

# NORTH CAROLINA A&T MAGAZINE

FALL-WINTER 2019-2020



# WOMEN *in* STEM



NORTH CAROLINA A&T  
MAGAZINE

FALL/WINTER 2019-2020

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WINTER WISHES IN AGGIELAND

North Carolina A&T student officers and volunteers take a break from spreading holiday cheer and distributing toboggans to those attending the university's 2019 Winter Wishes in Aggieland on Nov. 29. In its third year partnering with Guilford County Department of Social Services, the N.C. A&T family granted every gift wish for 200 children in foster care this holiday season.



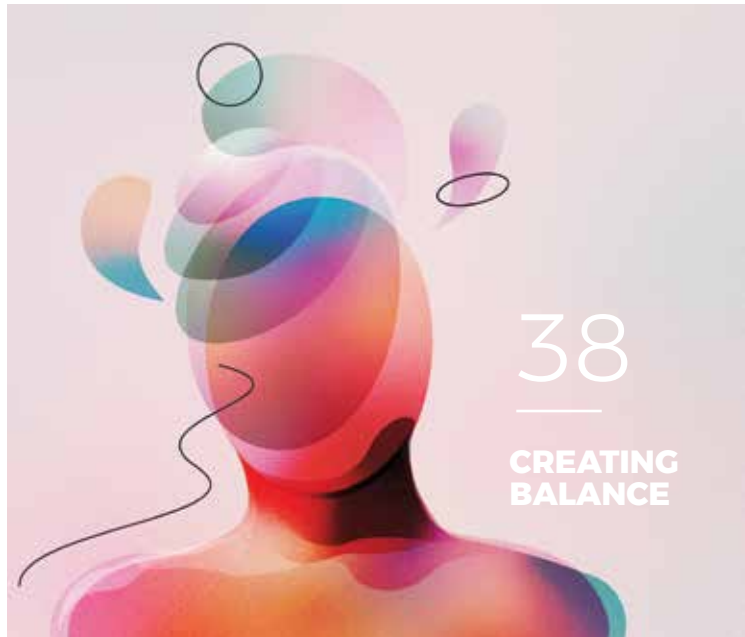
34

STUDENT  
SUCCESS



38

CREATING  
BALANCE



58

THE INVESTOR



AGGIE ATHLETICS

TOP  
10

32



GREATEST HOMECOMING ON EARTH

48



42

ON THE COVER



Clockwise from top left: Lyubov Kurkalova, Alesia Ferguson, Stephanie Luster-Teasley and Mulumebet Worku

- DEPARTMENTS
- 04

CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS
- 22

ATHLETICS
- 52

ALUMNI NOTES
- 58

PEOPLE BEHIND THE SCHOLARSHIPS





# N.C. A&T REMAINS NO. 1 PUBLIC HBCU AND IS RANKED AMONG NATIONAL UNIVERSITIES

North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University moved up in U.S. News & World Report's Best Colleges 2020 rankings, earning recognition as the nation's No. 1 public historically black college or university (HBCU) and breaking into the numerical rankings among national universities for the first time.

In the ranking of HBCUs, North Carolina A&T rose to No. 6, up one place from last year's listing, and No. 1 among publics. The university's peer score within that ranking was second among all HBCUs, with only Spelman College scoring higher. As recently as 2016-17, N.C. A&T ranked 10th overall on the highly competitive list and No. 2 among publics.

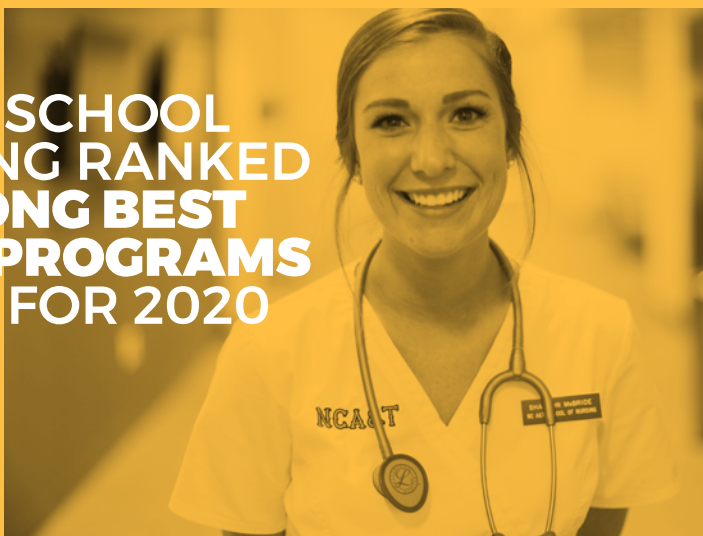
Among national universities, U.S. News provided a numerical ranking for only the top 292 campuses. A&T moved into the ranked category in an 11-way tie for No. 281 among such campuses as Florida Atlantic University, North Dakota State University and the University of Missouri-St. Louis. Growth in A&T's peer score, retention and graduation rates, entering SAT and ACT scores and alumni giving, helped the university's ascent.

Following an official count from the University of North Carolina System, more than 12,500 students now call Aggeland home and is A&T's largest enrollment to date. The university remains the largest HBCU in the nation. Since

2014, when the university first earned this distinction, enrollment has grown by 17%.

While many HBCUs have experienced growth over the past several years, A&T's national recognition for excellence in STEM education plus a focused effort on growing enrollment in specific areas has helped the university expand at a faster rate. The university drew nearly 25,000 applications for admission this school year—a record for A&T and a 6,000 application increase over last year.

**N.C. A&T'S SCHOOL OF NURSING RANKED NO. 5 AMONG BEST NURSING PROGRAMS AT HBCUS FOR 2020**  
NURSING SCHOOL HUB



**SIX YEARS RUNNING, N.C. A&T IS USA'S LARGEST HBCU**

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA SYSTEM



**A&T'S ONLINE MBA PROGRAM RANKED AMONG THE BEST IN THE NATION**  
COLLEGE CONSENSUS 25 BEST VALUE ONLINE MBA PROGRAMS 2019





MAKING NEWS

# TMCF HONORS CHANCELLOR MARTIN FOR EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

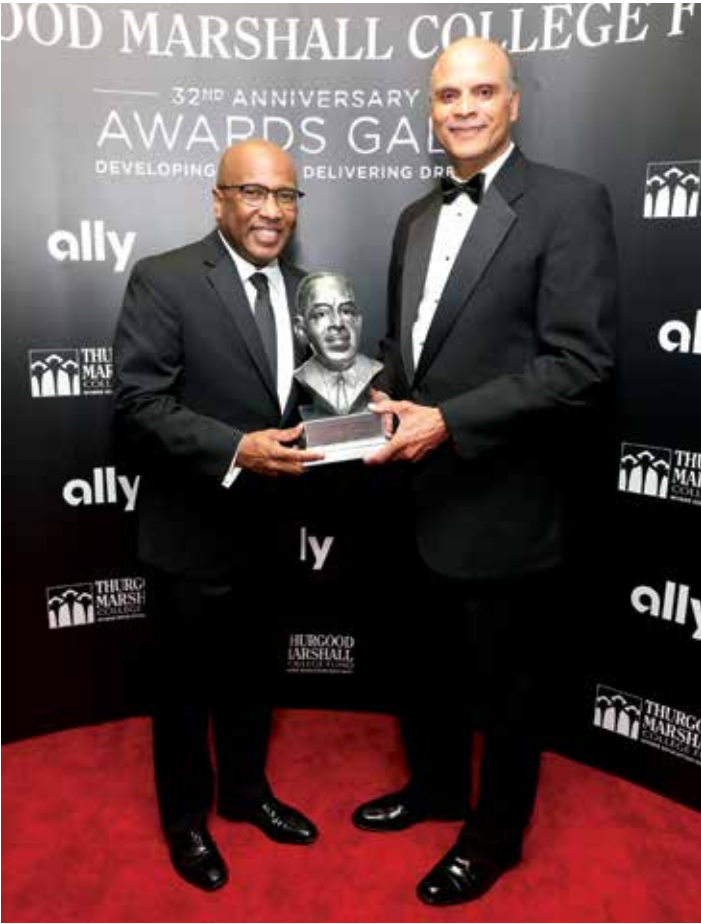
Chancellor Harold L. Martin Sr. received the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) Educational Leadership Award at the organization’s 32nd Anniversary Awards Gala in Washington, D.C., on Oct. 19.

“Harold raises the bar through his visionary leadership and innovative ideas at the helm of the largest publicly supported HBCU in the nation,” said TMCF president and CEO, Harry L. Williams.

Martin was elected 12th chancellor of N.C. A&T in 2009. He previously led Winston-Salem State University (2000–06), and he was senior vice president for academic affairs for the University of North Carolina System (2006–09) prior to being named chancellor of A&T. His tenure at A&T has been distinguished by a focus on long-range strategic planning and tactical leadership that has dramatically improved N.C. A&T’s standing among the nation’s land-grant doctoral research universities, as well as among historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs).

With a fall enrollment of more than 12,500 students, North Carolina A&T remains the nation’s largest HBCU for the fifth consecutive year. U.S. News & World Report rated A&T as the nation’s No. 1 public HBCU in its “Best Colleges 2020” report. A&T also remains North Carolina’s most affordable campus, according to Money magazine’s “Best Colleges for Your Money 2019” rankings. These results reflect intentional, steady growth under the university’s strategic plan, A&T Preeminence: Taking the Momentum to 2023, which projects a body of 14,000 students by its conclusion and includes key performance indicators based on student success, affordability, diversity and more.

“The work of the Thurgood Marshall College Fund has never been more important for the institutions, the hundreds of thousands of students and the communities and businesses



TMCF President and CEO Harry L. Williams (left) and N.C. A&T Chancellor Harold L. Martin Sr.

across America that its fine work helps to support,” said Martin. “I am both humbled and more honored than I can express to be recognized with TMCF’s Educational Leader Award. ... This is something that will inspire and energize me for years to come.”

Established in 1987, TMCF is the nation’s largest organization exclusively representing the black college community. Member-schools include publicly supported HBCUs and Predominantly Black Institutions, enrolling nearly 80% of all students attending black colleges and universities.



N.C. Senator Gladys Ashe Robinson, N.C. A&T Provost Beryl C. McEwen, Chancellor Harold L. Martin Sr. and College of Engineering Dean Robin N. Coger sign the uppermost beam for the Engineering Research and Innovation Complex before it is hoisted in place during the topping out ceremony on Nov. 5.

## ERIC CONSTRUCTION REACHES MILESTONE

A milestone in the construction of the state-of-the-art Engineering Research and Innovation Complex (ERIC) was celebrated Nov. 5, with a traditional topping out ceremony.

The building is scheduled to open in 2021.

The university broke ground in November 2018 for the four-story 130,000-square foot building on the former site of the original Hayes-Taylor YMCA facility at Dudley and Market streets. It is being built using a \$90 million investment from the Connect NC bond referendum, which state voters passed in 2016.

Chancellor Harold L. Martin Sr. called the ERIC an “incredible edifice” demonstrating N.C. A&T’s dedication to research, innovation and economic impact, which

attracts the most outstanding faculty, students and staff and “expands our university’s possibilities.

“This is another addition to our university that contributes to the growth of the economy, meeting the needs of our state and region,” Martin said. “The community’s expectations and demands of the university are to retain, attract and create jobs.”

The ERIC will be an integral component of the College of Engineering (COE)—the No. 1 producer of undergraduate-level engineering degrees awarded to African Americans in the nation—by establishing a pipeline of diverse STEM leaders.

With consistent enrollment in COE and a growing need for engineers from diverse backgrounds, the

ERIC will affirm the university’s position in the marketplace by providing the necessary space to accommodate the increasing number of engineering students and to support their respective research interests.

“Creating environments in which innovation and cutting-edge discoveries are nurtured and accelerated is important to all of us,” said COE dean, Robin N. Coger, Ph.D. “The Engineering Research and Innovation Complex is designed with that goal in mind.”

As an interdisciplinary and multifunctional center for academics, research and community engagement, the ERIC will provide the technology, environment and education necessary to meet the global challenges of the future.

The ERIC will host experiential learning laboratories and studios, distance learning facilities and modern learning spaces. In addition, it will transform the speed at which ideas are put into practice and in which knowledge is transferred from academia to industry and government.

Once completed, the ERIC will serve as a catalyst for short- and long-term economic growth and development, helping to foster partnerships with local and regional industries and creating job opportunities that directly benefit the entire local community, as companies seek to meet the demands of tomorrow.



MAKING NEWS



Chris Paul

About 200 North Carolina A&T students spent Sept. 25 in a demonstration of a Harvard Business School course that may be added to the College of Business and Economics (COBE) curriculum, thanks to the efforts of Piedmont Triad native and Oklahoma City Thunder point guard Chris Paul.

Paul, through the Chris Paul Family Foundation, and Harvard Business School professor Anita Elberse, Ph.D., partnered with COBE to present case studies about entertainment, media and sports to the students.

The course provided an opportunity for students to examine the decisions that take place behind the scenes of billion-dollar business contracts and projects that shape society, to learn more about the careers available to them in the sports and entertainment industries, as well as how they can pursue them and how their skills translate to every large organization that has business function, no matter the industry.

NBA POINT  
GUARD, HARVARD  
BUSINESS SCHOOL  
PROFESSOR  
DEMONSTRATE  
CLASS

Paul kicked off the course with a group of 50 students in a fireside chat-style session, encouraging them to create and maintain direct human connections, which have a more lasting impact than social media communications. “Always make that contact and give your first and last name,” he said.

Elberse engaged those students along with about 200 others in COBE and the Department of Journalism and Mass Communication to analyze Disney Studio’s tent pole strategy of producing and marketing movies.

Taylor Rooks, host of Bleacher Report’s “Take It There with Taylor Rooks,” concluded the session eliciting comments from the students, who said they liked the fast pace of the class, the large volume of information they were given to study in advance and hearing terms like “exponential growth” used in the context of real-life business situations.

Paul’s goal is the make the class a permanent offering at A&T. He found out about Elberse from his friend, fellow NBA superstar Dwayne Wade, and took her summer class in 2016 with his older brother C.J. Paul, NBA superstar Pau Gasol, actor and musician LL Cool J and actor Channing Tatum.



From left: Chris Paul, Anita Elberse, Ph.D. and Taylor Rooks

COAACH TEAM WINS THIRD PLACE  
IN NATIONAL CHALLENGE

A team from the Center for Outreach in Alzheimer’s Aging and Community Health (COAACH) at North Carolina A&T won third place in the Improving Care for People with Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias Using Technology (iCare-AD/ADRD) Challenge.

COAACH’s team provided the prototype for Caregiver411, a mobile application that addresses caregiver isolation and caregiver burden.

“We often see primary caregivers put aside their own needs when caring for their loved ones and may express a lack of assistance and support from other family members,” said Kristen Naney, Ph.D., COAACH research professor and challenge team lead. “Also, many of these caregivers experience stressful situations including financial, mental health or legal issues while they provide support.”

Rounding out the team were Alzheimer’s researcher Grace Byfield, Ph.D., mobile application development advisor Christopher Doss, Ph.D., and industrial and systems engineering doctoral candidate Janetta Brown.

The team’s prototype, the Caregiver411 mobile device application, enables dementia caregivers to foster social connections through a messaging center and obtain tailored resources related to mental, emotional, physical, social, legal and financial concerns. The app also enables caregivers to find local health specialists and other professionals. By connecting caregivers and family members with targeted information, the Caregiver-411 app can help people make informed decisions at each stage of the dementia care journey. The challenge is the National Institutes of Health’s (NIH) first Eureka prize competition, which was included in the passage of the 21st Century Cures Act. The Eureka competition is designated for biomedical science that could realize significant advancements and/or improve health outcomes in diseases and conditions that have a



disproportionately small research investment relative to expenses for prevention and treatment, represent a serious and significant disease burden, or for which there is potential for significant return on investment.

“The intent of this challenge was to spur technological innovations so that the overall quality of dementia care could be improved,” said National Institute on Aging (NIA) Director Richard J. Hodes, M.D. “By enabling more effective management of

dementia care overall, we anticipate that such innovations could have the potential to improve the quality of life of those living with dementia.”

An estimated 5.6 million Americans age 65 or older are living with Alzheimer’s disease, and thousands more live with related disorders such as frontotemporal, vascular, Lewy body and other dementias. Because the care of people with these diseases is complex and can involve multiple care settings, care providers and interventions, new technologies offer the potential for aiding people in the care spectrum, including people with dementia, professional and family caregivers, health care providers and health care service organizations.

As part of the challenge, NIA received 33 applications for mobile device applications or web-based methods that could help people coordinate and/or navigate the care of dementia. Applicants could either develop new technology applications or make improvements to existing apps. Applications were submitted by both individuals and teams, including researchers from the field of aging and other individuals, start-up companies and biotechnology firms.

The judging was based on five criteria: creativity and innovation, rationale and potential impact, value to relevant stakeholders, usability, and functionality and feasibility.



# UNDERSTANDING AND MITIGATING NORTH CAROLINA'S FOOD DESERTS

The existence of areas with low accessibility to healthy foods, known as food deserts, has been identified as a serious issue contributing to food insecurity in both urban and rural regions in the United States, especially in areas where minority populations reside. North Carolina is greatly affected by this issue, which is why integrated, interdisciplinary research is underway to examine and understand the multi-dimensional and complex problem.

A team of North Carolina researchers is one year into their three and one-half year \$750,000 National Science Foundation (NSF) Dynamics of Coupled Natural and Human Systems (CNH) grant. The team is exploring factors that contribute to improving food accessibility, while maximizing agricultural production and minimizing negative environmental impacts on the land and water used in food production.

The grant funds the modeling of linkages between biophysical processes and socio-economic factors, and how these impact agricultural production and food consumption patterns.

North Carolina's complex food desert issue supports the complexity of this research team—five researchers in five departments across two HBCUs who are bringing their data modeling expertise to bear on understanding and ultimately finding solutions to this problem.

Manoj Jha, Ph.D., of the Department of Civil, Architectural and Environmental Engineering in the College of Engineering, is joined by co-PIs Chyi Lyi "Kathleen" Liang, Ph.D., College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences; Lyubov "Luba" Kurkalova, Ph.D., College of Business and Economics; Greg Monty, Ph.D., College of Engineering; and Leila Hashemi Beni, Ph.D., College of Science and Technology. The team also includes Timothy Mulrooney, Ph.D., of the Department of Environmental, Earth and Geospatial Sciences at North Carolina Central University.

"North Carolina is an extremely productive state agriculturally," explains Liang. "We are Nos. 1 and 2 in

the nation in so many crops and food animals, yet we have a disproportionate number of food deserts. Why does a state with such a bountiful supply of resources have challenges providing nutritious food to its citizens?"

The research team is focusing on three geographically varied, food-challenged communities in the state with changing demographic profiles. The study area includes the state's eastern coastal region represented by Bladen County, the piedmont region represented by Guilford County and the western mountain region represented by Rutherford County.

Each regional testbed was selected for the following: (a) to verify methods of analysis for three distinct geographic, biophysical and socio-economic characteristics such as income, employment, household composition, education, and race and ethnicity; (b) to test and validate the integrated modeling system developed during the project; and (c) to compare and contrast food desert characteristics and sensitivity in different geographic areas.

In addition to involving faculty members across disciplines, the project includes educational experiences for underrepresented undergraduate as well as graduate students, further building research capacity. The project also involves engagement with stakeholders such as local and state planning agencies, extension agents, agricultural producers and food retailers. Having a broad, interdisciplinary team will contribute to the design, development and delivery of policy-relevant information for use at the state, county and city level, to support food security going forward.

Since 2001, the NSF has funded projects through its CNH program that examine the complex interactions between human and natural systems. The CNH program considers humans and their environment as one interconnected system; the grants lead to new understanding of how people can best interact with the environment on a planet with limited, and often irreplaceable, resources.



MAKING NEWS

N.C. A&T HOSTS FIRST AGGIE WRITING SCHOLARS  
SUMMER EXPERIENCE

Making the transition from high school to college can be challenging, socially and academically.

As part of a \$500,000 grant to the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (CAHSS) from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, North Carolina A&T hosted the first Aggie Writing Scholars Summer Experience, July 20–Aug. 2.

A group of 13 first-year students participated in the program, which is designed to help ease the transition to college and to foster success in writing courses.

The students resided on campus for two weeks and took writing courses while earning college credit. Topics include parts of speech, sentence patterns and writing personal essays. Also included are workshops on academic advising, good study habits, money management and job and internship success.

Another goal of the program is to give entering freshman an opportunity to get acclimated to campus

before the bustle of the academic year. Students lived in Aggie Suites E, met other freshmen and peer mentors, and earned a Student Success course credit.

The three-and-a-half-year grant, awarded to the CAHSS in March, was the first the university has received from the Mellon Foundation. It was also the first major award designated for N.C. A&T arts and humanities programs.

The grant also will allow CAHSS to expand the writing center staff; integrate a Faculty Writing Fellows program and Writing Across the Curriculum program to reach diverse majors on campus and online; offer more writing workshops and seminars to students; provide more undergraduate research opportunities for professors and students; and allow faculty to attend writing conferences to engage with experts, share knowledge about A&T’s program and discuss benefits and challenges of Writing Across the Curriculum programs.

EXTENSION CONFERENCE BUILDS LOCAL CAPACITY FOR  
PROBLEM SOLVING

Cooperative Extension at North Carolina A&T, in partnership with its Strategic Planning Council, connected real people with real issues and real strategies during the 2019 Grassroots Leadership Conference that was Oct. 9 at the Laureate Center at Kannapolis City Hall.

The 2019 Grassroots Leadership Conference focused on the theme, “Shaping the Future of Communities through Conversations That Matter.”

The conference allowed local organizations and decision makers to network and collaborate, but also to identify strategies to develop partnerships and enhance how communities work together.

Rachel Seidman, Ph.D., adjunct assistant professor and director of the Southern Oral History Program at UNC Chapel Hill, gave a keynote address at the start of the

conference, followed by concurrent breakout sessions on a series of topics that provided opportunities for participants to brainstorm solutions around important community issues.

The conference was open to civic leaders, community volunteers, community organizations, youth and families, Extension users and groups, farm/business owners, landowners and elected officials.

The Grassroots Leadership Conference aims to inspire and influence the public across the state as well as to engage community leaders who have the authority to execute change. The conference is supported by North Carolina Cooperative Extension.

NCDOT FUNDS NEW  
CENTER OF EXCELLENCE

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) recently chose a research team at North Carolina A&T to establish the NC Transportation Center of Excellence in Connected and Autonomous Vehicle Technology (NC-CAV), a project the agency is funding with a \$1-million grant.

As part of the project, N.C. A&T will partner with the City of Greensboro to build a road between the university and downtown for autonomous vehicles only. That is in addition to a dedicated test track the new center will have at Gateway Research Park.

“Disruptive technologies will reshape the transportation industry,” said state Transportation Secretary Jim Trogdon. “This research will provide North Carolina with data we need to prepare for these changes.”

NC-CAV’s research outcomes will assist NCDOT and transportation policy and decision-makers in better understanding and planning for future developments and long-term trends to advance North Carolina’s transportation research on CAVs at the national level.

The center, headquartered at the Gateway Research Park’s north campus in Greensboro, brings together a strong and diverse team of transportation-related expertise from N.C. A&T, North Carolina State University and University of North Carolina at Charlotte.

“Connected and autonomous vehicles will revolutionize transportation systems and promise increased capacity, reliability, affordability and sustainability,” said Ali Karimoddini, Ph.D., NC-CAV director and associate professor in the College of Engineering at A&T.

The research grant supports a three-year multidisciplinary effort directed by Karimoddini and will incorporate three interwoven research thrusts:

- Thrust 1, led by Wei Fan, Ph.D., at UNC Charlotte, will investigate the impact of Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAVs) on North Carolina’s transportation system and associated revenue.
- Thrust 2, led by Thomas Chase at N.C. State, will assess North Carolina’s readiness for CAVs in traditional and emerging transportation infrastructure.
- Thrust 3, led by Abdollah Homaifar, Ph.D., at A&T, will explore emerging applications of CAVs, and develop and deploy CAVs and Unmanned Ariel Vehicles (UAVs) for advancing transportation systems.

Other A&T researchers include John Kelly, Ph.D., in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering; Steven Jiang, Ph.D., Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering; Leila Hashemi Beni, Ph.D., Department of Built Environment; and Abdullah Eroglu, Ph.D., Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

The center will partner with Downtown Greensboro and the Greensboro Department of Public Transportation to create a pilot program deployment of CAVs in its downtown district from the A&T campus. A dedicated road will be built from the city to the campus, to facilitate the traffic of autonomous vehicles.

Additionally, national research partners such as the National Institute of Aerospace and NASA Langley Research Center, and Wireless Research Center, as well as industrial collaborators such as General Motors and National Instruments will collaborate with NC-CAV to develop and deploy innovative autonomous vehicle applications to address the needs of North Carolina.

The center will have its own dedicated test-track for autonomous vehicles at Gateway Research Park and support staff to accommodate the rigorous reporting and tracking required for a project of this scope.



MAKING NEWS

HELPING THE COMMUNITY THROUGH SERVICE



Tanisha George and Anjan Basu

Sixteen North Carolina A&T Center for Academic Excellence (CAE) staff members recently spent part of a Friday volunteering with Greater Greensboro Habitat for Humanity, demonstrating the university's commitment to community engagement.

Six CAE staff members worked in separate three-person shifts with other Habitat volunteers to replace a wheelchair ramp at Center Christian Church while the other 10 worked at Habitat's ReStore.

Cynthia Collins, Habitat's volunteer services manager, said many N.C. A&T students regularly work with her organization to fulfill service-learning hour requirements. The CAE staff members' service day strengthens the relationship between Habitat and the university.

"For N.C. A&T to step up and say, 'Yes, we need to do more to support the community,' in events like this one speaks volumes about its students, staff and administrators," Collins said.

CAE's Anjan Basu, Elizabeth Goodwin and Tanisha George, who worked on the church ramp project, saw the day as an opportunity to serve outside the classroom, learn new skills and and opportunity to acquaint themselves with the community.

"I've never done construction work like this, but I have some experience from going on mission trips," said Goodwin as she and George worked to dislodge rusted bolts from the old ramp's handrail supports.

At the ReStore, CAE's Torrey Burden, Dawn Nail, Ph.D., and Deborah Williamson teamed up to sort molding and trim in the warehouse, which is stocked with items like paints and solvents, hardware, appliances, cabinetry and tile.

"It's always good to give back to the community, which has been so supportive of A&T," said Nail. "As a pillar of the community, we need to assist those who have assisted us."

CAE staff members are the "boots on the ground for guiding the N.C. A&T academic experience," said Bryle Henderson Hatch, Ph.D., the university's executive director for

community engagement. Through events like service days, they set an example for students to become involved in the off-campus community.

Hatch said he hopes to replicate efforts like these for faculty and staff, campus wide.

"We are fortunate to work at a university that allows us to commit to this level of community service," he said.



Tanisha George

ONLINE IT  
PROGRAM IS  
AMONG THE  
NATION'S BEST



The online Bachelor of Science in Information Technology program at North Carolina A&T has been ranked among the nation's top programs, according to Study.com's Best Online Schools for Information Technology.

The College of Science and Technology (CoST) offers the undergraduate degree online with six specialization areas in computer networking, mobile application development, computer forensic investigation, consulting, cloud architecture and high-performance computing.

"We are very much excited about this recognition as it further confirms the quality, reach and impact of our programs," said Abdellah Ahmidouch, Ph.D., dean of the college. "It is our goal to continue developing innovative approaches to STEM teaching and learning to prepare the next generation of science and technology leaders."

Study.com placed N.C. A&T at the No. 10 spot, specifically highlighting the unique emphasis in mainframe education and considered available concentrations, online support tools, financial aid assistance, graduation rates and other factors when ranking each program. It also used data from the Department of Education to compile the rankings.

Additionally, for students interested in pursuing advanced knowledge in the field, the online graduate degree offers concentrations in computer networking and communications, computer security, web technologies, digital media technologies and database management for students to pursue their interests from anywhere in the world.

Affordable Schools also ranked the online undergraduate program as No. 3 in the nation for affordability earlier this year.



FACULTY, STAFF & ADMINISTRATORS



**SHYAM ARAVAMUDHAN, PH.D.**, associate professor, director of core facilities and researcher at the Joint School of Nanoscience and Nanoengineering, is working with the Research Triangle Institute (RTI) to study whether exposure to nanoparticles provokes a toxic response in biological systems.

Aravamudhan's research interests lie at the intersection of micro/nanotechnology and life sciences, with an overarching goal to question and better understand how biological systems function and what levels of exposure to nanoparticles may be acceptable. His research with RTI involving nanomaterial toxicity is conducted using tissue samples of rats, whose organ systems are similar to ours. So far, his lab has analyzed tissues exposed to a number of metal oxide nanoparticles with varying physiochemical properties and have compared their results to those obtained by other universities in this National Institutes of Health consortium study.

Nanoparticles can go places, and through barriers, carrying things that can make them extremely useful and powerful, allowing scientists to explore places that were previously off-limits. These pioneering materials also bring the potential for problems, which is why studying toxicity is so important.



**ABDOLLAH HOMAIFAR, PH.D.**, professor in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, has been appointed the Distinguished NASA Langley Chair Professor at the National Institute of Aerospace (NIA).

Funded by NASA

Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia, the professorship is dedicated to a North Carolina A&T faculty member who works at the institute and leads university-based research and technology thrusts of substantial interest to NASA. Under this prestigious award, Homaifar will continue to focus his attention and research on the development of tools for autonomous unmanned systems, bringing together top researchers to address grand challenges and investigate problems of significant national interest.

The Samuel P. Langley professorships were conceived and implemented by NIA's member universities to serve as the foundation for its unique academic research program that directly supports NASA Langley Research Center. In addition to N.C. A&T, currently there are Langley professorships at NIA representing The Georgia Institute of Technology, North Carolina State University, the University of Maryland, the Virginia Institute of Technology and the University of Virginia.



**ERIC MUTH, PH.D.**, has been named vice chancellor for research and economic development. Prior to this appointment, Muth was a professor of psychology and associate dean for research and graduate studies at Clemson University. During his tenure as associate dean, he was also chair of the university's Intellectual Property and Conflict of Interest committees.

As a faculty researcher, Muth has published more than 100 scientific papers and articles and earned nearly \$8 million in funding from the National Institutes of Health, the Office of Naval Research and other federal agencies and multiple private corporations. While Muth was at Clemson, the university grew as a research institution, moving into the top category of national research campuses

within the Carnegie Foundation's university classifications.

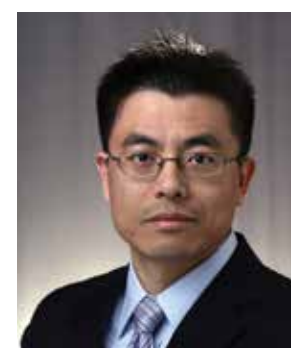
Muth also served nearly a decade as the co-owner of Bite Technologies, a university startup company based on technologies he helped invent, which resulted in two patents.



**SHERINE O. OBARE, PH.D.**, dean of the Joint School of Nanoscience and Nanoengineering, is a 2019 American Chemical Society (ACS) Fellow. The ACS Fellows program honors 2% of its membership for outstanding achievements and contributions in the field, in addition to exceptional volunteer service to the society.

Obare's nomination recognized her significant contributions to the profession through her work developing novel synthetic routes for nanoparticles and promoting studies to understand their use and impact. Her nomination further cited her innovative service as technical program chair of the society's Division of Environmental Chemistry by organizing premier symposia and successfully increasing public outreach through the Environmental Film Competition.

An ACS member for nearly two decades, Obare has played a significant role in mentoring and encouraging women pursuing careers in STEM. She has also helped to increase the number of students who pursue STEM careers. Obare joins a cohort of 70 ACS Fellows and was formally recognized at the society's national meeting in San Diego.



As the recipients of a four-year, \$1.8 million R01 grant from the National Institutes of Health, **SHENGMIN SANG, PH.D.**, and his colleagues at Columbia University are planning to study whether a well-known spice can help asthma patients breathe easier. Highly

competitive, R01 grants fund health-related research and development.

The pre-clinical study will investigate the effects of 6-shogaol, a biologically active component of ginger extract, and its bioactive metabolites and derivatives, on relaxing the smooth muscle found in the human airway. Airway smooth muscle (ASM) constricts during an asthma attack, tightening the airway and making breathing more difficult.

Shogaols are pungent components of ginger that have been shown to have positive physiological effects. The most common member of the group is 6-shogaol, which is produced when ginger is cooked or dried.

Sang's team will evaluate the active functional group of 6-shogaol, comparing the natural metabolic forms and chemical derivatives that his lab will prepare to identify compounds that are most effective in relaxing the airway smooth muscle and reducing lung inflammation. The project's ultimate goal is to provide a new medicine for asthmatics.

This is the second grant to study ginger and asthma the team has received from the NIH. The first grant funds a clinical trial to test the safety and efficacy of ginger supplements for asthma patients. Sang's research has demonstrated many medicinal uses for ginger, including its use as a treatment for anemia and some forms of cancer.



STUDENTS



Sophomore supply chain management student **LAUREN ATKINSON** was awarded a 2019 Finding Ashley Stewart Scholarship. She received the \$5,000 scholarship during the third annual Finding Ashley Stewart finale event.

Atkinson is pursuing a degree in supply chain management. After graduation, Atkinson wants to start her supply chain management career or continue her education to obtain a master's degree.

**BRENDA CALDWELL** has been selected for outstanding leadership and service by North Carolina Campus Compact, a statewide network of colleges and universities that are committed to community engagement.

Caldwell is a recipient of the Community Impact Student Award, which honors one student leader at each school. The award recognizes students with a deep commitment to community involvement and ability to inspire peers. She is one of 22 students across the state to receive the 2019 award.

A junior political science student, Caldwell used her position as attorney general for the Student Government Association to stimulate political activism, consciousness and responsiveness across campus divides. She helped students register to vote by organizing the university's fall Political Action Week and National Voter Registration Day, and training volunteers to assist with registrations. As a result, 648 students registered to vote in addition to the 525 registrations Caldwell collected from students in first year and various other classes.

Caldwell worked with the Color of Change to create a petition and a movement requesting the restoration of an early polling site on campus. She also organized a record number of students to attend Guilford County Board of Elections meetings in an effort to establish the university as an early polling site.

MBA graduate students specifically chosen from America's historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) based on high achievement.

Constable, a student in the College of Business and Economics, joins three fellows each from Florida A&M, Howard and Morgan State universities.

The Hennessy Fellows is an annual graduate program that provides soft skill resources, corporate development experiences and financial assistance. Fellows spend a week in New York City for an intense executive boot camp experience. Each fellow receives up to \$20,000 per academic year, a \$10,000 annual stipend for other educational expenses, an opportunity to compete for a community-related project grant up to \$10,000 and access to online training forums, boot camps, networking events and professional development experiences.



**FABIANA CONSTABLE** is one of the 10 inaugural members of the Hennessy Fellows cohort. Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCf) and Hennessy announced the selection of the cohort of the newly formed Hennessy Fellows who are high-potential

Aggies took the top prize at the Black Enterprise 2019 BE Smart Hackathon, a three-day event in Austin, Texas, where 13 teams of four college students worked collaboratively to develop an app and compete for prizes. Team N.C. A&T was comprised of computer science majors, juniors **OLUCHI CHUKWUNYERE** (team leader) and **DORIAN HOLMES** and sophomores **ESSENCE CAIN** and **DAKOTA PRICE**.

Participants learned on site what corporate challenge they would build a solution to. Judges assessed the students' apps in light of their projected impact, innovation and technical achievement, as well as the students' ability to work as a team and on their presentation skills. After meeting with each of the teams one-on-one, the judges selected the top five teams to present on the main stage before all attendees. In addition to hours of immersive hacking, students also got access to informative workshops, coaching, career advice, networking and tours at the headquarters of Dell, PayPal and Electronic Arts.

As one of six 2019 Chevrolet and National Newspaper Publishers Association (NNPA) "Discover the Unexpected" (DTU) Journalism Fellows, **ELAE HILL**, a journalism and mass communication student, spent the summer traveling the country to discover and share positive, inspirational and relevant stories from African American communities.

Hill's journey began in Atlanta, where he participated in two days of journalism training with Chevrolet and NNPA leadership before hitting the road for reporting assignments with The Atlanta Voice, Chicago Crusader, Houston Forward Times and The Washington Informer.

Each DTU Fellow received a \$10,000 scholarship and a \$5,000 stipend. Two teams of three students each also had access to an all-new 2019 Chevrolet Blazer during their reporting assignments.

**DORIAN HOLMES**, a junior computer science student, and **JAELYN PHILLIPS**, junior industrial systems engineering, join nearly 400 students from 90 colleges and universities across 13 countries as University Innovation Fellows by Stanford University.

Stanford's Hasso Plattner Institute of Design (d.school) offers the fellowship program as a means to empower fellows executing their projects "to ensure that all students gain the attitudes, skills and knowledge required to navigate a complex world and build the future."

Fellows are expected to work closely with campus leaders to offer hands-on activities and programs for students with various interests. Phillips and Holmes are teaming up to host a weekend workshop that will kick-start creativity and entrepreneurship on campus.

The Silicon Valley Meetup this spring will convene the larger group of fellows and allow them to learn from leaders at Stanford University and Google.



**KIARA NELSON**, a senior journalism and mass communication student, was named 2019 Intern of the Year by WayUp, a website that helps college students and recent college graduates find internships and jobs.

Nelson has worked internships for three consecutive summers. Last summer she held a 10-week paid internship at the corporate headquarters of Lowe's home improvement stores in Mooresville, North Carolina, where she tended to the Lowes.com website fielding customer and employee concerns about incorrect prices, missing pictures of merchandise, online buttons that didn't work when you clicked on them, etc.

Nelson also runs her own business, Natural Boss Branding, a brand development and graphic design firm that works with other small businesses owned by women of color.



STUDENTS

Last summer, senior **MYLES ROSS** was one of five students from various American universities who were X-Force Fellows at the Air Force Technical Applications Center (AFTAC), Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, Florida, through a program sponsored by the National Security Innovation Network (NSIN).

The X-Force Fellowship Program gives matriculated graduate and undergraduate students an opportunity to work on and solve current and emerging Department of Defense mission needs. The fellows' task was to develop an operational, end to end hardware/software test bed that would provide the ability to rapidly test new hardware/software solutions at low to no cost in a real-world environment.

Ross and the other fellows participated in a major Air Force event—Exercise Red Flag-Alaska—at Eielson AFB, Alaska. The Pacific Air Forces sponsored exercise is designed to provide realistic training in a simulated combat environment. More than 1,500 service members and 100 aircraft from more than 12 different units stationed around the world were involved.

Senior criminal justice student **EBONY TYSON** spent the fall semester in the District of Columbia participating in The Fund for American Studies (TFAS) Capital Semester on Leadership and the American Presidency program that is offered in partnership with the Ronald Reagan Institute.

Tyson was one of 14 young leaders from around the world who studied politics, economics and leadership over a period of 15 weeks. She also interned at the Africa Faith and Justice Network.

The Thurgood Marshall College Fund selected 34 Aggies to attend the largest talent and professional development recruiting conference for students of publicly supported HBCUs and predominantly black institutions at the award winning 19th Annual Leadership Institute presented by Wells Fargo in October.

The institute included sessions on financial literacy, personal branding and 21st century skill development as well as exclusive concurrent professional development immersion programs for additional students like the new cohort of Hennessy Fellows (see **FABIANA CONSTABLE**, p. 18).

Participants from N.C. A&T were **KE'SHAWN ALEXANDER, DYMON ATKINSON, REESE BEARDEN, DESTINY ANN BROOKS, ESSENCE CAIN, TYREAK CARR, FABIANA CONSTABLE, CAMERON DINKINS, ADRIENNE DOUGLAS, SIMONE DOUGLAS, KEMAURI DUNN, MARVIN EDGE, ZARIA HENRY, ZARIYA HOWIE, ALEXANDRIA IRISH, TAE'LOR JACKSON** and **BRIONNA JOHNSON**.

In addition, **KI'YONA MCCLARY, JOSHUA MCDUFFIE, MATTHEW MCGILL, JAMES MCNEILL, KAYLA MOORE, LAUREN MOORE, JAMES MOORMAN, DIVINE ONYEMIZE, JOSEPH PENFIELD, CALVIN POUGH, BRIANNA RASCOE, JAMES SIFFORD, AARON SLATER, ADIA SMITH, BRENAE SNOWDEN, LAMIAH TYSINGER** and **AALIYAH WRIGHT**.

The **AGGIE AUTONOMOUS AUTO TEAM (A3)** finished second overall and first in the country in the 2019 SAE Autodrive Challenge national competition. Now in the second year of the three-year competition, the College of Engineering's A3 team competed against seven North American teams including Virginia Tech, Michigan State, Michigan Tech, Texas A&M, University of Waterloo and Ketterling University, each transforming a Chevy Volt into a functional autonomous vehicle.

In this year's competition, the car's ability to navigate urban environment driving scenarios in the presence of static and dynamic objects was tested and scored at "Mcity," a one-of-a-kind urban test facility located in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Initiatives like the Autodrive Challenge test the limits of research and innovation for an autonomous future.

In honor of the 100th anniversary of the music program at North Carolina A&T, the award-winning **BLUE AND GOLD MARCHING MACHINE** found fame on the silver screen.

The renowned high-stepping show band is featured in a documentary by Randolph Community College photojournalism students. Led by instructor Jay Capers, the students spent the previous season shadowing the band and its members, leaders and program directors.

Aptly named, "The Blue and Gold Marching Machine" was submitted for inclusion in numerous film festivals across North Carolina and other states. To date, it has been selected for inclusion in the Longleaf Film Festival in Raleigh, the Joedance Film Festival in Charlotte and the Cape Fear Independent Film Festival in Wilmington, winning "Best Documentary" at the latter.





BOWLING

# AGGIE BOWLERS NAMED TO NTCA ALL-ACADEMIC TEAM



Quesada



Jones



Thompson



Merritt



Olaya

Five of North Carolina A&T's bowling team members were named to the National Tenpin Coaches Association (NTCA) All-Academic Team.

Sophomore **ERICKA QUESADA** led the team with a 4.0 GPA in finance, followed by sophomore **CHLOE JONES**, 3.94, liberal studies; sophomore **BRIONNA THOMPSON**, 3.68, English; senior **TYRA MERRITT**, 3.62, liberal studies; and junior **ANA OLAYA** 3.47, journalism and mass communication.

Last season, Quesada led the team with a 199.79 pinfall average in 38 games, with 16 games of scoring more than 200. Merritt averaged 179.28 in 25 matches.

Olaya, who was named an NTCA All-American honorable mention for 2018-19 and is a two-time Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) first-team member, led the Aggies last season with 10,090 total pinfall and recorded an average of 190.38 over 53 games, with 19 games of scoring more than 200. She earned MEAC Rookie of the Year honors during the 2017-18 season.

As a team, the Aggies posted a 3.22 GPA for the 2018-19 season and finished the season at No. 8 in the final NTCA rankings.

A team must have a minimum 3.2 GPA and student-athletes must have a minimum 3.4 GPA to qualify for the NTCA All-Academic Team. Overall, 28 teams and 256 student-athletes were represented on the team.

OLAYA AND QUESADA SHOWCASE AGGIE PRIDE AT PABCON

Juniors **ANA OLAYA** and **ERICKA QUESADA** competed in the 2019 Pan American Bowling Confederation Youth Championships under-21 in Santa Domingo, Dominican Republic, this past summer.

OLAYA BOWLED FOR **COLOMBIA**

QUESADA BOWLED FOR **COSTA RICA**

**BOTH BOWLERS FINISHED IN THE TOP 8 OF THE MASTERS BRACKET.**

VOLLEYBALL



Newman

# NEWMAN NAMED AN “UP AND COMING” COACH

Women's volleyball assistant head coach **ARIEL NEWMAN** was named as one of the up and coming coaches under 40 years old by VolleyballMag.com.

Newman, 30, was one of 50 coaches on the list of Under 40 Coaching Hotshots and one of three coaches in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC), along with Coppin State's head coach Tim Walsh and Howard's assistant coach Ciara Jones. The list includes coaches of Division I women's programs, Division I and II men's programs and all beach volleyball programs.

The Greensboro, North Carolina, native was hired by head coach Hal Clifton in June 2016. She came to North Carolina A&T from Guilford College as a volleyball assistant.

Newman started her collegiate playing career at Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) before finishing at UNC Greensboro where she lettered three years and was a team captain in her senior season.

In each of the past three seasons, the Aggies have posted at least a .500 record including a 16-15 record overall and an impressive 13-1 record in the MEAC in 2019. The Aggies' school record 13 conference wins helped them win the MEAC Southern Division title. Junior setter Edie Brewer was named the co-MEAC Player of the Year and Clifton was named the MEAC Coach of the Year.

The Aggies also received their first postseason bid in school history with a trip to the National Invitational Volleyball Championship (NIVC) to play against Troy at Georgia Tech in Atlanta.



# BELL RETURNS TO FORM AND REWRITES AGGIE FOOTBALL HISTORY

Perhaps if North Carolina A&T senior wide receiver **ELIJAH BELL** were from Florida, Texas or even North Carolina, his journey to the world of college football may have been different. Instead, Bell is from Wheeling, West Virginia.

Of course, the state of West Virginia is not without its superb athletes. There is the NBA “logo” Jerry West. Pro Football Hall of Fame wide receiver Randy Moss is also from the Mountain State, along with iconic gymnast and gold medalist Mary Lou Retton.

West Virginia typically is not known, however, to be a hotbed of college football talent. And, there have not been many players from West Virginia who have suited up for the N.C. A&T Aggies football team.

Crunched between Ohio, Pennsylvania, Kentucky and Virginia, West Virginia can easily get lost on a map, and Bell believes his talents went remarkably unnoticed despite his athletic exploits at Wheeling Park High School.

“Being from West Virginia, I’ve always had a chip on my shoulder because I felt like I was overlooked coming out of high school,” Bell said. “I’m proud of the accomplishments I’ve made here because I was overlooked.”

Everyone notices him now, including A&T’s opponents over the past four seasons.

Bell will graduate arguably the best receiver in A&T’s history, statistically. In the first game of the 2019 season, he broke the school’s record touchdown receptions with a brilliant one-handed catch in the corner of the end zone against Elon where he toe-tapped to stay in bounds.

Two weeks later, he grabbed the school record for receiving yards with a remarkable leaping catch on a 42-yard reception from quarterback Kyll Carter at Charleston Southern. He is also within reach to become the school’s all-time leader in receptions.

“I’m prouder of all the winning we have done here than I am the records,” said Bell. “We are doing what I came here to do—win. As long as we’re winning, the records are a bonus.”

A&T certainly has done a lot of winning since Bell’s arrival in 2016, when he was named the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) Rookie of the Year. That season, the Aggies went 9-3 and earned an at-large bid to the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I-FCS playoffs where they played at the University of Richmond. Bell compiled 35 receptions for 631 yards and eight touchdowns—all school records for a freshman.

In 2017, the Aggies went 12-0, won the MEAC, the Celebration Bowl and captured the HBCU national championship. Bell broke the school’s single season record for touchdown receptions with 11. He was seven receptions shy of breaking the school’s single season as he finished with 64. He was 47 yards shy of becoming just the second receiver in school history to have 1,000 yards receiving in a season.

At this point in his career, it appeared Bell easily would demolish all of A&T’s career receiving marks and perhaps reach the milestones before his senior

season. But injuries began to complicate things. A nasty ankle injury nagged Bell during the 2018 offseason. Other injuries surfaced sidelining Bell for the majority of the Aggies August camp heading into the 2018 season.

It was clear Bell’s injuries were affecting his play to open the 2018 season. Over the first six games of the season, he had compiled only 195 yards receiving and two touchdowns. However, as the season began to progress, the old Bell emerged as he got healthier.

During the Aggies’ run to another MEAC title and a Celebration Bowl victory, Bell improved. He posted 105 yards receiving and a touchdown on five receptions in a blowout win over Bethune-Cookman. He had 10 receptions for 122 yards and two touchdowns at N.C. Central. Bell had six grabs for 68 yards and a touchdown in the Aggies’ 24-22 win over Alcorn State in the Celebration Bowl at Atlanta’s Mercedes-Benz Stadium.

In his final season, he led the Aggies to another Celebration Bowl game where he helped the Aggies defeat Alcorn State 64-44 with two touchdown receptions at Mercedes-Benz. In his final year, he made 55 receptions for 855 yards and eight touchdowns.

When Bell walked away from Mercedes Benz Stadium after another Aggies win in December, he was walking away from his collegiate career and leaving future receivers his legacy to chase. Bell went to the postseason all four years of his career, won three straight HBCU national championships, three straight Celebration Bowl games and three straight MEAC titles.

“The bumps and bruises slowed him down,” said N.C. A&T coach Sam Washington. “But when he came back (this summer), he was playing at another level. Bell is a young man who has a lot of ‘want to.’ People see the catches he makes in the game, but he makes some catches in practice that you would not believe. It’s like wow.”

“To watch (him) grow has been a joy,” said Washington. “He brings a ton of leadership to this team. You know you’re always going to get the effort out of him. I’m excited to see what he is going to do after he leaves A&T.” Thank you, West Virginia!



# REYNOLDS IS 2019 MEAC MALE STUDENT-ATHLETE OF THE YEAR



Aggies linebacker **JULIUS REYNOLDS** was named 2019 Male Student-Athlete of the Year for the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC).

Reynolds, a pre-med biology student, graduated in spring 2019 with a 3.6 GPA and the goal of becoming a doctor. Nicknamed “Dr. Reynolds” by his coaches and teammates, he played four varsity football seasons for the Aggies, helping the team win three MEAC championships and three Air Force Reserve Celebration Bowl games.

As a two-year team captain, Reynolds led by example on the field and in the classroom, teaching biology classes at N.C. A&T as a graduate assistant with some of his former teammates as students. He also organized visits to the Children’s Healthcare of Atlanta hospitals during the team’s trips to the Air Force Reserve Celebration Bowl.

During his football career, Reynolds played 45 games with nine starts. He has 116 career tackles (68 unassisted) with 12.5 tackles for loss, five sacks, two interceptions and a fumble returned for a touchdown.

Last season, Reynolds posted 22 tackles (18 unassisted) and played on a defense ranked third in the nation.

# SENIOR BOWL SELECTS CAMPBELL



Campbell

**KATRINA CAMPBELL**, assistant athletics director for equipment, has been selected to work as an assistant in the equipment department with one of the chosen NFL teams at the 2020 Reese’s Senior Bowl on Jan. 25, in Mobile, Alabama.

Campbell came to North Carolina A&T in 2015 to work as an assistant equipment manager and learned under legendary equipment manager Theron Thomas before taking over for Thomas in 2019. Campbell was recommended for the Senior Bowl opportunity by Larry Kennedy Jr., Riddell’s national key account manager for the NFL and NCAA. She also credits Antonette Mitchell, the NFL’s diversity and inclusion manager, for providing what Campbell calls “an experience most people do not receive.”

A 2004 graduate of N.C. A&T, Campbell has a master’s in sports management and business administration. She was commissioned from Detachment 605 into The United States Air Force and served eight years as a logistics readiness officer and an officer training instructor. After medically retiring from the military, she began volunteering as an equipment staffer for N.C. A&T in 2012.

The Senior Bowl prides itself on providing professional growth along with outstanding networking opportunities. According to Senior Bowl officials, 19 female equipment managers earned 26 employment opportunities with nine NFL teams.

The Senior Bowl is an annual all-star college football game that showcases the best NFL Draft prospects who have completed their eligibility. This year’s game will be the 71st edition. It is considered the most prestigious all-star college football game in the country.



Carr

# WOMEN’S GOLF WINS SSU TOURNAMENT

Women’s golf found themselves back in the winner’s circle and sophomore **CHRISTYN CARR** added her name to a shortlist on Oct. 29, as the Aggies won the SSU Tiger Invitational hosted by Savannah State at the par-72, 5,850-yard Crosswinds Golf Club Championship Course.

Inclement weather cut the tournament short, therefore, the winners were decided after 36 holes. The Aggies shot 44-over 620 for the tournament and 25-over 313. The Aggies were followed by Western Illinois (632), Savannah State (668) and Hampton (673).

Carr became the third women’s golfer in school history to win a tournament joining Erica Jackson and Sofia Alvarez, who was the first Aggie to ever win as an individual when she broke through in September of 2017.

Carr shot a 5-over 77 and was 6-over for the tournament to finish five strokes ahead of second-place Natalie Hooper of Western Illinois. Behind her in third was N.C. A&T junior **XUSS BOIRA** who was 12-over for the tournament after carding a 79.

Freshman **JAYLA ROGERS** also placed in the top 5. Rogers shot a second-round 79 a day after shooting a first-round 78 to finish tied for fourth place at 13-over. Junior **MADISON HARRIMAN** played her way into a top-10 finish after shooting an 11-over (Oct.28). Harriman rebounded to shoot 6-over in the second round to finish in ninth place at 17-over.

Even though her card did not count toward the Aggies’ total, freshman **KIAIRA PORTER** was also a top-10 finisher. She was 18-over 162 for the tournament to finish 10th. The Aggies have now won four tournaments in their short four-year history.

The SSU Tiger Invitational serves as the Aggies’ final tournament of the fall semester. They return to action on Feb. 24 for the Oyster Shuck Match Play in Charleston, South Carolina.



# SIRLEAF SPRINTS TOWARD 2020 SUMMER OLYMPICS

By Jackie Torok

As a child, **AKEEM SIRLEAF** took up sprinting to keep up with his older cousins who ran track in Philadelphia. As a 23-year-old, he'll compete against the world's best sprinters in the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo.

Sirleaf will be a member of Team Liberia in the games. That is, after North Carolina A&T's regular indoor and outdoor track and field seasons, the MEAC Indoor and Outdoor Track and Field Championships—which the Aggies hope to win for another consecutive year—and the NCAA Indoor and Outdoor Track and Field Championships, not to mention graduating with a B.A. in liberal studies.

"It's an honor to qualify for the Olympics," Sirleaf said, "but my focus now is on the seasons ahead and finishing my senior year."

Sirleaf's talent was evident soon after he moved to Minnesota and went on to become the state's Class 2A champion in the 200-meter dash. He started track in the seventh grade and stuck with it through high school, where he also played football. A coach told him he needed to pick which of the two sports to continue before beginning college.

"I chose track because it came more naturally to me," Sirleaf said. "You know how to push your limits and how far you can go with practice and discipline. You learn about what it takes to be a man, but also about what it means to be part of a team."

After beginning at Butler Community College in Kansas, Sirleaf transferred to N.C. A&T because of the quality of its program, the success of its athletes and the reputation of coach Duane Ross.

"A&T was the best fit for me," Sirleaf said.

In his first Aggie season, Sirleaf earned first-team All-America honors after helping to propel the 4x100-meter and 4x400-meter relay men's team to a national fifth-place finish.

At the MEAC outdoor championship in May, he broke Liberia's 200-meter record with a personal best time of 20.37 seconds and the country's 400-meter record with a time of 45.42 seconds.



## AGGIES MAKE NATIONAL TRACK & FIELD TEAM

Thanks to impressive showings at the 2019 USA Track & Field (USATF) World Championships on the campus of Drake University, three Aggies are on the USATF National Team: former North Carolina A&T track and field stars **CHRIS BELCHER '19** (left) and **RODNEY ROWE '19** (center right), along with current Aggie standout **TREVOR STEWART** (right). Pictured center left is former Aggie hurdler **MICHAEL DICKSON**, who gave the two best performances of his life at the USATF World Championships.





# DESEMONE BRINGS 'LAST PIECE OF THE PUZZLE' TO ATHLETICS

By Jackie Torok

Cristina Desemone has become part of North Carolina A&T's history-making tradition by becoming the first nutritionist to join the staff of the Aggies' athletics department.

A native of Albany, New York, Desemone, is no stranger to the Carolinas. After receiving her B.S. in human biology from Albany State University, she earned her M.S. in human nutrition from Winthrop University and was a football nutrition intern at the University of South Carolina.

Desemone went on to serve as a dietetic intern at the University of Nevada-Las Vegas, performance nutrition volunteer at the University of Alabama and football sports nutritionist at the University of

"The talent, determination and discipline are already here. I'm just the last piece of the puzzle," she said. "Everything we do to produce optimal performance, we do as a team, from the administrators to the coaches to the student-athletes."

Taking a collaborative approach still allows Desemone to work one-on-one directly with student-athletes. That's important, she said, because one size doesn't fit all when it comes to nutrition.

"Everyone's body is different, so they all have different nutritional needs. You also have to consider their sport, their schedule, their cultural background, where and how they live, to help them build a plan for staying healthy, hydrated, preventing injury and getting the results they want," she said.

Desemone provides general nutrition recommendations for Aggie teams, implementing a traffic light-like system in the cafeteria with green dots denoting the healthiest options. She also takes teams on grocery store tours to offer suggestions and encourages teams to prepare and share meals together. She even welcomes emails and text messages from student-athletes who send her photos of foods and supplements they have questions about.

"I'm working with awesome student-athletes. They're so respectful and their buy-in is so strong," Desemone added. "They know how important it is for them to be accountable for their health. By focusing on nutrition now, they can head off a lot of health problems later in life."

Kansas, where she learned about the newly created nutritionist position at N.C. A&T and first spoke with assistant strength and conditioning coach Devin Young about it.

"I had heard of A&T athletics, particularly the football and track programs," Desemone said. "But the way all the coaches spoke about the athletes, you could feel the passion and energy they have." Desemone doesn't see her role as that of a change maker, however. Her goal is to contribute to and build upon the success of the university's athletics programs.

*"Everything we do to produce optimal performance, we do as a team, from the administrators to the coaches to the student-athletes."*



10

**N.C. A&T HIRES NEW SOFTBALL COACH**

The Aggies hired **PATTI RADEUNZ** to become the softball program's fourth coach during the fast-pitch era. Radeunz comes to Aggieland after 11 strong seasons as Elon's head softball coach (2001-2011) and hopes to lead the Aggies to their first-ever conference title.

**Honorable Mention - Freshman Emerges as Track Standout**

**CAMBREA STURGIS** emerged as the latest track and field star at N.C. A&T during the outdoor season. As a freshman, Sturgis finished third nationally in the outdoor 200 meters ahead of her superstar teammate **KAYLA WHITE**. In addition to earning All-American honors in the outdoor 200, she was also a first-team All-American in the 4x100 relay. If 2019 was any indication, Sturgis should have even more accomplishments in 2020.

9

**BASEBALL UPSETS THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA****Honorable Mention - Hunter gets selected in MLB Draft**

**LEON HUNTER JR.** (left) became the latest N.C. A&T baseball player selected in the Major League Baseball (MLB) Draft. Hunter went 1,045th overall in the 35th round by the Rangers. He went 3-1 for the Aggies in 2019 with 10 saves and a 2.87 ERA.

8

**TENNIS PRODUCES MEAC ROOKIE OF THE YEAR**

The Aggies have a standout men's tennis player and his name is **VASIL IVANOV** (above). Ivanov won MEAC Rookie of the Year, becoming the first men's tennis player in school history to win a high accolade in the MEAC.

7

**VOLLEYBALL'S MAGICAL SEASON**

Even though they came up short in the MEAC tournament, the Aggies went 13-1 in the conference to break the school record for conference wins. They also reached the postseason for the first time in school history with an appearance in the National Invitational Volleyball Championship (NIVC) tournament.

6

**ONE AGGIE MAKES THE OLYMPICS, FOUR MAKE U.S. TEAM**

**DUANE ROSS'** track and field program keeps rolling along, earning conference, national and international recognition. Over the summer, the Liberia Athletics Foundation (LAF) announced that Aggie sprinter **AKEEM SIRLEAF** had made the requirements to qualify for the XXXII Olympiad (Tokyo 2020). Also, over the summer, **CHRISTOPHER BELCHER, MICHAEL DICKSON, TREVOR STEWART** and **RODNEY ROWE** for the U.S. National Team for the IAAF Games.

**Honorable Mention - Men's Golf Wins First (Ever) Tournament**

N.C. A&T's men's golf team won Maryland Eastern Shore's UMES Collegiate Golf Challenge in October to win the program's first-ever tournament. **CODY LISSNER** won the tournament as an individual by shooting a career best 4-under 212 at the par-72, 6,624-yard Ocean City & Golf Yacht Club course.

5

**EARL M. HILTON III NAMED NCAA FCS UNDER ARMOUR ATHLETIC DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR**

4

**MEAC OUTDOOR CHAMPIONSHIPS**

If you were not at N.C. A&T's Irwin Belk Track in May for the 2019 MEAC Outdoor Track and Field Championships, you missed some special performances. A&T showed up and showed out, winning both the men's and women's championships. **KAYLA WHITE** ran the fifth fastest ever in the 100 meters by posting a blazing 10.96. White then teamed with Sturgis, **KAMAYA DEBOSE-EPPS** and **TALIYAH TOWSEND** to run the second-fastest time in the nation in the 4x100 (43.45). The weekend at A&T helped both teams earn their highest ranking in the nation ever, sixth, by the United States Track and Field and Cross-Country Coaches Association (USTFCCA).

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**FOOTBALL WINS THIRD STRAIGHT CELEBRATION BOWL**

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**KAYLA WHITE**

There is no disputing it; it was a **KAYLA WHITE** 2019. Her quest to cement herself as one of the most legendary student-athletes in N.C. A&T history began in February when White made news by running the fastest time in the world in the 200m indoor (22.82) at Tyson Invitational hosted by the University of Arkansas. Then she won the indoor national championship in the 200m in Birmingham, Alabama. She became the first Aggie to win an NCAA national championship and days later became the first Aggie to be named a national player of the year by the NCAA when she was named indoor women's track athlete of the year. White was named Southeast Region women's outdoor track athlete of the year by USTCCA.



# STUDENT SUCCESS

*Initiatives improve student achievement and retention*

By Jordan M. Howse



North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University prides itself on the intersection of its faculty, staff and alumni who all come together for one common goal: the success of North Carolina A&T's students.

Year over year, Aggie students make significant progress in how they succeed on campus and in the classroom. Those successes don't come from out of nowhere.

The "women behind the curtain" work in the Center for Academic Excellence (CAE). Regina Williams Davis, assistant provost for student success and academic support and director of CAE, is at the helm to increase retention and graduation to help special student groups such as newly admitted students, athletes and males.





N.C. A&T has been able to retain nearly 80% of its students, a number higher than the national average for public institutions.

CAE received a grant to begin the Aggie Success Academy. During the summer, the academy hosted 22 incoming first-year students to take seven credit hours in history, English, an online freshman studies course, with coding and fitness components.

“We knew we had success with our Summer Bridge programs, so it was a matter of doing unique and different things,” Davis said. “That’s why we added the coding portion, learning specialists to help our students and create a sense of belonging with external events.”

Aggie Success Academy was selected for the inaugural Student Success Innovation Lab (SSIL), which is designed to help UNC System universities develop and test new strategies for promoting student success. Students who participated in the Aggie Success Academy were selected randomly and took pre- and post-program interviews with an external evaluator to report the impact of the strategies.

In addition to the academy, CAE has seen achievements with their male retention and athlete academic success programs as well.

In the 2018-19 academic year, Aggie Male Empowerment Network (Aggie MEN)



reorganized its male success program to a living-learning community with freshmen males mentored by junior and senior males. Able to reach 500 male students, Aggie MEN improved the retention and persistence of young men in the program. In fact, the persistence level of men at A&T exceeded the women for the first time last year, Davis said.

Students residing in Curtis and Cooper halls were partnered with 100 juniors and senior male mentors. Anjan Basu and Kase Gregory led the mentoring program and reported that around 83% of the freshmen students who participated were eligible to return to the university for their sophomore year. That increase has been seen throughout the university. In five years, degree efficiency of male students has increased from 13.6 in 2012 to 17.1 in 2017.

Athletic success has skyrocketed since Leslie Rowls took over as director of the Student-Athlete Academic Enhancement Program (SAAEP) in 2013. SAAEP provides comprehensive and



progressive services and resources to student-athletes through academic monitoring, intrusive academic advisement, study hall coordination and tutorial assistance.

Through this program, Rowls and her team were able to change the culture of the university and make academic success the backbone of the athletic success A&T has seen in the last five years, winning more championships in the last two years than the previous five years, combined.

Prior to Rowls’ arrival, the football team was on a postseason ban and four teams on penalty for not meeting the NCAA standard of academic

progress rate (APR) and just over half of athletes were graduating. Now, nearly 70% of athletes are graduating, one third of athletes have made the dean’s or chancellor’s list and no team was penalized for academics during the 2018-19 season.

Rowls also noted that change has come because of a campus-wide commitment to certifying Aggie athletes. Her team asks department chairpersons and deans to perform degree audits for the student-athletes in their departments.

“When I arrived, about 28% of degree audits were completed,” Rowls said. “Now we have had 100% completion almost every semester.”

Increased retention contributes to A&T remaining the no. 1 public HBCU in the country, as well as the largest HBCU in the nation.

“We set that expectation for students and monitor their progress from orientation to graduation,” Davis said. “People are paying attention to us because what we’re doing works and you can see it in the data. A&T is the model for student success.”

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***Increased retention contributes to A&T remaining the No. 1 public HBCU in the country, as well as the largest HBCU in the nation.***

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# CREATING BALANCE

*Counseling Services provides guidance for students juggling life's challenges*

By Jamie Crockett

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) found that one in every five students lives with a mental health condition, and 40% of students do not seek help.

According to the 2018 annual report published by the Center for Collegiate Mental Health (CCMH), anxiety and depression are two of the most common concerns students express to clinicians. This national trend is also reflected in the student population at North Carolina A&T.

"I have worked in the mental health field for more than 20 years across the country, and I am drawn to students of color because many have not received adequate or any help with mental illness," said Vivian Barnette, Ph.D., executive director of Counseling Services at N.C. A&T.

"Our goal is to help our students by actively listening, supporting, uncovering the root of their concerns and reframing how they see themselves, their challenges and ensure resources are available for easy access."

College can present various challenges for scholars as they navigate the transition to adulthood, the journey of self-discovery, competing commitments, family responsibilities and academic pressures. Attempts to juggle these and other pressing concerns can be overwhelming and negatively impact their well-being and productivity. In fact, 76% of students reported their mental health interfered with their academics at least one day out of the month.

Recognizing the daily challenges students face, Counseling Services creates an empowering and welcoming environment that helps students identify and reach their academic, personal and professional goals.

The department is a comprehensive college counseling center that focuses on prevention, recovery and building resilience by offering free and confidential services such as personal and group counseling, academic skills training, career appraisals, psychological and educational testing and recovery programs for currently enrolled students. The team of 11 clinicians consists of licensed clinical social workers, licensed psychologists and licensed professional counselors and associates.

"Society may impact mental health and wellness as a result of stereotypes depicting people with mental illness as being crazy, dangerous or incompetent," said Calena Creft, a licensed professional counselor on the team. "This may cause individuals with mental health concerns to feel ashamed and deter them from seeking help."

"Counseling, therapy, talking to someone you trust, different forms like music therapy and even journaling can be helpful. We encourage students to take a holistic approach to self-care."

*Calena Creft, licensed professional counselor*

"Such reluctance is the reason Counseling Services provides ongoing psychoeducational workshops and mental health trainings to help reduce the shame and increase help-seeking skills," said Barnette.

Not only can societal pressures and stigma have a negative impact on mental health, but Creft also said scientists theorize chemical imbalances, as well as a combination of biological and environmental factors can contribute to the development of mental illness.

Out of the top 10 common warning signs of mental health imbalance, NAMI listed sadness and withdrawal as No. 1. Isolation is a sign of distress among students, along with sleep disturbances, decline in academics and excessive absences.

In her role, Creft serves as the mental health and wellness coordinator, as well as co-advises A&T's student chapter of Active Minds. Alison Malmon founded the organization in 2003, after her only sibling died by suicide when she was a junior at the University of Pennsylvania. The organization's mission is to change the conversation about mental health by focusing on students and young adults.

The A&T chapter is one of 450 across the nation and is instrumental in assisting Counseling Services with developing and offering entertaining yet informative programming for Aggies about topics that affect mental health.

Psychology major Shaunae Jackson wants to see even more change so she stepped up to become vice president of the Active Minds chapter.

"I believe the narrative is shifting as younger generations become even more vocal and feel free to express feelings that are often seen as taboo," said Jackson.

Jackson thought she knew everything there was to know about mental health prior to joining the chapter, but soon realized there was still much to learn.

"Even though I volunteer and help facilitate important conversations, I'm still gaining more insight," said Jackson. "And I think it's helpful and necessary to learn as you're teaching, so you can share that knowledge with others."

Active Minds is just one resource for students on campus. Counseling Services also organizes groups including:

- Collegiate Recovery Community, support for students who are recovering from alcohol, drugs and other addictive disorders;
- Aggies In Power, a support network for survivors of sexual assault;
- When Things Go Left, offering guidance on how to manage stressful situations when things don't go as planned; and
- Caregiver Connection, assisting students who take care of parents or children with disabilities

Additionally, Counseling Services partners with the Student Health Center (SHC) and its efforts to promote overall wellness. The SHC supports the Student Health Advisory Council (SHAC), a student-led organization that also allows for student centric programming regarding diverse health topics and concerns, as well as provides massage therapy to help students decrease stress, increase circulation and release tension in their muscles.

Engaging in a form of therapy and self-care that best suits the needs of a specific individual is key.

"Self-medicating with drugs or alcohol, or sweeping things under the rug, may evoke temporary relief, but it leads to long-term problems," said Creft. "Counseling, therapy, talking to someone you trust, different forms like music therapy and even journaling can be helpful. We encourage students to take a holistic approach to self-care."

In her opinion, Creft agrees with Jackson that the stigma associated with mental illness has decreased, especially for the traditional college-age student who may be more informed.

Counseling Services is appreciative of campus and community partners for their services and assistance in combating mental health challenges and stigma. Mental health wellness is everybody's business. And as education and resources expand, the more these concerns are normalized and addressed.





By Tonya D. Dixon '04

Visual appearances and societal stereotypes have become a calling card of the 21st century's technological society. While high-tech communication devices have increased global connectivity, they have, in part, decreased human kinship.

On Oct. 3, songs like Beyonce's self-love affirming anthem, "Brown Skin Girl," played in the background as North Carolina A&T students of all genders, identities and races filled Harrison Auditorium for the fall 2019 Chancellor's Speaker Series, "Love the Skin You're In," hoping to gain valuable insight from the special guests—actress Laverne Cox, model Shaun Ross and actress/singer Amber Riley.

From the moment Chancellor Harold L. Martin Sr. took the stage, the audience was engaged. Martin's comments about dealing with the effects of colorism as a youth growing up in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, along with the guest panelists' daily experiences created a platform for an hourlong discussion that would positively challenge (and possibly change) many perspectives.

The moderator, N.C. A&T alumna and licensed clinical psychologist Raushaunnah "Dr. RJ" Johnson-Verwayne, says it's okay to reevaluate the people and relationships in your life.

The moderator, alumna and licensed clinical psychologist Raushaunnah "Dr. RJ" Johnson-Verwayne, began the conversation detailing her journey of improved self-confidence. She said that coming to A&T (as a student) and seeing the diversity within the black community gave her the "confidence and swag" she needed to embrace, visualize and love herself.

Ross' experiences and career have provided him tremendous opportunities across the globe, yet he said it was his ability to speak and connect with students (that night) impacted him the most.

"I get to travel around the world and sit front row for some of the best designers and performers you could ever lay your eyes on, but there is something about speaking at a university with the future in front of you

Actress Laverne Cox, model/singer/actor/dancer Shaun Ross and actress/singer Amber Riley share a laugh while discussing self-love at the fall installment of the Chancellor's Speaker Series.

**"OWN YOUR STORY...TRYING TO BELONG AND TRYING TO FIT IN INSTEAD OF BEING OURSELVES IS OFTEN WHERE WE GO WRONG."**

- Laverne Cox

that is so much better," said Ross on Instagram following the event. "I received more love in this room than I could ever feel in my own industry."

The love was a free-flowing, two-way street. Students clearly were receptive of the words of wisdom and life experiences the guests transparently shared.

As Cox encouraged students to own their story, her bold statements of self-love were met with applause and agreement.

"Own your story. How wonderful is it that I'm a black transgender woman and I'm still alive. I love myself. I'm still worthy. You're worthy and here for something bigger than how you look," said Cox. "Trying to belong and trying to fit in instead of being ourselves is often where we go wrong."

"True love is never when you're hiding. Someone who truly wants to be with you wants the full

and complete you. You should never have to tone down who you really are to appease their comfort level," said Ross. "I love being around a man who loves being around me. ... We must learn and challenge each other to be in spaces where we might not always feel welcome."

All guests were presented with a gift tote that included a journal with a mirror inside for reflection, a massager and essential oil to help them love and care for themselves.

Absorbing the moment, students immediately used the journal to take notes and record strategies. From "watch what you put in your body" to "celebrate yourself" to "maintain a close support system," they captured profound statements and tangible steps to take away and apply.

While Cox, Ross and Riley had a wealth of motivational and inspirational information to share, it's worth noting they shared their own personal struggles.

"Remember, (achieving) self-esteem and self-acceptance is a process ... we have to constantly reaffirm who we personally think and know we are," said Riley.

Regarding the judgements of social media, she added, "It can be such a weird space. But at some point, you have to do you. ... If I want to wear the crop top, I'm going to wear the crop top. Sexy is what you say it is."

In a world where unsolicited opinions too often take center stage, the overall consensus among the panelists was to learn to accept and process only those of your own and of the people you truly value.

Turning toward professional assistance, Johnson-Verwayne echoed the sentiments of Cox and debunked an age-old African American cultural belief stating, "Everyone should have a therapist."

Perhaps, Riley best surmised the sentiments of the night: "Just because someone else doesn't value or know you, (it) doesn't negate the beauty and abilities you possess."

Johnson-Verwayne closed the conversation by encouraging attendees to "be fierce guardians of what you consume," ... "walk daily in positivity, affirmation and consistency" and know that "it's okay to reevaluate the people and relationships in your life. "There are some people who sit on the front row of your life today, who may later end up in the nose-bleeds seats."

Aligning with the university's strategic goal of fostering a more diverse and inclusive campus climate, the panel's discussion delved into the intersections of self-love and the extension of love toward others, infused with relevant and timely topics regarding body image perception, stereotypes, personal values, the constructs associated with social media and more, leading to a healthy, happy life.





**Women are no strangers to solving problems on a daily basis, and women in STEM and related fields at North Carolina A&T are conducting research that will help solve some of the world's problems.**



Female STEM researchers at N.C. A&T are studying how to sustainably and economically continue to cultivate (farm) land for food, resolve soil and groundwater contamination issues created in prior generations, learn from the mistakes of industrialization and find ways to help eliminate the need for herd-animal antibiotics.

In what are still the very male dominated fields of economics, civil and environmental engineering, and animal science, some of A&T's researchers have seen the landscape of STEM research change.

Mulumebet "Millie" Worku, Ph.D., a professor who has taught in the Department of Animal Science in the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences for more than 20 years, acknowledges how far her area of study has come.

"When I started there was one woman doing research," she said. "The hardest thing for us was the persistence, making sure the women researchers kept going. Women often take on the family burden and don't continue to do their research. Now, I have many more female students and some of my former female students end up right next door as colleagues. It's great to see."

Stephanie Luster-Teasley, Ph.D., chairwoman of the Department of Civil, Architectural and Environmental Engineering in the College of Engineering, is one of the co-principal investigators of Advance Institutional Transformation (IT), a project at A&T created to be a catalyst for university-wide systemic changes that increase the representation of women at all levels. Through that project, she's seen women of all disciplines and ages support one another.

"Women would get so bogged down in teaching that they couldn't push their research. Women who come in now are balancing that and be coming PIs," she said. "With Advance IT, I get the

Worku

# WOMEN in STEM

By Jordan M. Howse





Luster-Teasley is one of the early names on the list of A&T patents. Her “environmental pill” helps and continues to help remediated sites with contaminated soil and groundwater.

More than 200,000 sites in the United States require some form of environmental remediation, according to the National Science Foundation. Luster-Teasley said the most difficult to remediate are locations where contaminated subsurface soils and groundwater are present.

Luster-Teasley developed controlled release biodegradable polymers, RemRx™. The polymers use potassium permanganate, a chemical oxidant used in treating drinking water and in the remediation of chlorinated solvents, to release oxidants over time to treat contaminated soil or water.

RemRx™ treatment technology also supports the sustainability efforts of Triad Growth Partners in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Triad Growth Partners is developing innovative solutions for the \$60 billion remediation market to decrease cost, increase efficacy and restore water and land in a sustainable manner. AxNano, the technology development group of Triad Growth Partners, is designing these advanced solutions as part of Luster-Teasley’s RemRx™ treatment technologies platform.

opportunity to gather women and form a sort of support network and it’s really helped change the tide. Our ideas are just as great as the guys’. We just need to be heard.”

Worku’s research in animal genomics has used the unique genetic markers in goats and sheep that make certain breeds less susceptible to parasites and diseases to potentially develop food that may not need antibiotics.

As the demand for antibiotic-free meats grows, Worku has identified genetic markers that will aid in the control of gastrointestinal parasites in cattle, sheep and goats. She and her team have been working to develop novel and alternative ways to help farmers, particularly small farmers, protect their animals and raise meat that is antibiotic-free.

Funded by a grant from the USDA’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Worku and A&T master’s and doctoral students have focused their work on examining the period of time when a goat, sheep or cow has a weakened immune system and is more susceptible to disease.

“The world has limited resources. There’s such a large population and we have to ensure food security,” Worku said. “My work looks at the genetic diversity and what makes some animals better able to fight disease. That will help us find the right source of food for sustainability.”



Ferguson



Alesia Ferguson, Ph.D., interim chairwoman of Department of Built Environment in the College of Science and Technology, also works with contaminants. She looks more closely at the effects of human exposure to not only crude oil from oil spills but also the chemicals and other dispersants used to clean up the spill.

Ferguson’s research is funded by the Gulf of Mexico Research Initiative (GoMRI), which was created through a \$500 million commitment from BP to examine the long-term environmental impact of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill.

Ferguson, along with researchers from University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston and University of Miami, conducted surveys at four beaches—two in Galveston, two in Miami—to evaluate the risks and possible health effects on children exposed to these chemicals.

Through video surveys and the observation of 100 children for one hour at each beach, Ferguson looked at how often families were visiting the beaches and what activities they participated in.

“We documented how long children sat in the sand, if they buried themselves in it, how often they put their hands in their mouth, their contact with seaweed—everything,” Ferguson said.

Using the footage and documentation collected at the beaches, Ferguson built a predictive model of activity patterns to establish a health-risk assessment. She hopes their research helps establish timelines for closing and reopening beaches that have been contaminated as well as extrapolating her predictive model to other forms of contamination like bacteria and microbes.

Although much STEM research takes place in a lab, Lyubov “Luba” Kurkalova, Ph.D., associate professor of economics in the Willie A. Deese College of Business and Economics, works with an interdisciplinary team as the economic lead researching land use in the field, literally.

Kurkalova looks at what affects agricultural development and forestry and what it means for the environment. She uses maps and models of farms to evaluate the benefits of more sustainable ways to farm land.

Kurkalova is in the midst of a research initiative





Kurkalova

with North Carolina State University's Department of Forestry and Environmental Resources to perfect a forest productivity and economic model that supports a web based interactive tool for forest managers, who can use the tool to make better decisions on managing their production. Additionally, a proposed regional-scale economic analysis is aimed at informing policy makers and potential industrial users of wood feedstock.

Other work she's done includes creating efficient modeling for use in environmental sciences as well as looking at the economic benefits of reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

"Farmers are land stewards and very environmental-minded," Kurkalova said. "Our research looks at what the economic effects could be to continue to use the current agricultural practices. Going to more environmentally friendly practices might not be as costly as previously thought."

In what are still very male dominated fields of economics, civil and environmental engineering, and animal science, A&T's female researchers are changing the landscape of STEM innovation.

**"Farmers are land stewards ... Going to more environmentally friendly practices might not be as costly as previously thought."**

*-Lyubov "Luba" Kurkalova, Ph.D.*

**With so many unknown answers in STEM, here are a few more women who have made significant contributions as principal investigators and top researchers in their fields.**



**SHEA BURNS, PH.D.**

*College of Science and Technology, Department of Mathematics*  
Mathematics is typically the safe haven from the written word, but Burns' research proves how critical reading strategies can improve student success in math classes. Proof-based math, like abstract algebra, uses more critical thinking concepts than equation-based math. Burns is exploring interdisciplinary research with other CoST and English professors on how confidence in reading and writing can help students succeed in proof-based math.

**LAUREN DAVIS, PH.D.**

*College of Engineering, Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering*  
Davis' research addresses the management of for-profit and not-for-profit supply chains with specific focus on performance in dynamic environments. Characteristics of the dynamic environment include one or more of the following: constrained supply; uncertain supply, uncertain demand; demand surges due to extreme events like natural disasters' disruptions in operations caused by extreme events. The goal is to identify policies that are optimal from a financial and/or service perspective.



**KRISTEN DELLINGER, PH.D.**

*Joint School of Nanoscience and Nanoengineering*  
Dellinger's research focus includes synthesizing and characterizing nanomaterials for diverse applications, including diabetes and heart disease. Practical application for biomaterials can be found in the design of contact lenses and pacemakers. Dellinger is also interested in theranostics, or what a manuscript submitted to the National Center for Biotechnology Information (NCBI) defines as "ongoing efforts in clinics to develop more specific, individualized therapies for various diseases, and to combine diagnostic and therapeutic capabilities into a single agent." Currently, she is collaborating with Reza Zadegan, Ph.D., also a nanoscientist at JSNN, on further applications of synthetic biology.

**YEWANDE O. FASINA, PH.D.**

*College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences, Department of Animal Sciences*  
Fasina and her team are exploring ways to use plasma, an important healer, as an alternative to antibiotics to boost flock health. Adding sprayed dried plasma (SDP) to chicken feed has been proven to enhance gut health and disease resistance in various animal species, Fasina found. Young broiler chicks are among the poultry that can benefit from SDP added to their feed as a means of enhancing their immune systems and controlling salmonella infections. The finding gives the poultry industry the documentation it needs to investigate SDP as an alternative to antibiotics in controlling intestinal pathogens.



**ANTOINETTE MALDONADO-DEVINCCI, PH.D.**

*College of Health and Human Sciences, Department of Psychology*  
Maldonado-Devincci's current research broadly centers on understanding how sex differences that emerge during adolescence impact long-term changes in brain and behavior. She narrows in on investigating how binge alcohol exposure during adolescence changes (1) alcohol use disorders, (2) mood disorders and (3) abnormal brain development in adulthood. Researching animal models since 2003, Maldonado-Devincci has found that male subjects show more heightened anxiety in adulthood while female subjects show a more depressive phenotype.

**TERRY WARD, PH.D.**

*College of Health and Human Sciences, School of Nursing*  
Ward is conducting simulation studies with her nursing students by integrating a "hearing voices" simulator to help increase empathy for patients with mental disorders. The simulator includes students listening to a variety of voices in earbuds that can be degrading and comforting. The students attempt to conduct simple activities like puzzles, applications and interviews while hearing the voices. Through this simulation, students increase their level of empathy by learning what it is like to try to do what some may consider menial tasks while suffering from a mental disorder like schizophrenia or comorbid bipolar disorder.







# THE GREATEST HOMECOMING ON EARTH 2019

During North Carolina A&T's 93rd homecoming celebration, alumni, friends and the East Greensboro community displayed Aggie Pride to the nth degree.

The weeklong celebration of the Greatest Homecoming on Earth included traditional student, university and alumni sponsored events like the coronation, pep rally, convocation, concerts, parade and tailgate parties. New on the scene this year was the opening of the campus bookstore's pop-up shop in downtown Greensboro.

The Aggies blew out the Howard Bison in a 64-6 win at the sold-out football game.

Aggie alumni never miss a chance to come home to support their alma mater, see how the university has grown and relive memories that could only be made at A&T.









1960s

A skybox suite at BB&T Stadium has been named in honor of Joseph and Sallie Monroe. Their record of giving to North Carolina A&T dates back more than 30 years. In addition to their latest gift, to the Department of Athletics, the Monroes also have an endowed scholarship in computer science.

**JOSEPH MONROE** is a **1962** graduate of N.C. A&T. He went on to earn an M.S. and a Ph.D. in computer science from Texas A&M, becoming the first African American to earn a doctoral degree in computer science in the United States.

Upon graduating, he was commissioned as a second lieutenant in the U.S. Air Force and appointed as an associate professor of computer



'62 Monroe

science at the U.S. Air Force Academy. From 1978–1987, he held various positions at the Academy including dean of faculty and chairman of the Department of Electrical Engineering and the Department of Computer Science. He was the first African American appointed as a full professor.

In 1987, Joseph Monroe joined the faculty at Fayetteville State University, where he held various academic and administrative positions, and returned to A&T in 1991 as the Ronald E. McNair Endowed Professor and chairman of the Department of Computer Science. He took on an additional role in 2000 as dean of engineering.

N.C. A&T hosted the inaugural **VERNELL STALLINGS** Women's Bowling Invitational, Nov. 15–17, at AMF Lanes in Greensboro, North Carolina.

Stallings is a member of the class of **1964**. After serving in the Vietnam War, he returned to A&T in 1979 to become associate director of the Memorial Student Union, a position

he held for 22 years. He also coached women's bowling and led the Aggies to Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) titles in 1996, 1997 and 1999, before the conference fully sponsored the sport. He retired as the team's first head coach after the 1999 championship season. An avid and generous supporter of A&T, the university recognized Stallings' dedication by naming the Memorial Student Union Ballroom for him. Recently, he bestowed a gift to the bowling program that will allow for the purchase of SPECTO Bowling training software, which is used by previous NCAA bowling champions.

Widely considered one of the best in the nation, A&T's bowling team won the MEAC title in 2018. The team has made two appearances at the NCAA tournament in the last five seasons and in 2015 won the International Team Championship (ITC) national title, which is sponsored by the United States Bowling Congress.

The widow of the late **MARION HARRISON JR. '64** was presented

the Distinguished Civilian Team Member Award for his service to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Savannah District. The award recognized Harrison's steadfast support of diversity within the workplace and his singular focus on growing young professionals to the betterment of the organization.

A professional registered architect, Harrison served Savannah District from 1964 until his retirement in 2003, which was followed by several years as a rehired annuitant mentoring young engineers and architects working in the district's construction division. His final retirement from USACE was in 2010. He died in February 2017.

Harrison began his career as an intern, becoming the first African American to work in a professional position in the Savannah District after the Civil Rights Act was passed the same year. Throughout his career, Harrison demonstrated a strong work ethic, superior technical skills and a natural proficiency toward leadership. He was the "first African American" in several key positions throughout the organization.

Harrison was USACE Savannah District's Supervisor of the Year in 1998, and in 1999, he was selected by the Corps of Engineers as the world-wide "Top Architect" (now called Architect of the Year). In addition, he received the Black Engineer's Award and has been recognized by the Equal Employment Opportunity Office.

For nearly 40 years, alumna **SANDRA DAYE HUGHES '69** excelled in broadcast journalism as a talk show host and news anchor. On Sept. 27, Hughes was inducted into the National Black College Alumni Hall of Fame on Sept. 27 in the arts category.

Hughes made history in 1974, becoming the first African American woman to host her own daily talk show, "Sandra and Friends," in North Carolina's Piedmont. In 1976, she was the first female broadcaster invited to participate in the European

Communities' Visitors Program and, in 1978, she was the first African American woman in the Southeast to host the nationally syndicated "PM Magazine." She went on to co-hosted WFMY-TV's "Good Morning Show" and serve as an anchor for the evening news. Hughes retired from WFMY in 2011.

In 2002, Hughes received The Order of the Long Leaf Pine, the most prestigious award conferred by the governor of North Carolina. That same year, July 24 was declared Sandra Daye Hughes Day by the Guilford County Commissioners. In 2014, she received the Chuck Stone Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Association of Black Journalists.

1970s

**ROSA PURCELL, PH.D., '70** has received the 2019 Alumni Achievement Award from North Carolina A&T's College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences.

Purcell's professional experiences include high school teacher (Louisa, Virginia), extension advisor (University of Illinois) and associate professor and department chair of family and consumer sciences (N.C. A&T). During her tenure at A&T, Purcell initiated the department's accreditation by the American Home Economics Association in 1984, initiated the dietetics program accreditation by the American Dietetic Association (now the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics) and developed the Master of Arts in Teaching in family and consumer sciences education.

After over 35 years of employment at A&T, Purcell retired in June 2014 and established the Dr. Arthur and Rosa Purcell Endowed Scholarship Fund to support students in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences.

In addition to her B.S. in home economics from A&T, Purcell earned her M.Ed. and Ph.D. in home economics from the University of Illinois. She has served the family and consumer sciences



'64 Harrison Jr.



'69 Hughes



'70 Purcell



'64 Stallings





'73 Belgrave

profession and communities—locally and nationally—and is a recipient of the profession's highest honor.

**FAYE Z. BELGRAVE, PH.D., '73** has received the 2019 Alumni Achievement Award from North Carolina A&T's College of Health and Human Sciences.

Belgrave is university professor of health psychology, professor of psychology and founding director of the Center for Cultural Experiences in Prevention at Virginia Commonwealth University. Her programmatic and research interests are in the areas of health disparities, including drug and HIV prevention among African Americans and other ethnic minorities. Her research also focuses on the role of culture and context in prevention interventions, women's health and gender related issues.



'77 Pinnix-Ragland

She has published extensively with over 100 peer reviewed articles and book chapters and eight books. She co-authored the first textbook in African American psychology as well as books and cultural curricula on African American children. She has received numerous awards and recognitions for her research, teaching and service.

Belgrave received her M.S. from the University of Nebraska and Ph.D. from the University of Maryland.

**HILDA M. PINNIX-RAGLAND '77** has received the 2019 Alumni Achievement Award from North Carolina A&T's College of Business and Economics.

Pinnix-Ragland is a retired Duke Energy corporate affairs and business executive acknowledged for building best-in-class organizations that consistently achieve aggressive revenue and profit objectives. She currently serves as chief financial officer at AHK Global Resources and is a dedicated board member/advisor to

numerous industry, educational and community organizations, including the N.C. A&T Board of Trustees where she currently serves as vice chairwoman.

Pinnix-Ragland is a Chapter Fellow of the National Association of Corporate Directors, a member of Women Corporate Directors, Executive Leadership Council and a recipient of the Triangle Business Journal's Lifetime Women in Business Award. She recently published the book, "Women in Energy: An Illuminating Perspective from Five Trailblazers."

Her B.S. degree from A&T is in accounting and she holds an MBA from Duke University Fuqua School of Business. She also completed graduate studies in taxation at St. John's University and the Executive Program at Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

**JAMES C. DALTON '78** has received the 2019 Alumni Achievement Award from North Carolina A&T's College of Engineering.

Dalton is the director of civil works at Headquarters, United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), in Washington, D.C., where he leads, manages and directs the policy development, programming, planning, design, construction, contingency operations and emergency response, operation and maintenance activities of the Army Civil Works Program (a \$6 billion annual program of water and related land resources of the United States and oversees the work of over 25,000 civilian employees). He also represents the USACE in the United Nation's Advisory Board High-Level Experts and Leaders Panel on Water and Disasters, serves in several national and international water resources committees, and serves as the U.S. chair of the Columbia River Treaty Permanent Engineer Board—a major treaty between the USA and Canada for flood risk.



The North Carolina native's career at USACE began in 1978, immediately following the completion of his B.S. in architectural engineering. He was selected to the Senior Executive Service in January 2005. From July 2005 to May 2007, he was regional business director for USACE's South Atlantic division in Atlanta, Georgia. For the six months prior to that, Dalton was director of business management for USACE's Gulf Region Division in Baghdad, Iraq.

From May 2007 until August 2016, Dalton was chief of USACE's Engineering and Construction Division,

responsible for policy, program and technical expertise in the design and construction programs for the U.S. Army, U.S. Air Force, Department of Defense, other federal agencies and over 60 foreign nations. He also served as the corps' South Atlantic Division and South Pacific Division Regional Integration Team leader, USACE Climate Change Adaption Committee Chairman and lead for USACE on Resilience.

## 1980s

**WALTER HOOD '81**, a landscape and public artist based in Oakland, California, is one of 26 individuals chosen as a 2019 MacArthur Fellow and one of seven inaugural Knight Public Spaces Fellows.

Hood is the creative director and founder of Hood Design Studio, where his work combines art, design, landscape, research and urbanism. He is also a professor of landscape architecture and environmental planning and urban design at UC Berkeley.

The MacArthur Fellowship—a program supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation—is a five-year, \$625,000, unrestricted grant awarded to individuals who show exceptional creativity in their work and the prospect for still more in the future—all for the benefit of human society. The fellowship is designed to provide recipients with the flexibility to pursue their own artistic, intellectual and professional activities in the absence of specific obligations or reporting requirements. There are no limits on age or area of activity. Individuals cannot apply for this award; unsolicited nominations are not accepted.

The Knight Public Spaces Fellowship Program is an initiative of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation to recognize leaders, experts and practitioners who have created or influenced great public spaces that strengthened community engagement and connection. Recipients receive \$150,000 in recognition of their contributions and to advance their work.



1980s

**MICHEAL R. WATKINS '83** has received the 2019 Alumni Achievement Award from North Carolina A&T's College of Science and Technology (CoST).

Watkins is a global executive management professional with more than 35 years of experience, including over 10 years of profit and loss (P&L) management. He currently works with Regal Beloit Corporation, a \$4 billion Wisconsin based global manufacturer of electric motors and generators where he is the global director of supply chain quality, development, critical processes and compliance.

He is chairman of CoST's Department of Applied Engineering Technology Advisory Board. He has also served on the boards of Eagle Gold Academy for Kids and the National Minority Supplier Diversity Council, and he has chaired corporate United Way programs and fundraising campaigns.

Watkins has a B.S. in manufacturing engineering technology from N.C. A&T and an Executive MBA from Bowling Green University. He also has attended executive leadership programs at the University of Wisconsin and University of Michigan.

1990s

**BRENDEN A. HARGETT, PH.D., '91** has received the 2019 Alumni Achievement Award from North Carolina A&T's College of Education.

Hargett is a behavioral health professional with over 25 years of extensive clinical experience in a variety of settings. He currently works as the substance use educator/addictions specialist in the Office of Student Life at High Point University. Hargett previously served as an adjunct faculty member at Winston-Salem State University and N.C. A&T. He has acquired knowledge

and expertise in trauma informed care, addictions, program development and implementation, clinical supervision and leadership development. He also works on workforce development strategies with the intent to bridge the gap between research and practice while creating a more comprehensive behavioral health service system.

In July, Hargett was appointed by Gov. Roy Cooper to serve as a member of the North Carolina Commission for Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Abuse Services. He is the vice president of the North Carolina Foundation for Alcohol and drug Studies Board of directors and is a mentor for the National Board for Certified Counselors' Minority Fellowship Program.

Hargett has a Ph.D. in rehabilitation counseling and rehabilitation counselor education from A&T. He is a licensed professional counselor (LPC), licensed clinical addiction specialist (LCAS) and a nationally certified counselor (NCC) with a Master Addictions Counselor (MAC) designation.

2000s

**ALAN GILLESPIE, P.E., '07** is the first African American engineer to be appointed as a national discipline lead within the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

As the new national water management engineer with the Conservation Engineering Division, Gillespie fulfills a lifelong objective of providing leadership in policy development and technical guidance in engineering solutions.

"This opportunity expands the collective technical expertise of the USDA to include the legacy of academic and research excellence at N.C. A&T," said Gillespie. "I am who I am, and where I am, because of the investment the faculty made in me."

Gillespie graduated from the biological engineering department in 2007. Prior to this appointment, Gillespie served as the state conservation engineer for Rhode Island.



'83 Watkins



'91 Hargett

2010s

**KEVIN WILSON JR. '11** has received the 2019 Alumni Achievement Award from North Carolina A&T's College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

Wilson is an Oscar nominated and Student Academy Awards winning filmmaker based in New York City. His first works as a filmmaker came shortly after directing a sold out play as an undergraduate student at N.C. A&T. Since that time, his short films have screened at film festivals all over the world including the 55th New York Film Festival, Telluride Film Festival, Cleveland International Film Festival and HollyShorts Film Festival where he won Best Director.

In 2017, Wilson won the Gold Medal at the 44th Student Academy Awards for his short film, "My Nephew Emmett," a 20 minute short film based on the true story of the 1955 murder of Emmett Till. Months later, the film was nominated for an Oscar for Best Live Action Short Film at the 90th Academy Awards. "My Nephew Emmett" also won Wilson a Directors Guild of America Student Film Award and a BAFTA Student Film Award.

Wilson has a B.S. in journalism and mass communication from A&T and an MFA in film production from New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.



IN MEMORIAM

ALUMNI

**Bobby Addington**, June 3  
**Cheryl Alston '95**, July 14  
**Gerald Alston Jr. '97**, July 9  
**Jacqueline Alston '78**, March 13  
**Lamonte Armstrong**, Aug. 15  
**Daniel Atherton**, March 28  
**Rosa Beasley '49**, June 27  
**Amber Odette Best '02, '05 (M)**  
**Elbert Booker Jr. '67**, April 27  
**Sampson Buie Jr. '52**, June 27  
**Willena Campbell '53 (M)**, May 31  
**Faye Caple '64**, April 1  
**Inez Chandler '58**, June 20  
**Alice Chatman**, June 26  
**Gwendolyn Cherry**, April 26  
**Arlington Chisman**, June 29  
**Zanard Choice '16**, June 10  
**Phillip Collins '55**, May 15  
**Celessie Collins-Caldwell '55**, April 30  
**Christy Cousins '93**, March 15  
**John Crews '66**, July 23  
**Marian Crumdy '69**, July 6  
**John Deese '85**, May 15  
**Deborah Douglas '75 (M)**, April 19  
**Elizabeth Dowdy '72 (M)**, July 8  
**Andrew Edwards**, June 20  
**Mary Ellis '64 (M)**, April 6  
**John Feimster '71**, May 15  
**Gloria Fisher**, June 19  
**James Ford '91**, June 16  
**Jean Fulcher '52**, April 27  
**William Gamble**, April 25

**Gail Gibson '73**, May 6  
**Sarah Graham '68**, April 10  
**Ruth Grandy '56**, July 21  
**Terry Haith '82**, July 13  
**Jacquelyn Haizlip**, May 3  
**Arnetta Haney '07**, May 19  
**Elizabeth Harper**, March 21  
**Mary Hayes '54**, April 20  
**Darlene Hill '82**, June 24  
**Leon Hinton Sr. '82 (M)**, May 20  
**Tyrique Hudson '17**, April 15  
**Allen Ingram II '02**, April 4  
**Joseph Johnson '59**, March 6  
**Elizabeth Jordan '59**, April 28  
**Larry Linker**, June 23  
**Chevella Lomax '08 (M)**, July 5  
**Louise Lowery '52**, May 19  
**Goldia Mabry '05 (M)**, Aug. 8  
**Norma Majette**, June 19  
**Anthony Mangol '81**, May 8  
**Mabel Martin '50**, July 23  
**Frances Meadows '53**, April 6  
**Brian Millsapp '95**, May 21  
**Robert Moses '03**, July 16  
**Edward Parker '82**, April 27  
**Beanie Reeves '72**, Aug. 23  
**Barbara Rogers '54**, May 23  
**Keith Shields '06**, July 5  
**Ronnie J. Sadler '75**, Sept. 16, 2018  
**Joseph Shives Jr. '55**, July 23  
**Archie Smith '62**, May 22  
**Barbara Smith '74**, May 4

**Jerry Staples**, June 4  
**Reginald Thompson '61**, May 7  
**Ponce Tidwell Sr. '63**, June 14  
**Otis Tillman Sr. '53**, April 10  
**Willie Toomer '54**, April 15  
**James Tripp '78**, April 16  
**Velma Tyrance**, June 20  
**Reginald Victor '55**, Aug. 14  
**Albert Walker**, March 27  
**Eddie Ward**, June 14  
**Margaret Warren '58**, May 6  
**Charles E. Watkins '03**, Dec. 13  
**Joseph Williams '72**, June 11  
**David Wilson '96**, June 13  
**Larry Wittenberg**, July 13  
**William Young Jr. '67**, March 14

STUDENTS

**Claud Roberson "Robby" Wheatly IV**, graduate student

FACULTY & STAFF

**John Marshall Kilimanjaro**, founder, Paul Robeson Theatre; former executive director of theatre and Richard B. Harrison Players

**Nan P. Manuel, Ph.D.**, retired mathematics professor

**Garry Pierce**, procurement agent

**Peggie Jean Sigmon Waddell**, former charge nurse





# THE INVESTOR

By Jackie Torok

## ***Alumnus Jerome Myers creates opportunities for students and communities***

Jerome Myers '05 lives by the mantra, "Dreams should be real."

The Fayetteville native who graduated with a B.S. in civil engineering before earning his MBA from Longwood University in 2010, credits North Carolina A&T for fueling his ambition to make his dreams a reality.

As an N.C. A&T student, Myers was inducted into all engineering honor societies at the university. He also was an outside linebacker for the Aggies football team for four years.

Two years after his baccalaureate graduation, he established the Myers Family Endowed Scholarship, which provides significant support to high-caliber engineering students, beginning in their sophomore year. The scholarship renews through graduation as long as the 3.2 minimum GPA requirement is met each year.

"I'm proud to be an A&T graduate," Myers said. "All good things in my growth and development originated there.

"As Aggies, it's important to give back. I think we have to give back," he said. "We need to create opportunities for other people in our giving."

That philosophy has guided Myers through all professional pursuits. In 2006, he founded The Myers Development Group LLC (MGD), a service conglomerate "on a mission to build a portfolio of 1,000 workforce housing units in the Mid-Atlantic and to free 100 people from work they aren't passionate about."

Myers' passion lies in community reinvestment, which means investing in both people and places. In addition to his position as MGD managing director, he works as a life coach through Dreamcatchers to help people achieve their goals and hold them accountable to their actions.

He began working with Dreamcatchers at the same time he became a full-time entrepreneur in 2016 when he left MasTec, the largest minority-owned construction company. Among his accomplishments during his two years with MasTec, he oversaw one of the largest of seven areas of an estimated \$2 billion program with a \$175 million annual budget supporting up to 150 staff members.

One of Myers's own dreams is to revitalize East Greensboro. He took a major step toward realizing that dream when the Greensboro Zoning Commission in August unanimously approved a 120-unit multifamily complex on East Penry Road planned by Technology Row LLC, a developer Myers represents.

Not only will the project provide much needed modern and affordable housing in a designated Triad opportunity zone, Myers said, but it also will hark back to the area's architectural history with townhomes at the front of the six-acre property and three-story apartments at the rear.

"The area had a deep concentration of affluent African Americans, many of them N.C. A&T faculty members, in the '60s, mainly because at the time there was nowhere else for them to go," Myers said.

"My ambition is to build projects that will attract people back to East Greensboro, building upon that proud heritage," he said. "To create wealth for a lot of people, we've got to buy the necessary assets with an understanding of the market."

Also in August, Myers founded Myers Methods, a course designed to help people find, fund and fix their first multifamily property.

He said this outreach effort allows him to share his expertise as a Project Management Professional, professional engineer, licensed general contractor and licensed commercial contractor.

"We need to show people how doing your best leads to great things," Myers said. "We have to support them and show them how to make their dreams real."



# 2019 THE YEAR IN REVIEW

A&T moved forward in many ways in 2019. These are among our most memorable points of progress. #AggiesDO

JAN

- North Carolina A&T is the **first HBCU to be highlighted by the National Security Agency** on the agency's website as part of its new "Featured School" series.
- To address campus food insecurity, **A&T opens Aggie Source, a food and personal care item pantry for students.**



FEB

- Electrical and Computer Engineering Professor **Abdollah Homaifar is appointed Samuel P. Langley Distinguished NASA Langley Chair Professor** at the National Institute of Aerospace.
- A&T launches three new centers of excellence** in advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity and entrepreneurship and innovation.

80  
PERCENT

- A university-wide focus on student success pushes the A&T retention rate to nearly 80%, pares the time-to-degree rate to 4.53 years and sees A&T award 1,680 bachelor's degrees in FY18.

MAR



- Stage/screen stars Loretta Devine (Dream Girls), Jasmine Cuy (A Different World) and A&T alumnus/Oscar-nominated director Kevin Wilson Jr., teach master classes** in the performing arts as part of a star-studded Chancellor's Speaker Series event.

APR



MAY

- North Carolina A&T gave the Class of 1969 a proper graduation celebration** as part of the university's Spring 2019 Commencement. The class's commencement was cancelled in the aftermath of protests that saw U.S. military troops mobilized on the A&T campus.
- A Gallup survey of alumni of all 16 UNC campuses showed that **Aggie alums have the highest affinity for their alma mater** than any other university in the system.

- A&T sets a third-consecutive institutional record in **annual research funding with \$64.37 million** in contracts and grants.
- A&T's team finishes **first in the country and second overall in the second round of a major autonomous vehicle competition**, beating out such schools as Virginia Tech and Texas A&M.
- With the beginning of the 2019-20 school year, **North Carolina welcomes its largest ever student body - 12,556 Aggies strong.** For the sixth straight year, A&T is America's largest HBCU.

SUMMER

SEPT

- In U.S. News & World Report's "Best Colleges 2020" issue, A&T breaks into the top-tier numerical rankings for National Universities for the first time and is **recognized as the nation's No. 1 public HBCU.**



OCT

- Homecoming has become a major economic boost for Greensboro with an **estimated financial impact well in excess of \$10 million**, according to local financial analyses.
- Chancellor Harold L. Martin Sr. is named the Thurgood Marshall College Fund's **national Educational Leadership Award winner.**

NOV

- Juniors Dorian Holmes and Jaelyn Phillips** are part of a prestigious class of 400 students drawn from 90 colleges and universities across 13 countries chosen for the Stanford University Innovation Fellows program.
- The Campaign for North Carolina A&T **surges past its original goal of \$85 million and establishes a new target: \$100 million** by the end of 2020.



DEC

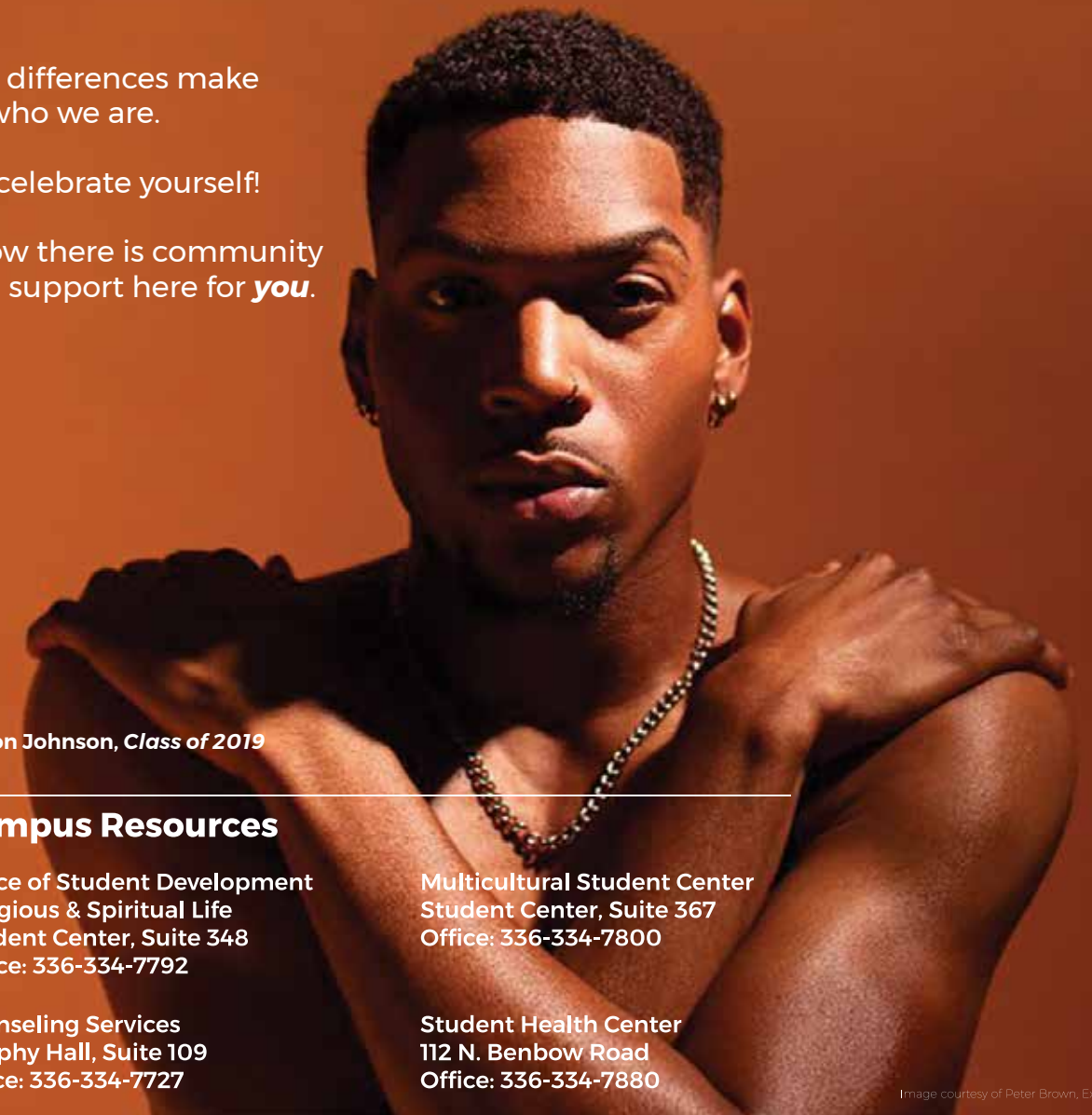
- More than 1,000 students become N.C. A&T alumni.** The keynote speaker was alumna, Kelly Richmond Pope, Ph.D. '96.
- N.C. A&T football team was **invited back to the Celebration Bowl for the third year in a row**, fourth time overall.

# LOVE THE SKIN YOU'RE IN

Our differences make us who we are.

So, celebrate yourself!

Know there is community and support here for **you.**



Aaron Johnson, Class of 2019

## Campus Resources

Office of Student Development  
Religious & Spiritual Life  
Student Center, Suite 348  
Office: 336-334-7792

Counseling Services  
Murphy Hall, Suite 109  
Office: 336-334-7727

Multicultural Student Center  
Student Center, Suite 367  
Office: 336-334-7800

Student Health Center  
112 N. Benbow Road  
Office: 336-334-7880

Image courtesy of Peter Brown, Extraor Productions



**NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURAL AND TECHNICAL STATE UNIVERSITY**

N.C. A&T does not discriminate against any person on the basis of age, color, disability, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, veteran status, or any other basis protected by law.





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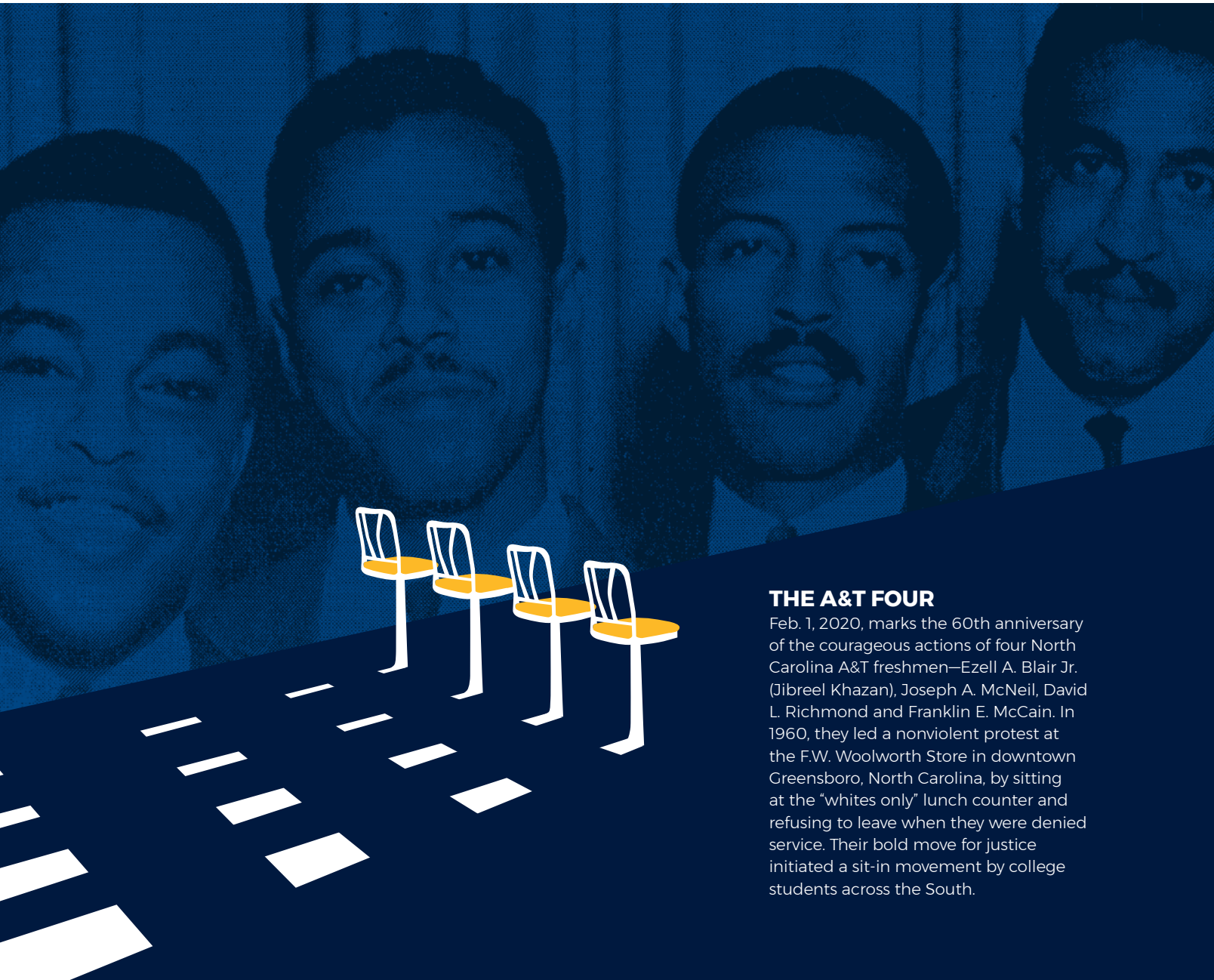
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## **THE A&T FOUR**

Feb. 1, 2020, marks the 60th anniversary of the courageous actions of four North Carolina A&T freshmen—Ezell A. Blair Jr. (Jibreel Khazan), Joseph A. McNeil, David L. Richmond and Franklin E. McCain. In 1960, they led a nonviolent protest at the F.W. Woolworth Store in downtown Greensboro, North Carolina, by sitting at the “whites only” lunch counter and refusing to leave when they were denied service. Their bold move for justice initiated a sit-in movement by college students across the South.