



FALL 2025

VIRGINIA TECH® MAGAZINE

# *Defining* MOMENTS

Experiences that spark new directions

**A CENTURY IN THE MAKING:** The past, present,  
and future of forestry education

**Butterfly Effect** (bədər, flī ə 'fekt, ēkt), n.

: a property of chaotic systems (*such as the atmosphere*) by which small changes in initial conditions can lead to large-scale and unpredictable variation in the future state of the system.

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Virginia Tech experiences set new paths in motion and empower Hokies to lead with purpose. *Cover photo illustration by Natalie Ferguson.*

### 40 ROOTED IN A CENTURY OF INNOVATION

Marking 100 years of forestry education, Virginia Tech's roots run deep – and its alumni and students, like Brenn Kurtz (at left), are cultivating the future. *Photo by Luke Hayes.*

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# VIRGINIA TECH MAGAZINE

FALL 2025, VOL. 48, NO. 1

Virginia Tech Magazine connects, inspires, and engages the global Hokie community. It celebrates alumni, students, donors, parents, and friends while strengthening their lifelong connection to the university. With campuses in Blacksburg, Alexandria, and Roanoke, Virginia Tech offers nearly 280 degree programs and recorded \$453.4 million in sponsored research expenditures in fiscal year 2024. By sharing stories of service, innovation, and community, the magazine is more than a publication — it's an experience that connects Hokies, highlights their achievements, and celebrates the enduring spirit of Virginia Tech.



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### CAN YOU GUESS?

Which Hokie rides a Harley-Davidson Fat Boy?

Answer on page 64

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# A HOME FOR DISCOVERY, INNOVATION, AND IMPACT

BY PRESIDENT TIM SANDS | PHOTO BY RAY MEESE

Do you remember your first day on campus? I remember mine, and I think you will enjoy this behind-the-scenes look at our 2025 fall move-in week as a new generation of undergraduate students joined thousands of their peers for a year of discovery, innovation, and impact.

Virginia Tech is an incubator for pivotal moments in Hokies' lives, a place where students come face-to-face with new ideas and experiences that shape the trajectory of their lives and careers (page 30). The powerful ripple effect of higher education also benefits the communities they serve across Virginia and the world.

Our forestry program — celebrating 100 years of education, research, and outreach — is one example of how Virginia Tech has created generations of scholars and delivered meaningful innovations that have supported our natural resources, related industries, and perhaps even the health of the trees in your backyard or neighborhood park (page 40).

As a land-grant university, we cross traditional academic boundaries to directly engage with people where they live and work. Our dedication to this Innovation Network continues to grow as we explore health sciences, advanced comput-

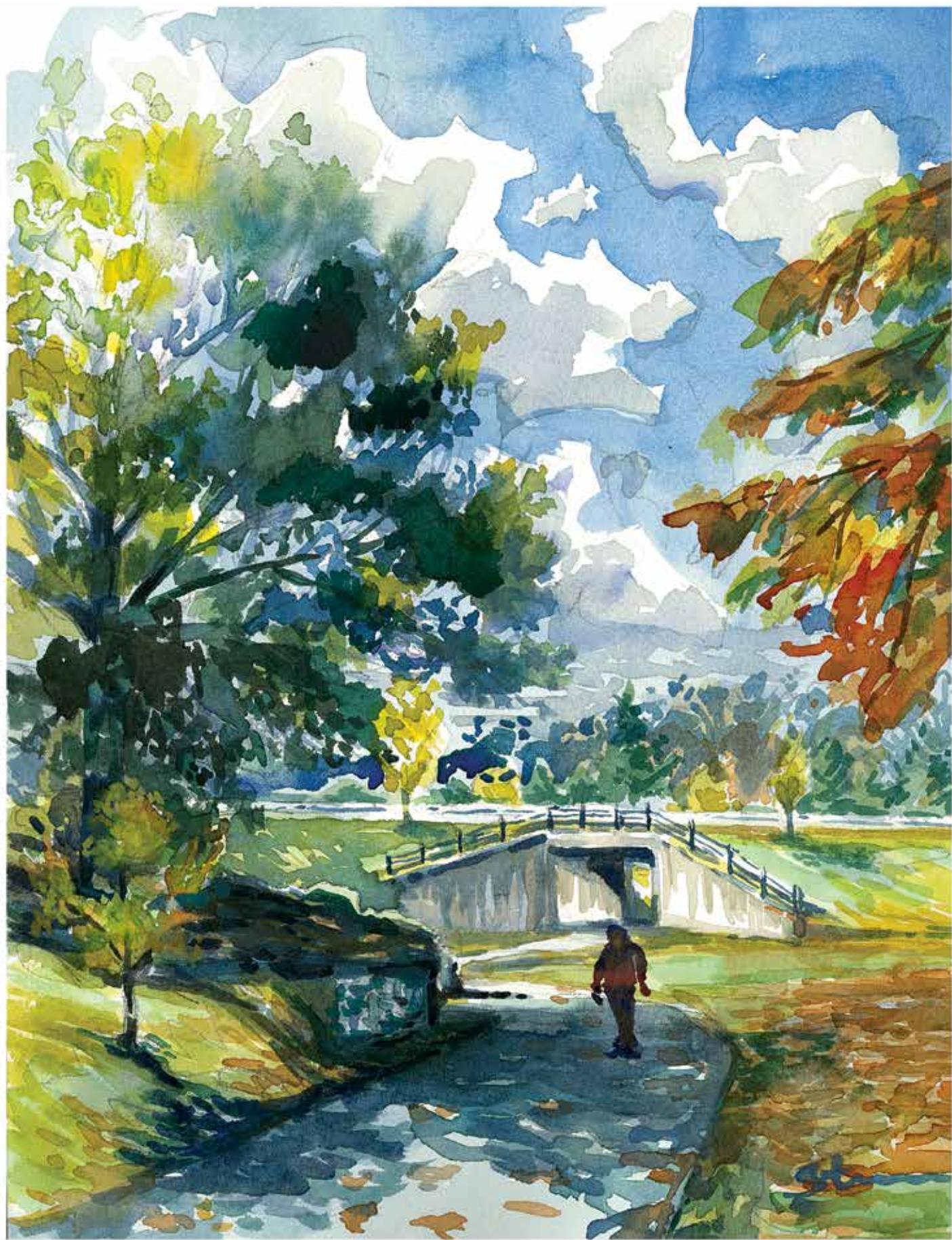
ing, artificial intelligence, quantum research, and find new ways for our students, faculty, and partners to impact the communities we serve.

Helping us navigate that growth is Tom Wamsley, our new senior vice president of Advancement. We're excited to have him join us at a time of great momentum, and look forward to working with him to further elevate Virginia Tech as a leading public research university (page 64).

Virginia Tech Athletics brings Hokies from all generations together to share memorable moments. As we make major moves to prepare for the new framework in college sports, thank you for continuing to encourage and support our outstanding student athletes. In this issue, you can learn how we use nutrition science to advance their performance and well-being (page 16).

Did you know you can create your own Hokie experience even after you graduate? Having our alumni on campus attending games, engaging with our students, sharing their time and expertise, and participating in events makes Virginia Tech a special place.

Wherever you are in the world, Virginia Tech is home, and you play an important role in how we serve our communities, celebrate and support each other, and have a positive impact on our future. 



*“Scientists say that human beings are made of atoms, but a little bird told me that we are also made of stories.”*

Eduardo Galeano,  
Journalist



#### TELL US MORE

To update your info, share your ideas, and connect with us, scan the code or go to [alumni.vt.edu/connect](http://alumni.vt.edu/connect).

#### **Where memories meet the future**

Hokie stories never stand still. They evolve, just as our university and our alumni community do. That's why this fall's Virginia Tech Magazine looks a little different. It's designed to capture what you told us matters most — the memories you cherish, the innovations you celebrate, and the future you're helping to shape.

Inside, you'll find a refreshed design, the features and departments you've come to love, and new ways to experience more online. Alumni are at the heart of this magazine, and your stories continue to inspire us — from memories of campus life to the ways you're reinterpreting Hokie traditions today.

And just as Hokie stories keep evolving, so will Virginia Tech Magazine. This is your magazine, shaped by your feedback and enriched by your experiences. We want to keep hearing from you — we invite you to share your memories, your milestones, and your ideas for future stories.

We've also tucked in a new tradition: a Hokie Easter egg in each edition. Think of it as a little hidden surprise between us — a detail from one of our stories that we think alumni will truly appreciate. The hunt starts on the contributors' page (page 4), where you'll find a clue to point you in the right direction. Happy searching!

No matter where you live or when you graduated, your story is part of Hokie Nation's past, present and future. Together, we carry forward the spirit of *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve) in the ways we connect, celebrate, and imagine what comes next. We're excited to keep telling that story with you.

Let's go!  
Erica Stacy,  
Editor

Illustration by  
Natalie  
Ferguson.





# THE MARKET

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Together, we nourish success. Keeping The Market's pantry filled with fresh, healthy food ensures Virginia Tech students feel supported, empowered, and ready to thrive. Help stock the shelves by making a recurring gift today.

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IMPACT POINTS

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**69,000+**

Pounds of food distributed

**375%**

Increase in visits to the pantry

**829**

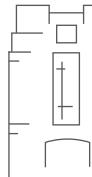
Students who received free meals

**\$130,520**

Funds raised for The Market

*Data reported from the 2024-25 academic year.*





# EYES ON THE SKIES

A new Virginia Tech-led effort targets drone threats to national security

BY TRAVIS WILLIAMS

A new Virginia Tech effort will take aim at bolstering the nation's defenses against uncrewed aerial systems (UAS), commonly called drones.

A recent \$5 million award from the U.S. Army Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Cyber, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance Center will augment capabilities at the existing Counter UAS Research and Testing Center that will include an unparalleled ecosystem of drone research with outdoor, indoor, and virtual labs working in tandem. Led by the Virginia Tech National Security Institute and the Virginia Tech Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership (MAAP), these efforts will leverage the long-standing expertise of both organizations to help the Department of Defense and law enforcement

mitigate threats from both novice drone users and nefarious actors.

"MAAP has experience conducting research around the domestic threat, whereas the National Security Institute has expertise in adversarial nation threats," said Austin Phoenix, director of the institute's Mission Systems Division. "Bringing together MAAP's ability to do dynamic, high-volume drone testing work within Federal Aviation Administration regulations and our expertise in security research, artificial intelligence, radio frequency systems, and system modeling will allow us to really push the bounds of the country's UAS and counter-UAS capabilities."

The center, which is expected to officially launch in the coming year, comes at a time of increased drone use, both domestically and abroad.

In December of last year, there were drone sightings along the East Coast that raised concerns for many, while drones have also become weaponized for use in international conflicts.

"This research is going to immediately contribute to the Department of Defense's efforts to keep people and critical infrastructure safe," said Tombo Jones, director of MAAP. "Long term, we're also building a foundation for future research that will benefit any agency — federal, state, or local — that has an interest in protecting resources and assets from a variety of UAS threats." □

(Above) Unmanned aerial systems, commonly called drones, present a variety of new security challenges for officials. Photo by Althea Olinger.



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# GIVING BACK, MOVING FORWARD

### Philanthropy at Virginia Tech

Virginia Tech thrives because Hokies give — alumni, friends, students, parents, and partners collectively contributed nearly \$241.6 million in 2024-25. Their generosity helps students pursue opportunities they might never have imagined, from scholarships to cutting-edge research.

As of June 30, the Boundless Impact Campaign has raised nearly \$1.877 billion, surpassing its goal two years early, and supporting initiatives like Virginia Tech Advantage, expanding access for undergraduates, and Global Distinction, fueling faculty innovation and discovery.

Every gift — big or small — creates real impact. The following stories highlight the ways philanthropy transforms student experiences, advances research, and strengthens the Hokie community. Together, we ensure Virginia Tech remains a place where talent thrives, ideas flourish, and the next generation of leaders is empowered to make a difference.

#### **Gift propels research**

Thanks to the generosity of an alumnus, Virginia Tech has become one of the world's first public research universities to endow a research center in the growing field that synthesizes philosophy, politics, and economics.

Electrical engineering graduate David H. Kellogg '82 recently committed a \$16 million estate gift to endow the research center that he helped launch with initial support.

Virginia Tech introduced a minor in philosophy, politics, and economics in 2015 and a major in 2017. Over the past 10 years, enrollment in both degree programs has surged, making

the university one of the few U.S. institutions recognized for excellence in both research and teaching in this interdisciplinary field of study. Today, more than 225 students are enrolled in philosophy, politics, and economics at Virginia Tech.

In addition to overseeing two degree programs, the center supports research across the disciplines it integrates. The Kellogg Center also offers annual public lectures featuring Nobel Prize winners; MacArthur Fellows; renowned moral, political, and economic theorists; and prominent legal scholars.

#### **Philanthropy supports student robotics team**

Members of a student team at Virginia Tech are building more than robots. They're building futures.



David H. Kellogg asks a question during the PPE Distinguished Public Lecture in March. Photo by Richard Mallory Allnut for Virginia Tech.

With support from the Des Champs Chair, the VEX-U Robotics team is turning departmental backing from mechanical engineering into career-defining learning experiences.

The endowed chair, established by the late Nicholas Des Champs '62, Ph.D. '67 and his wife, Rebecca, in 2018, provides flexible funding that allows leadership to invest directly in student experiences.

Endowed chairs, professorships, or faculty fellowships are prestigious faculty positions funded by a donation from an individual, family, or organization.

One of 120 university teams worldwide to qualify for the VEX-U Robotics World Championship, the team earned an impressive 16th place finish.



#### **HELP HOKIES THRIVE**

Gifts fuel the Hokie experience — scan here or visit [alumni.vt.edu/giving](https://alumni.vt.edu/giving) to learn more.



### Generosity provides scholarships, fellowships

Through the vision and generosity of Gary Bowman '80, the next generation of leaders in sustainable land development will receive critical support and recognition through a new fellowship and scholarship program within the Charles E. Via, Jr. Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering.

In 2022, Bowman, founder of Bowman Consulting, committed more than \$2 million to Virginia Tech to establish the Bowman Sustainable Land Development Program. This program trains students in sustainability and engineering design principles for land development at local, regional, and global scales. It is one of just six official program areas in the department and only the second to be endowed.

Bowman's gift is already making a difference. For the 2025-26 academic year, three undergraduate students and three graduate students are the inaugural recipients of the Bowman Sustainable Land Development Scholarships and Fellowships.



(Top) The Virginia Tech VEX-U Robotics team showcased high-performance robots at the 2024 VEX-U Robotics World Championship and competed with top university teams from around the world. *Photo courtesy of Ty Van Buskirk.*

(Above) The Bowman Scholars and Fellows celebrate with Gary Bowman at a recognition event in July. Members of the sustainable solutions and surveying team were also in attendance. They are (from left) Cambelle Laskodi, Brianne Lombardo, Sam Brooks, Nekahn McLain, Gary Bowman, Jaelynn Holloway, Adam Lemieux, Lillian Kobe, Devin Poe, and Liam Glennon. *Photo courtesy of Kevin Young.*



### Estate gift expands clinical trial opportunities

Scientific discoveries can change the landscape of veterinary medicine, but their true worth is never known until they cross the breach into real-life application for animals. Clinical trials bridge the gap between the laboratory and the veterinary clinic.

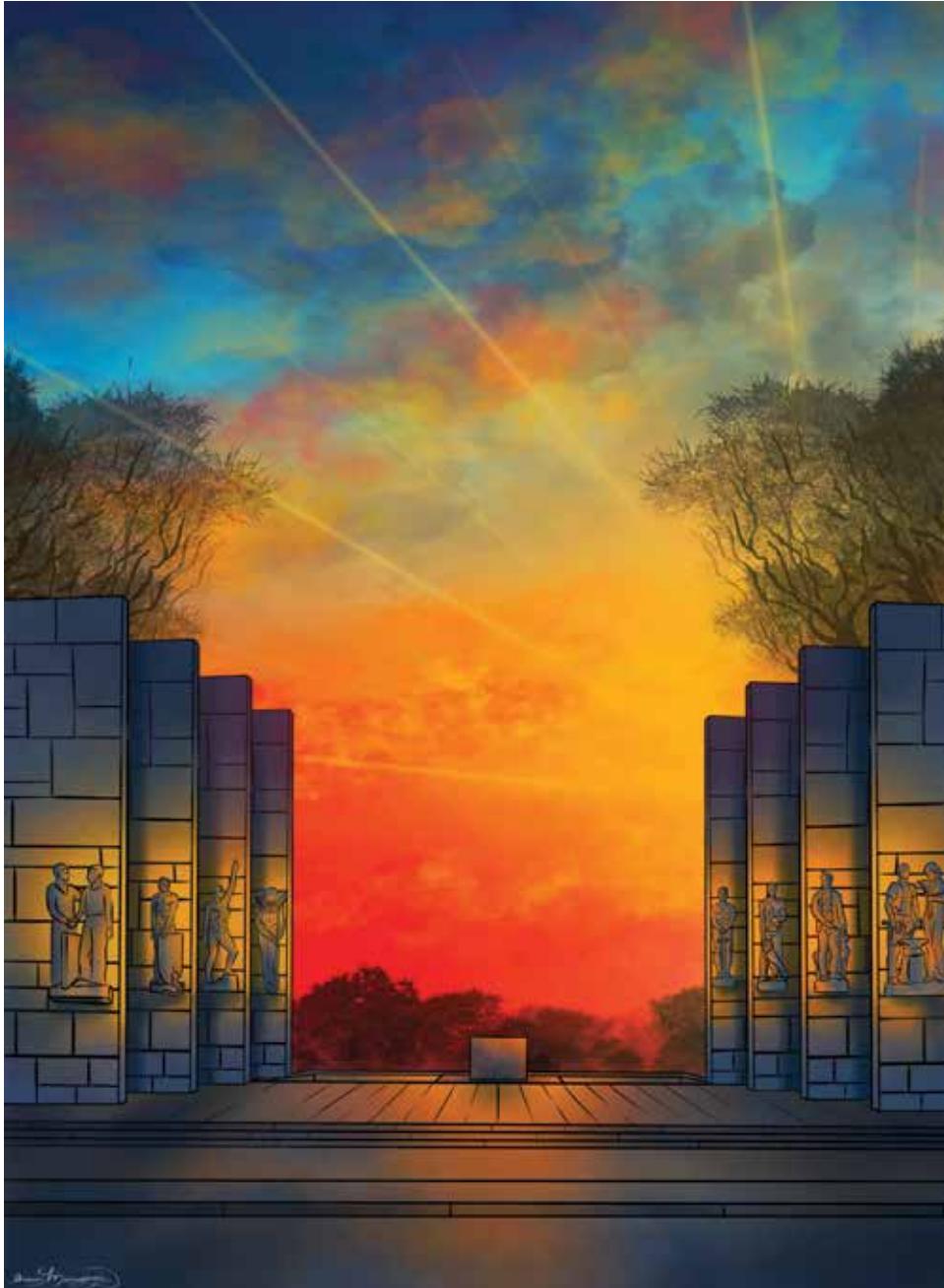
The Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine has newly expanded capacity to carry out clinical trials of potential new treatments and diagnostic procedures for dogs and cats thanks to a \$15 million estate gift.

The Helen Dessin Spurr and Frank Arthur Spurr Jr. Endowed Research Fund for Domestic Canine and Feline Pets is a transformative gift that will enable novel treatments and diagnostic procedures to be applied in a compassionate, safe environment for the pets of owners who often have few other options and who can benefit through drastically reduced costs for treating their beloved animals. *VT*



A researcher works in a laboratory at the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine. *Photo by Andrew Mann for Virginia Tech.*

## THE UPPER QUAD



**The Pylons** by Erem Memisyazici, senior research specialist in the Division of Vehicle, Driver, and System Safety, Virginia Tech Transportation Institute.

## DRAWN TO TRADITION

Since 2020, Steven White '92 has shared daily doodles of Hokie life. Last fall, alumni and friends joined him, sketching traditions, landmarks, and memories for the 2026 Doodle calendar and this magazine edition.

Many artists — including Erem Memisyazici and Katie Mallory '04 — turned their eyes to the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets: Lane Hall, the Upper Quad, the Pylons, and the legacy of the university's military roots for inspiration.

The university, which was founded in 1872 as a land-grant military college, continues to honor its history through today's corps of about 1,400 cadets. Their mission to lead with character remains a subject worth sketching. VT



**The Pylons at Sunset**, by Katie Mallory, a former cadet who is now serving as the corps communications director.



### THE DRAWING BOARD

Scan or go to [alumni.vt.edu/doodles](http://alumni.vt.edu/doodles) for more entries and information on the 2026 Doodle Calendar.



## TAKING THE BATON

BY EMILY SOUTHERN | PHOTOS COURTESY OF COL. SCOTT MCKENZIE

In March 2026, Col. Scott McKenzie '94 will become the new director of Pershing's Own, the premier band for the U.S. Army located in Washington, D.C.

McKenzie, who graduated with a bachelor's degree in music, is currently serving in Germany as the commander of the U.S. Army Europe and Africa Band and Chorus.

"Pershing's Own is one of the premier bands of all the United States military," McKenzie said. "They are world class players, so it's a great privilege. It's incredibly rewarding for me to get to represent the Army."

Pershing's Own provides musical support for the U.S. Army, and its mission is to connect the Army to the American people. In his new role, McKenzie will lead over 200 soldiers in performances all over the U.S. Pershing's Own performs at venues worldwide including the White House, the Pentagon, and the U.S. Capitol Rotunda.

"The band's mission is to help people remember, help veterans remember to appreciate what they've done for their country," McKenzie said. "It's for families today. It's for children today so that they can see soldiers in uniform and know what the army is about and what it does — to serve the American people."

Dave McKee, the director of the Marching Virginians from 1986-2018, saw McKenzie's potential during his time at Virginia Tech.



"He has a work ethic beyond reproach," McKee said.

*"He has people skills that are magical, but his creativity and his willingness to make music with other people is really remarkable and wonderful."*

McKenzie earned his master's degree in music from George Mason University and taught music at the middle-school level for four years before enlisting in the Army.

McKenzie said his time at Virginia Tech taught him about people and how to lead others in the world of music.

"Virginia Tech prepared me in many ways," McKenzie said. "My years as a teacher before I joined the Army continued to serve me in the Army. It's still a job where you take care of people, encourage them, mentor them, and grow the next generation of leaders." VT

### Pershing's Own also includes these Hokies:

**Sgt. 1st Class Kelley Corbett '04,** principal trumpet in the Concert Band

**Staff Sgt. Anne Friend '14,** band resource manager

**Staff Sgt. Rebecca McFarland '13,** clarinetist in the Ceremonial Band

(Top) Col. Scott McKenzie (right) conducts a performance as the as the commander of the U.S. Army Europe and Africa Band and Chorus.  
(Above) Col. Scott McKenzie.



#### MAKING MUSIC

Scan to read more about  
Scott McKenzie's career or  
visit [alumni.vt.edu/mckenzie](http://alumni.vt.edu/mckenzie)

# fall FOR NEW HOKIE GEAR

Get the latest looks for trips to Blacksburg, Saturday game day, and more. There's gear for all fans, and we're always adding more.

When you score your gear from the Hokie Shop, a portion of your purchase helps fund programs that support opportunities and experiences for students.



Look good – do good.



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## HOW CAN I SHOP SAFELY ONLINE?

The holiday shopping season is ramping up and unfortunately, so are criminals looking to take advantage of your urge for discounted prices. Virginia Tech cybercrime expert Katalin Parti shared these tips to help you avoid falling victim.

- 1. Avoid clicking unknown links:** Never click on unsolicited pop-ups, emails, or attachments. If something appears unexpectedly, ignore or delete it.
- 2. Verify contact information independently:** Do not call phone numbers from suspicious pop-ups, texts, or emails. Use verified contact details instead
- 3. Never download unfamiliar software:** If an unknown person asks to install software, decline immediately. Criminals often use these tactics to compromise your device.
- 4. Prevent remote access:** Do not permit anyone you don't know to remotely or physically access your computer or other devices.
- 5. Be cautious with money requests:** Legitimate entities such as the U.S. government will never ask you to send money via wire transfers to foreign accounts, prepaid gift cards, or cryptocurrency.
- 6. Carefully review emails:** Pay attention to sender addresses, subject lines, and branding quality. In the age of artificial intelligence, misspellings and bad grammar are not as common as they once were, but requests to share personal details can still signal an email phishing attempt.
- 7. Website vigilance:** There isn't a foolproof method to detect compromised websites. Trust your instincts — if a website feels off or suspicious, avoid making purchases. Always check out website credibility by reading customer reviews before buying goods or services. In your browser, type the website or company name plus "scam" to look for results that indicate suspicious or scam-like activity.
- 8. Enable security alerts:** Set up purchase notifications on your credit cards and disable international purchases unless traveling abroad. Use home or mobile networks for transactions, never public Wi-Fi.
- 9. Use secure payment methods:** Avoid saving credit card details directly on retail sites. Instead, use third-party secure payment options such as Apple Pay, Google Wallet, or PayPal whenever possible.
- 10. Avoid messaging apps for official business:** If someone claiming to be from your bank or credit card company calls about suspicious activity and wants to talk through an app like WhatsApp, hang up. Then, call back using a number from an official website.
- 11. Report suspicious activity:** If you suspect fraudulent activities, promptly report them to your local FBI office with detailed information to help mitigate and prevent further threats. Make your own review online about the website or company so others can be informed. 



(Top) Katalin Parti, associate professor of sociology, College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences.  
Photo courtesy of Katalin Parti.

### SHOP SMART

Scan the code or visit [alumni.vt.edu/shopping](http://alumni.vt.edu/shopping) for more tips to protect yourself from online scams year-round.

# DISHING ON FOOTBALL

Meet the alum who feeds the Washington Commanders

BY JIMMY ROBERTSON

As he attempted to establish a career as a chef in the restaurant industry, Connor McGuire '10 found himself with a unique opportunity to follow his mentor, Jon Mathieson, to become sous chef for the NFL's Washington Commanders in 2013.

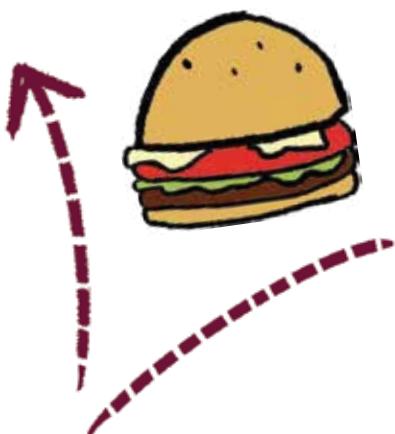
"This was such a unique opportunity," McGuire said via Zoom from the Commanders' headquarters in Ashburn, Virginia. "I thought maybe I'd do it for a year, just to get that experience. My mentor brought me along with him, and I fell in love with it. Sports is like no other business."

McGuire now serves as the executive chef for the Commanders following a promotion in 2018. Armed with an appetite for cooking and for hard work, the Washington, D.C.,

native takes pride in providing tasty and nutritious food daily for some of the world's top professional athletes.



McGuire's culinary career started after he earned his degree in consumer foods from Virginia Tech's Department of Human Nutrition, Foods, and Exercise within the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Today, McGuire and his 15-person staff provide meals for approximately 225 people — including players, coaches, executives, personnel staff, and others — three times a day from July through January. During the season, he rises at 4 a.m. for what will be a 16-hour day, arriving at the team headquarters by 5:15 a.m. or 5:30 a.m. At 6 a.m., he meets with his cooks, who already have prepped breakfast, to review the menus for the day.



"We feed the same people, obviously, every day, so we don't want to be too repetitive," McGuire said. "We talk about the menu and any special things going on, any special prep items that need to be made."

Also, McGuire communicates daily with the team's dietitian, who builds meal plans for specific players that may require special food items. McGuire takes that information and food allergies into account when preparing menus.

The team usually consumes 25 to 45 pounds of vegetables for a single lunch, around 14 pounds of pasta, up to 20 pounds of rice, and 10 pizzas.

Life may cook up new opportunities for this chef, but he doesn't see himself leaving this team any time soon.

"I see myself in this position, in this organization, for a very long time, as long as they'll have me," McGuire said. "There's room for growth in this organization and different ways that I can continue to branch out and continue to help the team." VT

(Top) Connor McGuire (left) and his staff begin breakfast prep for Commanders' players and staff at 5 a.m. and often don't leave the kitchen until after 8 p.m. during the season. (Center) Connor McGuire in the Commanders' kitchen. Photos courtesy of the Washington Commanders.



### HOKIE TO HEAD CHEF

Scan the code or visit [alumni.vt.edu/mcguire](http://vt.edu/mcguire) to read more about the alum serving up championship meals.



## FUEL FOR VICTORY

Nutrition promotes peak performance on the field and in life

BY CARTER BROWN | PHOTOS COURTESY OF VIRGINIA TECH ATHLETICS

When the Hokies take the field, or the court, or the mat, or dive into the pool, behind every athlete stands a dietitian equipped with a fueling strategy to help them feel and perform their best.

Clint Wattenberg, associate athletics director, sports nutrition, oversees the team responsible for meeting the nutrition needs for 600 plus student-athletes across 22 sports.

### **How does nutrition affect student-athlete health?**

Nutrition is a foundational part of health, well-being, and performance. Eating better allows the student-athlete to train harder, to recover better, to be better prepared to handle the stressors of life. That leads to performance adaptations.

### **How does your team involve student athletes in nutrition choices?**

We engage in frequent “team talks” to outline good fueling and recovery strategies, as well as tackling specific nutrition topics by sport. The staff is available for personalized counseling, including continuing education, planning, and optional check-ins for athletes.

### **What are the advantages of the Student-Athlete Performance Center (SAPC)?**

The SAPC is a dining facility for student-athletes, offering nine complete meals a week and a carryout option. It's a popular spot for athletes to gather with the larger athletics family. The menu features key nutritional parameters to support the needs of student-athletes. Our football players and cross-country runners have quite different

nutritional needs, as do our various student-athletes. Our Sodexo staff, led by Chef Seyi Akintonwa, does a terrific job of providing this variety.

### **What is a performance plate?**

Micro and macronutrients are top of mind in the construction of what's known as a performance plate. Plates vary based on training and competition demands, personal preferences, food history, and palette.

Performance plates start with structure and variety at the entrée lines. We ensure that there is a safer option — a comfortable food that our student-athletes recognize. For protein, a chicken or a steak is the safer option, but also, Chef offers an eclectic option like fish, shrimp, a pork dish, or various novel proteins. Same goes for starchy carbs and vegetables.

One of the challenges of fueling so many athletes is managing nutrition for allergies, medical diagnoses, religious requirements, and alternative diets, such as vegan or vegetarian.

Major allergens are labeled in the SAPC and at the Nutrition Oasis, our Olympic sport fueling station. We have an allergy friendly area that offers a variety of allergy safe foods. The space is also an allergy safe place to prepare meals. ✓

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(Top left) Salad buffet in the Student-Athlete Performance Center dining facility. (Top right) Clint Wattenberg (far right) helps ensure that student athletes are optimally fueled.



### **STRONG STARTS HERE**

Scan to read more about  
Clint Wattenberg and sports  
nutrition or visit alumni.  
[vt.edu/athletics-fall](http://vt.edu/athletics-fall).

## HOW TO



## FIND THE PERFECT HOKIE VENUE

From Hahn Garden to War Memorial Chapel – memorable options for special celebrations

BY MARYA BARLOW

In September 2024, Virginia Tech faculty member Ramtin Haghnazari and Ph.D. student Yasaman Ashjazadeh were the first couple to exchange their marriage vows at the Hahn Horticulture Garden's new garden marquee — a covered, open-air, 2,800-square-foot venue for weddings and other events.

"We wanted an outdoor place in a beautiful landscape that protected us from the possibility of rain," said Haghnazari, assistant professor in the College of Architecture, Arts, and Design. "It was perfect, from the setting, to the service, to the affordable price. We, and our guests, had a wonderful time. The Hahn Garden would be great for any event."

The garden marquee is the newest addition to the 6-acre public teaching and display garden in the heart of Virginia Tech's Blacksburg campus. The largest public garden in western Virginia, the Hahn Horticulture Garden is open 365 days a year as a learning resource for gardening, landscaping, and environmental awareness. It's also a living laboratory for Virginia Tech faculty, staff, and students to better serve the landscape, nursery, and public horticulture sectors.

"We are a self-supporting entity, so all revenue from event rentals goes straight into our daily operating fund to cover everything from paying student workers, to plants and mulch, to equipment," said Hahn Horticulture Garden Director Scott Douglas. "Having a permanent structure

with a hard floor enables us to host more events — which allows us to bring in more revenue to achieve our goal of being a teaching garden."

Located next to the Peggy Lee Hahn Garden Pavilion, the marquee accommodates up to 184 people. It features a two-tiered green metal roof, tapered wood columns with Hokie Stone bases, a smooth concrete floor, and expansive views of the garden.

Douglas said the venue has been reserved for several game day tailgates and is booking weddings well into fall of 2026.

### Cultivating progress

"I have watched the garden develop over the last 40 years," said Hokie alumnus Mike Hildebrand '74, owner of James River Nurseries, who supported the marquee project. "The marquee space will certainly be a catalyst for getting more visitors to the garden. James River Nurseries' — and my — success has been supported for many years through the horticulture program, so giving back has been a privilege."

(Top) A recent wedding photo features an elegant table set up under the marquee. Photo by Eden Alley Photography. (Inset) Hahn Garden is a popular spot for bridal portraits and other photos. Photo by Rachel DeBusk Creative.



### THE MAIN EVENT

To learn more about hosting an event on campus, scan or visit [alumni.vt.edu/host](http://alumni.vt.edu/host).



## Gathering Grounds

In addition to the garden, Hokies may reserve other spaces on campus for their special events.

The Virginia Tech War Memorial Chapel has been open for weddings since 1960, and occasionally, memorial services are also held in the venue. Weddings are scheduled year-round on Saturdays, and Sunday dates may be considered during the summer months.

The Center for the Arts features premier spaces, including a 1,200-seat theatre, adaptable black box Cube, and flexible, open lobbies to accommodate a range of events. The center can host full-scale productions, talks and lectures, receptions, dinners, and other special events.

Details and reservation forms for the venues may be found online, and although its schedule is very busy, special requests for HokieBird appearances may be made online through [hokiesports.com](http://hokiesports.com).

*"When we got married in 2017, my parents surprised us with an appearance by the HokieBird, and it was absolutely perfect," said Kelly Jamieson Noack '09, who married Chris Noack '07 on June 24, 2017.*

Additional funds for the marquee came from the Peggy Lee Hahn Memorial Garden and T. Marshall and Peggy Lee Hahn Horticulture Endowments, the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, the School of Plant and Environmental Sciences, and Patricia Ceperley, a longtime garden volunteer and friend.

The Saunders family, alumni owners of Saunders Brothers Inc. Nursery in Piney River, Virginia, is sponsoring the next chapter of growth: a new formal garden.

"The formal garden will offer experiences to maintain a managed and controlled landscape style that's very different from other spaces in the garden," Douglas said. **VT**

(Top) The new marquee at Virginia Tech's Hahn Horticulture Garden can host groups of up to 184 people and is the first of several new features to enhance the public garden.

*Photo by Tom Soladay.*

(Bottom left) Laura Collins Legg '93 says that "a most memorable moment was when the HokieBird made an appearance to lead a rendition of the Hokie Pokey during the reception."

(Bottom center) Neil '88, M.S. '00 and Dianna (Grotto) Jablonski '90 tag the famed Hokie Stone in Lane Stadium's tunnel for good luck before the wedding reception.

*Photos from the Virginia Tech Magazine Archives.*



*(Above) Photo courtesy of Kelly Noack.*



(At left, from left) Jared Frayer, Cody Brewer, Sam Latona, Dom Latona, Norm Latona, Virginia Tech head wrestling coach Tony Robie, and Jared Haught. (Above) Tony Robie.

## WHEN SERVICE SAVES

One friendship. One act of courage. Two lives forever changed.

BY JACK BRIZENDINE '24 | PHOTOS COURTESY OF VIRGINIA TECH ATHLETICS

Some friendships change your life. For Norm Latona, one of those friends also saved it.

Latona, a former wrestler and co-founder of the Warrior Wrestling Club in Alabaster, Alabama, met Virginia Tech coach Tony Robie at a clinic years ago. Their bond deepened when Latona's sons, Dominic and Sam, joined the Hokies' wrestling program.

*"We just kind of developed a friendship," Robie said. "It was a lot more than just being the coach of two of his kids ... we really hit it off and talked about a lot of things that weren't related to wrestling."*

Latona admired the community that Robie had built in Blacksburg, also.

"I haven't heard about any program [in the country] that even comes close to Virginia Tech," he said. "It's a special place, and that's a function of Tony."

That family culture became more evident when Latona was diagnosed with advanced kidney disease.

Within months, he was in renal failure and dependent on dialysis. A transplant was his only long-term solution. Word spread and Hokies everywhere stepped forward.

"The doctor came in one time and said that there were so many people that applied to be a kidney donor that they had to turn people away," said two-time All American Sam Latona.

"I think we became a little notorious within the transplant team ... for how many folks they were having to look through and evaluate," Dominic Latona added.

And then, Robie emerged as a match.

"I had a very strong calling that I was going to be able to donate and that was part of the plan for me," he said. "Once I made the decision to do it, I never wavered or thought twice about it."

Following a successful surgery, both men have recovered and are bound by a friendship that has become family.

Latona's sons say their father taught them to trust in God and love others. Robie mirrors those lessons, urging wrestlers to support each other without hesitation.

When asked to describe their father and coach, Dominic and Sam Latona chose the same word: selfless. A fitting tribute for two men who embody *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve). 



### BEYOND THE MAT

To read more about Tony Robie, scan the code or visit [alumni.vt.edu/robie](http://alumni.vt.edu/robie).



# SAVE THE DATES

We love celebrating the Hokie community.  
Attend one of our upcoming events in  
Blacksburg and beyond.

## OCT. 1-NOV. 17

Hokie Hike  
Virtual

## NOV. 18

Cornerstone Chat:  
Changes Coming to Medicare in 2026  
Roanoke, Virginia  
(Virtual option available.)

## DEC. 18

Virginia Tech Night with the  
Washington Capitals  
Washington, D.C.

## FEB. 18-19

Giving Day  
Virtual

## JUNE 4-7

Alumni Weekend  
Blacksburg, Virginia



### DON'T MISS OUT

For more events, scan  
the code or visit [alumni.vt.edu/events-fall](http://alumni.vt.edu/events-fall).

## HIKE WITH HOKIES

Crisp air, colorful trails, and Hokies everywhere—it's Hokie Hike season!

Since 2020, thousands of Virginia Tech's alums and friends have laced up their boots or sneakers and hit the trails from Blacksburg to far-flung corners of the globe as part of Hokie Hike.

Registering is easy. There are options for adults, children, and even pets. Once you register, we'll mail you some sweet Hokie hiking gear to use on your trek.

There's still time to join in the fun this fall! The 2025 Hokie Hike runs Oct. 1–Nov. 17.

Grab your hiking pals, two-legged or four-legged, choose your favorite trail—or even your neighborhood sidewalk—and start exploring. Share your pics with #HokieHike, and see how Hokies everywhere are making memories outdoors.

Since it began, Hokie Hike has raised more than \$75,000 to support recreation opportunities for students.

What are you waiting for? Let's hike, Hokies! 🚶



(From left) Mark Ph. D. '91 and Boni Flanagan are seasoned Hokie Hikers who enjoyed exploring the coast of Nova Scotia this year.



### ON THE MOVE

Scan the code or visit [alumni.vt.edu/hike-25](http://alumni.vt.edu/hike-25).

## UNBRIDLED DREAMS

BY JIMMY ROBERTSON

Seven years ago, while working full time as a veterinarian, Rob Bell '86, M.S. '89, D.V.M. '07 heard that the World Clydesdale Show was going to be in Madison, Wisconsin. He asked his wife, Robin Bell '03, if she had any interest in seeing the powerful draft horses.

"I told her, 'This looks like fun. Do you want to go?'" he said. "Of course, being a horse girl, she's like 'Hell, yeah.'"

That fun trip sparked another venture a few months later — a horse sale in northern Indiana. This time, the trip left the Bells a little emptier in their pockets, but with a trailer filled with their future.

Rob and Robin Bell simply couldn't hold back the reins on their enthusiasm, purchasing two Clydesdale mares — named Monga and Harley — and ultimately starting Misfit Manor, a Clydesdale and donkey breeding enterprise on their 100-acre property in rural Penhook, Virginia, about 30 minutes southeast of Roanoke.

Today, the Bells have 13 Clydesdales — 10 mares and three stallions — along with three other horses of different breeds and three donkeys. As fledglings in the horse breeding business, they find themselves saddled with a little more responsibility than maybe they originally expected. But such is the sacrifice when one has an unbridled passion for horses.

Originally from Scotland, Clydesdales have become an American icon, mainly because of their association with Anheuser-Busch brewery. But early settlers brought them to America for more practical purposes — logging, farming, and hauling coal.

Part of the Bells' decision to breed Clydesdales centers on the breed's lack of prominence in Virginia, where they say Percherons and Belgian drafts are more prevalent.

The other part: "I've got to be different," Rob Bell said.

The couple tag-teams the everyday farm chores, such as feeding, cleaning water troughs, and repairing fences. Robin Bell mostly handles the farrier work, while Rob



(Top) Rob and Robin Bell train their horses, with Rob (pictured) teaching certain Clydesdales how to pull a cart and Robin training others on equitation events for future competitions. (Above) Rob and Robin Bell showcased two of their Clydesdales pulling their cart during the 2024 Homecoming parade. Photos by Andrew Mann.



### HORSE SENSE

Scan the code or go to [alumni.vt.edu/hooves](https://alumni.vt.edu/hooves) to read more.



Bell takes care of any veterinary needs. They also train their horses, with Rob teaching certain Clydesdales how to pull a cart and Robin training others on equitation events for future competitions.

Rob Bell graduated in 1986 with a degree in forestry, and three years later, added a master's degree in natural resource management and economics, both from the College of Natural Resources and Environment.

In 2003, he left his job in forestry to pursue a veterinary degree from the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine. He was 40 at the time, nearly 20 years older than his fellow classmates.

He jokingly said he had a midlife crisis.

"I had wanted to be a veterinarian [when he first enrolled at Virginia Tech], but my grades weren't going to get me into that school, and I was realistic enough to say that plan B is the plan," said Rob Bell.

"In 2003, I decided to apply. It wasn't that hard for me because I didn't have a family. I was single at that time. I was financially secure. In my mind, it was like, 'I'll just keep applying until they let me in or I retire, whichever comes first.' I applied the first time and didn't get in. The second time, they let me in."

While there, he met Robin Bell. She earned a degree in animal science from the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences in 2003 and worked as a licensed veterinary technician at the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine.

After completing his degree in 2007, Rob Bell spent the next 15 years working as a veterinarian. In 2011, he founded Log Cabin Vet Inc., living in Franklin County, Virginia, and working as a relief veterinarian, filling in for veterinarians for vacations, medical reasons, family situations, and such. He retired in 2022.

But, Rob Bell's version of retirement looks different than most people's. It looks like ... well ... work. 



### Hokie hospitality with a side of hay

The world-renowned Budweiser Clydesdales Team made an overnight stop at Virginia Tech in July, spending a restful night in the Virginia Tech Equitation Barn. The Clydesdales were on their way from Washington, D.C., where they participated in the National 4th of July Parade, to Atlanta for the MLB All-Star Game. Marissa Kaminski '15 coordinated the stay in collaboration with Coach Beth Sheely and Equine Barn Manager Caroline Knewst. Kaminski is a Budweiser Clydesdale handler.

The Clydesdales, along with their dalmatians, were a special sight for those on campus. The event was celebrated by the Virginia Tech community on social media, with posts highlighting the horses' visit.

(Above) Marissa Kaminski with a Budweiser Clydesdale at Virginia Tech. Photos by Marya Barlow.

## HAPPENINGS



**WELCOME TO THE CITY - D.C.** Board members from the Asian Pacific Islander Desi Alumni Society at Mister Days for the D.C. Welcome to the City event for new Hokies in the area. (From left to right) Melanie Do '20, Elaine "E.J." Consolacion '21, Charlyn Castillo '21, and Jackie Marmol '20. *Photo courtesy of Kashi Nikore '22.*



**START JUMPING** Hundreds of Hokies joined the Enter Night Concert Kickoff, a preshow tailgate held at the Sochinski-McKee Marching Virginians Center, before Metallica took to the stage inside Lane Stadium on May 7. *Photo by Luke Hayes.*

**WELCOME TO THE CITY - NEW YORK** (From left to right) Matt Rosenstein, Patrick Tuite '19, Natalie Beden '18, and Matt Turner '18 attend New York Welcome to the City, held at Downtown Social. The event, held in August each year, welcomes Hokies who are new to the area. *Photo courtesy of Mariah Raskin '18.*



### PICTURE THIS

Scan the code or visit [alumni.vt.edu/gallery](http://alumni.vt.edu/gallery) to see more alumni photos and events.



#### HAVE HOKIE SPIRIT, WILL TRAVEL

Virginia Tech fans gathered in Atlanta at a pregame tailgate before the Hokies faced the Gamecocks in this year's season opener at Mercedes-Benz Stadium. *Photo courtesy of Boman Raskin '21.*

**THE SUMMER TRADITION** More than 1,000 Hokies attended Alumni Weekend in June, including Saturday's dinner, dancing, and fireworks on the Drillfield. *Photo by Luke Hayes.*



**CELEBRATING A LASTING LEGACY** The Legacy Society Gathering was held earlier this fall in Blacksburg, honoring those Hokies who make deferred gifts or have included the university in their estate plans. Pictured at the event, (from left to right), are Maj. Gen. William H. Seely III, Corps of Cadets commandant, Jim Marchant, Mary Marchant, and Ted King '72. *Photo by Lee Friesland.*

# THE START OF SOMETHING HOKIE

A DAY OF BOXES, BIG EMOTIONS, AND BEGINNINGS

BY ERICA STACY

From bustling residence halls to carefully coordinated behind-the-scenes details, move-in day sets the stage for a new class of Hokies to begin their Virginia Tech adventure.



# THE PROCESS

## BY THE NUMBERS

Move-in 2025 took place Aug. 19-21 for first-year and transfer students and Aug. 22-24 for returning students. Facilities' crews worked throughout the summer to make repairs and replace furniture. On-campus students signed up for move-in timeslots in July. Timeslots were staggered to minimize traffic snarls.

**480**   
move-in carts

**700**   
furniture replacements

**11,256**   
bottles of water

**5,295**   
room repairs

**597**   
hokie helper shifts



Families, friends, and volunteers support students during campus move-in. Photos by Clark DeHart.

## HOW MANY STUDENTS MOVE IN PER DAY?

On new student move-in days, 2,000–2,500 students moved in on campus each day. That dropped to around 450-600 students a day for returning on-campus students.

**2,000-2,500**  
new students

**450-600**  
returning students



### WELCOME HOME, HOKIES!

Scan or visit [alumni.vt.edu/move-in](https://alumni.vt.edu/move-in) for videos, playlists and more move-in memories.

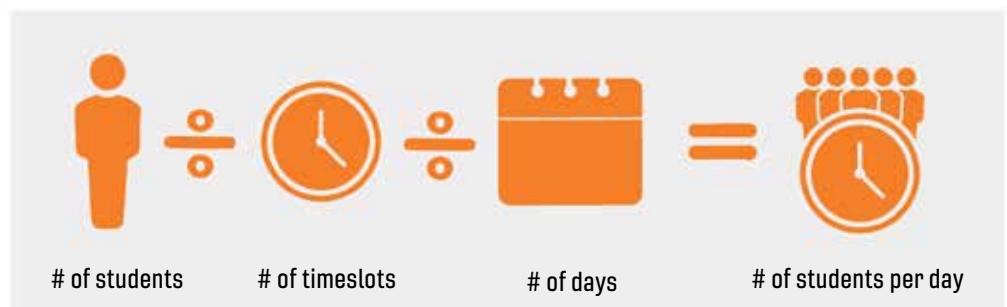


## MATH MATTERS

### HOW MOVE-IN IS CALCULATED

This year all Living Learning Program (LLP) students were required to move in by the end of the day on Wed., Aug. 20. So, if there are 300 people in an LLP, and there are 11 timeslots, the group is divided by 22 to spread students out evenly across two days.

In many ways, move-in day hasn't changed much over the years. *Photo from 1982 Bugle.*



## MOVE-IN MEMORIES

Some move-in essentials never change. Others don't survive the decades. We reached out to Hokie alums to learn more about must-have items when they first unpacked in Blacksburg.

“

In 1992 when we moved in, we had to purchase a heavy, clunky, wooden loft bed made out of four-by-fours and two-by-fours to set up in our rooms if we wanted more space. Yeah, that was fun.

**Dustin Eshelman '96**  
Roanoke, Virginia

In the fall of 1976, I brought a small fridge and Pioneer 35W stereo, large speakers, and crates of vinyl. I met my lifelong friends by playing Marshall Tucker!

**David Gess '80**  
Barboursville, Virginia

I brought my sewing machine to seventh floor A.J. (Ambler Johnson) in 1973!! I met my husband, Rick, in the sixth floor A.J. lounge the first weekend.

**Susan Guthrie DiSalvo '77**  
Blacksburg, Virginia

I remember my 1986 move-in well — bringing that new student ID card with my social security number on it as the ID number.

**Tracy Lynn Eastridge '90**  
Charlotte, North Carolina

Before I moved in 1969, my dad gifted me his slide rule. The Texas Instruments (TI) calculator hadn't come out yet. The only phone was a shared pay phone down the hall.

**Marc Sheffler '73**  
Bellefonte, Pennsylvania

I arrived with an 8-track tape player, a 12-inch black and white TV with rabbit ears, a mini fridge, and a manual typewriter.

**Clarence W. Rorrer '75**  
Alexandria, Virginia

”



## CADET MOVE-IN 2025

### AT A GLANCE

**23**

minutes, 27 seconds

Check-in time from the front door of the Corps Leadership and Military Science Building to the front door of the cadet's residence hall.



**515**

new cadets

The corps moved in 65 families every 30 minutes.

**20**

alumni returned

To hand out items, answer questions, and operate tents and water stations at three halls.



**283**

returning cadets

Helped manage move-in tasks.

(Top) New cadets take the oath of cadets.

(Above) The Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets celebrate the end of New Cadet Week with a parade on the Drillfield. Photos by Clark DeHart.



# *Defining* **MOMENTS**

How Hokies found direction, meaning, and the confidence to pursue them

BY ERICA STACY WITH ANDREW ADKINS M.A. '24, ANNE KROEMER HOFFMAN '85,  
ALEX PARRISH, JIMMY ROBERTSON, MELISSA VIDMAR, MELODY WARNICK

**Butterfly Effect** (bədər, flī ə 'fekt, ēkt), *n.*

: a property of chaotic systems (*such as the atmosphere*) by which small changes in initial conditions can lead to large-scale and unpredictable variation in the future state of the system.



Sometimes one moment shifts the trajectory of a life — a spark of curiosity, a mentor's encouragement, a scholarship that provides a lift, or an opportunity to test limits in the classroom or on the field. What begins quietly can gather momentum, setting new paths in motion that extend far beyond the moment itself. At Virginia Tech, these moments become forces that shape futures, inspire service, and empower Hokies to make a positive difference in the world.

# Grounded in Community

Mary Michael Lipford Zahed '21, M.S. '24 came to Virginia Tech seeking an education that blended cultural understanding with resource conservation. When she met Ozzie Abaye, the Thomas B. Hutcheson Jr. Professor of Agronomy, Zahed found her true path — one rooted in hands-on experiences and community-based solutions.

Through fieldwork in Senegal, Ghana, and rural Virginia, Zahed, who earned degrees in crop and soil science, learned that lasting change depends on building trust.

"For work to be sustainable, it needs to involve the community," she said.

Zahed and her husband, Malek Zahed '18, envision taking their skills abroad to expand cross-cultural knowledge eventually, but they are currently located in San Antonio, Texas, for his neurosurgery residency, a move that led her to the Texas Water Resources Institute. Today, she helps landowners adopt practices that protect and conserve local water resources.

"It's grassroots work, which is my favorite, and I am using everything I've learned from previous experiences," Zahed said.

Guided by Abaye's lessons — celebrate small wins, trust each step — Zahed continues to cultivate change wherever life plants her.

(Right) Mary Michael Lipford Zahed organizes community outreach programs in Texas. Photo courtesy of Mary Michael Lipford Zahed. (Bottom right) Ozzie Abaye (second from right) helps students prepare foods using flour-alternatives. Photo by Clark DeHart.



In 2021, Mary Michael Lipford Zahed (second from left) brought one of her students, Patrick (third from left), to tour the University of Cape Coast facilities in Ghana with Kwekuchar Ackah (at right). Photo courtesy of Mary Michael Lipford Zahed.



“

For work to be sustainable, it needs to involve the community.”



“

The fact that Nate will be remembered, and he'll have an impact forever there, I think that's special.”

# Paying It Forward

Nate Williams '09 approached death the same way he did life — with love, laughter, and a desire to leave a legacy.

“He never wanted to be known as the ‘sick’ friend,” said his wife, Faith Williams. “He just wanted to be the friend.”

Nate Williams, who graduated with a degree in architecture, passed away in 2020 after a two-year battle with colon cancer. But his story didn't end there.

A few days before he died, Nate Williams expressed a desire to “start a scholarship for architecture students at Virginia Tech because being an architect meant everything to him. It was his passion and his profession. It was his food and air.”

Friends, family, and even strangers inspired by his life contributed to endow a scholarship in his name, ensuring his legacy supports future generations.

Within four years, more than \$60,000 was raised via GoFundMe. The Williams family and other anonymous donors committed

the remaining \$40,000, meeting the \$100,000 endowment requirement.

The Nathan Williams Scholarship will support an incoming first-year student in the College of Architecture, Arts, and Design each year.

“The fact that Nate will be remembered, and he'll have an impact forever there, I think that's special,” said Jeff Yacup '07, who attended high school with Williams and was a longtime friend. “To think back to the times we had there and the fun we had, and that may be emulated for some other student from Manassas or elsewhere — I think it's amazing.”

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While they were students at Virginia Tech and even after graduating, (from left to right) Alex Bonine '07, Nathan Hall '07, Nate Williams, Mike Kelly '07, Colin Reusch, and Lenny Brown '08, participated in Novembeard to raise money for cancer research. Photo courtesy of Lenny Brown '08.

# A Hokie Bond Across Generations

“

**It's really important to me to know I'm actually making a difference in somebody else's life. Rabihah reminds me on a daily basis why it's so important to give.”**

Nearly 30 years apart, Julie Byrd '95 and senior Rabihah Waheed found their way to Virginia Tech. Their paths connected through the Beyond Boundaries Scholars program, which pairs donors with students and doubles each gift through a university match.

For Byrd, who studied English and history and built a 20-year career in finance, the program offered a meaningful way to give back. She remembered how scholarships helped her as a student and wanted to extend that support to future generations.

Waheed, a political science major with a minor in Arabic, is a first-generation student who grew up in Northern Virginia. She said Byrd's mentorship has been invaluable.

“When you are a first-gen student, people don't always realize how much having

someone there for you can shape your four years,” Waheed said. “I'm glad you were the one paired with me, because I feel like you understand.”

Since the Beyond Boundaries Scholars program launched in 2017, more than 100 households have helped students pursue their dreams. Byrd encourages others to consider it.

“A lot of people think they have to give large dollar amounts,” she said. “The reality is, with Beyond Boundaries, you're giving a relatively small amount, but it's so significant. You get to watch someone grow, and to know you're helping them along their journey — it is incredibly meaningful.”

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(Below) Julie Byrd (left) and international relations major Rabihah Waheed. Photo by Andrew Adkins.





“

I had a lot of people at Virginia Tech who encouraged me to learn and step outside of just being an athlete. One pivotal experience was studying abroad. It taught me that we're all a lot more alike than we are different, even in various corners of the world.”

Changing the world may be impossible, but changing a world is realistic — that's how Lorenzo "Zo" Amani '11, '12 approaches life.

Amani's journey to the financial sector is one of perseverance, growth, and adaptability. On the field and in the classroom, coaches, peers, and faculty supported him as an athlete, student, and intern. Today, he serves as a mentor and role model.

The son of military parents, Amani grew up under structured discipline, moving frequently, shaping his resilience. In high school, he played defensive back and ran the 400-meter dash in the Junior Olympics, ultimately focusing on football for scholarship opportunities that led him to Virginia Tech. A Lisfranc injury before his junior season shifted his focus from athletics to academics.

"I had a lot of people at Virginia Tech who encouraged me to learn and step outside of just being an athlete," Amani said.

"One pivotal experience was studying abroad. It taught me that we're all a lot

more alike than we are different, even in various corners of the world."

After earning degrees in sociology and consumer studies, Amani pursued a master's in higher education at Arizona State University while mentoring student-athletes transitioning from college sports. He later worked with the Federal Reserve, U.S. Treasury, and National Community Re-investment Coalition.

Today, Amani is senior vice president, compliance product senior officer for wealth banking and lending for CitiBank. Also, he is working to develop SPinance, a resource hub to empower athletes by addressing their financial literacy and education needs. Currently, Amani is pursuing a Ph.D. in public administration and public affairs at Virginia Tech, and this summer, he joined the board of directors of the Virginia Council on Economic Education. Through these efforts, he continues to live out his philosophy of changing a world — one life at a time.

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(At left) Zo Amani. Photo courtesy of Zo Amani.

# Changing A World

# Balancing The Future

After immigrating from Hong Kong, Marco Leung '12 grew up in Bluefield, Virginia, where his uncle ran a small restaurant. He was an excellent student, but financially, college seemed out of reach. Leung mapped every cost alongside his available funds in columns on a whiteboard until the numbers aligned.

That determination carried him through Virginia Tech, where he earned a computer science degree with minors in business and math, landed internships, and set the stage

for a career at Deloitte. As a senior manager, Leung leads federal digital transformation projects that improve citizen services and spark innovation.

An active member of the Virginia Tech Alumni Board, he connects Hokies with opportunities at Deloitte. "Virginia Tech leveled the playing field for me," Leung said. "Now I can help expand that network for future Hokies."

(Below) Marco Leung (second from right) participates in Hokies on Wall Street in 2024. Photo by Dana Maxson.

“

Now I can help expand that network for future Hokies.”





“

I apply everything I learned at Virginia Tech in what I am doing today. It filled my toolbox with the essential tools.”



“

She helped me with my career path and set me up for success. This is the lasting impact a mentor can have on someone.”

A great mentor can guide students through college, shape career readiness, and inspire success long after graduation. For Alana Davis '07, that mentor was Dixie Watts Dalton, associate professor of practice in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences.

“Dr. Dalton had a profound impact on me as a student,” Davis said. “She helped me with my career path and set me up for success. This is the lasting impact a mentor can have on someone.”

Davis had long dreamed of becoming a veterinarian. Her parents encouraged her to study business if she hoped to one day own a practice. Dalton showed her a path through agricultural and applied economics that combined both business and pre-veterinary coursework.

The program challenged Davis and ultimately helped her realize veterinary medicine wasn't the right fit. She joined Virginia Tech's Post-baccalaureate Research and Education Program, where she focused on virology and discovered a passion for vaccine development.

Today, Davis is head of customer experience at FUJIFILM Diosynth Biotechnologies. She credits Virginia Tech for preparing her to adapt and thrive.

“I apply everything I learned at Virginia Tech in what I am doing today,” Davis said. “It filled my toolbox with the essential tools.”

For Dalton, watching Davis succeed has been rewarding. “She embraced the mentoring opportunities provided to her as a student and, in a full-circle moment, is benefiting those with whom she works,” Dalton said.

Looking back, Davis said mentorship gave her courage to change paths. “It was scary when I decided not to be a veterinarian anymore. Mentorship was crucial to me and why I proudly pay it forward. I am a proud Hokie.”

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(Top) Alana Davis. Photos courtesy of FUJIFILM Diosynth Biotechnologies. (At left) Dixie Watts Dalton. Photo by Normand Adams.



## Mentorship That Lasts a Lifetime

# Engineering Performance

“

I'm thrilled I chose Virginia Tech and have had such a supportive community helping me reach my goals.”

John Linehan ran track at Grafton High School in Yorktown, Virginia, but at Virginia Tech, he chose a different lane.

“I knew I wasn't going to be a pro athlete, but I was obsessed with cross country and track,” Linehan said. “There's no way I could run those times, but I wanted to help pro athletes hit world records and crazy goals. An advisor helped me see the difference between engineering disciplines, and I've been working toward that ever since.”

Linehan chose mechanical engineering based on its versatility and his interest in the mechanics of shoes, adding a biomechanical engineering minor. The mix put him at the perfect intersection: designing athletic shoes to support the human foot in motion.

In the Kevin P. Granata Biomechanics Lab, Linehan explored sex-based differences in performance and plantar loading in soccer and football cleats. According to Robin Queen, professor and lab director,

he quickly learned the skills needed to make meaningful contributions in the industry.

Hungry to expand his experience, Linehan scoured LinkedIn for internships worldwide. When a first interview at Adidas in product testing didn't pan out, he asked for feedback and was recommended to the product development team instead. That led to six months in Germany, combining hands-on work with study abroad.

Now a senior, Linehan has shifted focus from feet to heads, conducting research in the Virginia Tech Helmet Lab. The journey has given him clarity as he nears graduation in May 2026.

“I'm fascinated by how products interact with the body,” he said. “Innovation in sports isn't just about performance; it's about solving problems, telling stories, and making an impact. I'm thrilled I chose Virginia Tech and have had such a supportive community helping me reach my goals.”



(From left) Bjørn Gulden, CEO of Adidas, with John Linehan.  
(At right) John Linehan in the Virginia Tech Helmet Lab. Photos courtesy of John Linehan.





“

**She also offered answers to my questions about Virginia Tech and Blacksburg, from ‘What are the students like?’ to ‘Where can I get good Thai food around here?’**

Now a collegiate associate professor, Jadrian Wooten, first stepped onto a college campus as a third grader – it made higher education real.

As a first-generation student, Wooten witnessed how his parents' perspectives expanded as he pursued his degrees. He recognized that learning can transform families.

Years later, a different encounter affirmed his viewpoint and reshaped his path.

Wooten, who is the director of undergraduate studies in the College of Science, was surprised during a 2022 interview at Virginia Tech when he had a 30-minute confidential meeting with a work-life liaison. The conversation signaled something new: a university investing in faculty well-being.

The 10-year-old work-life liaison program, led by the Office of Faculty Affairs, in the

Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, is a unique creation of Virginia Tech that encourages prospective faculty to ask those crucial questions they often feel they can't ask their search committee.

In Wooten's case, the liaison shared information about Virginia Tech's work-life programs, policies, and culture, including dual-career resources, tenure clock extensions, parental leave and modified duties, and community resources.

“She also offered answers to my questions about Virginia Tech and Blacksburg, from ‘What are the students like?’ to ‘Where can I get good Thai food around here?’ It's not the only reason we came,” Wooten said, “but it made it a lot easier to say yes.”

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(At left) Jadrian Wooten. Photo by Hunter Quillen Gresham.

# Questions | That Matter |

**Every story begins with a moment — a decision, a challenge, a flash of curiosity. Over time, those sparks build force, bending trajectories and opening new directions for discovery. At Virginia Tech, the energy of these moments carries forward, guiding Hokies to serve others, make lives better, and set futures in motion that reach far beyond where they began. VT**



## MOMENTS THAT MATTER

Scan to see videos and more about this story, or visit [alumni.vt.edu/moments](https://alumni.vt.edu/moments).



# ROOTED IN A CENTURY OF INNOVATION

## FORESTRY AT VIRGINIA TECH CELEBRATES 100 YEARS

BY ANNE KROEMER HOFFMAN '85

One hundred years ago, Virginia Tech planted the seed for forestry education with a single hire. Over time, that seed grew into the College of Natural Resources and Environment — a national leader in sustainable land management, environmental stewardship, and cutting-edge research.

Today, the college is home to four departments, 12 undergraduate majors, and world-class research programs that tackle challenges ranging from climate resilience to sustainable materials. In May, the college's students earned 255 bachelor's degrees and 60 advanced degrees.

As the forestry program marks its centennial, we look back at the milestones that shaped its legacy, explore the research driving solutions for a changing planet, and amplify the alumni and faculty whose work continues to protect and restore the world's natural resources.

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(Top) Agriculture Experiment Station circa 1890. Photo from the Harry Downing Temple, Jr., Papers. (Middle) Virginia forest researcher. Photo from "Virginia Tech Forester" 1958. (Bottom) circa 1958, pallet truck winches loaded pallets up removable ramps to the bed of the truck. Photo from "Virginia Tech Forester," 1958. (Background) Professor Thomas B. Hutcheson and V.P.I. students, conduct a wheat experiment, circa 1916. Photo courtesy of Virginia Tech Special Collections and University Archives.



## A CENTURY OF FORESTRY EDUCATION

Virginia Tech's College of Natural Resources and Environment celebrates 100 years of forestry education, tracing its roots from a single course to national prominence.

### FROM TIMBER TO TOMORROW

When Virginia Tech hired Wilbur O'Byrne in 1925 to teach forestry, few could have imagined the academic legacy the decision would propagate. What started as a single course has matured into one of the nation's premier programs in natural resources and environmental education.

"Forestry is all about manipulating the environment — it's gardening, but with trees," said John Seiler Ph.D. '84, Alumni Distinguished Professor of Forest Biology. "Adjusting for light, water, soil — it's a very hands-on science."

Seiler, who has taught at the university since 1984, has seen the program expand well beyond traditional forestry. "What's now the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation started out focused primarily on forestry," he said. "But over time, we realized we had more and more majors. We changed the name to reflect what we actually are."

Adaptability, he said, helps the program remain relevant. "Our curriculum has never been static. We've evolved steadily based on what students need and what the job market demands."

That spirit of evolution isn't new. It's been part of the program's DNA since its earliest days. At the turn of the 20th century, Virginia's forests were nearly stripped bare by logging and industrial demand. The first forestry course appeared in the 1902 catalog, but the program truly took root in 1925 when O'Byrne joined the faculty to lead forest management education.

In the decades that followed, Virginia Tech became the commonwealth's center for forestry education, no longer sending — and funding — Virginia students to attend North Carolina State University for a degree.

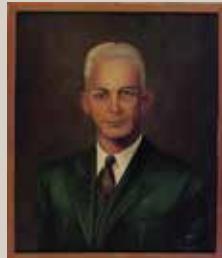
During the 1970s and '80s, the program added fisheries, wildlife, and wood science; by 1982, Virginia Tech's forestry school ranked among the top three in the nation.

"Over the past century, our program has grown beyond traditional forestry where forests were primarily managed for fiber production," said Eric Wiseman, professor of urban forestry. "Today, we address a much broader range of issues, from managing rural wildlands to understanding how urbanization impacts natural resources."

The first forestry course appeared in the 1902 catalog of Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute, offering instruction in the classification and conservation of native trees.

#### ► 1925

The program took root with the hiring of pioneering professor Wilbur O'Byrne.



Wilbur O'Byrne.  
Photo from 2007  
CNR History Book.

#### ► 1938

The university began offering a Bachelor of Science in conservation and forestry, establishing a formal path for students interested in sustainable land management.



Cover of Forester Club's first annual publication, 1949.  
Scan of booklet.

#### ► 1959

Forestry and wildlife sciences separated from the Department of Biology to form a new academic unit dedicated to the conservation of forest landscapes and the species they support.



In July, (from left to right) Tenna Hosner, Jessica Rodriguez '25, former faculty member Dave Smith, department head Joe Knight, Associate Dean Keith Goyne, and Dean Paul Winstorfer plant a commemorative northern red oak tree near the Duck Pond to celebrate a century of forestry education. The ceremonial planting included a formal first-shovel of dirt to cover the root ball. Photo by Chris Moody.



Professor Mike Aust teaches students to use surveying tools to find property lines as part of his class, Forest Roads and Boundaries in 2022. Photo by Clark DeHart.

## ALUMNI LEAD THE WAY

The College of Natural Resources and Environment boasts more than 10,000 living alumni — professionals who are shaping the future of environmental stewardship in government, industry, and nonprofit sectors.

As the program marks its 100th year, four Hokies offer insights on their work, their alma mater, and their advice to those who will shape the future of natural resources.

### BRIAN KEIGHTLEY '01

Director, Urban and Community Forestry, Fairfax County, Virginia

**What does urban and community forestry mean in practice?** Among the defining features that attract people to our county is the abundance of green spaces and tree canopies. As the county grows, it's becoming increasingly challenging to balance new development, expanding infrastructure, and the establishment of additional services and commercial areas — while still preserving these vital green spaces and tree cover.

**How did Virginia Tech Forestry influence your path?** I attribute much of my professional development to my undergraduate education. It provided me with a solid, broad-based foundation that enabled me to excel in a variety of roles. It's fascinating how those experiences continue to influence my professional journey.

**What advice would you offer to current forestry students?** Gain relevant job experience before graduation. Prioritize a strong foundation in the core sciences and technical skills essential to forestry. These disciplines offer critical expertise that is difficult to teach on the job.

### MOLLY O'LIDDY '14

Urban and Community Forestry Partnership coordinator, Charlottesville, Virginia

**How did Virginia Tech Forestry influence your path?** The forestry classes that I took gave me various tools that I still refer to daily. Without that exposure, I wouldn't be where I am today.

**Any special memories about your time at the university?** One of my favorites is of wetlands class with Dr. Mike Aust. My class took a trip down to Francis Marion in South Carolina and spent a few days taking and analyzing soil samples. Each site was unique — on one site I sunk to my hips in mud and had to rely on a handful of classmates to pry me out.

**What advice would you offer to current forestry students?** When you are looking for employment, if you find a position that looks interesting, apply for it. Even if you are not completely qualified, you may score an interview where you can introduce yourself. Being Virginia Tech Hokies — I would put my money on you any day.



#### AIMEE LIVINGS TOMCHO '98

Senior manager, technical operations, Family Forestry Carbon Program, American Forest Foundation, Washington, D.C.

**How does your work make an impact?** The principles of forestry and wildlife management I learned at Virginia Tech equipped me with practical knowledge that was not only foundational, but also adaptable. Today, my work with American Forest Foundation allows me to implement the traditional practice of forestry through the modernized lens of the forest carbon markets ... more than I imagined possible as a young college graduate.

**Biggest lessons from Virginia Tech?**

Virginia Tech taught me to be a critical thinker and how to be versatile in my career and the ways I chose to implement conservation sciences.

**What would you tell women entering forestry today?** Each of the women before you helped open more accessible pathways in forestry professions. Our unique perspective serves not only as an asset but as an essential cog in the wheel of global land stewardship.



#### ANNE HAIRSTON-STRANG '86

Director and forester, Maryland Forest Service, Annapolis, Maryland

**What does urban forestry really mean in practice?** I've spent much of my career working with the Chesapeake Bay Program, and what we've seen is that forests, especially riparian buffers and urban tree canopy, are key to improving watershed conditions. Trees are a critical tool in protecting water resources.

**How did your time at Virginia Tech influence your career?** What made Virginia Tech stand out was the depth and breadth of the education. I received experiential learning even before it was a popular concept. Fieldwork, labs, applied science — gave me both the theoretical foundation and practical skills to move into graduate school and eventually into public forestry leadership.

**What advice would you give to young women considering a career in forestry?** Forestry is a lifelong learning career. If you love the work, it becomes a deeply fulfilling journey. Representation matters, and part of the reason I took this role was to help shape the future of the profession.

#### ► 1961

John F. Hosner became head of the department, helping establish Virginia Tech as a national leader in forestry education through faculty recruitment, industry partnerships, and student engagement.

#### ► 1965

The program earned accreditation from the Society of American Foresters. Within a decade, enrollment jumped from 66 undergraduates and five graduate students to more than 340 undergraduates and 50 graduate students.

#### ► 1971

A \$1.6 million bond referendum and corporate support funded construction of a state-of-the-art academic building, Cheatham Hall, which remains a hub for forestry education and research.



Cheatham Hall. Virginia Tech photo

#### ► 1974

The forestry and wildlife programs evolved into two separate units: fisheries and wildlife sciences, and forestry and forest products. Two years later, they were unified under the School of Forestry and Wildlife Resources.

#### ► 1979

The forestry unit split again, forming the Department of Forestry and the Department of Wood Science and Forest Products. The latter moved into the newly constructed Thomas Brooks Center.



## A MISSION ROOTED IN RESEARCH

While the college is known for its research excellence, Seiler said teaching remains at its core. “We’ve always believed teaching and research should go hand-in-hand,” he said.

That philosophy is built into the college’s tenure process and hiring practices, which emphasize classroom excellence alongside scholarly work. It also influences the kind of research the college undertakes, tackling issues that are as relevant in the field as they are in the lab.

Today, a new generation of faculty is expanding the boundaries of forestry science — and wildland fire is central to much of that research.

“Fire is one of the most influential forces on our forested landscapes,” said Adam Coates, associate professor of wildland fire ecology and management. “It shapes what species grow, how ecosystems function, and even how wildlife thrives. But it’s also a tool — when used carefully and intentionally.”

Coates leads the Wildland Fire Ecology and Management Lab, where he and his students study how prescribed burns — deliberately set, low-intensity fires — can reduce

fuel loads, restore native plant communities, and improve forest resilience in a warming climate.

*“There’s a misconception that all fire is bad,” Coates said. “But in many forests, fire is a natural and necessary process. Without it, we often see declining biodiversity, disease outbreaks, or worse, wildfires down the line.”*

Coates and his team conduct field research throughout Virginia and the Appalachian region. Their work is helping agencies and private landowners make informed decisions about when and how to use prescribed fire.

“We’ll always be grounded in teaching and learning, study and research, in outreach and extension — those are the core pillars of our mission,” said Wiseman. “But how we deliver on that mission is evolving.”

Carrie Fearer, assistant professor of forest health, agreed. “Our forests look different today, and they will look different 100 years from now unless we protect forest health by equipping professionals to respond to threats rapidly.”

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Fishburn Forest controlled burn. Photo by Dan Mirolli.



(Top) Kevin Smith '00 (second from left, speaking) works in the forest products industry. He returns to campus each year to assist faculty in outdoor labs. *Photo by Chris Moody*.

(Below) John Seiler (standing at right) teaches students from the Black College Institute about forestry. *Photo by Olivia Coleman*.

## FROM HERE, FORWARD

As Virginia Tech marks a century of forestry education, its impact can be read in the forests its alumni steward, the policies its research informs, and the students it continues to inspire.

"Advances in artificial intelligence and environmental sensing are transforming how we study and manage natural resources," Wiseman said. "Sensors are cheaper, more durable, and more powerful than ever. Combine that with AI, and we can explore ecosystems in greater depth, uncover new insights, and educate students in ways that weren't possible even a few years ago."

"Forestry has changed a lot since 1925," Seiler said. "But what hasn't changed is the core idea: we're here to understand the natural world and help others take care of it." VT



### DEEP ROOTS

For more about forestry education, scan the code or visit [alumni.vt.edu/forestry](http://alumni.vt.edu/forestry).



Jim Burger and Dave Smith analyze soil solution samples for elevated nitrogen content due to forest harvesting disturbances in the forest soils chemistry lab, circa 1982.

### ► 1982

Virginia Tech's School of Forestry was recognized as one of the top in the nation, ranking third overall and earning high marks for faculty productivity, graduate success, and peer reputation.

### ► 1992

The College of Forestry and Wildlife Resources was formally established.

### ► 2000

The name was changed to the College of Natural Resources.

### ► 2010

"Environment" was added to reflect a broader mission.



Erika Wright '19 takes part in an arboriculture tree climbing clinic. *Photo by Kris Timney*.

### ► TODAY

The college, which includes four departments with 12 undergraduate majors, awarded 255 bachelor's and 60 advanced degrees in May — a testament to its enduring legacy and continuing relevance.





## Trading military boots for Hokie gear

Maj. Gen. William H. Seely III joined Virginia Tech on April 1, as the 37th commandant of the Virginia Tech Corps of Cadets. The first Marine to serve in the role, Seely was born in Saigon during the Vietnam War and came to the United States as a small child, spending his youth in California. He served 36 years in the Marine Corps. *Photo by Katie Mallory.*



## Sonderling visits Blacksburg

Deputy Secretary Keith Sonderling of the U.S. Department of Labor visited the Blacksburg campus in August. Sonderling met with President Tim Sands and senior leaders to discuss artificial intelligence in education and the university's experiential learning programs. He also toured the Center for Autonomous Mining, talking with some of its faculty about research and workforce development initiatives related to mining safety. *Photo by Luke Hayes.*



## Dogs vs. spotted lanternflies

A new study led by Virginia Tech found that volunteer dog-handler teams — made up of everyday people and their pets — can effectively detect the elusive egg masses of the spotted lanternfly, an invasive insect that's damaging farms and forests across the eastern and central United States. It's the first study to show that citizen dog-handler teams can achieve detection success rates comparable to professional conservation detection dogs. *Photo by Clark DeHart.*





## Apex Center invests in students

The Virginia Tech Apex Center for Entrepreneurs awarded more than \$80,000 to Virginia Tech students during the 2024-25 academic year, including over \$70,000 in scholarships, to support hands-on learning beyond the classroom. The awards were distributed through Apex Center-led programs and events, including KickStart VT, Venture Founders, Venture Scholars, the Entrepreneurship Challenge (eChallenge), Pitch Party, and leadership opportunities within the Apex Center Student Advisory Council. *Photo by Kristie Lea Photography.*



## Business Leader of the Year named

The Alexandria Chamber of Commerce recognized the Virginia Tech D.C. area launch team as its 2025 Business Leader of the Year, a distinction that celebrates the university's impact on education, innovation, and regional growth. The award highlights the team's leadership in opening the new academic building in Alexandria, which welcomed its first graduate students in January and held its grand opening in February. *Photo by Luke Hayes.*



## But first, pizza

For the millions of Americans who live with a mobility issue, making a pizza can be a lot more challenging than just choosing between pepperoni or sausage. Virginia Tech researchers have developed a robotic arm with novel assistive grippers that can help those with disabilities accomplish complex everyday tasks, including building a pizza. *Photo courtesy of Maya Keely.*



## Dick's Sporting Goods partnership

The Virginia Tech Helmet Lab's research is on the shelves of sporting goods stores across the United States. In collaboration with Dick's Sporting Goods, the lab's peer-reviewed and published STAR helmet rating system is now available in all the company's retail locations. The ratings can be found on store signage, along with information about the Helmet Lab and tips on how to find a properly fitting helmet. *Photo by Craig Newcomb.*



## New dean named for CNRE

Saskia L. van de Gevel, who formerly served as the chair of the Appalachian State University Department of Geography and Planning, is the new dean of Virginia Tech's College of Natural Resources and Environment. She succeeds Paul Winistorfer, who retired in August after 16 years as dean. *Photo by Christina Franusich.*



## Algae power next generation plastics

A team of chemists is pioneering a new approach to creating plastics made from whole-cell algae and common chemical components. These biohybrid plastics are strong, highly adaptable, and fully recyclable. *Photo by Spencer Coppage.*



## Historic investment in athletics

Virginia Tech has approved a \$229 million investment in athletics over four years to position the university to compete with top Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) programs. The plan, finalized by the Board of Visitors in September, comes as President Tim Sands noted new realities: capped student-athlete revenue sharing, evolving name, image, and likeness rules, and ACC media revenue tied to success. *"It has never been clearer that the future of Hokie Athletics will depend on the institutional commitment to compete, in partnership with our alumni and supporters,"* he said. *Photo by Luke Hayes.*



## Therapy for hard-to-treat cancers

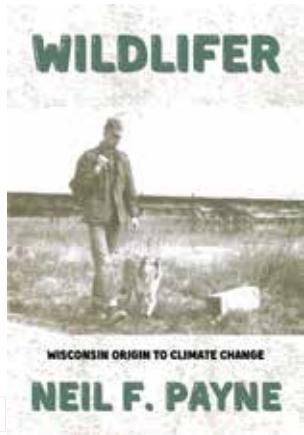
A potential target for experimental drugs that block PRMT5 — a naturally occurring enzyme some tumors rely more on for survival — has been identified by researchers with the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute's Cancer Research Center in Washington, D.C. In a study published in *Cancer Research*, Assistant Professor Kathleen Mulvaney shared research that could help guide development of new therapies for some treatment-resistant lung, brain, and pancreatic cancers. *Photo by Samantha Pipken.*



### Extra! Extra!

Go to [alumni.vt.edu/news-fall](http://alumni.vt.edu/news-fall) or scan the code to read more Virginia Tech news.

## LIFE EVENTS



**1949** » **Robert F. Barbe**, Tarboro, N.C., wrote a book entitled, "African Faces and Places," about his work as a medical missionary in West Africa.

**1951** » **Frederick C. Schwartz**, Vonore, Tenn., was honored on Memorial Day for his Army service in World War II.

**1964** » **1 Neil F. Payne**, Plover, Wis., published a book, "Wildlifer: Wisconsin Origin to Climate Change" in 2024. Photo courtesy of Neil Payne.

**1966** » **2 Ronald W. Gibbs**, Blacksburg, Va., spoke this spring during the opening of a special exhibit in the Corps Museum that recognized the 50th anniversary of the Paris Peace Accords. The



exhibit included several artifacts and relics from Maj. Gibbs. *Photo by Katie Mallory.*

**1976** » **3 Douglas W. Johnson**, Jacksonville, Fla., published a memoir, "Portrait of a Kaleidoscope Life: Chasing Clouds, Cancer, Culture & Creativity." An entire chapter is devoted to his time at Virginia Tech and his lifelong commitment to *Ut Prosim* (That I May Serve). *Photo courtesy of Douglas W. Johnson.*

**1980** » **Ronald J. Kendall**, Lubbock, Texas, received a Governor's Texas Environmental Excellence Award from the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.

**1981** » **Robert A. Bryant**, Clinton, S.C., published two companion volumes



under the title, "The Book of Revelation: All Creation's Hallelujah." » **Frank H. Cowling Jr.**, Chesapeake, Va., a partner and senior vice president of private asset management at S.L. Nusbaum Realty, retired after four decades working in commercial real estate. » **Russell D. Housley**, Herndon, Va., was named a 2024 ACM Fellow, one of the most prestigious recognitions in the computing field. » **Melanie Hurley**, Alexandria, Va., retired from the U.S. Department of Energy after 33 years of federal service. Currently, she is the president/CEO of the Heart of Gold Sickle Cell Foundation of Northern Virginia.

**1983** » **Timothy P. Roche**, Falls Church, Va., retired from the Foreign Service in April 2021. A few months later he cycled the Great Divide Mountain Bike Route from Canada to Mexico. He now works a variety of odd jobs, including contract instructor at the State Department's Diplomatic Security Training Center, solutions architect with a major government contractor, substitute school bus driver, teacher and coach with Falls Church City Public Schools, stick-shift driving instructor, and climbing arborist. He also serves on the Falls Church City Urban Forestry Commission.

**1984** » **Gaynor Richardson Flynn**, Chesapeake Beach, Md., retired in September from her role as quality assurance manager in the Division of Pathology and Clinical Laboratory Medicine at Children's National Hospital in Washington, D.C. Her career spanned 40 years across several hospital clinical laboratories.

**1986** » **Kirk H. Schulz**, Spokane, Wash., joined the Knight Commission on Inter-collegiate Athletics.

**1988** » **4 Steve Hopkins**, Louisa, Va., was named Virginia's 2025 Farmer of the Year by the Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition. He runs Riverview Farms Cattle,



4

the family farm, with his wife, Cristi Hopkins '90, and their sons Garrett Hopkins '21, and Blake Hopkins. *Photo courtesy of Sunbelt Agricultural Exposition.*

**1990 » Keith A. Laepple**, Bellevue, Wash., is part of a trio of Seattle-area angel investors who recently launched a new group called VentureUs that aims to make pre-seed and seed investments in startups across the Pacific Northwest.

**1992 » Rush D. Dixon**, North Charleston, S.C., and Judith A. Maragioglio Dixon '93, were named to Forbes Magazine's inaugural list of America's Top 200 Residential Architects.

**1995 » 5 Rebecca Ballard Ensogna**, Virginia Beach, Va., was named vice

president at Hanbury. *Photo courtesy of Rebecca Ensogna.* » **James J. Gapinski**, Lusby, Md., leads the site and infrastructure group for A. Morton Thomas and Associates, Washington, D.C.

**1997 » James L. Moore III**, Lorton, Va., has been recognized for four consecutive years as one of the top 200 education researchers and scholars in the United States who shape educational practice and policy.

**1998 » Diana F. Karczmarczyk**, Alexandria, Va., co-authored "Health Education and Promotion: A Skills-based Approach" along with Sara Pappa. This is her second publication with Routledge. The first was "Men's Health: An Introduction," for which she was a co-editor and contributing author.

**2000 » Michael B. McGrath**, Glen Allen, Va., is the founder, executive director, and head coach at River City Inclusive Gym in Henrico, Va.

**2001 » Ryan A. Crowley**, Washington, D.C., relinquished command of the Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling and the 11th Wing to Col. James M. Clark on June 25.

**2002 » Morgan A. Eddy**, Annandale, Va., vice president of Steele Foundation, was awarded the 2024 ABC Metro Washington Excellence in Construction Award for exceptional site work on the Claret project and received a Washington Building Congress 2025 Craftsmanship Award in the underpinning, foundations, and excavations category. Eddy recently delivered a presentation at the ASCE Geo-Institute's Geo-Virginia 2025 conference.

**2005 » Paul N. Bowles III**, Park Ridge, N.J., a partner at Fox Rothschild, was named to Billboard's 2025 Top Music Lawyers list. » **Seth W. Pesek**, Milton, Ga., was named president of Phoenix Senior Living.

**2006 » 6 Jummy Olabanji**, Washington, D.C., has a broadcast career that has taken her to television stations in Charlottesville, Norfolk, and New York City. Five years ago, she returned home to the Washington, D.C., area as the co-anchor



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## LIFE EVENTS



of News 4 Today at NBC4 Washington.  
*Photo by Andrew Adkins for Virginia Tech.*

**2008 » Brian Anthony P. Gerardo**, Baltimore, Md., was recognized by The Baltimore Banner as a 2025 Emerging Leader. He is senior associate of learning and capacity building at The Annie E. Casey Foundation. » **7 John R. Matthews**, Wytheville, Va., was named a 2025 Virginia Business Forty Under 40 honoree. *Photo courtesy of John Matthews.*

**2009 » Elizabeth Paige Hungerford Kepner**, Glen Allen, Va., is the executive director of the Child Development Center at Wyndham.

**2010 » 8 Valerie L. Van Dyke Rasmussen**, Daleville, Va., is vice president



of marketing and communications for Country Natural Beef. *Photo courtesy of Valerie Rasmussen.*

**2011 » 9 Kirsten N. Kube**, Denver, Colo., joined Fox Rothschild as counsel in the litigation department in Denver. *Photo courtesy of Kirsten Kube.*

**2014 » 10** Identical twin boys, Sully Matthew (left) and Cal Hamilton (right) were born on 2/28/2025 to Hokie alumni parents; **Matt Chandler** and **Emily Preisendanz Chandler '15** of Leesburg, Va. *Photo courtesy of the Chandlers.*

**2016 » Anna W. Drew**, Salem, Va., was named as a 2024–25 Milken Educator. The Milken Educator Awards, a recognition program created by philanthropist Low-

ell Milken, provide unrestricted grants of \$25,000 cash. » **Shivanie A. Ramdin**, Ocala, Fla., is a hospitalist with TeamHealth.

**2017 » Henry S. Yockey**, South Bend, Ind., joined the Institute for Defense Analyses as a member of the research staff in the Operational Evaluation Division of the Systems and Analyses Center. » **Colin R. Miller**, Virginia Beach, Va., welcomed a son, Finn William Miller, 12/10/2024.

**2017 » Justin M. Bull**, Indianapolis, Ind., was the 2025 U.S. Brewers Cup Champion in the U.S. Coffee Championships and advanced to the World Brewers Cup in Jakarta, Indonesia.

**2018 » Kevin M. Osborne**, Arlington, Va., married Carly Dutton '18, 2/22/2025.

**2019 » Anelise S. Brinker**, Smyrna, Ga., married Patrick Anthony Brinker '20, 11/15/2024.

**2020 » Star A. Norton**, Martinsville, Va., is the director of the exceptional children's program for Rockingham County Public Schools.

**2021 » 11 Nabra Asgedom**, Aiken, S.C., is a UAV Development Engineer at Savannah River National Lab. He is also the visual technician and choreographer at North Augusta High School and the





visual technician at Civitas Independent Percussion for the indoor drumline. *"I started teaching marching band and my heart felt full again. Since then, I've still been working and teaching marching band and will see what happens next."* Photo courtesy of Nabra Asgedom.

**2022** » **Dax Hollifield**, Charlotte, N.C., is the jackman for Michael McDowell's No. 71 Spire Motorsports crew, which earned the \$100,000 grand prize in the NASCAR Cup Series All-Star Pit Crew Challenge at North Wilkesboro Speedway. » **12 Fletcher Dodge** (left) and **Natalie Ferguson**, Blacksburg, Va., were married on 10/25/2025 in King George, Va. Photo courtesy of Madison Gravitt Photography.

**2023** » **Luke D. Bussel**, Salisbury, N.C. is the tire carrier for Michael McDowell's No. 71 Spire Motorsports crew, which earned the \$100,000 grand prize in the NASCAR Cup Series All-Star Pit Crew Challenge at North Wilkesboro Speedway. » **Emma R. Lulis**, Detroit, Mich., is the social media coordinator for the Detroit Pistons. VT



## KILN IT

Pottery, passion, and a place to belong

BY EMILY SOUTHERN

Sarah Ahart '17 turned her favorite hobby into a business.

Ahart opened Mudhouse Pottery Studio in South Baltimore, Maryland, after learning pottery during her time at Virginia Tech. She graduated with a degree in industrial design from what is now the College of Architecture, Arts, and Design, then moved to Massachusetts where she joined a community pottery studio.

"I really just loved the idea of a community pottery studio," Ahart said. "It was such a great environment to be in. When I moved to Baltimore, I missed my studio in Massachusetts and decided to create my own."

Ahart works as an experiential design project manager at the National Aquarium in Baltimore while also juggling the challenges of being a new business owner.

The studio offers various memberships and experience-building classes. Ahart's favorite part about pottery is how low stakes it is — you can always start over.

"Since clay is infinitely recyclable, you can just try something out and if you don't like it, you reclaim it and try something new with it," Ahart said.

Ahart wanted to build a comforting space to enjoy the art of pottery making.

"I really hope that the studio can be a place where people feel like they're able to relax and destress, but also learn something," Ahart said. "When they leave, I want them to feel like they just did something that was calming and relaxing." VT

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Sarah Ahart (standing at center) works with pottery students at her Baltimore business, Mudhouse Pottery Studio. Photo courtesy of Philip Smith.



### AROUND HOKIE NATION

Scan the code or visit [alumni.vt.edu/lifefall25](https://alumni.vt.edu/lifefall25) to read more.

## FOOTSTEPS THROUGH HISTORY

Virginia Tech in Normandy

PHOTOS COURTESY OF NICOLE WAGNER.

In June 2025, Virginia Tech alumni and friends explored the rich history and stunning landscapes of Normandy. From the solemn D-Day landing beaches to the charming streets of the historic port town of Honfleur, the journey offered a blend of reflection, culture, and camaraderie.



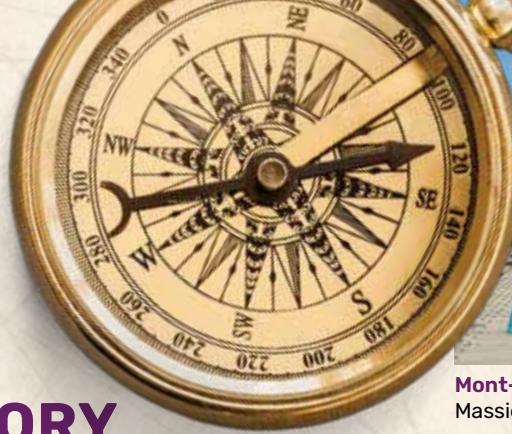
**Honfleur, France**

Naomi McDermott (left) and John Meluzio '79 relax at Brume.



**Omaha Beach Memorial**

(From left) Massie Simpkins, Amy Simpkins '74, Andy Pickard '69, Eileen Grant '80, John Grant, Susan Hildebrand, and Mike Hildebrand '74.



**Mont-Saint-Michel, Normandy, France**  
Massie (left) and Amy Simpkins.



**Lunching at L'Absinthe**

(Clockwise from left) Andy Pickard, Frances Pickard, Amy Simpkins, Massie Simpkins, John Meluzio '79, Naomi McDermott, Susan Hildebrand, and Mike Hildebrand.



**Brume in Honfleur, France**

Massie Simpkins, Amy Simpkins, Nicole Wagner, Naomi McDermott, John Meluzio, Frances Pickard, and Andy Pickard.



**Dinner at L'Oxalis**

(From left) John Meade '76, Amy Simpkins, Frances Pickard, Chris Meade, Andy Pickard, Eileen Grant, John Grant, Nicole Wagner, John Meluzio, Naomi McDermott, Massie Simpkins, Mike Hildebrand, and Susan Hildebrand.

# Traveling HOKIES™

**DEC. 4-9**  
San Antonio Holiday

**DEC. 30-JAN.5**  
Rose Parade New Year's

**JAN. 23-FEB. 8**  
Maori Heritage

**FEB. 20-MARCH 11**  
Enclaves of Indochina

**APRIL 2-15**  
Cherry Blossom Splendor of Japan

**MAY 6-17**  
Aegean and Turkish Awakening

**MAY 30-JUNE 13**  
British Isles Immersion

**JULY 12-24**  
Icelandic Revelation

**JULY 20-30**  
Regal Baltic Shores

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Virginia Tech offers travel opportunities for every kind of explorer – whether you're a seasoned globetrotter or just beginning. Trips are open to Virginia Tech alumni, friends, and family.

Ready to see the world, Hokies?

Santorini (pictured) is a destination on the Aegean and Turkish Awakening Tour, a 10-night cruise, May 7-17, 2026.

Photo courtesy of Adobe Stock.



## ADVENTURE AWAITS

For more information about travel tours, go to [alumni.vt.edu/fall-travel](http://alumni.vt.edu/fall-travel) or scan the code.

# IN MEMORIAM

*Listing includes notices shared with the university from Aug. 1, 2024, through March 5, 2025.*

## 1930s

**Virginia Teske Smith '39,**  
Raleigh, N.C., 2/9/2025.

## 1940s

**William J. "Doc" Artrip II '43,**  
Southside, W.Va., 8/18/2024.

**Baxter C. Carr Jr. '44,**  
Williamsburg, Va., 11/3/2024.

**Frederick G. Hilbush '45,**  
Kannapolis, N.C., 8/3/2024.

**William D. Goode '45,**  
Radford, Va., 7/27/2024.

**John B. Adams '45,**  
Martinsville, N.J., 8/1/2024.

**Samuel H. Levine '46,**  
Fort Myers Beach, Fla.,  
12/15/2024.

**Homer E. Wright Jr. '46,**  
Eden, N.C., 7/22/2024.

**John W. Boyd Jr. '47,**  
Saratoga, Calif., 2/20/2025.

**Gerald Palevsky '47,**  
Hastings-on-Hudson, N.Y.,  
6/12/2024.

**Thomas N. Bartron '48,**  
Topping, Va., 9/30/2024.

**Hinton D. Hurff Sr. '48,**  
Suffolk, Va., 8/23/2024.

**Robert F. Titus Sr. '48,**  
Colorado Springs, Colo.,  
9/8/2024.

**Billy J. Gilpin '49,**  
Virginia Beach, Va.,  
10/26/2024.

**Melvin H. Lewin '49,**  
Huntington Beach, Calif.,  
10/18/2023.

## 1950s

**Robert F. Aumack '50,**  
Pebble Beach, Calif.,  
11/21/2023.

**John L. Brammer '50,**  
Quinton, Va., 12/9/2024.

**John D. Mitchell '50,**  
Mechanicsville, Va.,  
7/22/2024.

**Harvey L. Pearson '50,**  
Warrenton, Va., 9/14/2024.

**Benjamin H. Vester Jr. '50,**  
Ellicott City, Md., 11/11/2024.

**Berkley Z. Clarke Jr. '51,**  
Sutherland, Va., 9/4/2024.

**Ivan C. Cole '51,**  
Richmond, Va., 9/10/2024.

**John E. Lastovica Jr. '51,**  
Lake Jackson, Texas,  
12/1/2024.

**Jack M. Patteson '51,**  
Charlottesville, Va.,  
10/4/2024.

**Robert D. Price '51,**  
Burlington, N.C., 11/11/2024.

**Richard C. Quesenberry '51,**  
Blacksburg, Va., 10/29/2024.

**Barbara Caldwell Sutton '52,**  
Richmond, Va., 12/23/2024.

**Daniel W. Cheatham Jr. '52,**  
Brookneal, Va., 11/7/2024.

**Robert T. Garman '52,**  
Fayetteville, N.C., 9/26/2024.

**Edward E. Hudgins '52,**  
Chapel Hill, N.C., 2/2/2025.

**William J. Maney Jr. '52,**  
Carolina Beach, N.C.,  
7/21/2024.

**Thomas D. Steele '52,**  
Fort Myers, Fla., 8/7/2024.

**Homer W. Johns '53,**  
Staunton, Va., 10/1/2024.

**Robert K. Wormald Sr. '53,**  
Potomac, Md., 11/30/2024.

**Robert R. Dalton '54,**  
Winston Salem, N.C.,  
8/21/2024.

**Dallas J. Dye '54,**  
Nellysford, Va., 8/29/2024.

**Roy Phillip Harman '54,**  
Radford, Va., 9/2/2024.

**Jean Adams Miller '54,**  
Winchester, Va., 10/22/2024.

**Arthur L. "Ike" Eller Jr. '55,**  
Blacksburg, Va., 10/21/2024.

**David W. Leonard '55,**  
Blacksburg, Va., 2/18/2025.

**Denwood T. Milby '55,**  
Charlottesville, Va.,  
11/20/2024.

**Owen Thomas '55,**  
Winchester, Va., 8/26/2024.

**William C. Trenary III '55,**  
Front Royal, Va., 10/13/2024.

**Roy C. Wilcox '55,**  
Auburn, Ala., 11/14/2024.

**Lois E. Beaufait '56,**  
Lewes, Del., 11/1/2024.

**Maxey L. Bryant '56,**  
Virginia Beach, Va.,  
12/14/2024.

**Charles E. "Gene" Leslie '56,**  
Vinton, Va., 12/19/2024.

**Vestal "Keith" Shelton '56,**  
Moneta, Va., 8/16/2024.

**Thomas T. Thompson '56,**  
Hampton, Va., 10/15/2024.

**Phillip W. Unger '56,**  
Daleville, Va., 12/30/2024.

**Carl W. "Bud" Balance Jr. '57,**  
Parksley, Va., 9/24/2023.

**Clell R. Clemons Jr. '57,**  
Greensboro, N.C., 7/20/2024.

**Paul F. Crawford '57,**  
Rocky Mount, Va., 12/9/2024.

**Ronald E. Estes '57,**  
Saint Augustine, Fla.,  
10/13/2024.

**William R. Jones '57,**  
Yorktown, Va., 7/24/2024.

**Harold "Wayne" Knowles '57,**  
Virginia Beach, Va.,  
2/16/2025.

**Carl O. Maddox '57,**  
Reidsville, N.C., 8/27/2024.

**Donald V. Otey '57,**  
King George, Va., 11/20/2024.

**Frank B. Reid '57,**  
Winston-Salem, N.C.,  
10/20/2024.

**Ralph A. Thompson '57,**  
Fairfax, Va., 8/12/2024.

**John W. Barnes Jr. '58,**  
Santa Ana, Calif., 8/7/2024.

**Alfred R. Cline Sr. '58,**  
Staunton, Va., 11/17/2024.

**Robert E. Ennis '58,**  
Vero Beach, Fla., 7/28/2024.

**James C. Ford Sr. '58,**  
Kingsport, Tenn., 8/22/2024.

**Henry "Mack" Harvey Jr. '58,**  
Radford, Va., 9/7/2024.

**David W. Paxton '58,**  
Newark, Del., 9/9/2024.

**Kenneth O. Webb '58,**  
Bedford, Va., 11/19/2024.

**Robert F. Boyd Sr. '59,**  
Palm Beach Gardens, Fla.,  
10/16/2024.

**Ann Thomason Carter '59,**  
Salem, Va., 2/26/2025.

**Billy L. Dix '59,**  
Rocky Mount, N.C.,  
7/30/2024.

**Stanley B. Hankins '59,**  
Greensboro, N.C., 11/9/2024.

**Alvin R. Hardy '59,**  
Hilton Head Island, S.C.,  
10/5/2024.

**William H. Moore Jr. '59,**  
Savannah, Ga., 11/6/2024.

**Robert F. Nichol '59,**  
Bozeman, Mont., 11/17/2024.

**Bobby E. Spiers '59,**  
Bellville, Texas, 1/5/2025.

**James R. Williamson '59,**  
Yakima, Wash., 8/17/2024.

**William P. Zentmeyer '59,**  
Richmond, Va., 1/1/2025.

## 1960s

**Wilton "Drex" Bradshaw '60,**  
Suffolk, Va., 12/13/2024.

**Edward C. Bullock '60,**  
Kingsland, Texas, 8/18/2024.

**Clarence J. Cameron '60,**  
Southern Pines, N.C.,  
10/8/2024.

**Robert S. Carlon '60,**  
Disputanta, Va., 9/26/2024.

**Wickliffe L. "Rosser" Cobb IV '60,**  
Tappahannock, Va., 2/3/2025.

**Eric S. Elsam '60,**  
Escondido, Calif., 10/16/2023.

**Lindsey K. Gardner '60,**  
Virginia Beach, Va.,  
8/21/2024.

**John B. Harlan Jr. '60,**  
Laurinburg, N.C., 9/8/2024.

**John A. Hoffman '60,**  
Richmond, Va., 1/1/2025.

**Clyde Maynard Powell Jr. '60,**  
Middletown, Ind., 1/5/2025.

**David C. Powell '60,**  
Atlanta, Ga., 10/24/2024.

**Kenneth L. Rosette '60,**  
Cordova, Md., 12/6/2024.

**Robert L. Stallings Jr. '60,**  
Yorktown, Va., 9/28/2024.

**Gail C. Thompson '60,**  
Farmville, Va., 7/23/2024.

**Elizabeth Scott Adkins '61,**  
Hardwick, Ga., 9/29/2024.

**Charles W. Chase '61,**  
Wytheville, Va., 7/28/2024.

**James L. Douthat '61,**  
Signal Mountain, Tenn.,  
11/17/2024.

**Robert H. Lucas II '61,**  
Blythewood, S.C., 12/9/2024.

**Lawrence G. Midkiff Jr. '61,**  
Columbia, S.C., 9/18/2024.

**James W. Pavlik '61,**  
Boylston, Mass., 11/21/2024.

**Richard G. Rice '61,**  
Punta Gorda, Fla., 8/29/2024.

**Eugene J. Seward '61,**  
Suffolk, Va., 2/20/2025.

**William L. Shepheard Jr. '61,**  
Virginia Beach, Va.,  
7/27/2024.

**W. D. "David" Thompson '61,**  
Carthage, N.C., 8/8/2024.

**Kermit F. White '61,**  
Danville, Va., 9/21/2024.

**Claude "Bill" Wright Jr. '61,**  
South Hill, Va., 7/16/2024.

**Michael N. Cassell '62,**  
Waco, Texas, 8/20/2024.

**Julian "Wayne" Craig '62,**  
Salem, Va., 12/2/2024.

**Gilbert M. Dinkins '62,**  
Evington, Va., 8/29/2024.

**Timothy "Don" Dobbins '62,**  
Radford, Va., 10/6/2024.

**John L. Driver '62,**  
Winchester, Va., 9/15/2024.

**Larry G. Fitzpatrick '62,**  
Marion, Va., 11/27/2024.

**Frank O. Gaylord '62,**  
Bonita Springs, Fla.,  
11/10/2024.

**George E. Krajnak '62,**  
Athens, Ohio, 12/4/2024.

**Richard R. Smith '62,**  
Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio,  
9/2/2024.

**Donald R. Askew '63,**  
Sumerduck, Va., 12/6/2024.

**James A. "Jimbee"**  
**Branscome '63,**  
Fredericksburg, Va.,  
8/23/2024.

**Richard W. Cole '63,**  
Murfreesboro, Tenn.,  
9/22/2024.

**Frank Spencer Givens III '63,**  
Camillus, N.Y., 2/20/2025,

**Aubrey S. Mitchell '63,**  
King George, Va., 9/11/2024

**Laurence C. Pettit Jr. '63,**  
Charlottesville, Va., 9/8/2024.

**Jeffrey A. Smith '63,**  
Mobile, Ala., 1/27/2024.

**Richard E. Smith '63,**  
Mooresville, N.C., 11/22/2024.

**Gary H. Spiers Sr. '63,**  
Staunton, Va., 2/10/2025.

**Bruce A. Conway '64,**  
Yorktown, Va., 8/7/2024.

**Hubert L. Davidson '64,**  
Charlotte, N.C., 1/17/2025.

**Alan W. Hoover '64,**  
Roanoke, Va., 9/2/2024.

**Harold "Gene" Hornick '64,**  
Wilmington, N.C., 11/7/2024.

**Robert G. Kyle '64,**  
Lorton, Va., 8/14/2024.

**Charles S. Matheny '64,**  
Opp, Ala., 8/21/2024.

**Jay W. Robinson '64,**  
Richmond, Va., 9/28/2024.

**Henry C. Schneider '64,**  
Blacksburg, Va., 9/30/2024.

**Paul E. Tilson Jr. '64,**  
Viera, Fla., 7/23/2024.

**David Barnhardt '65,**  
Benicia, Calif., 10/11/2024.

**John "Tom" Creedle '65,**  
Roanoke, Va., 10/14/2024.

**Waverly T. Johnson '65,**  
Mechanicsville, Va.,  
1/27/2025.

**Grover "Alexander"**  
**Josey Jr. '65,**  
Virginia Beach, Va.,  
11/10/2024.

**Eugene C. Knox '65,**  
Murfreesboro, Tenn.,  
2/16/2025,

**William R. Long Jr. '65,**  
Huntington, W.Va., 8/6/2024.

**Charles D. Montague III '65,**  
Chantilly, Va., 8/2/2024.

**Warren H. Poarch '65,**  
Pass Christian, Miss.,  
11/13/2024.

**Clifton C. Shepherd '65,**  
Roanoke, Va., 12/2/2024.

**David E. Stanley '65,**  
Poquoson, Va., 8/23/2024.

**William T. Towles Jr. '65,**  
Daleville, Va., 9/27/2024.

**Larry R. Ammons '66,**  
Asheville, N.C., 10/27/2024.

**Robert N. Bates '66,**  
Panama City Beach, Fla.,  
11/21/2024.

**Earl C. Currin Jr. '66,**  
Lunenburg, Va., 8/19/2024.

**Wilson L. Dickerson Jr. '66,**  
Altavista, Va., 12/4/2024.

**Roger J. Lin '66,**

Blacksburg, Va., 8/2/2024.

**Thomas H. Mehnert '66,**  
Waynesboro, Va., 2/13/2025.

**Thomas A. Mong '66,**  
Forest, Va., 8/27/2024.

**James L. Poole '66,**  
Youngstown, N.Y., 11/1/2024.

**Howard G. Sholl Jr. '66,**  
Wilmington, Del., 12/19/2024.

**Herbert D. Vicinus '66,**  
Horseshoe Bay, Texas,  
8/12/2024.

**Samuel L. Blair '67,**  
Galax, Va., 10/5/2024.

**James E. Bowen Sr. '67,**  
Charlottesville, Va., 8/2/2024.

**George T. Cadotte '67,**  
Copley, Ohio, 6/24/2024.

**Robert R. "Rusty" Fife '67,**  
Bluefield, Va., 11/6/2024.

**Barry L. Guthrie '67,**  
Ripplemead, Va., 8/16/2024.

**James M. McMillion '67,**  
Huntsville, Ala., 10/20/2024.

**James W. Patterson Sr. '67,**  
Cary, N.C., 8/27/2024.

**James E. Rice '67,**  
Greenville, S.C., 2/1/2025.

**Bruce K. Robinette '67,**  
Bristol, Va., 7/29/2024.

**Robert J. Simmons '67,**  
Marietta, Ga., 11/26/2024.

**Frank D. Williamson '67,**  
Covington, Va., 2/24/2025,

**Madeline Fortune**  
**Blackwell '68,**  
Greer, S.C., 2/20/2025.

**Robert A. Boice '68,**  
Grand Ledge, Mich.,  
11/24/2024.

**Annette Parker Burr '68,**  
Blacksburg, Va., 1/2/2025.

**Lemuel C. Johnson III '68,**  
Wilmington, N.C., 2/17/2025.

**Francis W. Shelton '68,**  
Radford, Va., 2/12/2025.

**Robert H. Shelton '68,**  
Elkins, W.Va., 10/28/2024.

**A.R.T. "Tas" Wahlah '68,**  
Wexford, Pa., 12/9/2024.

**Edward "Randy"**  
**Woodson III '68,**  
The Villages, Fla., 10/24/2024.

**Richard W. Gerling '69,**  
Stuart, Fla., 10/18/2024.

**James A. Jeckell '69,**  
Woodbridge, Va., 11/15/2024.

**James A. McMichael '69,**  
Englewood, Colo., 12/9/2024.

**John R. Miller '69,**  
Henrico, Va., 10/22/2024.

**Joan Bear Minnick '69,**  
Rural Retreat, Va., 9/13/2024.

**Gregory H. Moser '69,**  
Richmond, Va., 11/16/2024.

**James E. Pitts Jr. '69,**  
King George, Va., 6/4/2024.

## 1970s

**John T. Driscoll '70,**  
Alexandria, Va., 8/4/2024.

**Kathryn Anderson Hall '70,**  
Tallahassee, Fla., 9/21/2024.

**George T. Kiser Jr. '70,**  
Lebanon, Va., 1/13/2025.

**Mary A. Krusicky '70,**  
Martinsburg, W.Va.,  
12/23/2024.

**Janet Polk Lehre '70,**  
Manakin-Sabot, Va.,  
1/13/2025.

**James E. Lineweaver '70,**  
Cumberland, Va., 11/13/2024.

**Jeff B. Miller '70,**  
Christiansburg, Va., 8/5/2024.

**Andrew J. Newchok '70,**  
Ashland, Va., 12/7/2024.

**Thomas E. Patterson '70,**  
Cocoa Beach, Fla., 11/29/2024.

**Frances Kunze Schlabach '70,**  
Tryon, N.C., 10/27/2024.

**Thomas W. Skelly '70,**  
Roanoke, Va., 12/15/2024.

**John H. Wehrenberg Jr. '70,**  
Washington, N.C., 8/27/2024.

**Robert T. Wingate '70,**  
Fairfax, Va., 2/20/2025.

**Dean G. Barker '71,**  
Houston, Texas, 10/28/2024.

**Donald S. Jones '71,**  
Roanoke, Va., 2/3/2025.

**Michael E. Laing '71,**  
Fredericksburg, Va.,  
10/19/2024.

**Doreen Long Morgan '71,**  
Bainbridge Island, Wash.,  
10/22/2024.

**Jack "Marshall" Robeson Jr. '71,**  
Austin, Texas, 10/5/2024.

**Mary Ann Dickenson**  
**Wine '71,**  
Snellville, Ga., 8/26/2024.

# IN MEMORIAM

<b>John L. Boaze '72,</b> Whittier, N.C., 2/14/2025.	<b>Charles "Frank" Moore '73,</b> Lancaster, Pa., 9/21/2024.	<b>Diane L. Fairclough '75,</b> Denver, Colo., 3/2/2024.	<b>Kevin A. Whitlock '76,</b> Salem, Va., 9/24/2024.	<b>Nancy M. Dotson '79,</b> Bridgeport, W.Va., 11/15/2024.
<b>Michael S. Bullock '72,</b> Wilkesboro, N.C., 9/29/2024.	<b>Samuel H. Parsons '73,</b> Lynchburg, Va., 9/25/2024.	<b>James B. Graham Jr. '75,</b> McLean, Va., 12/7/2024.	<b>Gus C. Vlahos '76,</b> Dublin, Va., 2/24/2025.	<b>Lois Martub Fears '79,</b> Sun City Center, Fla., 11/8/2024.
<b>Thomas H. Eldredge '72,</b> Stephenson, Va., 1/28/2025.	<b>Richard A. Shafer '73,</b> Vicksburg, Miss., 10/11/2024.	<b>Charles W. Goodman '75,</b> Palmyra, Va., 7/16/2024.	<b>Etel W. Schmidt '76,</b> Santurce, Puerto Rico, 11/21/2024.	<b>Ronnie D. Jewell Sr. '79,</b> Pembroke, Va., 10/23/2024.
<b>James B. Fields '72,</b> Greeneville, Tenn., 9/2/2024.	<b>David B. Todd '73,</b> Matthews, N.C., 9/26/2024.	<b>Edris Whitted Jones '75,</b> Virginia Beach, Va., 8/21/2024.	<b>Kim S. Angle '77,</b> Eagle Rock, Va., 8/24/2024.	<b>William M. Jones '79,</b> Marlton, N.J., 8/26/2024.
<b>Janet Tilley Harding '72,</b> Bluffton, S.C., 9/19/2024.	<b>Wayne F. Weikert '73,</b> Annapolis, Md., 11/16/2024.	<b>Jean D. Toler Kirchner '75,</b> Lexington, Va., 10/30/2024.	<b>Karen A. Kelly Heidorn '77,</b> Chesterfield, Va., 11/14/2024.	<b>William "Page" Kahler '79,</b> Fort Worth, Texas, 10/19/2024.
<b>Pamela A. Martin '72,</b> Norfolk, Va., 11/26/2024.	<b>John A. Ballagh '74,</b> Leesburg, Va., 8/3/2024.	<b>Priscilla G. Lane '75,</b> Spotsylvania, Va., 1/8/2025.	<b>Randall W. Jones '77,</b> Salem, Va., 1/14/2025.	<b>John K. Laur '79,</b> Slidell, La., 11/30/2024.
<b>Larry A. Muse '72,</b> Colonial Beach, Va., 11/18/2024.	<b>James E. Chase '74,</b> Richmond, Va., 8/14/2024.	<b>Larry W. Long '75,</b> Flagler Beach, Fla., 10/30/2024.	<b>Jama McGee Mason '77,</b> Radford, Va., 11/13/2024.	<b>Leslie Howe Marley '79,</b> Snow Camp, N.C., 11/28/2024.
<b>Edward A. Powell Sr. '72,</b> Christiansburg, Va., 6/14/2024.	<b>Dennis K. Folsom '74,</b> Charlottesville, Va., 11/25/2024.	<b>Susan Mercer Miles '75,</b> Lincolnton, N.C., 7/19/2024.	<b>Glenn W. Valentine '77,</b> Christiansburg, Va., 10/3/2024.	<b>Thomas M. Padgett '79,</b> Bedford, Va., 7/24/2024.
<b>Lacy E. Sandridge Sr. '72,</b> Durham, N.C., 6/28/2024.	<b>Diane L. Gawrys '74,</b> Imlay, Nev., 7/24/2024.	<b>Mary Jane Harkrader Allen '76,</b> Suffolk, Va., 1/13/2025.	<b>Earl C. Cox Jr. '78,</b> Ashland, Va., 9/13/2024.	<b>Bruce E. Saunders '79,</b> Toano, Va., 8/26/2024.
<b>Davies "Gregg" Seacrist Jr. '72,</b> Mooresville, N.C., 10/21/2024.	<b>Darryl A. Givens '74,</b> Land O'Lakes, Fla., 9/3/2024.	<b>Maple R. Anderson '76,</b> Lewisville, N.C., 10/22/2024.	<b>Edward L. Goforth '78,</b> Louisville, Ky., 12/31/2024.	<b>1980s</b>
<b>Mary Sue Younger '72,</b> Knoxville, Tenn., 8/4/2024.	<b>John W. Martin '74,</b> Richmond, Va., 11/28/2024.	<b>James W. "J.B." Brown '76,</b> Blacksburg, Va., 9/14/2024.	<b>Connie L. Gordon '78,</b> Fishersville, Va., 10/24/2024.	<b>Rufus A. Banks Sr. '80,</b> Chesapeake, Va., 10/7/2024.
<b>John M. Barnett '73,</b> Christiansburg, Va., 8/23/2024.	<b>Howard "Phil" Mickey '74,</b> Charlotte, N.C., 9/19/2024.	<b>David T. Delp '76,</b> Rural Retreat, Va., 9/4/2024.	<b>Joyce Atkins Jackson '78,</b> Wethersfield, Conn., 7/17/2024.	<b>John F. Burgwyn '80,</b> Virginia Beach, Va., 8/13/2024.
<b>Chester "Ray" Bowling '73,</b> Richlands, Va., 10/22/2024.	<b>Barbara Powell Pendleton '74,</b> Grassy Creek, N.C., 12/6/2024.	<b>Charles M. Edmiston '76,</b> Marion, Va., 9/18/2024.	<b>Charles H. Lamons '78,</b> Saint Louis, Mo., 8/18/2024.	<b>Stephanie L. Hooker Spurgin '80,</b> Hillsborough, N.C., 10/14/2024.
<b>Joseph M. Bowman '73,</b> Abingdon, Va., 9/9/2024.	<b>William E. Quillen '74,</b> Waynesboro, Va., 2/7/2025.	<b>Leonard H. Elam Jr. '76,</b> Detroit, Mich., 11/7/2024.	<b>Betty Adams Littlejohn '78,</b> Alexandria, Va., 12/19/2024.	<b>George C. Hunt '80,</b> Danville, Va., 10/14/2024.
<b>S. Wayne Campbell '73,</b> Whitsett, N.C., 9/18/2024.	<b>Cheryl Wuttke Schindele '74,</b> Boise, Idaho, 9/4/2024.	<b>Charles W. Fotis Jr. '76,</b> Alexandria, Va., 11/3/2024.	<b>Edwin "Sam" McCrickard '78,</b> Chesapeake, Va., 7/22/2024.	<b>Susan Torregrosa Lewis '80,</b> Bethany Beach, Del., 10/5/2024.
<b>Charles "Randy" Dulaney Jr. '73,</b> Tokyo, Japan, 12/19/2024.	<b>David R. Schroeder '74,</b> Blue Ridge, Va., 10/15/2024.	<b>Harold G. Gilbert Jr. '76,</b> Roanoke, Va., 2/21/2025.	<b>Jerry V. Presley '78,</b> Glen Allen, Va., 7/29/2024.	<b>Ralph C. Saunders '80,</b> Manassas, Va., 8/23/2024.
<b>Larry L. Dunbar '73,</b> Narrows, Va., 7/28/2024.	<b>Robert "Bruce" Tibbetts '74,</b> Culpeper, Va., 2/8/2025.	<b>Rick L. Law '76,</b> Roanoke, Va., 8/3/2024.	<b>William B. White '78,</b> Waynesboro, Va., 12/21/2024.	<b>H. M. Snodgrass '80,</b> Frankfort, Ky., 10/30/2024.
<b>Cecil J. Higginbotham Jr. '73,</b> Goode, Va., 8/23/2024.	<b>Christie Paulos Wray '74,</b> Roanoke, Va., 12/22/2024.	<b>David E. McDysan '76,</b> Lahaina, Hawaii, 7/30/2024.	<b>Susan Whitt '78,</b> Ashland, Va., 8/20/2024.	<b>Karen S. Waldrop '80,</b> Alexandria, Va., 10/23/2024.
<b>Elizabeth J. Newman Emison '73,</b> Lakewood Ranch, Fla., 12/29/2024.	<b>Kenneth S. Caldwell '75,</b> Coatesville, Ind., 9/22/2024.	<b>Irving R. Peters '76,</b> Earlysville, Va., 8/28/2024.	<b>Randy G. Bauserman '79,</b> Pinckney, Mich., 10/24/2024.	<b>Steven L. Galligan '81,</b> Denmark, Wis., 10/13/2024.
<b>Stephen C. Maguigan '73,</b> New Market, Va., 10/28/2024.	<b>James H. Cochrane Jr. '75,</b> Newport, Va., 10/24/2024.	<b>Diane Dillon Roberts '76,</b> Midlothian, Va., 11/21/2024.	<b>Robert R. Cason '79,</b> Waynesboro, Va., 11/26/2024.	
	<b>Keith L. Englander '75,</b> Alexandria, Va., 5/2/2024.	<b>Lynn M. Hilleary '76,</b> Staunton, Va., 10/8/2024.		

**James A. Gardner '81,**  
Middletown, N.J., 8/6/2024.

**Deborah L. Short  
Economopoulos '81,**  
Boyertown, Pa., 9/7/2024.

**David R. Wagner '81,**  
Logan, W.Va., 9/15/2024.

**James R. Dooley '82,**  
Merritt Island, Fla., 7/10/2024.

**Larry W. Stewart '82,**  
Pilot Mountain, N.C.,  
8/29/2024.

**John D. Wells '82,**  
Staunton, Va., 11/3/2024.

**Mary Snyder Wheeler '82,**  
Edmond, Okla., 8/2/2024.

**Gary R. Ball '83,**  
Matthews, N.C., 11/2/2024.

**Jeffrey G. Jivatode '83,**  
Wilmington, N.C., 7/24/2024.

**Philip K. Johnston '83,**  
Lancaster, Pa., 1/7/2025.

**Sarah Keehne Marsh '83,**  
Charlotte, N.C., 8/15/2024.

**Randolph F. Holland '84,**  
Vienna, Va., 7/30/2024.

**Tammy G. Jaxtheimer '84,**  
Newport News, Va.,  
12/12/2024.

**Clayton L. Ashby '85,**  
Williamsburg, Va., 2/4/2025.

**Frederick L. Copeland '85,**  
Charlottesville, Va.,  
9/13/2024.

**Susan Denham Lopez '85,**  
Piscataway, N.J., 10/26/2024.

**Douglas D. Lunnie '85,**  
Pearisburg, Va., 12/15/2024.

**Otis McNeil '85,**  
King, N.C., 8/7/2024.

**Clay "Corey" Childs '86,**  
Berryville, Va., 8/31/2024.

**Rebecca A. Rallis '86,**  
Alexandria, Va., 9/13/2024.

**Kenneth S. Reuwer '87,**  
Front Royal, Va., 9/13/2024.

**Nancy L. Shands '87,**  
Lake Forest Park, Wash.,  
2/16/2025.

**Timothy J. Truett '87,**  
Bethesda, Md., 11/27/2024.

**James R. Bensley '88,**  
Medina, N.Y., 8/14/2024.

**Phillip A. Ronneberg '88,**  
Newport News, Va., 1/6/2025.

**John P. Waller Jr. '88,**  
Alexandria, Va., 11/1/2024.

**James S. Day '89,**  
Fort Mill, S.C., 12/11/2024.

**Bryan Dennis '89,**  
Waynesville, N.C., 11/1/2024.

**Heidi A. Weiffenbach '89,**  
Norris, Tenn., 11/4/2024.

## 1990s

**William E. Baker Sr. '90,**  
Roanoke, Va., 8/4/2024.

**Oliver Love Jr. '90,**  
Smithfield, Va., 9/14/2024.

**Steven H. Bell '91,**  
Coeur d'Alene, Idaho,  
12/31/2024.

**Derek A. Dyson '91,**  
Washington, D.C., 10/2/2024.

**David G. Nuzzo '91,**  
Manassas, Va., 9/12/2024.

**William "Terry" Whisnant '91,**  
Kingsport, Tenn., 8/16/2024.

**Douglas B. Hudgins '92,**  
Blacksburg, Va., 7/25/2024.

**Douglas G. Lebold '92,**  
Richmond, Va., 11/21/2024.

**James B. Towe '92,**  
Cana, Va., 12/26/2024.

**Maxine J. Mullins '93,**  
Pilgrims Knob, Va., 11/3/2024.

**Mary S. Coleman '94,**  
Green Bay, Va., 12/3/2024.

**Brian J. Moyer '94,**  
Yorktown, Va., 8/22/2024.

**Sandra F. Dill '95,**  
Greensboro, N.C., 1/7/2024.

**Michael J. Gredlein '95,**  
Charleston, S.C., 9/28/2024.

**Daniel J. Reynierse '95,**  
Blacksburg, Va., 8/4/2024.

**Mary R. Wilson  
Blankenship '96,**  
Tazewell, Va., 9/9/2024.

**Maria "Susie" Vass-Gal '96,**  
Galax, Va., 10/28/2024.

**Linda Holder Kunder '98,**  
Arlington, Va., 9/22/2024.

**Gary A. Nitowski '98,**  
Natrona Heights, Pa.,  
9/25/2024.

**Christopher S. Vandergoot '98,**  
Huron, Ohio, 9/22/2024.

**George G. Brown Sr. '99,**  
Richlands, Va., 7/27/2024.

**Patricia A. Lambert '99,**  
Nora, Va., 12/19/2024.

## 2000s

**Shelley A. Barrett '00,**  
Silver Springs, Md.,  
7/21/2024.

**Christopher T. Kucera '00,**  
King George, Va., 7/22/2024.

**Matthew B. McCormack '00,**  
Eliot, Maine, 8/30/2024.

**Troy A. Eisenberger '01,**  
Spotsylvania, Va., 10/5/2024.

**Sarah B. Hudson '01,**  
Madison Heights, Va.,  
11/14/2024.

**Amy K. Carl '02,**  
Yorktown, Va., 1/5/2025.

**Debra W. Herter '03,**  
Princeton, W.Va., 8/25/2024.

**William H. Johnson '03,**  
Alexandria, Va., 9/28/2024.

**Erin E. Larsen '03,**  
Fayetteville, W.Va., 8/27/2024

**Andrew W. Warf '04,**  
North Chesterfield, Va.,  
11/24/2024.

**Bernice L. Smith '05,**  
Bowie, Md., 9/5/2024.

**Linda T. Lam '07,**  
Fairfax, Va., 8/7/2024.

**Shannon Reeves Wallace '07,**  
Chesapeake, Va., 12/11/2024.

**Patricia L. Brown '08,**  
Moseley, Va., 9/16/2024.

**Steven P. Brickfield '09,**  
Fairfax, Va., 6/3/2024.

## 2010s

**Cassandra M. "Casey"  
Harvey '17,**  
Stephens City, Va.,  
12/20/2024.

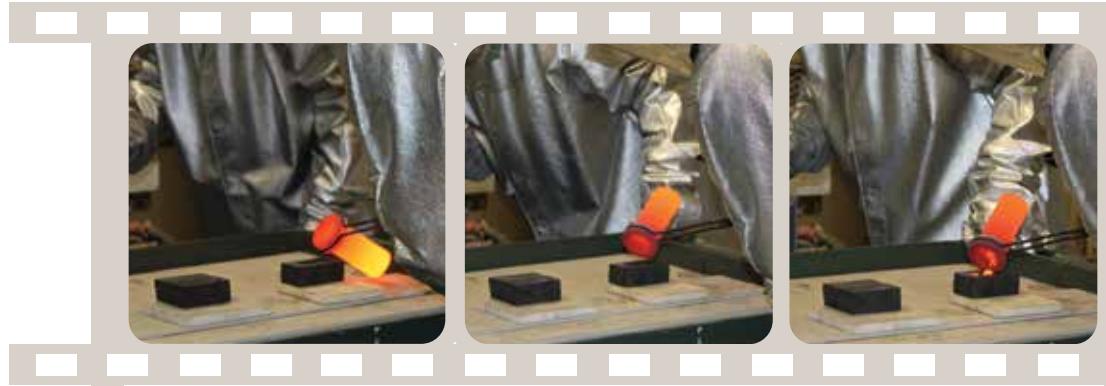
## 2020s

**Dennis E. Lacot '20,**  
Lorton, Va., 1/15/2025.

**Michael K. Ning '20,**  
Great Falls, Va., 8/16/2024.

**Madison M. Wray '22,**  
Chester, Va., 2/14/2025.

## REWIND



# FORGED IN TRADITION

Hokie Gold connects past and future through annual ceremony

STORY BY ERICA STACY | PHOTOS BY MELVONA WHITE

Virginia Tech's ring tradition dates to 1911. From the beginning, each class has designed a ring uniquely connected to their campus experience.

In 2013, the Hokie Gold Legacy Program was introduced to link the university's history with its future. Initiated by members of the Class of 1964's M Company of the Corps of Cadets with support from the Virginia Tech Alumni Association, the Hokie Gold Legacy Program offers alumni the opportunity to donate rings back to the university. The rings are melted and the resulting gold becomes part of the next year's class rings.

On Sept. 16, the Ring Design Committee for the Class of 2027 gathered at the VTFIRE Kroehling Advanced Materials Foundry for the Hokie Gold Legacy ceremony.

This year, nine rings were melted, producing more than 10 ounces of Hokie Gold to be refined and included in the Class of 2027's rings. (A small amount of each melt is reserved to carry forward into future ceremonies, ensuring the program continues in perpetuity.)

Among the donated rings was one belonging to Joseph G. "Jerry" Wallmeyer, who graduated in 1969 with a forestry degree and earned a master's in civil engineering

in 1974. Wallmeyer died in 2022, and his brother, Al Wallmeyer '75, took part in the ceremony in his memory.

*"I think it's very important to connect across generations of Hokies," Al Wallmeyer said. "This program is symbolic of how the work that has been done before — even 50 years ago — is a part of what is happening at Virginia Tech today."*

For students, that connection is deeply felt.

"It's humbling when you begin to understand that as a Virginia Tech student, you are part of a legacy that goes back more than 100 years," said junior class president Karl Rice. "Meeting Al and learning how his brother's ring will be a part of mine — it shows that being a Hokie is a deep connection."

Ring design chair Connor Hennessey, a junior studying marketing management, agreed.

"We are honoring a legacy that dates back more than 100 years," he said. "Through our rings, we take previous generations of our Hokie family with us from Blacksburg to wherever we go." VT



(Film reel) Students wear protective gear to participate in the 2025 ring melt.

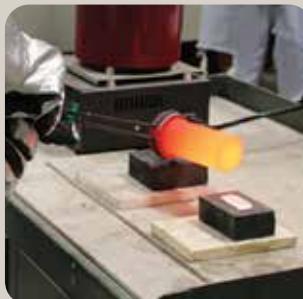
(Above) Al Wallmeyer with his brother's ring and photograph.

(At right) During the ceremony, the donor rings are placed on the Bugle page that features the alum's photograph, if available.



### RINGS OF TIME

To learn how you can donate a class ring, scan the code or visit [alumni.vt.edu/gold](http://vt.edu/gold).



### The rings donated this year belonged to:

**Robert Cox, '64**, mechanical engineering

**Davis Ditman '59**, civil engineering

**Steven J. Dunlap '63**, marketing management

**Thomas N. Lash, '63, M.S. '69**, civil engineering

**F. Wayne Martin '70**, business administration

**George Miller '22**, animal science

**John Miller '56**, animal science

**Thomas Tokarz '51**, business administration

**Joseph G. "Jerry" Wallmeyer '69, M.S. '74**,  
forestry and wildlife, civil engineering





# HOKIES, SPOTTED!

In our spring edition, we asked readers to share their most unexpected Hokie encounters – and you delivered. Here are some of our favorites.



## Double take in Rome

I was on a tour bus in Rome, when I looked out the window and saw David Bunch, a fellow alum! When the bus arrived at the Coliseum, there he was again. What an amazing chance encounter.

*Catherine Karp Breske '75  
Blacksburg, Virginia*



## What are the odds?

I saw a Facebook post from my dear friend Wendy Taylor Ames '85, who was enjoying the Grand Canyon. When I got a call from my son, Neil Robles '17, who was visiting there, also, I said, "If you bump into Wendy while you're there, tell her I said 'Hi!'" We laughed at the odds of that happening. Imagine my surprise when I received this picture the next day!

*Theresa E. Fritz Robles '85  
Andover, Kansas*

(From left) David Ames, Wendy Ames, and Neil Robles. Photo courtesy of Theresa Robles.

## Tuscan surprise

In September 2024 during a trip to Italy, we toured the Siena Cathedral in Tuscany, climbing many steps to the Gate of Heaven. When we moved on to the Opera Museum, I traded "climbing more stairs" for a stop at a small cafe. While there, I noticed a Virginia Tech shirt walking in! Of course, I said, "Go Hokies," and an unexpected connection was made!

*Paula Miller Dow '83  
Tampa, Florida*

Paula Dow (left) with fellow Hokie Rich. Photo courtesy of Paula Dow.

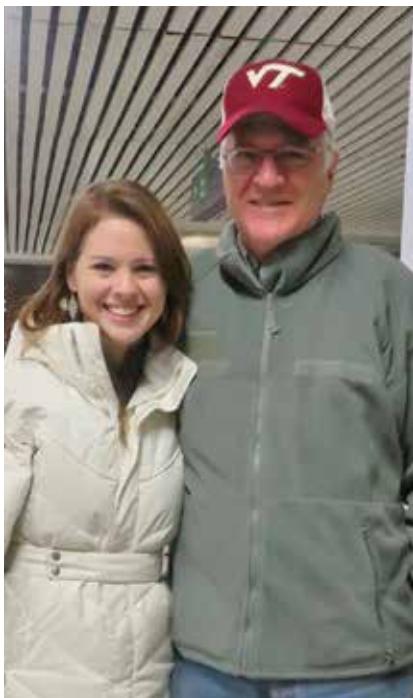


(Above, from left) Rachel Jackson, Clara Clark, and Gary Jackson. Photo courtesy of Gary Jackson.

### 1,350 miles to 'Hey, Hokie!'

In August 2012, I moved my oldest daughter to Houston, Texas, for graduate school. Her sister and a friend wanted to go shopping, so I parked myself on a bench while they explored. Of course, I was wearing one of my signature Virginia Tech hats. A beautiful expensive car with tinted windows stopped in front of me. Then, the window rolled down, and the man driving yelled, "Hey Hokie." Behind the wheel was none other than Shayne Graham, former Hokie placekicker. It was a special moment for me, and I hope it was for Shayne.

*Gary N. Jackson '78  
Blacksburg, Virginia*



### The Hokie hat strikes again

In 2018 during a trip to China, we visited the Marco Polo bridge. We took the subway back, and as we exited via the escalator, I heard someone saying, "I like your hat." I turned around, and there stood a fellow Hokie. Her name was Nancy, and she was from Bluefield, West Virginia. She had recently graduated from Virginia Tech and was studying in China. You never know when and where you will run into a Hokie.

*David F. Pohlig '74  
Draper, Virginia*

David Pohlig (right) with fellow Hokie, Nancy. Photo courtesy of David Pohlig.

### Global sightings

In 2015, I met a Virginia Tech grad as we both took sunrise photos in Yulara, Australia. In 2017, my wife, Gale, and I were at a hotel in Tahiti, and we struck up a conversation with a couple sitting nearby. They were Hokies who lived on Clayton Lake and season ticket holders for football like us. We are not surprised anymore when we run into fellow Hokies.

*Joe Ferguson '77  
Blountstown, Florida*



### Canyon echo, Hokie style

We took our family to the Ranger Walk at the Grand Canyon. Three other families were there, and each had at least one member wearing a Hokie shirt or cap. Turns out we were all Virginia Tech grads. Before we left the canyon rim, we all joined in making sure "Old Hokie" echoed through the canyon.

*Victor E. Sower '68  
Huntsville, Texas*



#### HOKIES EVERYWHERE

Scan the code or head to [alumni.vt.edu/encounters](http://alumni.vt.edu/encounters) to read more or find out how to add your own.

## ASKED AND ANSWERED

### MEET TOM WAMSLEY

Tom Wamsley joined Virginia Tech as senior vice president of advancement in August. He is only the second person to serve in the role.

BY ERICA STACY

**Q: Why Virginia Tech?** A: There are so many reasons: The national reputation as a leader in public education. The mission of service. The last 10 years of growth and momentum. And the great work of the Advancement team led by my predecessor, Charlie Phlegar.

**Q: What have you discovered about Hokie Nation that stands out to you?** A: The passion for the university and its mission – Hokie Nation lives up to its national reputation for being one of the most engaged university communities in the nation.

**Q: What keeps you grounded during a busy week?** A: Cycling and cheering for my kids on the field and stage.

**Q: What message would you like to share with our readers?** A: It is an unprecedented time for higher ed – alumni support has never been

more essential. As we navigate this course correction, it is alumni expertise, support, and advocacy that will help guide us to new heights. The possibilities are endless.

**Q: What advice do you have for Hokies who want to make a difference?** A: Show your Hokie pride by staying up to date on what is happening at Virginia Tech, help recruit a student, host an intern, hire a new grad, attend an event, and contribute in a way that is meaningful to you.

**Q: What's something readers might be surprised to learn about you?** A: People are usually surprised to learn that I have a Harley-Davidson Fat Boy; I love riding it. 

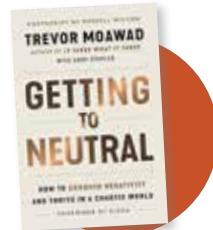
Tom Wamsley (top) at a reception honoring members of Virginia Tech's Legacy Society in September. Photo by Lee Friesland.



(From left to right) Nancy Moga '76, Nick Moga '76, Tom Wamsley, and Lu Liu, dean of the College of Architecture, Arts, and Design, enjoy the fall 2025 Ut Prosim Society Tailgate. Photo by Luke Hayes.



Wamsley's reading:



"*Getting to Neutral: How to Conquer Negativity and Thrive in a Chaotic World*"  
By Trevor Moawad with  
Andy Staples

**"I'M SO ENERGIZED TO BE A HOKIE."**

- TOM WAMSLEY

Wamsley's watching:



"*Deadliest Catch*" and the latest documentaries on Netflix.



#### THE NEXT CHAPTER

Visit [alumni.vt.edu/wamsley](http://alumni.vt.edu/wamsley) for the rest of the Q&A and more about the Advancement Division.

*Torgersen Bridge in  
dark mode — glittering  
under the stars.*

*Photo by Travis Carr.*



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