her the opportunity to do more on her own.

"I think Jetta is a big component in the reason I can be independent and pursue the things I want to pursue. I don't worry about the navigation part of my life. I don't have to worry about finding the door to the building or getting into the right Uber or worry about my safety when I am walking down the road and there is an overhanging branch," Chambers said. "Through my reliance on her, I was able to move to Birmingham on my own and earn my doctorate."

Chambers says the faculty, staff and students at Samford—particularly in the School of Health Professions—made her, and Jetta, feel right at home from the minute she stepped on campus as a new student. From professors making sure she had accessible resources to her classmates welcoming her like everyone else, she says her experience helped her realize how important it is for the world to see that all people can succeed, regardless of one's ability.

"I was treated just like everyone else. Everyone ignored Jetta when they needed to, and loved on her when they could—always asking for permission first. We were welcomed with open arms among the whole cohort," Chambers said. "At Samford, I was allowed to fail and be bad at things just like everyone else."

Because of this, she has found herself advocating for the blind community, sharing her journey—and what it is like to have a guide dog—on social media. Through Chambers' own Instagram account, she promotes inclusivity. Her first post was about her own anxiety from living in a world that is not accessible to everyone. The post was shared thousands of times.

"There are all of these things that we don't talk about and view as taboo, but I can share my experience to destigmatize these topics and normalize these conversations. It has allowed me to speak about my struggles and the struggles of my community on a platform that can reach a lot of people in a non-confrontational approach," Chambers explained. "It has allowed people to open their eyes to things that they otherwise wouldn't have seen."

Even her classmates have learned from her and say they are better able to communicate with blind patients through using nonvisual cues thanks to





what she has shared with them in class and on social media.

"It has been incredibly beautiful to see how a health care provider adjusts what they have been taught to communicate and interact with a disabled patient," Chambers said.

She also advocates about the benefits of having a guide dog through her account as well as a special Instagram account for Jetta.

"I started posting on Jetta's account to connect with others who have guide dogs and those who raise guide dogs," Chambers said. "I didn't expect people outside of the guide dog community to find it that exciting, but I am thrilled that so many are learning through us. My goal is to show you can still do the things you want to accomplish with a guide dog."

To her professors, Chambers has not only been an excellent student, but has inspired them to use more inclusive strategies while teaching and working with patients.

"Emma inspired me to rethink what inclusion means for individuals desiring to enter the physical therapy profession. One way in which I was inspired was through her desire to transform her disability into an opportunity to advocate for individuals who are blind," said Andrea Bowens, associate professor in the School of Health Professions. "I also saw Emma's tenacity and grit to not let her condition be a barrier for pursuing her professional calling. In turn, I was inspired to try to employ inclusive strategies for diverse learners in my classroom because I wanted to do my part in removing any barriers, large or small, for Emma or others like her."

During the College of Health Sciences commencement ceremony, Chambers was awarded her degree, alongside Jetta who was also recognized for her support, service and attendance. Earning her diploma for her Doctor of



“My goal
is to see people
with disabilities
within every
professional
sphere, which
includes physical
therapy.”

—Emma Chambers

Physical Therapy was a full-circle moment for Chambers who says it proves inclusivity and accessibility is possible.

“This diploma is for my family and friends who breathed life into me when I didn’t think I could do this job and felt like the fight was too much. It’s for my professors who believed in me and fought for my access to this space. It’s for my clinical instructors and classmates whose patience and creativity made this profession attainable. It’s for college me who was told I could ‘never work in a medical setting’ and for younger me who so badly wanted to make a difference. It is so much more than a diploma; for me, it represents a hard-fought battle that proves that disabled doesn’t mean unable,” she said.

Chambers will remain in Birmingham, having accepted her first job as a physical therapist with Birmingham Physical Therapy & Sports Medicine, where she will be treating adults. And while her first priority is working with her patients, she and Jetta plan to continue their work to advocate for a more inclusive and accessible world.

“I am not unique as a disabled person who has earned an advanced degree. It should not be a big deal that someone who is blind is a physical therapist, but because the voices of those with disabilities are often not heard, it seems like a big feat. My goal is to see people with disabilities within every professional sphere, which includes physical therapy,” Chambers said. ▀

At the program's Commissioning Ceremony in 2022, Chambers received her white coat, and the class honored Jetta with her own white bandana.



Scan the QR code to read more of
Chambers' story and watch the video.



SAMFORD CELEBRATES HISTORIC GROUNDBREAKING OF STATE-OF-THE-ART CAMPUS RECREATION, WELLNESS AND ATHLETIC COMPLEX

by Holly Gainer

Construction on Samford's new state-of-the-art recreation and athletic complex is underway and was celebrated with an official groundbreaking on April 25. The historic project will result in the Campus Recreation, Wellness and Athletic Complex, which will provide students and employees with expanded opportunities to improve physical fitness and mental wellness as well as new spaces for campus events and student gatherings. Additional facilities will provide new practice and training spaces for the university's 17 Division I athletic teams.

The complex will be made up of four separate buildings totaling 165,000 square feet. The \$65 million venture is the largest capital project in the university's history. Construction and renovations are currently underway with the first phase of the project—the Health and Wellness Center—completed this spring. The new health and wellness space is located on the first floor of the Dwight and Lucille Beeson Alumni Center and is now home to University Health Services and the Samford CARES office, which includes student counseling, wellness programs, a food pantry and offices for the CARE team.

Renovations of Seibert Hall and Bashinsky Field House are also

underway. Seibert Hall is being completely redesigned to include two basketball courts, a new multiuse court, studios for fitness classes, an esports studio, dance studios, weight and cardio machines, a multipurpose workout area, and common areas for students to gather, with lounge areas, a coffeehouse and a 24-hour convenience store.

Bashinsky Field House is being renovated into a fully refurbished, dedicated facility for Samford student-athletes, including new training spaces for teams and dedicated practice space for the men's and women's basketball and volleyball programs.

A third building will be constructed adjacent to Seibert Hall and will encompass

30,000 square feet of recreation and event space. The new facility will include a suspended indoor track, additional basketball courts and cardio spaces, sound and staging to host campus events, a catering kitchen, covered outdoor athletic space, a pedestrian walkway and a covered balcony that overlooks Bobby Bowden Field.

"This project represents a substantial investment in the health and wellness of our campus. We are committed to supporting our students in their educational and spiritual journeys, and we also want to support them in their physical and mental well-being," said President Beck A. Taylor. "With the completion of the health and wellness center, we are one step closer to enhancing campus life for our students and employees, and providing our students with spaces to gather, exercise, socialize and participate in numerous recreational activities."

The project is expected to be completed in the fall of 2024. ▀



Samford Alumnus and Health Care Advocate SUPPORTS NEW COMPLEX INITIATIVE

by Dakota Rice

John Beard, J.D., M.B.A. '76, and his wife, Louise, are pillars of philanthropy in Alabama, and more personally, Samford. Over the years, the Beards have supported numerous initiatives on campus, with their passion being the health and well-being of Samford students.

Beard's time at Samford helped him form a successful career, and it also impacted his personal life. One of his law school classmates introduced him to Louise, and the two have been married for 46 years. "My connections and time at Samford set both my business career and personal life on a positive lifetime path," he said.

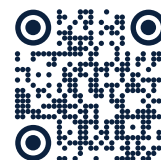
Beard's family became involved with health care when his father founded a home health agency. There was a need in the community for in-home, skilled nursing professionals for Birmingham's senior population. The agency was called Alacare Home Health Services, and Beard served as its chairman and president from 1976 until 2019. Beard and Alacare have a long history of contributing to nursing school initiatives across the state.

After years of supporting nursing and health care efforts at Samford, they jumped at the chance to support Samford's newest wellness initiative. "The new Campus Recreation, Wellness and Athletic Complex at Samford will

make significant contributions to the health of students, faculty and staff as well as the overall college experience at Samford," said Beard. "As expected, the nursing school and its students are involved in the health care of their campus and their community. We are honored to support these activities."

The generous gift from the Beards will support the university's efforts to see all Samford students flourish in the pursuit of health, happiness and knowledge. Gifts of all levels make an impact in the effort to build this new complex, and Samford is grateful for faithful advocates and friends like the Beards. ■

For more information about the
Campus Recreation, Wellness and
Athletic Complex, scan the QR code.
samford.edu/go/recreation



Rendering provided by Davis Architects





Political Science Alumnus on a Mission to Meet Every Mayor in His State

by Diamond Nunnally

"Every city, big or small, should truly matter to us all."

Mitchell Whitley '21 is on a mission to meet every mayor in his home state of North Carolina. Since starting this project two years ago, he's visited 236 out of 521 cities to show lawmakers and townspeople that their voices matter.

"Visiting every city and town is important in helping people feel heard regardless of their background or where they're from," Whitley said.

During his time at Samford and after graduating with a political science degree, Whitley worked for campaigns, federal and state legislators and even the U.S. Secretary of Labor in Washington, D.C. Through these experiences, he discovered small towns weren't being prioritized on the campaign trail. This revelation concerned Whitley and made him want to take action. That's when he came up with the Mitchell's Mayors project.

"It's really important, especially for

our small and rural communities, to feel like they have a voice and that somebody's on the road learning from them," Whitley said. "And it's meant a lot to the small-town mayors when I've shown up. They've been surprised by how young I am."

At just 22 years old, Mitchell sent an email to every mayor in the state. The response was slow at first. Many mayors had never been approached by an outside person asking to hear their personal story and tour their community. But, when they spoke to Whitley, they realized he genuinely cared and wanted to know more about their town.

Many people his age might be intimidated to take on a project this size, but not Whitley. Having been a member of student government and a political science major, he said Samford made him a better leader and speaker.

"I had a lot of great opportunities, especially in SGA, sitting down and meeting people from different organizations around campus, being able to hear their perspectives and what was

important to them," Whitley said.

"Before that, I was deathly scared to speak in front of people. Now, I have many opportunities to speak in front of Rotary Clubs in the coming months across North Carolina to talk about my mayors project."

Whitley has learned a lot from these experiences, including pressing issues. From infrastructure problems to finding more affordable housing, he plans to compile his findings in a book to raise awareness and encourage lawmakers to act.

Rather than being labeled as a politician, Whitley hopes to become a statesman. He wants to advocate for North Carolinians, regardless of political affiliation or background. "I'd love to lead our state and make a positive difference for every North Carolinian," he said. "Not just one side or the other." ▀

Learn more about Whitley's travels across the state at mitchellsmayors.com.



Degree of Success

*Public Health alumna goes global
with doctoral degree*

by Frank Ruggiero



When she enrolled in the School of Public Health, Liza Pugh Nicholson had business to attend to.

As founder and chief executive officer of Avail Management Services, a Tuscaloosa, Alabama-based health care management company, Nicholson, a 2022 graduate of the school's Doctor of Public Health, had already established herself as a leader in her field.

"But you can never know enough," she said. "I pursued a Doctor of Public Health to enhance my knowledge and skills, thus leveraging my interdisciplinary expertise to further the efforts of Avail Management and bridge business and public health solutions."

Avail provides program/project planning, direction and technical assistance within clinics, health care systems, academic institutions, home care and community-based organizations, with a focus on improving performance,

capacity and cost-saving solutions.

"Avail ensures that people are getting the absolute best care possible," Nicholson said.

In her studies, Nicholson focused on health management and policy, which proved instrumental in expanding her business to serve clients globally.

"I am appreciative of the opportunity I had at Samford to expand my expertise in addressing emerging trends in public health," she said. "The exposure to the phenomenal faculty and diverse cohort of peers allowed for lasting relationships and a network of public health leaders impacting populations across the world."

Although the Dr.P.H. curriculum is offered fully online, Nicholson never felt disconnected from her instructors and

peers. Furthermore, being part of this program helped her develop a public health initiative called the Cultured Heart Connection. What started as Nicholson's capstone project now promotes culturally responsive education among African American women to reduce cardiovascular disease morbidity and mortality.

Since earning her Dr.P.H., Nicholson was named one of the "75 Black Health Care Leaders to Know" by Becker's Healthcare/Hospital Review in 2022 and featured as the cover story for CIO Views' 2023 International Women's Day issue, among numerous other accolades.

"Liza is one of the most inspiring students I have ever taught," public health professor Ahinee Amamoo said. "I am so proud of her and can't wait to see how God continues to use her. She is truly operating in her calling." ■

A Prescription for Miracles

Pharmacy alumnus develops cataract drug and treats those in need

by Frank Ruggiero

Randy Davis has a vision—to help others restore theirs.

Davis, a 1988 graduate of McWhorter School of Pharmacy, is the founder and owner of Designer Drugs in Chattanooga, Tennessee, where he developed a groundbreaking treatment for cataracts.

It began when he was approached by an optometrist, who explained that cataract patients were struggling with a complicated regimen involving three different eyedrops to be taken before and after surgery. The optometrist suggested combining the drops into one bottle but doing that alone would reduce the drugs' potency.

That's when Davis stepped in—and into his compounding lab.

"I knew I could build this from the ground up—one drop to provide all three drugs at the right concentrations," he said. "That was my goal."

Over the next few months, Davis

developed CatarActive3. It didn't take long to realize its impact.

"It really helped patients with their regimen," Davis said, noting that it also helped them save money. "Three co-pays can be cost-prohibitive. Many patients would actually avoid surgery because they couldn't afford therapy."

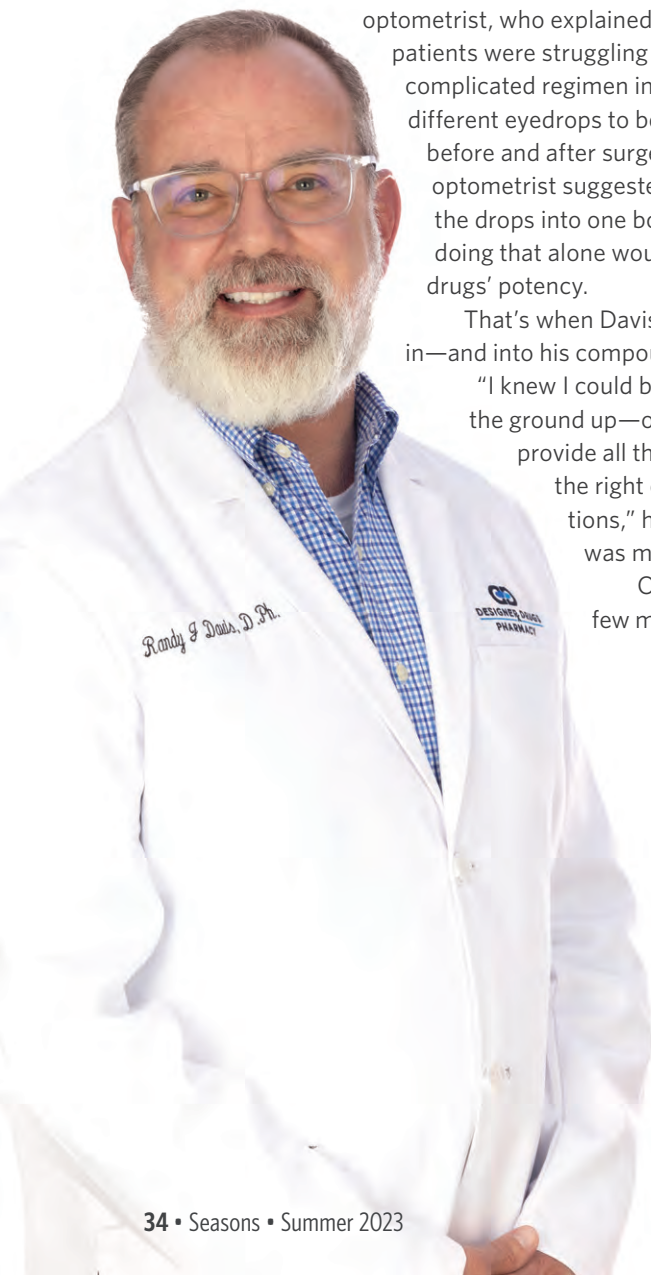
And it wasn't only patients seeing the benefits.

"The whole purpose of compounding is to help patients with their individual, specific needs," Davis said. "But this seemed to help more than the patients—surgery centers, doctors, staff, the pharmacy formulary side. It was a bigger deal than we ever thought it would be."

Davis gradually guided Designer Drugs through licensing in all 50 states, exponentially expanding CatarActive3's accessibility. In 2022, Davis and his company dispensed 43,752 bottles of CatarActive3. Now, they're up to 900 per week.

That number also includes treatment for patients in a place near and dear to Davis's heart: Haiti. For the past five years, he's visited Haiti with friend Luckson Previl, whose Every Eye Will See Him Ministries provides complimentary cataract surgery and treatment to Haitians in need. Davis travels there twice a year, accompanied by volunteer surgeons.

"Many Haitians don't have access to medical care and go blind from cataracts," he said. "I get to tell my patients there that I made this drop for them. It's amazing. It's the miracle of giving sight back to people. Their lives are changed." ▮



Davis (left) in Haiti with Every Eye Will See Him Ministries

From Soldier to Caregiver

Meet the military veteran who earned her nurse practitioner degree while serving her country

by Eric Holsomback

The sacrifice and commitment of serving in the military are immeasurable, and it can be even more challenging when trying to balance education with deployments.

Stevonica Logan, M.S.N. '22, was able to complete her family nurse practitioner degree while being deployed for a lengthy part of her nursing education, thanks to immense support provided by Samford's Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing.

"While deployed, my professors became my family," Logan said. "They often sent me care packages and emails to let me know I was in their thoughts. As a service member and a student, I really appreciated that."

During her deployment, Logan could tell her professors that she was away on military duty, but she was not allowed to disclose where she was stationed. "We had assignments due where we had to record ourselves performing a physical assessment," she said. "I had to cover wall maps and confidential information that would give away my location."

After completing a six-month tour in Southeast Asia, as Logan was starting to enjoy life back at home with her family and focus on her fourth semester in school, she got a call she'll never forget—a 48-hour notice that she was being tasked with another six-month military assignment, this time to Poland.

Logan was in disbelief. She promptly emailed Jill Cunningham, professor, associate dean and chair of the nurse practitioner program.

"She called immediately," Logan recalled. "I was in tears over the phone at the thought of leaving my family behind again. Dr. Cunningham was extremely understanding and told me she, as well as the staff, supported me."

Fast forward to December 2022 and Logan was able to walk on stage, receive her hood and eventually her diploma. Logan acknowledged it was a long, complicated and demanding process, but noted that she wouldn't change a thing. "I'd still choose Samford again," she said. ▀



CLASS NOTES

Compiled by the Office of Alumni Programs and Annual Giving.

1960s

Richard Smith '60 has published a new book, *BLACKWATER: Lincoln's War in West Florida*.

1970s

Michael "Mike" Bolin '70 has received the Alabama Farmers Federation Cultivator Award.

James "Jimmy" Rane '71 has been inducted into the Dothan Business Hall of Fame.

W. Stancil Starnes '72 has been named a University of Alabama Trustee.

Arnold Mooney II '73 has been elected to a third term as State Representative of Alabama House District 43.

Steven "Steve" Taylor '73 has been inducted into the Boaz High School Wall of Fame.

Russell "Rusty" Paul '74 has been inducted into the Georgia Municipal Association Hall of Fame for his service as a city official in Sandy Springs, Georgia.

Joe Ritch '75 has joined the board of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

Bill King '78 has been named the new pastor of Lanier Baptist Church in Lanett, Alabama.

Steven Cleckler '79 has published a new book, *The Prisoner's Escape Manual: A Scriptural Way Out of Spiritual Bondage*.

James "Jim" House '79 has been selected as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Who's Who in Banking for 2023.

Stephen "Steve" Wilson '79 has been awarded Auburn University's Walter Gilbert Award.

1980s

James "Jim" Vann '81 has been selected as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Who's Who in Banking for 2023.

Glenn Bryan '82 has been selected as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Who's Who in Banking for 2023.

Ken Schroeder '82, '84 has been named president of the Alabama Baptist Retirement Centers.

Richard Smith '82, '85 has been named as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Best of the Bar for 2023.

James "Jim" Taylor Jr. '82 has been named the 2023 recipient of St. Paul's Lutheran School's Impact Award in Cullman, Alabama.

Tim Hall '83 has received the 2022 Paul Stewart Lifetime Service Award at the Alabama Singing Men's/Women's banquet.

Mechelle Wilder '83 has been selected as one of the winners of the *Birmingham Business Journal's* Top Birmingham Women awards for 2022.

Sylvia Young '83 has been appointed to the Lincoln Educational Services Corporation's board of directors.

John Clendinning '84 has been elected chairman of the Language Arts Department of Park Place Christian Academy in Pearl, Mississippi.

Joyce Heames '84, '88 has been named dean of the Jennings A. Jones College of Business at Middle Tennessee State University.

James "Ed" Mizzell '84 has been named board chairman of the Alabama Humanities Alliance.

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

Dale Wood '84 has joined the Friendship Baptist Association in Oneonta, Alabama, as the associational mission strategist.

Margaret Cook '85 has been promoted to director with Kassouf CPAs and Advisors in Birmingham, Alabama.

Richard Hughes '85 has been named executive vice president and treasurer of Simmons Bank.

W. Davis Malone III '86 has been named a University of Alabama Trustee.

C. Douglas Dooley '87 has been elected a fellow of the Tennessee Bar Foundation.

Evan Jenkins '87 has been appointed by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce as Head of Congressional Affairs.

Sharon Stuart '87, '90 has been elected president-elect of the Birmingham Bar Association.

Todd Carlisle '88, '91 has been named as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Best of the Bar for 2023.

Phillip "Phil" Nichols '88 has joined Red Diamond in Moody, Alabama, as General Counsel.

Kevin Kynerd '89 has joined the board of directors of CommerceOne Bank.

1990s

Perryn Carroll '90 has been named the executive director of Jimmie Hale Mission. Additionally, she has been selected as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Who's Who in Nonprofits for 2023.

Steven Moore '90 has joined the Hamilton County District Attorney's office as deputy assistant district attorney in Tennessee.

Kevin Dean '91 has been nominated to the Board of Governors Executive Committee for the South Carolina Association for Justice.

Tracy Dismukes '91 has been appointed as a member of the Hoover Arts Council in Hoover, Alabama.

J. Timothy Downard '91 has assumed the role of chief financial officer for the law firm, Lewis Thomason, in Knoxville, Tennessee.

Kathyjo Gordon '91, '93 has joined Double Eagle Associates' executive leadership team as regional director.

Nicole Williams '91 has been selected as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Who's Who in Nonprofits for 2023. She serves as CEO of the Community Food Bank of Central Alabama.

Tracey Morant Adams '92 has been selected as one of the winners of the *Birmingham Business Journal's* Top Birmingham Women awards for 2022.

Anthony "Tony" Hale '92 has been cast in Hocus Pocus 2.

Ric Ransom '94 has been appointed CEO of MU Health Care with the University of Missouri.

Rusha Smith '94 has been named to the Leadership Birmingham class of 2022-2023.

Tom Bazemore '96 has been named as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Best of the Bar for 2023.

Christopher Berdy '96 has joined the board of directors of the Alabama Holocaust Education Center in Birmingham, Alabama.

Christopher "Chris" Bottcher '96 has been named as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Best of the Bar for 2023.

April Danielson '96 has been selected as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* 2022 Women To Watch.

Drew Langloh '96 has been selected as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Who's Who in Nonprofits for 2023. He serves as president and CEO of United Way of Central Alabama.

Jeff Tickal '96 has been sworn in as a circuit judge for Alabama's 37th Judicial Circuit.

Jennifer Compton '97 has been promoted to chair of the management committee with Shumaker Law Firm. In assuming this role, she became the firm's first female leader.

Jeff Inman '97 has been promoted to general sales manager of broadcasting and digital operations for WIAT-TV Birmingham, which includes CBS 42 and CBS42.com.

William Weaver '97 has been selected as a 2023 member of the Committee of 100 for Economic Development, Inc.

Jennifer Jaquess '98 has been named to the Leadership Birmingham class of 2022-2023.

Christopher "Chris" King '98 has received the Physicians Excellence Award, an award voted on

by the Physician Leadership Group at Grandview Medical Center in Birmingham, Alabama.

Gabby McCutchen '98 has been named the new provost of Arts and Sciences and the Scott Northern Wake Campus for Wake Technical Community College in Raleigh, North Carolina.

Jeffrey Pomeroy '98 has been named by Baker Donelson Bearman Caldwell & Berkowitz vice chair of the firm's real estate group.

Ed Stetzer '98 has been appointed dean of Talbot School of Theology at Biola University in La Mirada, California.

Jake Hall '99 has been named the executive director of United Way of Central Georgia's new initiative, United to End Homelessness.

Lori Stinson '99 has been named to the Leadership Alabama class of 2022-2023.

Robert Wick III '99 has received the Legal and Policy Professional of the Year award through the South Carolina Manufacturers Alliance Professionals of the Year Awards.

2000s

Khristi Driver '00 has been sworn into Alabama's Hoover City Council as a new member.

Dean Johnson '00 has released a new book, *Miracle Boat*.

Robert Maddox '00 has been elected as a fellow of the American College of Real Estate Lawyers.

Robert "Bob" Roller '00 has been named vice president of sports for Shriners Children's.

Jennifer "Jenny" Sneed '00 has been selected as one *Birmingham Business Journal's* 2022 Women To Watch.

John "Jack" Campbell '01 has been appointed to the Juvenile Justice Delinquency State Advisory Group in the state of Florida.

Lucas Dorion '01 has been appointed coordinator for the Alabama Cooperative Baptist Fellowship coordinating council.

KC Hairston '01 has been elected president of the Alabama Municipal Judges Association.

Rebecca Losli '01 has been named president of Illinois American Water, a subsidiary of American Water.

Carrie Markham '01 has been named Outstanding Probate Judge of the Year by the Council of Probate Court Judges of Georgia.

Herbie Newell IV '01 has been awarded one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* CEO Awards for 2022 in the category large nonprofit. He serves as president and executive director of Lifeline Children's Services. Additionally, he has been selected as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Who's Who in Nonprofits for 2023.

Amanda Cavin '02 has been named the principal of Peachtree City Elementary in Peachtree City, Georgia.

Drew Lasater '02 has been elected to serve a second term as president of the Alabama Classical Association.

Robin Mark '02 has joined Burr & Forman LLP in Birmingham, Alabama, as a partner.

Andria Cleghorn '02, '08 has been named to Momentum's 2022-2023 executive leadership class.

Lance Maddox '03 has been named the new worship pastor of First Baptist Church Andalusia in Andalusia, Alabama.

Megan England '04 has joined Horton, Ballard & Pemerton in Chattanooga, Tennessee, as an attorney.

Tony Greer '04 has been elected member with Dickinson Wright in Nashville, Tennessee.

Andrew Housholder '04 has opened a new practice, The Morning Sickness Clinic in Birmingham, Alabama.

Amy Stout '04 has been promoted to vice president of leadership development with Commerce Lexington Inc.

William "Bill" Averett Jr. '05 has been named of-counsel with Dentons Sirote in Birmingham, Alabama.

Leigh Davis '05 has been selected as one of the winners of the *Birmingham Business Journal's* Top Birmingham Women awards for 2022. Additionally, she has joined the Birmingham Advisory Board of Synovus Bank and has been named senior vice president of marketing and economic development with Alabama Power.

Seale Duggar '05 has joined StratCap as director of contract management.

Duncan Blount '06 has been named the chief executive officer of Chilean Cobalt Corporation (C3) based in Berwyn, Pennsylvania, and is a member of the C3 Board of Directors.

William "Wil" Drake '06 has opened new Hero Doughnuts & Buns locations in Trussville, Alabama, Fayetteville, Georgia, and Nashville, Tennessee.

Christopher "Chris" Edmunds '06 has been appointed senior vice president and chief accounting officer of Redwire Corporation in Jacksonville, Florida, and has assumed the role of principal accounting officer.

Autumn Jeter '06 has been named assistant superintendent with the Alabama State Board of Education.

LaKisha Mack '06 has joined the Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York as chief administrative officer.

Kevin Pughsley '06 has been named the 2022-23 Hoover Secondary Teacher of the Year in Hoover, Alabama.

Dylan Reeves '06 has joined Stites & Harbison, PLLC in Nashville, Tennessee, as partner.

Mary Blanche Hankey '07 has been selected as the chief of staff for U.S. Senator Tommy Tuberville.

William "Bill" Jones '07 has been sworn in as Campbell County, Tennessee's general session judge.

Brittany Mathis '07 has been named one of the *Birmingham Business Journal's* 2023 Top 40 Under 40.

Stephanie Mays '07 has joined the board of directors of Prosper Birmingham.

R. Ashby Pate '07 has been named to the Leadership Birmingham class of 2022-2023.

Jonathan Robinson '07, co-owner of Little Professor bookshop in Birmingham, Alabama, has opened a new location in Pepper Place.

Tyrus Sturgis '07 has been named chief officer of engagement with The Heritage Foundation of Williamson County based in Franklin, Tennessee.

Nash Wills '07, '15 has been named the new pastor of Friendship Baptist Church in Malone, Florida.

Randall Woodfin '07 has been appointed to the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation by President Joe Biden.

Edward "Hayes" Arendall '08 has been elected partner with Compton Jones Drescher LLP in Birmingham, Alabama.

Christian Corts '08 has been selected as the regional banking director for Huntington National Bank.

Aaron Fobian '08 has received the 2023 Donald K. Routh Early Career Award from the American Psychological Association's Society of Pediatric Psychology.

Brian Malcom '08 has been named a shareholder with Baker Donelson in Birmingham, Alabama.

Meredith Robinson '08, co-owner of Little Professor bookshop in Birmingham, Alabama, has opened a new location in Pepper Place.

Steven Shirley '08 has been appointed to the First National Bank and Trust's board of directors.

Kipp Keown '09 has been named to the Leadership Birmingham class of 2022-2023.

Andrew Knowlton '09 has been named as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* law honorees for 2022 NextGen BHM.

Caitlin Miller '09 has been named to Momentum's 2022-2023 executive leadership class.

Matthew Penfield '09 has been named as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Best of the Bar for 2023.

Summer Summerford '09 has been sworn in as the district attorney for Cherokee County and DeKalb County in Alabama.

2010s

Krystal Drummond '10 has been named one of the *Birmingham Business Journal's* 2023 Top 40 Under 40.

Heather Locklar '10 has been named one of the *Birmingham Business Journal's* 2023 Top 40 Under 40.

Ashley Peinhardt '10 has been elected secretary-treasurer of the Birmingham Bar Association.

Staci Pierce '10 has joined the board of directors of Prosper Birmingham.

Lonnie Pressley '10 has been selected as a 2023 honoree of the City of Birmingham's StrongHER initiative.

Brittany Schaffer '10 has been appointed the dean of the Mike Curb College of Entertainment and Music Business at Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee.

Michael Taunton '10 has been named partner with Balch & Bingham LLP in Birmingham, Alabama.

Chase Baker Jr. '11 has been promoted to audit senior manager with Dent Moses, LLP in Birmingham, Alabama.

Ruby Jackson '11 has been named as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* law honorees for 2022 NextGen BHM.

Joshua Reif '11 has been named a shareholder with Polsinelli PC in Atlanta, Georgia.

Mary Catherine "Katie" Voss '11 has been named one of the *Birmingham Business Journal's* 2022 Top 40 Under 40.

Matt Bryson '12 has joined Holland & Knight, LLP in Nashville, Tennessee, as a partner.

Charles "Todd" Buchanan '12 has been named as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* Best of the Bar for 2023.

Heidi DiLorenzo '12 has been named as one of *Birmingham Business Journal's* law honorees for 2022 NextGen BHM.

Ryan Richardson '12 has joined Davis Wright Tremaine LLP in New York City, New York, as a partner.

Lanice Smolar '12 has joined Kelley Kronenberg in West Palm Beach, Florida, as an associate attorney.

Jennifer Bray '13 has been sworn in as district attorney for Marshall County, Alabama, becoming the first female district attorney in the county's history.

Hunter Haley '13 has joined Oxford Orthopaedics and Sports Medicine in Oxford, Mississippi, as a physician.

Drew Hall '13 has released a new book *Tier 1 Christianity: The Stories, Lessons, and Heroes of the*

Special Operations Community. The Gospel of Jesus, and the Journey of Discipleship.

Abigail “Abba” Harris ’13 has been named one of the *Birmingham Business Journal’s* 2023 Top 40 Under 40.

Marshall Moore ’13 has published three novels as part of his fictional Rites of Resurrection series: *The Pale City, The Ashen City* and *The Awoken City*.

Christopher Weaver ’13 has been named as one of *Birmingham Business Journal’s* law honorees for 2022 NextGen BHM.

Michael Yaworsky ’13 has been appointed the Insurance Commissioner for the Florida Office of Insurance Regulation in Tallahassee, Florida.

James Sutton II ’14 has been named the executive director of BuildUP, a workforce development model that provides low-income youth career-ready skills through paid apprenticeships.

Cameron Thomas ’14 has been named assistant vice president and dean of chapel for Talladega College in Talladega, Alabama.

Carl Williams ’14 has been promoted to partner with Hall Booth Smith PC in Birmingham, Alabama.

Ethan Howard ’15, ’16 has been selected to the Kiwanis Emerging Leaders Program.

Sarah Osborne ’15 has been promoted to partner with Bradley Arant Boulton Cummings LLP in Huntsville, Alabama.

Thomas “Lars” Porter ’15 has been named assistant principal of Mountain Brook High School in Mountain Brook, Alabama.

Robert “Hogan” Whitmire ’15 has opened a dental practice, Chatt Implant Center in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Lindsey Cochran ’16 has been named as one of *Birmingham Business Journal’s* law honorees for 2022 NextGen BHM.

Emily Curran ’16 has been named as one of *Birmingham Business Journal’s* law honorees for 2022 NextGen BHM.

Terry Lamar ’16 has been appointed to the Hoover Library Board in Hoover, Alabama.

Brandi Russell ’16 has been named one of the *Birmingham Business Journal’s* 2023 Top 40 Under 40.

Morgan Thompson ’16 has joined Bressler Amery and Ross in Birmingham, Alabama, as an associate attorney.

John Binet ’17 has been named a recipient of the 2022 Yale Educator Award by Yale University’s Office of Undergraduate Admissions.

Kassidy Gaylor ’17 has been named the girls basketball coach for Ringgold High School in Ringgold, Georgia.

Brooks Mason ’17 has joined Kutak Rock in Omaha, Nebraska, as an associate attorney.

Wade Norwood ’17 has been named a shareholder with Carr Allison in Birmingham, Alabama.

William “Will” Thompson ’17 has been named as one of *Birmingham Business Journal’s* law honorees for 2022 NextGen BHM.

Jordan Vaughn ’17, ’20 has been inducted into Marquis Who’s Who biographic registry for excellence in health care.

Alexis Esneault ’18 has been appointed to serve on the board of directors of the AlabamaGermany Partnership.

Ruth Ann Moss ’18 has joined the board of directors of Prosper Birmingham.

Clay Nolen ’18 has opened Moss Rock Pharmacy in Hoover, Alabama, where he serves as co-owner.

Alexander Sturdivant ’18 has opened Moss Rock Pharmacy in Hoover, Alabama, where he serves as co-owner.

Carmen Weite ’18 has been appointed vice president of public service with the Birmingham Bar Association’s Young Lawyers Section.

Eljennette West ’18, ’22 has joined the nursing department of Mississippi University for Women in Columbus, Mississippi, as an assistant professor.

Maria Aguilera ’19 has joined Cranfill Sumner LLP in Charlotte, North Carolina, as an associate attorney.

Anna Catherine Roberson ’19 has been selected to the Kiwanis Emerging Leaders Program.

Allyn Russell ’19 has been named assistant principal at Scottsboro High School in Scottsboro, Alabama.

2020s

O. Cobb Bostick Jr. ’20 has joined Bradley Arant Boulton Cummings LLP in Birmingham, Alabama, as an associate attorney.

Wendy Corso ’20 has joined The Erlanger Western Carolina Hospital Wound Care Center in Murphy, North Carolina, as a family nurse practitioner.

Arthur Fisher Jr. ’20 has been selected to the Kiwanis Emerging Leaders Program.

Jonathan Plott ’20 has joined Burr & Forman LLP in Birmingham, Alabama, as an associate attorney.

Jack Elliott Jr. ’21 has joined the board of directors of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Central Alabama.

Jon-Kaden Mullen ’21 has joined McGlinchey Stafford PLLC in Birmingham, Alabama, as an associate attorney.

Carly Atkisson ’22 has joined Huie, Fernambucq and Stewart, LLP in Birmingham, Alabama, as an associate attorney.

Hannah Black ’22 has joined Christian & Small in Birmingham, Alabama, as an associate attorney.

Robert Cornell ’22 has joined Christian & Small in Birmingham, Alabama, as an associate attorney.

Margaret Hicks ’22 has joined Hatcher Schuster Interiors in Birmingham, Alabama, as an interior designer associate.

Mickala Lewis ’22 has joined Leitner, Williams, Dooley and Napolitan, PLLC as an attorney in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Liza Nicholson ’22 has been inducted into Marquis Who’s Who biographic registry for excellence in health care.

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FUTURE BULLDOGS



Cliff Kelley '02 and Jennifer Kelley welcomed a daughter, Selah Reign Kelley. **1**

Leslie Marquez '04 and David Marquez welcomed a son, John David Marquez. **2**

Tara Flaniken '06 and Ian Flaniken welcomed a daughter, Lily Grace Flaniken. **3**

Holly Holladay '08 and **Nathan Holladay '04** welcomed a daughter, Elizabeth Mills Caroline Holladay. **4**

Megan Ackerson '10 and **Asa Ackerson '09** welcomed a son, Wade Wilderotter Ackerson. **5**

Katherine Deen '12 and **Logan Deen '12** welcomed a son, Josiah Logan Deen. **6**

Allison Strickland '13, '19 and **Taylor Strickland '10** welcomed a son, Sutton Lanier Strickland. **7**

CJ Jones '13 and **Andrew Jones '11** welcomed twin sons, Benton Michael Jones and Jordan Leverett Jones. **8**

Kathryn Walker '14 and **Gil Walker '12** welcomed a son, Richard "Rhett" Thomas Walker. **9**

Rachel Kenney '15 and Jacob Kenney welcomed a daughter, Julia Katharine Kenney. **10**

Morgan Mudd '16 and Jacob Mudd welcomed a son, Judah Logan Mudd. **11**

Hannah Surface '21 and **Mitchell Surface '21** welcomed twin daughters, Margaret Louise Surface and Mary Boyd Surface. **12**



SAVE THE DATE

Family Weekend, Sept. 22-24

Homecoming, Oct. 27-28

Reunion classes include:

10-YEAR: Class of 2013 **25-YEAR:** Class of 1998 **50-YEAR:** Class of 1973

Samford Giving Day Surpasses Goal Through Community Support

On April 4, Samford Giving Day provided an opportunity for the Samford community to collectively support areas across campus. With a goal of 1,100 donors, this year's campaign focused on raising funds for the Campus Recreation, Wellness and Athletic Complex, but ultimately, alumni, students, employees, parents and friends were encouraged to give in support of any area of campus they were the most passionate about.

In just 24 hours, over \$200,000 was raised from more than 1,200 donors.

"Gifts to Samford are absolutely critical for our university to continue its mission of nurturing the development of intellect, creativity, faith and personhood. It's because of our generous donors that we are able to support students through rigorous academic programs, encourage creativity and provide opportunities through community-building across campus," said Sydney Talley, director of annual giving.

"Samford Giving Day is a time for the entire Samford community to come together to further the mission of the university," she said. "We are really proud of the success of this year's event. Not only did we exceed our goals, but we were proud to engage our entire community to make an impact for generations of Bulldogs." ▮



Scan the QR code to learn more about giving at Samford. samford.edu/giving.



IN MEMORIAM

'42 Lloyd Lovegren, age 100, of Nashville, Tennessee, died on November 11, 2022.

'44 Margaret Ward Morland, age 99, of Lynchburg, Virginia, died on September 8, 2022.

'45 William "Bill" Crowder, age 99, of Lafayette, Indiana, died on October 13, 2022.

'46 Jeanette Counts Blackman, age 97, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on September 11, 2022.

'47 Cecil Duffee Jr., age 98, of Carrollton, Georgia, died on October 26, 2022.

'48 James Liles, age 97, of Pensacola, Florida, died on January 14, 2023.

'49 Euel Stephenson, age 98, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on October 2, 2022.

'50 Margret "Peggy" Hagood Oakley, age 94, of Columbia, Alabama, died on October 26, 2022.

'50 Hazel Petersen Walter, age 99, of Gainesville, Florida, died on March 15, 2023.

'52 Darwin Hardison, age 93, of Fairhope, Alabama, died on December 7, 2022.

'52 Gloria Rowan Kelley, age 93, of St. Simons Island, Georgia, died on April 8, 2023.

'55 Isaac "Clifford" Matthews, age 87, of Jack, Alabama, died on June 17, 2022.

'55 Charles Eugene "Gene" McGee, age 91, of Decherd, Tennessee, died on March 29, 2023.

'55 John Perry, age 91, of Chattanooga, Tennessee, died on October 31, 2022.

'55 Mary "Joyce" Clark White, age 91, of Huntsville, Alabama, died on October 16, 2022.

'56 Dianne Clemm Caldwell, age 87, of Dallas, Texas, died on February 7, 2023.

'56 Elizabeth Mahan, age 86, of Montgomery, Alabama, died on October 2, 2022.

'56 Bettye Dickinson Mauterer, age 87, of Baton Rouge, Louisiana, died on July 19, 2022.

'56 Ethel VanDyke Reece, age 87, of Bay Minette, Alabama, died on February 12, 2023.

'56 Betty Slaughter Stringfellow, age 88, of Haleyville, Alabama, died on August 9, 2022.

'57 Lawanna McIver Fields, age 87, of Nashville, Tennessee, died on November 5, 2022.

'57 Thomas "Tom" Kennedy, age 88, of Tallahassee, Florida, died on October 23, 2022.

'57 Thomas McGregor, age 87, of Montgomery, Alabama, died on November 23, 2022.

'57 Freddie "Fred" Slaughter, age 86, of Wetumpka, Alabama, died on December 9, 2020.

'57 Jo Ann Aman Woods, age 87, of Hoschton, Georgia, died on January 19, 2023.

'58 Bill Gann, age 88, of Anniston, Alabama, died on November 14, 2022.

'58 Joseph "Joe" Hosmer, age 88, of Pleasant Grove, Alabama, died on September 23, 2021.

'58 Doris Green Jones, age 87, of Fairfax, Virginia, died on March 13, 2023.

'58 Jerry Stephens, age 94, of Little Rock, Arkansas, died on February 1, 2023.

'59 William Leon Jr., age 84, of Pelham, Alabama, died on May 27, 2022.

'59 James McBride, age 86, of Tullahoma, Tennessee, died on October 24, 2022.

'59 Merrill McRae, age 88, of Mobile, Alabama, died on July 25, 2022.

'59 Evelyn Rhodes Tarrant, age 100, of Pell City, Alabama, died on February 11, 2023.

'60 Gloria Kirkland Slaughter, age 83, of Thomasville, Georgia, died on August 16, 2022.

'61 John Bush, age 85, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on October 18, 2022.

'61 Don Campbell, age 84, of Pell City, Alabama, died on January 21, 2023.

'61 Grethel Gardner Harlow, age 81, of Athens, Alabama, died on September 2, 2022.

'61 Mittie Hoggle Karthaus, age 85, of Florence, Alabama, died on March 28, 2023.

'61, '68 Alfred Langston, age 85, of Hartselle, Alabama, died on December 22, 2022.

'61 James "Dalton" Splawn, age 83, of Hoover, Alabama, died on September 23, 2022.

'61 Patricia "Patty" West Taylor, age 83, of Franklin, Tennessee, died on December 21, 2022.

'62 Carolyn "Maxine" Abernathy Cornwell, age 85, of Newnan, Georgia, died on September 18, 2022.

'62 Lou Beth Reeves Givens, age 84, of Maryville, Tennessee, died on February 21, 2023.

'62 Harold Hancock, age 85, of Hoover, Alabama, died on January 9, 2023.

'62 Charles Haston Sr., age 86, of McMinnville, Tennessee, died on November 16, 2022.

'62 Donald Savage, age 84, of Greenville, Indiana, died on October 12, 2022.

'63 Terry Bennett, age 81, of Arab, Alabama, died on November 27, 2022.

'63 Gerald Bucklew Sr., age 83, of Collins, Mississippi, died on November 25, 2022.

'63 Rena Blackwell Corley Chamblee, age 80, of Vestavia, Alabama, died on January 19, 2023.

'63 Jimmy Thompson, age 82, of Balsam, North Carolina, died on January 4, 2023.

'64, '69 Clarence Beck Jr., age 78, of Milton, Florida, died on September 11, 2022.

'64, '69 Brenda Mitchell Coats, age 81, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on November 6, 2022.

'64 John Curry Jr., age 88, of Greenville, South Carolina, died on October 11, 2022.

'64 Donald Dove, age 81, of Winchester, Kentucky, died on January 14, 2023.

'64 Jerry Patterson, age 85, of Springville, Alabama, died on December 19, 2022.

'65 Andrew "Doc" Creel, age 80, of Greenville, South Carolina, died on August 26, 2022.

'65 Frances Neely Francis, age 91, of Trussville, Alabama, died on December 25, 2022.

'65 Eleanor Mathis Hunter, age 82, of Tuscumbia, Alabama, died on April 8, 2023.

'65 William "Ken" Jacobs, age 80, of Huntsville, Alabama, died on August 17, 2022.

'65 Dianne Bridges Nash, age 79, of Owens Cross Roads, Alabama, died on September 11, 2022.

'65 Clovis Rutledge Smith, age 78, of Arab, Alabama, died on July 23, 2020.

'66 Donald Lytle, age 78, of Vestavia Hills, Alabama, died on November 18, 2022.

'66 Irene McCombs, age 87, of Gardendale, Alabama, died on October 18, 2022.

'66 Fred McGraw, age 86, of Sumter, South Carolina, died on January 20, 2023.

'67 Glenda Goodwin Greene, age 77, of Decatur, Alabama, died on February 27, 2023.

'67 James "Marion" McCarty, age 78, of Stringer, Mississippi, died on September 30, 2022.

'67 Robert "Bob" Moorer, age 86, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on March 31, 2023.

'68 Obert Collins, age 76, of Farragut, Tennessee, died on April 5, 2023.

'68 Calvin Crocker, age 98, of Montevallo, Alabama, died on November 18, 2022.

'68 James Douglas, age 76, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on February 3, 2023.

'68 Jack Stewart, age 75, of Louisville, Kentucky, died on August 31, 2022.

'68 Robert "Bob" Waldrop, age 77, of Decatur, Alabama, died on March 13, 2023.

'69 Robert Blake Jr., age 77, of Hoover, Alabama, died on December 16, 2022.

'69 Charlotte Mann Halcomb, age 75, of Hoover, Alabama, died on October 29, 2022.

'69 Lewis "Pete" McLean Jr., age 82, of Vestavia, Alabama, died on September 13, 2022.

'69 Francis Poggi Jr., age 81, of Mobile, Alabama, died on December 21, 2022.

'69 Herbert Smith Jr., age 76, of Vestavia Hills, Alabama, died on February 27, 2022.

'69 Marcia Gwin Wright, age 75, of Trussville, Alabama, died on November 5, 2022.

'70 Jerry Butler, age 86, of Boaz, Alabama, died on November 27, 2022.

'70 Robert "Bob" Flowers, age 76, of Alexis, Illinois, died on February 13, 2023.

'70 Clair Wise McGill, age 81, of Atmore, Alabama, died on November 18, 2022.

'70 Sandra Paschall, age 74, of Nashville, Tennessee, died on December 20, 2022.

'71, '01 Robert "Bob" Hatfield, age 73, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on November 5, 2022.

'71 Stephen "Steve" Openshaw, age 73, of Northfield, Minnesota, died on January 17, 2023.

'72 William "Bill" Hasty Jr., age 77, of Vestavia Hills, Alabama, died on October 16, 2022.

'72 Jim Fisher, age 77, of Hoover, Alabama, died on September 23, 2022.

'72 Robert "Bob" Hunt Jr., age 72, of Leesburg, Florida, died on August 30, 2022.

'72 Jesse Sprayberry, age 85, of Trussville, Alabama, died on September 12, 2022.

'72 Frederick Sundheim Jr., age 77, of Palm City, Florida, died on April 4, 2023.

'72 Jerome "Jack" Tucker, age 77, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on January 16, 2023.

'73 Angela Golden Hughes, age 72, of New Brockton, Alabama, died on February 11, 2023.

'73 Jo Beth Drysdale Newton, age 69, of Homewood, Alabama, died on September 4, 2022.

'74 Mike Carter, age 80, of Crawfordville, Florida, died on November 16, 2022.

'74 Kerry Gatlin, age 75, of Foley, Alabama, died on December 11, 2022.

'75 Nelson Arnold, age 79, of Knoxville, Tennessee, died on April 15, 2023.

'76 Betsy Mackta Scott, age 71, of Great Falls, Virginia, died on September 25, 2022.

'76 William "Bill" Varnell, age 71, of Cleveland, Tennessee, died on April 14, 2023.

'77 John Brandon Jr., age 70, of Knoxville, Tennessee, died on November 8, 2022.

'78 Thomas "Tommy" Duncan, age 72, of Mountain Brook, Alabama, died on February 2, 2023.

'78 Dennis Haynes, age 75, of Vestavia, Alabama, died on January 30, 2023.

'79 June Carroll Hogue, age 88, of Fort Mill, South Carolina, died on September 1, 2022.

'79 Wayne Hollaway Jr., age 66, of Hamilton, Georgia, died on March 23, 2023.

'79 Bruce McCarthy, age 66, of Lineville, Alabama, died on September 14, 2022.

'80 John Neal, age 76, of Austin, Texas, died on February 10, 2023.

'81 Martyn Fernambucq, age 64, of Atlanta, Georgia, died on October 10, 2022.

'81 John Williams, age 68, of Huntingdon, Tennessee, died on September 2, 2022.

'81 Richard Williams, age 64, of Mountain Brook, Alabama, died on November 14, 2022.

'82 Kenneth Cooper Jr., age 64, of Winter Springs, Florida, died on October 28, 2022.

'82 Denise Elliott, age 75, of Hoover, Alabama, died on February 26, 2023.

'84 Robin Williamson Fort, age 60, of Whiteville, North Carolina, died on August 24, 2022.

'85 Anita Handley Chavers, age 67, of Hokes Bluff, Alabama, died on November 27, 2022.

'85 Thomas "Tom" Osborne, age 62, of Pearisburg, Virginia, died on March 3, 2023.

'85 James Parker, age 73, of Pinson, Alabama, died on January 15, 2023.

'87 Elizabeth Averett Pate, age 91, of Vestavia, Alabama, died on March 23, 2023.

'89 Cathy Haden, age 58, of Plano, Texas, died on August 20, 2022.

'90 Joseph "Joe" Heuer, age 61, of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, died on November 8, 2022.

'91 Dennis Burns, age 58, of Savannah, Georgia, died on September 22, 2022.

'91 Cynthia Johnson Davis, age 52, of Pardeeville, Wisconsin, died on December 18, 2022.

'91 Michael "Mike" Fondren, age 69, of Remlap, Alabama, died on August 14, 2022.

'91 Michael Kellum, age 66, of Johnson City, Tennessee, died on April 6, 2023.

'91 David Randle, age 62, of Charlottesville, Virginia, died on August 31, 2022.

'93 Karen Walker, age 54, of Orlando, Florida, died on December 8, 2022.

'94 Tyre Weaver IV, age 50, of St. Petersburg, Florida, died on March 2, 2023.

'95 Betty Finley Talley, age 69, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on November 18, 2022.

'95 Judy Wellberg, age 78, of Winfield, Alabama, died on November 25, 2022.

'98 Joel Weaver, age 49, of Pelham, Alabama, died on November 28, 2022.

'02 Jana Sanderson McEachern, age 43, of Gadsden, Alabama, died on December 16, 2022.

'05 Todd Hood, age 44, of Big Canoe, Georgia, died on January 1, 2023.

'07 Bricker Daughtry, age 46, of Watkinsville, Georgia, died on January 27, 2023.

'11 Michael Barnett, age 39, of Dallas, Texas, died on February 13, 2023.

'12 Logan Deen, age 32, of Birmingham, Alabama, died on November 12, 2022.

'15 Katherine "Kate" Giles, age 31, of Huntsville, Alabama, died on April 1, 2023.

'16 Emily Zupanick, age 33, of Montevallo, Alabama, died on September 16, 2022.

'22 Regina Jackson Ward, age 59, of Dothan, Alabama, died on October 7, 2022.

A Love for Family and Samford Inspires a New Scholarship

When speaking about her husband's call to ministry, Meia Evans said it was the driving force behind everything he did. "It was God first, family and then the church," she said.



Todd Evans '87, D.Min. '97, dedicated his entire life to ministry. He poured everything he had into the church and into his family. In 2022, just days before Easter, he passed

away unexpectedly after complications during surgery. He was 57 years old.

Todd graduated from Samford in 1987 with a degree in religion. He then

earned his Master of Divinity from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary and returned to Samford to earn a Doctor of Ministry from Beeson Divinity School in 1997.

"He loved Samford," Meia said. "My kids have all grown up hearing about it."

So much so that it inspired two of their children to attend the university: their daughter, Ellie Evans Roesener '22, a Moffett & Sanders School of Nursing graduate, and their son, Sam Evans '21, who earned a B.A. in Public Administration from Howard College of Arts and Sciences.

"It meant the world to us that our two oldest children chose Samford," she said. "For Todd, it was the gift of a lifetime. To be able to walk on campus with our children—visit for Family Weekend and go to Step Sing—was something our entire family will always treasure."

Todd spent more than 30 years serving God and others as a pastor. "My husband was a very humble man," Meia said. "He would not want a lot of fanfare. But as his family, we want to do something to honor his legacy in ministry."

Seeking to help young ministers pursue their calling, Meia and her family established the Dr. Samuel "Todd" Evans Scholarship in her husband's memory. "Knowing how important it was for him to be trained at a university like Samford, we want to help somebody else that is just starting out," Meia said. "It's a small thing we can do to honor his service to the Lord and to us." 📌

175 Years

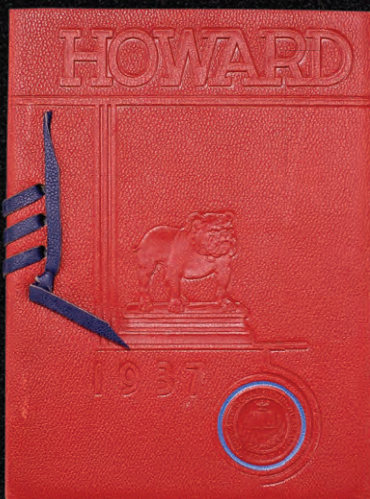
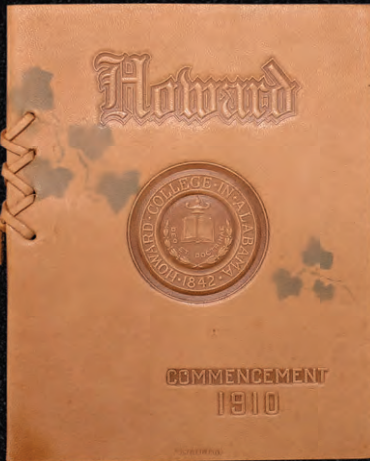
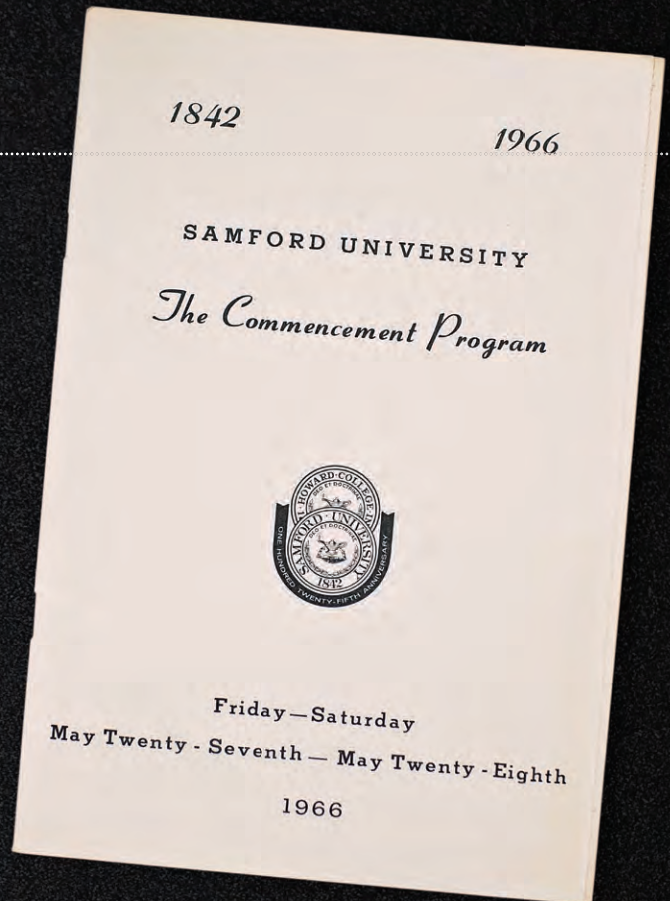
OF COMMENCEMENT

On July 27, 1848, Samford University—then Howard College—held its first commencement ceremony. The graduating class was comprised of seven members. Two became medical doctors, John T. Barron and Milton Weisenger, and two went on to receive master's degrees, William Blassingame and Singleton Williams.

Additionally, Henry W. Nate worked as an attorney, William L. Mosely became a teacher, and Thomas Book went on to become a merchant.

This year marks the 175th anniversary of commencement ceremonies at Samford, but it does not mark the 175th graduating class. Howard College did not grant any degrees in 1864 (during the Civil War) and 1865 (during Reconstruction). Samford anticipates hosting ceremonies for the 175th graduating class in 2025. ▶

The commencement program of 1966 recognized the institution's new name and university status by including the seals for both Howard College and Samford University.



Commencement programs in the early 1900s were pocket-sized and featured a leather cover and binding.

Historical items shown are preserved by Samford's Special Collection and University Archives.

Howard College's original matriculation record officially lists the names and information of the first students who enrolled. John T. Barron, a member of the inaugural graduating class, is listed first.

Entered	Names	Parent or Guardian	Office	Session
1842				
Jan 9 th	John T. Barron	Mrs. Julia A. Barron	Marion	Eng. Class
" "	Thomas Booth	Mrs. N. E. Huffer	"	"
" "	William Miller	W. N. Wyatt	"	Com. Eng.
" "	Thomas A. Craven	Jesse P. Craven	"	Eng. & Cla.
" "	William D. Wing	Gen. E. D. Wing	"	"
" "	William Blassingame	J. A. Townes	"	"
" "	J. E. Goree	L. Goree	"	"
" "	Thomas J. Anderson	Reuben Anderson (out of town)	"	"
" "	M. A. J. Oliver	M. M. Oliver	Marion	"
" 4	Milton M. Weisenger	L. Weisenger	"	"
" 6	Edward L. Jones	Robt. Jones	"	"
" 10	Henry M. Nave	Jesse B. Nave	"	Eng. & Sci.
" "	John G. Hornbuckle	William Hornbuckle	"	Prepara
" "	James Nuttidge	"	"	"
" 17	Thomas A. Weir	Dr. Wythous	"	Eng. & Cla.
" "	Richard Page	J. M. Stone	"	Prepara
" "	Robertus R. Lea	Martin A. Lea	"	"



At this year's Step Sing, Phi Mu received the coveted Sweepstakes trophy with their performance called "9 to 5", which celebrated the joys that come with being a grandmother.