

# N.C.A.&T

SPRING 2019

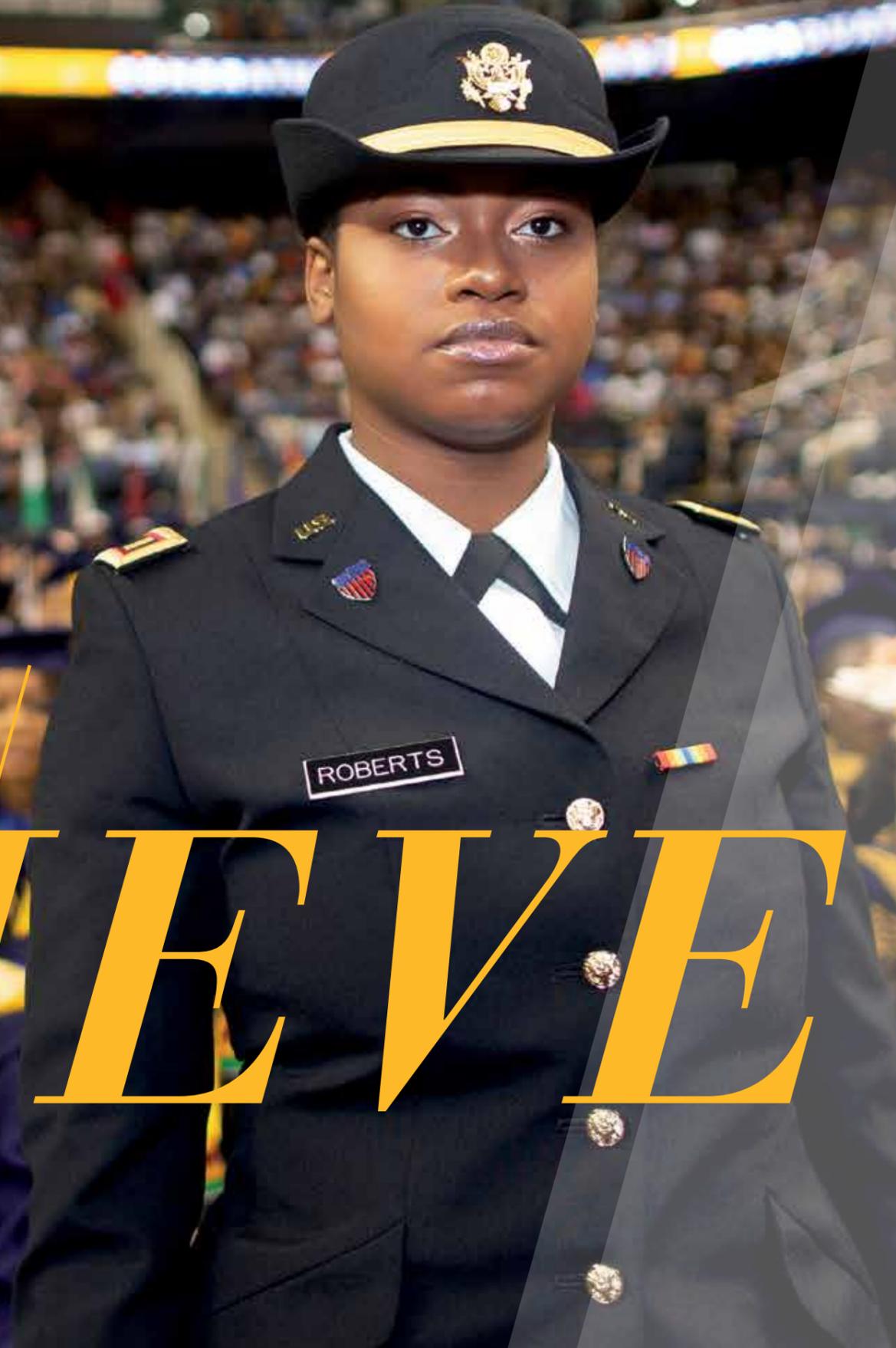


## AGGIES SWEEP MEAC TRACK AND FIELD

FIRST CLASS | INSIGHT AND INSPIRATION | TOWN & GOWN | THE POWER OF "DO"



# AGGIES ACHIEVE



## N.C. A&T Magazine

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Spring 2019 biology graduate **SAMIRA ROBERTS** is recognized for her commission as a second lieutenant in the United States Army.



INSIGHT AND INSPIRATION

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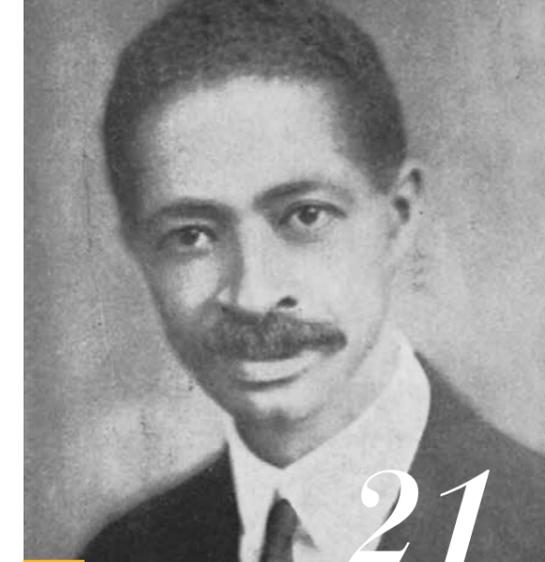
# N.C. A&T

MAGAZINE

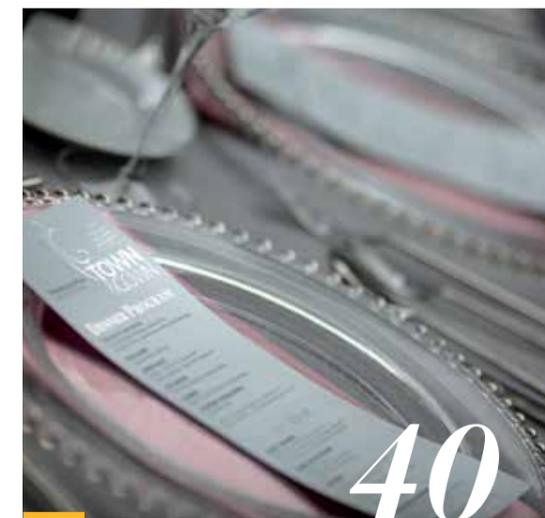
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COVER: N.C. A&T senior student-athlete **KAYLA WHITE**. On Feb. 8, White finished the indoor 200 meters sprint at the Tyson Invitational in 22.82 seconds, making her the indoor 200m fastest woman in the world. In May, her time of 10.96 won the MEAC outdoor 100m moved her to no. 1 in the nation and the fifth fastest time ever recorded for a collegiate athlete.



FIRST CLASS



TOWN & GOWN



THE POWER OF "DO"

# Making News

## N.C. A&T PARTICIPATES IN UNC SYSTEM DONOR-ADVISED FUND PROGRAM

Through a new University of North Carolina System partnership with TIAA Charitable, North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University is the first historically black college or university to offer a leading-edge, branded donor-advised fund (DAF) program to alumni and friends.

With this partnership, cash, securities and other highly appreciated assets may be placed into the Aggie Charitable Giving Fund (ACGF). Donors may elect to make an immediate gift to North Carolina A&T and other charities or to invest for additional tax-free growth. Philanthropists may remain anonymous and/or establish a systematic way to support the causes they care about.

“It is important for us to offer our alumni and constituents flexibility and innovative programs to meet their charitable giving needs,” said Kenneth Sigmon, vice chancellor for university advancement. “The TIAA fund will provide additional opportunities beyond traditional means through various secure options.”

A donor-advised fund works like a personal fund dedicated to charitable giving. In lieu of writing multiple checks to individual charities, donors have the option to place assets into one giving fund while maintaining distribution discretion into a wide range of investment options, including a suite of funds that explicitly incorporate environmental, social and governance criteria in their investment decision-making.

### NORTH CAROLINA AGRICULTURAL AND TECHNICAL STATE UNIVERSITY IS THE FIRST HISTORICALLY BLACK COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY TO OFFER A LEADING-EDGE, BRANDED DONOR-ADVISED FUND (DAF) PROGRAM TO ALUMNI AND FRIENDS.

All growth is tax-free, which may allow for larger gifts over time. In addition, all contributions may be eligible for an immediate tax benefit. Further, when donors contribute long-term appreciated securities or real estate, no capital gains taxes are applied and the full fair market value of the securities could be available for giving.

“Our donors are interested in donor-advised funds to help them fulfill their philanthropic goals,” said Timothy A. Minor, vice president for university advancement for the UNC System. “This system-wide offering provides access that allows each of our 17 individual institutions to offer its own version

of the donor-advised fund. Each university has unique needs, and this is one more way to enhance giving opportunities for our supporters.”

Currently, three other UNC System universities are participating in the initiative: East Carolina University, North Carolina State University and the University of North Carolina at Pembroke. The fund program is open to all of the UNC System institutions.

TIAA Charitable is an independent public charity dedicated to encouraging philanthropy by helping donors make the most of their generosity. ■

## PARTNERSHIPS RESULT IN CAMPUS PANTRY TO COMBAT HUNGER AND FOOD INSECURITY



*N.C. A&T Miss Senior 2018-19 and Food Lion MVP Ambassador, Nicole Gregory inside The Aggie Source. The food and nutritional science student's royal court campaign, "Feed the Future," ignited a drive within her and the university.*

Food insecurity on college campuses is becoming more and more prevalent, so last fall North Carolina A&T joined forces with Food Lion Feeds and North Carolina Campus Compact for a “Collegiate Challenge” to address hunger and food insecurity in the local East Greensboro community and throughout the state.

The university used the challenge as a kickoff to The Aggie Source, a student-run campus food pantry that now serves the campus.

Organizers launched the challenge on Sept. 26, disseminating information about the competition as well as the new food pantry and collecting non-perishable items that were donated to a regional food bank. A portion of the kickoff benefited those affected by Hurricane Florence.

The Office of Student Development, N.C. A&T Student Government Association and several other campus entities also worked together to establish the university's first-ever campus food and personal care item pantry for students—The Aggie Source, which officially opened Feb. 5.

“One of the most important parts of our agenda was to make sure every student on our campus had access to all material needs. The creation of The Aggie Source was exactly what we envisioned,” said Delaney Vandergrift, 2018-19 SGA president.

The Aggie Source is mission-focused to support students, by alleviating the stress associated with short-term food insecurity and other financial constraints, through the collection and distribution of food and personal care items.

Primarily instituted, facilitated and run by students, the pantry operates on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 2-6 p.m., and is available to all currently registered students who can apply via an online application.

“The pantry serves as another opportunity to assist students with food and personal care items,” said Arturo M. Cummings, Ph.D., associate director for student development. “The Aggie Source is not just a source for food, but [is also] a vehicle to engage, educate and empower our students, campus and community.”

The self-sustainable pantry accepts shelf stable food donations such as canned fruits and meats, prepackaged meals, cup of noodles, peanut butter and jelly, breads and other non-perishable as well as personal care items. Monetary donations are also accepted.

The Aggie Source is located at 205 Nocho Street, suite 115. Additional information can be obtained by emailing [aggiesource@ncat.edu](mailto:aggiesource@ncat.edu) or by calling 336-285-4453. ■





Rendering of the Engineering Research and Innovation Complex at N.C. A&T

## GROUND BROKEN FOR ENGINEERING COMPLEX

Last October, the only thing that stood in the way of the start of construction on the Engineering Research and Innovation Complex (ERIC) at North Carolina A&T was the original Hayes-Taylor YMCA.

At 2 p.m., Oct. 29, university officials and community members gathered to raze the building created in the late 1930s for African Americans in Greensboro and break ground on a catalyst for short- and long-term economic growth and development.

In the 2016 primary election, North Carolina voters approved the \$2-billion Connect NC bond that included a \$90-million provision for N.C. A&T. The ERIC will deepen the university's engineering instruction and research capacities, help the university foster partnerships with local and regional

industry and create job opportunities that directly benefit the entire community as companies seek to meet the global demands of the future.

A&T is already a national leader in engineering education, producing more African-American graduates at the undergraduate and master's levels than any other campus in the country.

Connect NC was the state's first bond since 2000 when voters approved a \$3.1-billion measure for construction on UNC System and community college campuses. Traditionally, bond referendums are financed by tax increases. Connect NC came at a time when the state was experiencing strong revenue growth and ample debt service capacity. ■

## N.C. A&T SURPASSES UNC SYSTEM'S STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS

As part of its ongoing commitment to preeminence, North Carolina A&T has exceeded all of the goals outlined in the University of North Carolina System's strategic plan, including several "stretch goals" that are not due until 2021.

"Higher Expectations," the UNC System's strategic plan for 2017-2022, provides a roadmap of priorities for its 17 campuses to focus on access, student success, affordability and efficiency, economic impact and diversity. N.C. A&T surpassed all its goals within the plan, including benchmarks for low-income and rural enrollments.

Most prominently, A&T had goals to enroll 4,775 low-income students and 2,299 rural students in 2017-18 but exceeded its five-year goals by enrolling 5,152 low-income students and 2,514 rural students. The former total exceeded a 2021 goal of 5,048, and the latter a 2021 goal of 2,422.

A&T also beat its first-year goals of graduating 943 low-income students and 440 rural students, with 1,008 low-income students and 470 rural students.

"A&T's enrollment management process is strongly focused and enables us to achieve strategic goals around the kinds of students we seek to attract and enroll," said Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs Beryl McEwen. "Identifying specific goals in areas of strong importance to our university, to the UNC System and to the state overall helps us to point our resources in the right direction to achieve them. We look forward to continuing our impressive growth in these and other key areas in the next five years and beyond."

A&T's own strategic plan was updated in 2018. "A&T Preeminence: Taking the Momentum to 2023" includes multiple targets aligned with the system's "Higher Expectations" plan, including five-year graduation rates, diversity goals and more.

Like the UNC System, A&T has topped not only its first-year goal for students graduating in five years but exceeded its five-year goal.

A&T also exceeded five-year goals in achievement gaps in overall degree efficiency among male students and low-income student completion. Other variables measured include "critical workforce," where the university graduated 844 students in STEM and nursing disciplines, and research productivity, in which A&T faculty generated nearly \$64.3 million in contracts and grants in fiscal year 2017. ■

## Nursing School Celebrates 65 Years

For 65 years, the School of Nursing has called Noble Hall home. In commemoration, the unit held a homecoming celebration luncheon and \$65,000 scholarship fundraiser, "65 Years of Aggie Nursing: Improving Lives and Embracing Communities." The event took place at Proximity Hotel in Greensboro.

The celebration provided an opportunity for alumni to reconnect with one another as well as raise critical dollars for the nursing program. Included in the festivities were a silent auction, commemorative photograph and ceremony honoring past and present Aggie nurses.

"Our nurses leave this campus prepared to improve lives and impact communities across the world," said Terry Ward, Ph.D., director of the School of Nursing and associate dean in the College of Health and Human Sciences. "We are fortunate to have Aggie nurses who make an indelible impact and represent this great university every day in a variety of roles within healthcare. We challenge all nurses to pay it forward."

A portion of the proceeds generated by tickets sales is being used to support the needs of future nursing students including, tuition, exam and lab fees and other financial burdens unmet by grants and state-sponsored dollars. Alumni and attendees also had the option to sponsor a student. ■



Nayriah Johnson, M.S. in Biology, 2019

## AWIS AND N.C. A&T— ADVOCATES FOR WOMEN IN STEM

The Association for Women in Science (AWIS), the leading association that advocates for women in STEM, recently formed an institutional partnership with North Carolina A&T.

As an institutional partner, AWIS will collaborate with the university's ADVANCE Institutional Transformation (IT) project, which is designed to address the systemic underrepresentation of women within the ranks of higher education faculty.

"As an academic and research leader in STEM, N.C. A&T is committed to the achievement and success of students, as well as faculty," said Sherrice Allen, Ph.D, project director for ADVANCE-IT. "We are excited about this partnership with AWIS and even more excited to know that our female faculty members in STEM will be exposed to more opportunities and equitable access throughout the STEM profession."

Through the partnership, AWIS will provide faculty with professional development and leadership training to

help them succeed in their mission to achieve full equity and participation of women in all disciplines of STEM. In October 2018, AWIS presented a workshop focused on leadership advancement and strategies for collaborating with industry advocates and allies.

"Our goal is to take a holistic approach to help remove the systemic challenges and barriers that impede women from advancing in their STEM career whether in a classroom, lab, office setting or in the field," said AWIS CEO Sandy Robert. "We are excited about this partnership with North Carolina A&T for its commitment to diversity and being the top producer of African American engineers across all levels."

AWIS is a global network with 80 grassroots chapters and affiliates connecting more than 100,000 professionals in STEM with members, allies and supporters worldwide. Since its founding in 1971, it has been the leading advocate for women in STEM to achieve business growth, social change and innovation. ■

## N.C. A&T IS NSA 'FEATURED SCHOOL'

North Carolina A&T has partnered with the National Security Agency (NSA) for over 20 years. To celebrate this partnership, NSA named N.C. A&T a Featured School.

The Featured School Series highlights colleges and universities that help develop the talent and tools needed to meet national security challenges.

"N.C. A&T contributes to the diversity of our workforce and provides degree programs that are comprehensive, multidisciplinary and relevant to our mission," said George C. Barnes, deputy director of NSA.

The collaboration between NSA and A&T is highlighted on NSA.gov, IntelligenceCareers.gov and on social media.

"We are so excited to be chosen as a Featured School. Partnerships such as this demonstrate our commitment to improving lives through innovations in research and discovery," said Beryl McEwen, provost and executive vice chancellor for academic affairs at A&T. "The university's longstanding commitment to computer science and to cybersecurity has made significant career opportunities available for so many exceptional students and helped to

advance the frontiers of this important discipline." A&T has been a National Center of Excellence (CAE) for eight years, promoting higher education and research in the critical area of cyber defense. The school is also one of 16 colleges and universities across the country in NSA's hiring and recruitment Campus Ambassador Program, which serves to build and strengthen relationships with select universities. Further, A&T hosted two GenCyber Camps in 2018 sponsored by NSA and the National Science Foundation, providing free summer cybersecurity experiences for students and teachers at the K-12 level.

Currently, NSA hires more A&T grads than any other agency in the intelligence community; nearly 70 A&T alumni work at the agency.

"Academic partnerships are so vital to national security that NSA invests more than \$100 million annually in support of academic partner programs, including educational grants, research and recruitment efforts," said Barnes.

NSA aims to introduce a new featured school every few months, highlighting schools designated as CAE that have a depth and breadth of engagement with NSA. ■

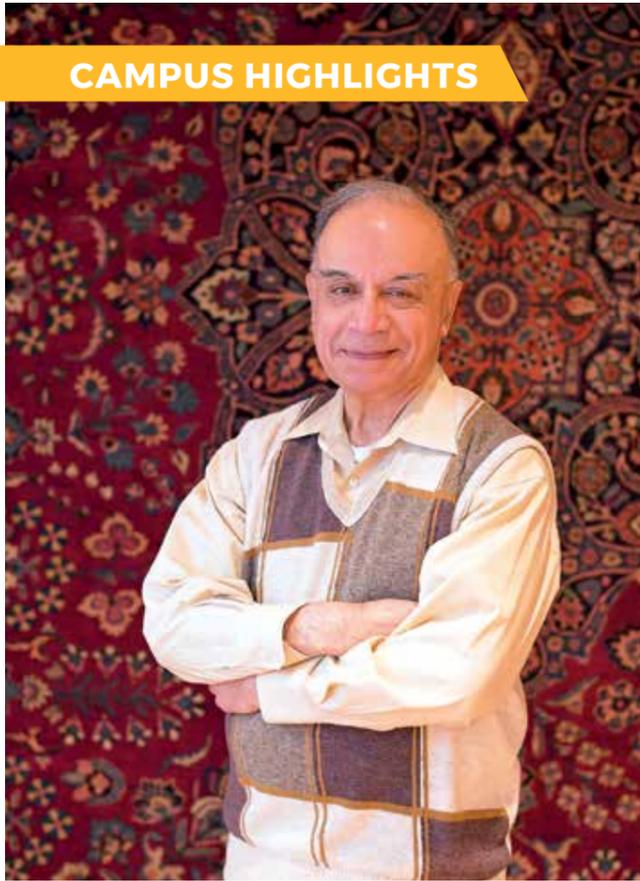
## AGGIE PLUS PROGRAM ANNOUNCED

North Carolina A&T and Forsyth Technical Community College are collaborating on a transfer bridge program to provide Forsyth students a seamless transition to the university.

The Aggie Plus Program will provide transfer students targeted advising from an Aggie Plus advisor at Forsyth Tech and N.C. A&T, priority review in the university's admissions process, an Aggie Plus program orientation session at Forsyth Tech at the beginning of each fall term and an Aggie Plus program visit day at A&T during the spring term.

To participate, students must earn an associate's degree, select transferable courses and consult with advisors to ensure that they are making progress toward their chosen course of study and education requirements at A&T. Participants must also maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA at Forsyth Tech or better on all transferable coursework and transfer to A&T to complete their undergraduate degree.

All prospective Aggie Plus participants will need to submit the online commitment form and submit proof of admission to Forsyth Tech. ■



## KHALIFA RECEIVES HUMAN RIGHTS MEDAL

Business leader, humanitarian and long-time High Point, North Carolina, resident Zaki Khalifa is the recipient of the 2019 Human Rights Medal, North Carolina A&T's highest honor. He received the award during the 59th Sit-In Anniversary Breakfast.

Born, raised and educated in Pakistan, Khalifa immigrated to the United States at the age of 30 to explore business opportunities. A professor and friend suggested High Point's international furniture market would be a perfect home for his planned rug business.

Soon thereafter, Khalifa opened Zaki Oriental Rugs, offering the nation's largest selection of fine handmade rugs.

Since then, Khalifa has emerged as a generous civic leader and philanthropist in North Carolina and his native country. He and his wife, Rashida Wawda, have supported a free health care clinic for indigent patients in Burlington, as well as economic development and opportunity within the city, including donating one of his former business locations for use by various organizations.

In late 2018, Khalifa announced he would sell his High Point business location with its remaining inventory and donate the millions in proceeds to a Pakistani organization in support of programs addressing poverty. Further, he would move to Lahore, Pakistan, and spend eight months of the year volunteering as a teacher in the schools his business donation will support. The moves are part of his plan to donate 80 percent of his net worth to charity.

Khalifa has also demonstrated a willingness to stand against discrimination. He often speaks publicly on diversity, advocating for tolerance, acceptance and assimilation among people of different cultures.

In 2015, he received the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, one of the most prestigious awards presented by the governor of North Carolina, the BB&T Distinguished Citizen of the Year and the High Point Chamber of Commerce Small Business Advocate of the Year. He was also chosen as one of the top 50 Asian Americans in Business in the United States by the Asian American Business Development Center.

The Human Rights Medal was established to honor the courageous, non-violent acts of the A&T Four – Jibreel Khazan (Ezell Blair Jr.), Franklin McCain, Joseph McNeil and David Richmond – who sat down at a local Woolworth's all-white lunch counter, igniting a national movement.

The award is given annually by N.C. A&T to recognize individuals who have endeavored to correct social injustice and have significantly contributed to the betterment of the world.

MacArthur Genius Grant awardee and national co-chair of the Poor People's Campaign, Rev. Dr. William J. Barber II was the keynote speaker at this year's commemorative program. ■

*“The opportunities to grow mutually beneficial relationships between technology concerns and our colleges and universities are real and rapidly expanding.”* — CHANCELLOR HAROLD L. MARTIN SR.

## CHANCELLOR, ALUMNA PARTICIPATE ON SXSW PANEL

On March 10, North Carolina A&T Chancellor Harold L. Martin Sr. participated in a panel discussion at South by Southwest (SXSW), the internationally recognized annual presentation of entertainment community festivals and technology industry events in Austin, Texas.

The Bipartisan HBCU Caucus @ SXSW, a four-part panel series, brought together members of Congress, industry giants and leaders of historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) for in-depth conversations examining the role HBCUs play in building a more diverse and inclusive tech workforce.

The day included multiple sessions on diversity in technology fields, including a keynote panel featuring Martin and N.C. A&T alumna, U.S. Rep. Alma Adams.

Adams, who is founder and co-chair of the Bipartisan HBCU Caucus, said, “HBCUs matter—there is no black tech without them. My colleagues and I are proud to take this message, alongside our nation's top HBCUs, to Austin, Texas, during the first-ever Bipartisan HBCU Caucus @ SXSW.

“HBCUs contribute nearly \$15 billion annually to our economy and have provided pathways of opportunity to millions of Americans, many of whom are first generation

college students. Despite being historically underfunded, HBCUs continue to produce 42 percent of black engineers and 47 percent of black women engineers. That is why the Bipartisan HBCU Caucus exists in Congress and it is why the Bipartisan HBCU Caucus @ SXSW is so important.”

Martin joined Adams along with Lyft Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer Nilka Thomas and VICE News Washington, D.C., Bureau Chief Shawna Thomas for “HBCUs: A Key to Tech Diversity.” Among other topics, panelists discussed the Bipartisan HBCU Caucus's “Partnership Challenge,” a landmark initiative that brings together industry, government and historically black colleges and universities to craft universal best practices to recruit and retain diverse talent in tech.

“With the growth of the technology sector comes significant needs for employees with the high-quality STEM education necessary for those positions, and that has strong implications for many of our campuses,” said Martin. “The opportunities to grow mutually beneficial relationships between technology concerns and our colleges and universities are real and rapidly expanding. SXSW is an ideal opportunity for dialogue around

**SXSW** ↙  
**2019**

those opportunities with the innovators and creators who make this such a special annual event.”

The panel discussion was a part of the conference's Tech Industry & Enterprise Track and is one of four panels organized as an outgrowth of the HBCU Bipartisan Caucus Diversity in Tech Summit hosted by Adams last August at A&T. That event drew more than 200 representatives of the tech industry, state and national government and HBCU campuses to Greensboro for two days of discussions, planning and networking.

The Tech Industry & Enterprise Track focuses on the forward-thinking innovation of today and what is projected to be trending tomorrow. Executives and leaders from diverse industries are set to discuss the evolving landscape of technology driven services. ■



## Student Center Wins Industry Awards

North Carolina A&T's new Student Center recently won several prestigious awards for its design, construction and architecture from the state's prestigious trade organizations.

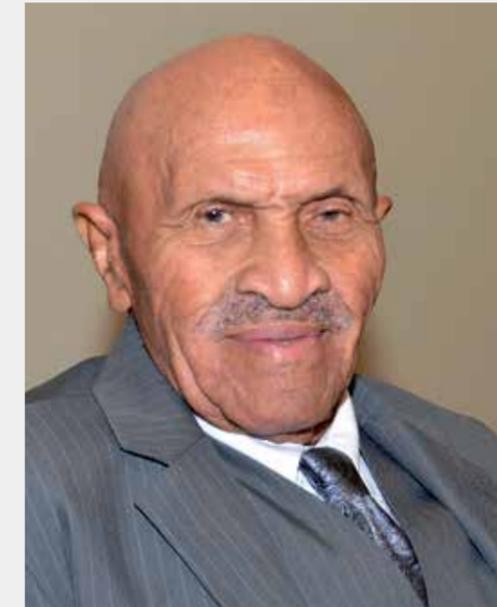
The North Carolina chapter of the American Institute of Architects honored the Student Center, designed by Vines Architecture, with the 2019 Honor Award for Design; The N.C. Office of State Construction awarded the project a Certificate of Merit for Project Implementation; and the Association of General Contractors awarded Balfour Beatty, project contractor, a Certificate of Merit for Excellence in Construction.

The 150,000-square-foot Student Center is rated a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver facility, using innovative solutions to support the environment and public health in many areas including energy use and air quality. LEED is the most widely used green building rating system in the world.

It features areas for studying, small and large group meetings, relaxation, dining options such as Einstein Bros., Chick-fil-A and 1891 Cafe, student activity offices, gaming and recreation areas, as well as the Barnes & Noble campus bookstore and Starbucks.

Project planning began in 2015 when students were surveyed about what they wanted to see in a new student center that would make N.C. A&T feel more like home, said Andrew Perkins, associate vice chancellor for facilities.

"We'd heard that students would go to other campuses because of their student centers, so we wanted to make sure ours had everything they needed or wanted," he said. ■



Dunn



Kearney

## AG HALL OF FAME INDUCTS TWO

Two key leaders in North Carolina agriculture have been inducted into the Agricultural Hall of Fame at North Carolina A&T, based on their outstanding contributions to agriculture and their significant ties to the university.

James Carlton Kearney Sr. of Henderson, and Samuel J. Dunn, Ph.D., of Whitsett, joined the 15 Hall of Famers whose activities and research have elevated the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences (CAES) as a leader in agricultural research and outreach.

The ceremony, including dinner and the unveiling of the new members' portraits, was April 5, in the N.C. A&T Student Center Ballroom.

"It's an honor for us to recognize these two extremely worthy recipients," said CAES Dean Mohamed Ahmedna, Ph.D. "Their exemplary work sets a high bar for those of us who follow. They are role models, for all they have done for North Carolina agriculture and for N.C. A&T."

Kearney served the USDA for 37 years in the federal farm housing and rural development programs, working at the local, state and national levels. He was also state director for rural development and is the recipient of North Carolina's highest honor, the Order of the Long Leaf Pine. He has spent 36 years in the profession.

Dunn, a chairman of the Department of Plant Science and Technology at A&T for more than 30 years, oversaw the department's transition from a technology-oriented program to a research-intensive one. He also developed master's degrees for the department and laid the foundation for the university's accreditation in both the biological engineering and landscape architecture programs. He has spent 43 years in the profession.

The Agricultural Hall of Fame showcase is located in the lobby of B.C. Webb Hall on the university campus. ■

# Faculty, Staff & Administrators

**MOHD ANWAR, PH.D.**, associate professor in the Department of Computer Science, is using Twitter to study the opioid epidemic in the United States. Last fall Anwar began collaborating with RTI International, an independent nonprofit research institute, to study the extent to which social media data can be harnessed as an indicator of the opioid epidemic. His research explores the power of social media to gauge the progression of the opioid crisis in near-real time and to understand how data extracted from social media platforms correlate with ground truths such as drug overdoses.

Anwar gathers, mines and scientifically translates public opioid-related Twitter data in North Carolina, to understand and identify interventional opportunities. In February, he presented preliminary results on the content and changing patterns of opioid-related conversations occurring in the North Carolina Twitterspace, as well as implications for future research comparing subgroups, using larger samples, and integrating additional social media platforms.

The research signals that social media platforms like Twitter represent alternative indicators of the evolving opioid crisis and provide nearly omnipresent, timely and readily-ingested data for research purposes.

Anwar is the first N.C. A&T faculty member to be selected as an RTI University Scholar. Scholars take leave from their home institutions to collaborate with RTI researchers, advancing research in priority areas of national need. Anwar's cohort includes researchers from Duke University, North Carolina State University and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. ■



A team of North Carolina A&T researchers led by **SOLOMON BILILIGN, PH.D.**, principal investigator (pictured left), and **MARC FIDDLER, PH.D.**, co-principal investigator (right), received a \$1 million grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF) to study the climate and health impacts of biomass smoke, combustion emissions and sub-Saharan Africa and Saharan dust mixed with biomass smoke. The team will look at the optical properties of biomass smoke as a function of relative humidity and the health implications of the smoke. The grant is for three years through 2021.

Bililign and his team of undergraduate and graduate researchers will collaborate with Colorado State University in field research and modeling of health impacts, and with Howard University to collect filter samples on aboard maritime research platforms on NOAA ships on the Atlantic Ocean.

The overall goals of the project, "HBCU-Excellence in Research: Radiative Effects of Biomass Burning Aerosols Laboratory and Field Measurements and Modeling of Climate and Health Impacts," are to understand the chemical composition and optical properties of biomass burning aerosols, quantifying and understanding various biomass emissions and emission factors to understand their impact on global climate, air quality and human health.

"Because of this grant's emphasis on research excellence at HBCUs, this project will directly increase the number of minority students trained in atmospheric science both in field and laboratory research," said Bililign.

The project also will allow A&T faculty and students to be part of a major field campaign to study wildfire emissions in collaboration with NSF's National Center for Atmospheric Research, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and NASA Aerodyne company and other universities. ■



**ROBIN COGER, PH.D.** (pictured top), and **FRANCES WARD-JOHNSON, PH.D. '86/'95** (bottom), were among 23 women recently named Triad Business Journal (TBJ) Outstanding Women in Business for 2019. Like their business and community leader colleagues, Coger and Ward-Johnson were nominated for doing "extraordinary work in the Triad."

Coger has been with the university since 2011. She leads more than 120 faculty and staff who serve nearly 2,000 students across 23 academic programs. One of few African-American woman deans for a college of engineering, Coger is chairwoman of the national Council of HBCU Engineering Deans and is a board member of For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology, along with Advancing Minorities' Interest in Engineering.

She leads a college that produces more African-American engineers than any other campus across the United States and that

is also consistently among the top three campuses in production of African-American women engineers.

Ward-Johnson, dean of the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, returned to the university last year and is at the helm of more than 100 faculty and staff who serve more than 1,850 students across six departments. Her college has significant impact on the undergraduate experience at N.C. A&T, providing the heart of the general education curriculum that all students are required to complete.

Prior to her return, Ward-Johnson worked 15 years at Elon University in various leadership capacities, including faculty fellow in the Office of the Provost. She also co-chaired the Presidential Task Force on Black Student, Faculty and Staff Experiences and was a co-leader of study abroad programs to Greece and Barbados. ■



**GALEN FORESMAN, PH.D.**, was named one of the Triad Business Journal's 40 Under Forty, which recognizes young professionals (ages of 21 and 39) for their leadership and achievements within their organizations as well as have substantial community involvement outside their day-to-day job.

Now in his 11th year at N.C. A&T, Foresman is a tenured professor of philosophy in the Department of Liberal Studies and co-director of the Wabash Provost Scholars Program. He has received A&T's Junior Faculty Teaching Excellence Award for the

then College of Arts and Sciences, as well as funding from the Academy for Teaching and Learning and the Center for Distance Learning. He is also a co-author of "The Critical Thinking Toolkit" (Wiley-Blackwell, 2016) and editor of "Supernatural and Philosophy: Metaphysics and Monsters ... for Idjits" (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), part of the Blackwell Philosophy and Pop Culture Series.

Foresman's passion for people and his volunteer work include service with the Guilford Green Foundation and the Hands4Hearts Committee, which helps children with congenital heart defects. In addition to his volunteer work, Foresman serves as the vice chairman of the Faculty Senate and coordinator of the pre-law program. He is also a member of Cone Health's ethics committee. ■

## Faculty, Staff & Administrators, cont.



**VALERIE J. MCMILLAN, PH.D.**, an associate professor of family and consumer sciences in the College

of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, received a University of North Carolina System 2019 Board of Governors (BOG) Award for Excellence in Teaching, along with leading faculty from the other 16 constituent campuses of the UNC System.

In her teaching strategies, McMillan emphasizes the process rather than the product of teaching and

learning. She engages her students in a discourse of learning through self-discovery, cooperative activities, experiential engagement and reflection.

A faculty member at N.C. A&T since 2000, McMillan has facilitated and fostered numerous undergraduate and graduate students' successful entry into the early childhood workforce in careers such as teachers, center directors, child development specialists and extension agents. She develops and teaches courses designed to prepare students to meet the unique needs of young children and families, regardless of ethnicity, culture, language, ability, disability and family structure.

In 2007, McMillan was recognized as the Academic Advisor of the Year by the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences. In 2011, she received the Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award from the College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences and the Award for Excellence in Teaching from the N.C. A&T Chapter of Gamma Sigma Delta. She received the Early Childhood Champion Award from Guilford Child Development in 2017.

Each Excellence in Teaching awardee receives a commemorative bronze medallion and a \$12,500 cash prize. BOG members present the awards during each campus's spring commencement ceremony. ■



**LAMON LAWHORN**, assistant director of bands, organized and composed music for the commemorative drumline celebrating American Honda's 60th anniversary at the 2019 Tournament of Roses Parade in Pasadena, California, on New Year's Day. The 60-member HBCU drumline included members of N.C. A&T's Cold Steel drumline, as well as percussionists from Prairie View A&M University, Bethune-Cookman University, Tennessee State University, Hampton University, Alabama A&M University and Miles College.

Honda has supported HBCUs for nearly 30 years with initiatives including the Honda Battle of the Bands and the Honda Campus All-Star Challenge. The 130th Rose Parade, themed "The Melody of Life," was seen by more than 45 million viewers. ■



**ROBERT NEWMAN, PH.D.**, associate professor in the Department of Biology, received \$1.4 million from the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of General Medical Sciences to investigate the biochemical mechanisms that facilitate communication within and between cells in the human body.

Newman is researching cellular signaling pathways—how cells know what to do and when to do it.

Focused on phosphorylation-dependent signaling pathways mediated by protein kinases and phosphatases, this research holds possibilities for improved treatments for diseases ranging from cancer to diabetes to heart disease. It also has the potential to answer fundamental questions about the regulation of cellular signaling pathways. This information can be used to develop computational models of cellular signaling pathways to predict dynamic changes in pathway properties following exposure to various physiological, pharmacological and toxicological stimuli, both in isolation and in combination. ■



As an outgrowth of its recently updated strategic plan and commitment to outstanding quality in research, teaching and community engagement, North Carolina A&T has created three new Centers of Excellence to provide exemplary leadership in research, academic programming and community outreach, consistent with the university's land-grant mission.

Serving as interim directors for the Center of Excellence in Cybersecurity, Center of Excellence in Advanced Manufacturing and the Center of Excellence in Entrepreneurship and Innovation are **TONYA SMITH-JACKSON, PH.D.** (pictured top left), professor and chairwoman of the Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering; **AJIT D. KELKAR, PH.D.** (top right), professor and chairman of the Department of Nanoengineering in the Joint School of Nanoscience and Nanoengineering; and **THADDEUS MCEWEN, PH.D.** (bottom), professor in the Department of Management and coordinator of the entrepreneurship program, respectively. They will establish interdisciplinary faculty advisory committees and external advisory committees, initiate discussions with business and industry leaders and plans for sustaining the centers for the long term. They will also assist with hiring of permanent directors and initiate strategic planning. ■

## Faculty, Staff & Administrators, cont.



North Carolina A&T has been awarded a collaborative research grant from the NSF Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) program. “AGEP North Carolina Alliance: An Institutional Transformation Model to Increase Minority STEM Doctoral Student and Faculty Success” is a five-year, \$761,280 grant that seeks to address a critical issue of underrepresentation of African-American and Hispanic/Latinx students in STEM disciplines.

The lead researcher on the grant, **KEITH SCHIMMEL, PH.D.**, is director of N.C. A&T’s applied science and technology (AST) doctoral program in the College of Science and Technology (CoST).

Schimmel and his team are collaborating with researchers and officials at North Carolina State University and the University of North Carolina at Charlotte to develop, implement, and study a model to create institutional, department-level, and faculty change and promote doctoral completion and progression to faculty careers among historically underrepresented doctoral students in STEM disciplines.

Each participating department will have a volunteer faculty member interested in historically underrepresented student success issues designated as an AGEP-NC Faculty Fellow. The Fellow will receive support and training on mentoring, the experiences of underrepresented minority students, and fostering change. Each Fellow will work together with their department head, graduate program coordinator, and departmental faculty colleagues to understand graduate student pathways, identify practices and policies that promote success, and diagnose trouble spots.

Based on this study of the graduate student experience in their own department, the faculty will then develop a departmental plan to build these insights into departmental practices and procedures. Project funding will be available to help implement initiatives identified in the plans.

Along with Schimmel, the A&T research team consists of **ABDELLAH AHMIDOUCH, PH.D.**, CoST dean; **AJIT KELKAR, PH.D.**, nanoengineering chairman; **JOHN KIZITO, PH.D.**, mechanical engineering professor; and **C. DEAN CAMPBELL, PH.D.**, assistant dean for academic services in The Graduate College. ■

## Students



Four seniors from the College of Business and Economics (COBE)—**GREGORY STEWART, KYRA MCLAREN, TREVOR NELSON** and **HUNTER WATSON** (pictured left to right)—were awarded \$1,200 and job offers for their second-place win at Cisco’s first national college Supply Chain Operations Case Competition. The event was April 1, at the company’s headquarters in California.

COBE’s 1891 Logistics Team was selected from 26 schools as one of six finalists to attend the competition. The case competition gives students from Cisco’s targeted supply chain colleges and universities a chance to test their understanding of the supply chain industry and present innovative solutions to a panel of judges.

A&T’s team worked on solving problems related to the circular economy used by Cisco that strives to maximize output while minimizing the amount of raw materials used.

Other finalists were Arizona State University, California Polytechnic University, Georgia Institute of Technology (third-place winner), Howard University (first place) and Michigan State University. ■

Two North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University students are recipients of a new scholarship awarded through a partnership with Honda and Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF).

**DYMON ATKINSON**, sophomore engineering student, and **MARVIN EDGE**, first-generation business student, are recipients of a new scholarship awarded through a partnership with Honda and Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) to support students pursuing an education in engineering, supply chain management and manufacturing-related fields.

To qualify for the scholarships, students must be enrolled full-time at one of the 47 TMCF member-schools; earn a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher; demonstrate leadership qualities and community service experience; and be recommended by a faculty or staff member of their current school. In addition to financial support, scholarship recipients will be invited to interview for internships and co-op positions at one of 12 facilities in America where Honda manufactures vehicles, engines, transmissions, as well as aircraft, aircraft engines, power equipment and side-by-side and all-terrain vehicles. ■



**ALLISON GILMORE, DIAMOND MANGUM** and **ARMANI MAY** (pictured left to right) will serve as president of the Student Government Association, Miss N.C. A&T and Mister N.C. A&T, respectively, for the 2019–2020 academic year.

Other SGA officers include **VICTORIA LAWSON**, vice president of external affairs; **AALIYAH WRIGHT**, secretary; and **BRENDA CALDWELL**, attorney general. ■

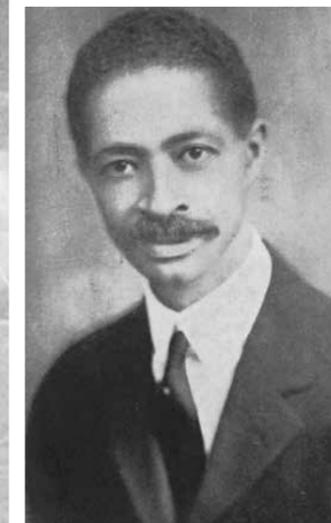
# FIRST CLASS

**CLASS OF 1899 MARKS 120 YEARS**

*By James R. Stewart Jr. '08*

On Nov. 02, 1939, President F.D. Bluford introduced a special guest to the large

Founder's Day assembly in the college gymnasium, **AUSTIN W. CURTIS SR.**, dean of the department of agriculture at West Virginia State College. Forty years earlier, Curtis was one of the very first graduates of the Agricultural and Mechanical College for the Colored Race.



*Curtis*

Curtis told the audience of how when he came in 1896, there were only four buildings and five faculty members: President James B. Dudley; A.T. Stevens, teacher of agriculture; Orlo Epps, mechanics; Charles H. Moore, English; and a "Mr. Hayes." In addition, he recalled his days of being appointed head of the original dairy barn, which

consisted of just two cows, while he was still a student in 1897.

For decades, Curtis was the only member of the first graduating class of whom there was a full history. Fortunately, with some investigative work the lives of the other six class members have been rediscovered.

In most university histories, they were known only as W.T.C. Cheek, I.S. Cunningham, E.L. Falkener, J.M. Joyner, P.E. Robinson and A. Watson. Understanding the full names and stories of all seven members of the class of 1899 in time for their 120th anniversary reveals why their motto, "No Steps Backwards (sic)," was prophetic, and why "Aggies DO" has been a true sentiment from the very beginning. These are their stories:



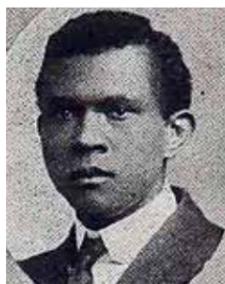
*Curtis Hall*

**WILLIAM THOMAS CAIN “WILLIE”**

**CHEEK** (1875–1956), B.S., of Warrenton, North Carolina, was North Carolina A&T’s very first graduate. Cheek taught manual training and physics while also working as a mechanic and architect at various vocational schools and colleges in West Virginia. He became an instructor of manual arts at Winston-Salem State University in the early 1910s. After moving to the Washington, D.C., area in the 1920s, he continued to work as an architect.

**ISAAC SUMMERVILLE**

**CUNNINGHAM** (1877–1932), B.S., M.D., of Hillsboro, North Carolina, worked as an instructor of wood turning and joinery at the old A&M College for a few years before teaching at the Florida Normal and Industrial Institute (now Florida Memorial University). Cunningham earned a medical degree from Meharry Medical College in 1908, and practiced medicine in Owensboro, Kentucky. In 1916, he moved to Winston-Salem, North Carolina, continuing as a physician and a pharmacist until his death in 1932.



**PETER EDWARD ROBINSON**

(c. 1886–1912), B.Agr., D.D.S., of Raleigh, North Carolina, was an assistant professor of agriculture and chemistry

at A&M College beginning in 1901. Along with Cheek and Curtis, Robinson was an editor of the “A&T Register” around 1899. He attended the Northwestern University Dental School of Chicago, becoming their first demonstrator of color and

graduating with highest honors in 1911. Robinson returned to North Carolina to start a dental practice in Durham that same year. Unfortunately, he died a year later. A \$50 gift from his estate was donated to the A&M College, and it was reported in the press as the largest gift of any alumni up to that time.

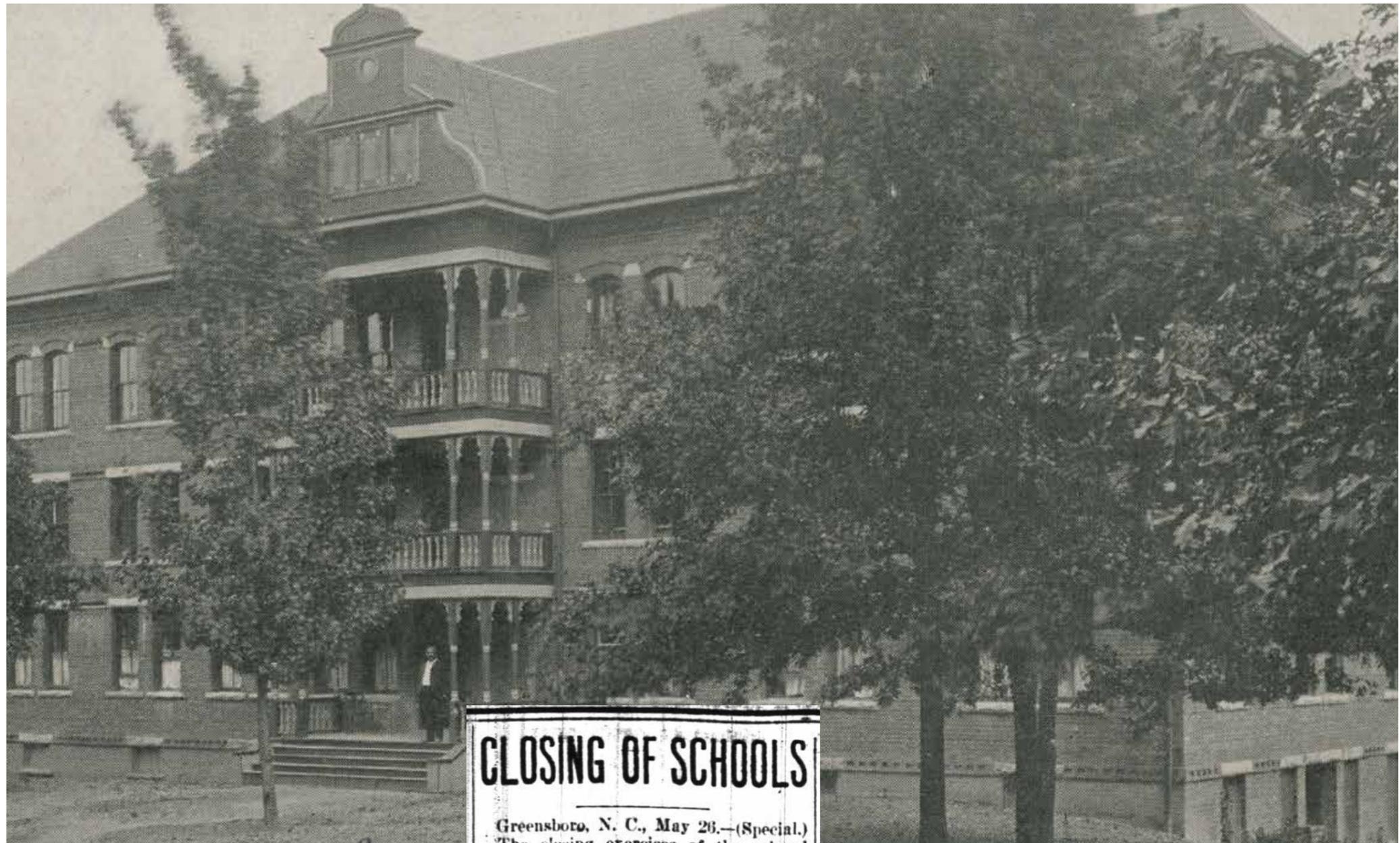
Most of the press of the May 1899 commencement highlighted the attention **ADAM WATSON** (c. 1870–c. 1908), B.S., of Warren County, North Carolina, received for his working steam engine. It was claimed to be the first engine built by a person of color in the state. After two years teaching at the High Point Normal and Industrial School, Watson became an instructor and later head of the mechanics department at A&M in 1901. He designed the South Dormitory, a three-story brick structure that housed up to 96 students and was completed in 1907. The Adam Watson House, his home on Dudley Street in Greensboro, is one of the 59 panels on the N.C. A&T Centennial Quilt, crafted by a niece, Mary Watson Wynn, and designed by Louise F. Cummings.

**EPSS LUTHER FALKENER** (1876–

1922), B.Agr., was a member of one of Aggieworld’s first families. His older brother was Henry Hall Falkener, one of the institution’s earliest professors of English. Henry’s wife Margaret was the founder of the music department. Epps served as farm supervisor for the J.K. Brick School in Enfield, North Carolina. He became an instructor of fruit growing at Tuskegee Institute around 1908, making him one of the first of a number of Aggies to work for Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver. Epps Falkener later became a school principal in his hometown of Warrenton, North Carolina.

**JAMES MATTHEW JOYNER** (1876–

1969), B.Agr., taught agriculture in North Carolina and Langston University in Oklahoma before becoming a longtime postal worker in Philadelphia. For a time, Joyner also worked as an insurance agent. Very little is still known about his life, but he was the last survivor of the class of 1899 until his death in 1969, at the age of 93. ■



**CLOSING OF SCHOOLS**  
Greensboro, N. C., May 26.—(Special.)  
The closing exercises of the colored Agricultural and Mechanical college last night compared very favorably with other college commencements.  
The three orations by the three members of the graduating class were of more than ordinary ability.  
This institution is doing a good work and it should have a better patronage from the race. This is the first year the college has had a graduating class, sending out seven members.  
One instance of the fine mechanical training it gives is a steam engine, made by Adam Watson, a student from Warren county. This engine was made and put up in its entirety by this young man, and it is claimed by the college that this is the first engine constructed in the State by a colored man.

South Dormitory

*The F.D. Bluford Library Archives is actively seeking more information about N.C. A&T’s earliest graduating classes. Please contact us at [libraryarchives@ncat.edu](mailto:libraryarchives@ncat.edu) if you have any information, or if you would like to know more about other topics in A&T history.*

*James R. Stewart Jr. is the archives and special collections librarian for F.D. Bluford Library.*

By Brian M. Holloway '97

## HILTON NAMED AN UNDER ARMOUR ATHLETIC DIRECTOR OF THE YEAR



Intercollegiate Athletics Director **EARL M. HILTON III** has been named an Under Armour Athletics Director of the Year for NCAA FCS institutions, the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics announced March 7.

The Under Armour awards program was created to honor intercollegiate directors of athletics for commitment and administrative excellence within a campus or college community environment over the past year. The awards span seven divisions—NCAA FBS, FCS, Division I-AAA, II, III, NAIA/ Other Four-Year Institutions and Junior/Community

Colleges—and annually honor 28 athletics directors (four from each division).

Hilton has served as North Carolina A&T's athletics director for eight years, leading its 17 Division I sports teams from challenging circumstances to unprecedented success on the field and in the classroom. Under Hilton, the Aggies have won a combined 26 conference regular-season, championship meets or tournament championship titles, played in 11 post-season bowl or tournament games and they have won seven games or matches there.

In football, Aggies have won three of the four Celebration Bowls held thus far, an event that pits the winners of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (in which A&T competes) against the Southwestern Athletic Conference. The annual event is the de facto national championship of black college football.

In men's and women's track, Aggies have been even more dominant, winning a combined nine indoor

and outdoor conference championships over the past three years. This past February, N.C. A&T became the first MEAC institution to win three consecutive conference championships in both men's and women's indoor track and field. In 2018-19, the women's basketball team went undefeated in the MEAC marking the first time in school history the program has accomplished the feat.

Numerous Aggies have moved on to professional competition over the past few years, as well, including Tarik Cohen of the Chicago Bears and Brandon "Big Stuff" Parker of the Oakland Raiders in the NFL and Cutter Dyals in the Atlanta Braves organization of Major League Baseball. In amateur competition, women's track star Kayla White and men's standout Chris Belcher logged global and national best times in the 200-meter and 100-meter sprints.

Academic performance among student-athletes has grown just as strong.

"Earl is not only an exceptional leader, focused

on excellence in both academic and athletic performance, but an outstanding role model for the coaches and student athletes in our athletics program," said Chancellor Harold L. Martin Sr. "He leads with his values, never avoids the tough decisions and requires that his teams compete with honor. I could not ask for anything more from an athletics director. This award is richly deserved."

Prior to his service as athletics director, Hilton served the university as assistant athletics director for compliance, associate athletics director for internal affairs and assistant vice chancellor for student affairs.

Hilton received his bachelor's degree in political science in 1992 from Lamar University. He also has a master's degree in public administration and a juris doctorate from Texas Tech University. ■



## PARKER LOOKS FORWARD TO SECOND SEASON WITH OAKLAND RAIDERS *By Jordan M. Howse*

Going to the NFL was a huge transition for **BRANDON PARKER '18**. Not only did it come with a cross-country relocation, it also came with a new kind of playbook.

Parker, who was drafted by the Oakland Raiders in 2018, said his rookie season was tough but enlightening.

"The transition to the NFL is tough," he said. "Obviously it's a higher skill level, but it's also stepping into the adult world. It's the same game you've been playing but (now) it's your livelihood and how you support your family. It's way more serious."

Parker was thrust into play in the Raiders' season opener against the Cleveland Browns after his teammate Donald Penn left the game with an injury.

"I wasn't even supposed to play," he said with a laugh. "But getting in there for the first time in our first game was definitely a highlight."

Another highlight for Parker was meeting former teammate Tony McRae on the field when Oakland took on the Cincinnati Bengals in December.

"It's like walking in class and seeing your best friend," Parker said. "We could see each other's faces light up. It's exciting to see him doing his thing and us living our dreams."

In the offseason, Parker is working out, spending time with his wife Dominique and looking forward to thriving in his next season as a Raider.

"I want to see the difference a year makes," he said. "Now that I've played a year, I know what to expect. I want to see how much can be done to improve what I can do." ■



Left to right: Earl Hilton, athletics director; Richie Kittles, defensive back; Sam Washington, head football coach; Lamar Raynard; Davida Martin, first lady; and Harold L. Martin Sr., chancellor

## WASHINGTON EARNS MEAC COACH OF THE YEAR

Meeting hefty expectations is the task North Carolina A&T head football coach **SAM WASHINGTON** had ahead of him in his first year as a head coach, and he accomplished the enormous task despite the adversity that came along the way. So, enough Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference head coaches around the league recognized the outstanding job Washington achieved in his first year and voted him the MEAC Coach of the Year.

The Aggies ended the regular season 9-2 overall and 6-1 in the MEAC to win the school's fourth conference title in five years. When the honor was announced in November, the team was also headed back to the Air Force Reserve Celebration Bowl for the third time in four years to play the SWAC champion on Dec. 15 at Atlanta's Mercedes Benz Stadium.

Washington joins Rod Broadway (2017), George Small (2003), Bill Hayes (1999, 1991), Mo Forte (1986), Jim Mckinley (1980) and Hornsby Howell (1975) as N.C. A&T coaches who won MEAC Coach of the Year honors.

"We accomplished many of the goals we set out to accomplish," said Washington. "I'm very proud and grateful that I have been blessed with this honor. It all boils down to having a great coaching staff and outstanding players. It is truly a team award."

Broadway, the Aggies coach from 2011-17 retired in January 2017. Yes, Broadway turned over to Washington, his longtime assistant, a team coming off a 12-0 season, a MEAC title, a Celebration Bowl win and a black college football national championship.

Yes, the 2018 team Washington inherited included three star skilled players in running back Marquell Cartwright, quarterback Lamar Raynard and wide receiver Elijah Bell. The team also included eight returners on defense including first-team all-conference returnees in defensive end Darryl Johnson, Jr. and cornerbacks Mac McCain III and Timadre Abram.

Washington used the inherited talent to open the season with two humungous wins. The Aggies defeated the No. 6 Football Championship Subdivision team in the nation in Jacksonville State to open the season in the FCS Showcase before beating FBS opponent East Carolina at ECU. That was followed by a blowout win over Gardner-Webb at home.

After the GWU win, the Aggies rose to No. 4 in the nation, the highest ranking in school history. Then adversity entered. In what was deemed a non-conference game before the start of the season because the departure of Hampton University left some schools with only seven conference games, the winless Morgan State Bears ended the Aggies 15-game winning streak at N.C. A&T's BB&T Stadium with a 16-13 win on a 36-yard field goal with two seconds remaining.

The Aggies then found themselves trailing 16-10 at halftime five days later to S.C. State before a second-half rally fended off a second straight loss. But on Oct. 13, the Aggies dropped a conference game as Florida A&M overcame a 21-6 halftime deficit to defeat the Aggies 22-21 on a 26-yard field goal with four seconds remaining. In an instant, all of the expectations coming into the 2018 season seemed to be weighing on the Aggies. It began the process of Washington earning his respect as a head coach.

"We needed the wakeup call," said Washington. "... Losing to Florida A&M was a turning point for putting things back into perspective. Despite how good you are, you still have to do the little things for big things to happen for you.

You can't assume people are going to lay down for you because of your past success," Washington continued. "You have to play the game right. There is a reason those games are on the schedule. You have to work hard to win every time."

Washington led the Aggies to four straight wins to close the regular season. All four wins were by double-figures.

"The expectations at this university are always high and that speaks to the excellence this university has displayed over the years," said Washington. "Thanks to the excellence of coach Broadway, those expectations were made even higher. Coach (Broadway) built a program here where people expect us to do great things. I'm thrilled we are still meeting those expectations." ■

## AGGIES WIN THIRD BOWL IN FOUR YEARS

The North Carolina A&T Aggies captured its third Celebration Bowl title in four years with a 24-22 win over Alcorn State on Dec. 15, at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta.

The Aggies led the entire game, but it was **MALIK WILSON**'s 79-yard game winning return with 38 seconds left in the third quarter that gave N.C. A&T the 24-16 lead. Alcorn didn't take long to respond and capped a drive of nine plays under four minutes with a 59-yard touchdown run by Noah Johnson at the 11:55 mark, cutting A&T's lead to 24-22. The Braves attempted a two-point conversion that would have tied the game; however, A&T's defense was able to stop the Braves.

A&T set the tone early in the game and held a comfortable 17-6 advantage at the half. **LAMAR RAYNARD** threw a 17-yard pass to **ZACHARY LESLIE** in the opening drive of the game to give the Aggies a 7-0 lead with 12:38 in the first quarter. Alcorn cut in A&T's lead with a 29-yard field goal by **COREY MCCULLOUGH** with less than three minutes in the first.

**NOEL RUIZ** nailed a 36-yard field goal at the 8:33 mark in the second quarter which stretched A&T's lead to 10-3. With 53 seconds remaining in the half, Raynard connected with **ELIJAH BELL** on a 27-yard pass pushing the Aggies to a 17-3 lead. The Braves used a 25-yard field goal by McCullough as time expired in the second quarter cutting A&T's advantage to 17-6.

Raynard was impressive in the win and was 18-of-30 passing for 292 yards. Leslie caught six passes and finished with 119 yards. A&T's kicking game was fueled by Wilson who finished with 112 yards on four returns including a touchdown.

The Aggies finished the season with a 10-2 record and its first Celebration Bowl win for head coach **SAM WASHINGTON**. Alcorn State finished the season 9-4 overall. ■

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL HAS HISTORIC UNDEFEATED REGULAR CONFERENCE SEASON

On March 7, the North Carolina A&T women's basketball team completed the program's first-ever undefeated season in the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference with a resounding 86-52 win over arch-rival N.C. Central Eagles at Corbett Sports Center.

The Aggies finished the regular season 19-10 overall and 16-0 in the MEAC to become the first MEAC team to finish the regular season undefeated since Hampton accomplished the feat in 2013-14.

But who saw it coming?

In November and December, the team battled through serious injuries, they lost to a Division II program and they got off to a 3-10 start. All the same, they had faith that the system works.

N.C. A&T's 6-foot-3 junior center **ALEXUS LESSEARS**, who is one of the best rebounders in the conference and a third-team All-MEAC selection last season, missed eight games with an injury. The Aggies also lost promising freshman **CHARME LILLY** with a season-ending injury who at one point during the season earned a MEAC Rookie of the Week honor. Second-leading scorer **CINIA MCCRAY** missed six games this season including four conference games.

"We had faith in each other, in the system, and just knowing that what the coaches are teaching us is good enough," said junior guard **C'CORIEA FOY**, who led the Aggies at the NCCU matchup with 17 points, five assists and four steals.

"It's really gratifying," said head coach **TARRELL ROBINSON** about being perfect in the MEAC. "We feel like we had a talented group, and to be perfect in the regular season, it takes a lot of collaboration, a lot of buy-in, and hard work. These young women did that."

When their three-game tournament run to the last year's MEAC championship is included, the Aggies have won 34 of their last 35 games against MEAC opponents. They have won 16 straight at home against MEAC competition and they finished undefeated in conference road games for the second straight season.

"This group went 15-1 last year (in the conference) and we lost three seniors, so I knew we had to develop our bench this year," said Robinson. "Fortunately, our starters had experience, so this opportunity was in the back of my mind. But obviously, you have to practice and go through the ups and downs to get where we are now."

The women's team headed into the MEAC tournament looking for their third MEAC title in four years. As fate would have it, N.C. Central defeated Delaware State and the top-seeded Aggies' (re)match against the Eagles at the Norfolk Scope Arena wasn't victorious. ■

*"We feel like we had a talented group, and to be perfect in the regular season, it takes a lot of collaboration, a lot of buy-in, and hard work. These young women did that."*

— TARRELL ROBINSON



*Lady Aggies celebrate win over N.C. Central during regular season.*





# AGGIE MEN'S AND WOMEN'S TRACK AND FIELD SWEEP MEAC CHAMPIONSHIPS

For the second time in three years, the North Carolina A&T men's and women's outdoor track and field teams swept the MEAC championships, May 4.

This is the third consecutive MEAC title for the men's outdoor team to go along with their three straight MEAC indoor titles and their 2018 MEAC men's cross-country championship. The women also hold three consecutive MEAC indoor titles.

"Based on some of the times we put up, this is the best MEAC championship we have ever had," said Duane Ross, director of track and field programs.

For the women's team, it was a day of redemption. Florida A&M has proven to be a formidable opponent for the N.C. A&T women over the past two years at the conference championships. It was the Rattlers who prevented the Aggies from repeating last season, and it was

the Rattlers who led by more than 100 points after the first two events were scored on Saturday during the final day of the championships.

For the second straight season, senior **KAYLA WHITE** was named the meet's most outstanding runner. She ran an NCAA-best 10.96 to win the 100 meters. According to the United States Track and Field Cross Country Coaches Association, it was the fifth-fastest collegiate time ever. White also ran an NCAA-best 22.52 to win the 200. White was also part of the Aggies 4x100 championship team.

Senior **TREVOR STEWART** was the main highlight for the men. He won the 400 meters by running the 14th-fastest time ever in the world at 44.38. Stewart will head to the NCAA Division I East Regional Preliminary Round (regionals) with the No. 1 team in the nation. ■

The N.C. A&T Aggies also swept both Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) Indoor Track and Field Championships to become the first university in MEAC history to sweep the men's and the women's indoor championships three years in a row.

### WOMEN'S OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD

*First-Team All-MEAC:* Jayne Roberts (pole vault); Madeleine Akobundu (long jump, 100m); Kayla White (100m, 200m, 4x100); Tori Ray (400m, 4x400); Cambrea Sturgis (4x100); Taliyah Townsend (4x100); Kamaya Debose-Epps (4x100); Sun-Sara Williams (4x400); Kristoni Barnes (4x400); Nilaja Florence (4x400); G'Jasmyne Butler (3,000m steeplechase).

*Second-Team All-MEAC:* Paula Salmon (high jump, 400m); Loren James (shot put); Cambrea Sturgis (200m); TeJyrica Robinson (100m); Kristoni Barnes (800m).

*Third-Team All-MEAC:* Nazah Reddick (high jump); Cambrea Sturgis (100m); Kamaya Debose-Epps (200m); Sun-Sara Williams (400m); Paula Salmon (100m); Nilaja Florence (400m).

### MEN'S OUTDOOR TRACK & FIELD

*First-Team All-MEAC:* Lasheon Strozier (triple jump); Derrick Wheeler (hammer); Aaron Wilkerson (shot put); Rodney Rowe (100m, 200m, 4x100); Trevor Stewart (400m); Michael Dickson (110m, 4x100); Malcom Croom-McFadden (4x100); Akeem Sirleaf (4x100); Akeem Lindo (4x400); Brandy Felix (4x400); Chase Bonham (4x400); Kemarni Mighty (4x400); Regan Kimtai (1,500m)

*Second-Team All-MEAC:* Brandon Hicklin (long jump); Joshua Faison (discus); Kevin Fofanah (hammer); Akeem Sirleaf (400m); Akeem Lindo (400m); Regan Kimtai (800m)

*Third-Team All-MEAC:* Akeem Sirleaf (200m); Regan Kimtai (3,000m steeplechase)



## VOLLEYBALL'S WIGGINS SCORES INTERNSHIP WITH NFL

North Carolina A&T volleyball player Megan Wiggins received the opportunity of a lifetime in February. It was one of those opportunities many dream of but never see come to reality.

Wiggins was a part of Super Bowl LIII between the New England Patriots and the Los Angeles Rams. She worked and covered Super Bowl week as an intern with the National Football League (NFL). The ultimate prize was attending the game played at Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta.

Wiggins attended a Careers in Football Forum last December. She was one of two student-athletes to represent N.C. A&T. The forum, hosted by the NFL, is held every year during the week of the Celebration Bowl which pits the football conference champion of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference (MEAC) against the football conference champion of the Southwestern Athletic Conference (SWAC) in an HBCU national championship game played at Mercedes-Benz Stadium.

Athletes from each school of both conferences were represented at the Celebration Bowl.

"It was all about working your way to a career with the NFL and what you can do in sports", said Wiggins. After I left, while I did network with people, I didn't feel like I networked enough to reach out to them personally. So, what I did was take three days and put together a good resume and I applied for everything. I just took some time to focus on just doing that."

When she got home after the N.C. A&T's 24-22 win over Alcorn State in the Celebration Bowl, Wiggins immediately began applying for all the opportunities with the NFL that she learned about from the forum.

Her efforts were not in vain.

Two days after she put in her last application, Wiggins received an email from the NFL offering an internship for the Super Bowl working in the broadcast bowl. Weeks before the big game, she found out the job description through a conference call.

"After that conversation, I told myself I don't really know what to expect, but I'm going to show up, be professional, do what I'm asked and make the most of this experience," said Wiggins about her thoughts after finding out what her job duties were.

Wiggins, along with Zach Bragg, an intern from Hampton University, had to escort various NFL players to media interviews. In addition, she helped with Radio Row held at the Georgia World Congress Center in Atlanta where the Super Bowl media coverage for the week takes place. Her other job duty included participating in the NFL Fan experience where player interviews and different field events take place.

A day before the game, however, Wiggins was not sure if she could attend the Super Bowl game. Wiggins received a text Saturday afternoon from a player she worked with during the week. He informed her that she was granted a media credential and that her hard work had not gone unnoticed.

"The whole aspect of being there at the game was great. There were four NFL players that we were helping out with during the week, so we were with them during all their interviews and were able to watch the game with them," said Wiggins.

Wiggins, who is pursuing a degree in journalism and mass communications with a concentration in multimedia, plans to attend graduate school for film with her sights on owning her own production company. The opportunity to work the Super Bowl was a stepping stone in that direction.

"Being in a position to network and talk with different people that you wouldn't normally be around and interact with, was huge," said Wiggins. ■





# SPIRITUAL EXPRESSION

*Fellowship Gospel Choir celebrates 50 years*

By Jordan M. Howse

## Fellowship Gospel Choir

**TO COMMEMORATE ITS 50TH ANNIVERSARY, THE CHOIR RECORDED MANY OF ITS ORIGINAL SONGS IN CORBETT SPORTS CENTER. THE RECORDINGS ARE AVAILABLE ON MOST STREAMING SERVICES.**

In 1969, North Carolina A&T was in need of a little spirit. The country was battling a war abroad and a civil rights movement at home, so the time was right to start the Fellowship Gospel Choir.

The choir was conceived as an avenue through which N.C. A&T students could maintain continuity with the black religious experience.

Ron Jones '87, current director and alumnus of the gospel choir, said it was a natural progression for him to join when he arrived at A&T.

"So many of us grew up in the church," Jones said. "So, the choir started as a way for students to express themselves from a spiritual standpoint."

Jones sang in the choir for three years and played piano at his own commencement. He came back as director two years after he graduated.

From its inception, the Fellowship Gospel Choir has sought to be a witness to the truth of God. As such, the choir has added dimension to the campus and the local community.

The award-winning choir would not be able to make that claim without gifted directors to impart the knowledge and skills necessary to make it so.

Yvonne Haygood-Smith was the choir's first director, 1969-1982, and under her direction, the choir became a nationally known college gospel choir. Jimmy Thomas succeeded Smith in 1983 and continued the legacy that had been established. During the years he served, two albums were recorded: "Leaning on Jesus" (1985) and "God is my Refuge" (1986).

Jones, whose tenure as director began in 1989 after Thomas's resignation, has led the choir to greater prominence in the gospel music industry as well as the national college arena. Under his direction, the choir recorded three albums: "Give Him Praise" (1991), "Jesus is Real" (1997) and "Be a Witness" (2007).

In his 30 years as director, he's seen a lot of change while holding on to the traditions of the founding members.

"The groundwork was laid by the time I took over," Jones said. "What I've seen over time, though, is the gospel choir has become a vital part of the university community. There's not much that happens on campus that we aren't invited to and that didn't happen so much 30 years ago."



*Fellowship Gospel Choir, 1989*

In 2004, Jones started a scholarship fund to assist members of the choir when they are at financial risk of leaving the university.

"I see how these students struggle to get here and to stay here," he said. "Retention gets more difficult each year."

The Fellowship Gospel Choir travels to participate in workshops and festivals. Some of its notable performances include the Annual Black College Gospel Workshop in Atlanta, the Annual Collegiate Gospel Choir Festival in New York City and the Carolina Gospel Fest in Raleigh, North Carolina.

The choir has consistently won awards and competitions for outstanding soloists, choreography and original songs.

To commemorate its 50th anniversary, the choir recorded many of its original songs in Corbett Sports Center. The recordings are available on most streaming services.

"Music is universal, and it never dies," Jones said. "The choir rehearsed all semester and we brought in some of our alumni from across the country for this, too. It was the perfect way to commemorate our anniversary."

Senior Ariel Gunn, the current president and student director, has spent her entire college career in the gospel choir.

"It was a monumental experience to be a part of the 50th anniversary celebration as a student," Gunn said. "The choir impacted my life not just on an inspirational level but my faith and family as well. It's so pivotal for me to be a part of what GC's become and where it's going." ■



*Pictured left: Boris Kodjoe, Nicole Ari Parker Kodjoe, Lance Gross, Rebecca Gross, Tatyana Ali, Vaughn Rasberry and Kimberly Gatling*

Lance Gross was a series regular on Fox's "Star" and is the first actor to win four NAACP Image Awards for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series for his role on Tyler Perry's "House of Payne." Rebecca is a Los Angeles-based wardrobe stylist who works primarily with celebrity clients on red carpets, editorials and television.

A five-time NAACP Image Award winner and Harvard Aspiring Minority Business Leader, Ali is known to millions worldwide for playing Ashley Banks in the iconic comedy series, "The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air," and has appeared in numerous television, film and theatrical

projects over her career. Rasberry, an author and Fulbright Scholar, is associate professor of English at Stanford University, where he teaches African-American literature and the intellectual history of the African diaspora.

**Living Your Best Life**

More than 2,200 students and members of the local community gathered in Corbett Sports Center April 11 to hear master communicator, multidimensional businessman and international thought leader T.D. Jakes firsthand. Jakes was the spring guest for the Chancellor's Speaker Series.

Known for his eloquent and extensive vocabulary, Jakes began by painting a picture of all the ancestors who paved the way for every student to be sitting in the audience seats they occupied. His descriptive portraits of enslaved persons who endured heartache so that succeeding generations could excel, culminated with one simple truth about the initial pathway to "Living Your Best Life"—you must first know and appreciate from whence you've come.

Continuous applause, rapt attention and nods of approval were indicative of the night's success.

# INSIGHT

# INSPIRATION

**Personal and professional goals the emphasis of 2018-19 Chancellor's Town Hall and Speaker Series**

*North Carolina A&T is committed to creating an intellectual climate that encourages the creative exchange of ideas. Through the Chancellor's Town Hall Series and Speaker Series, nationally distinguished guests participate in campus dialogue on matters of global importance.*

**Relationship Goals**

Celebrity couples Boris and Nicole Ari Parker Kodjoe, Lance and Rebecca Gross, and Tatyana Ali and Vaughn Rasberry kicked off the 2018-19 Chancellor's Town Hall Series by addressing "Relationship Goals," Nov. 15, 2018, in Harrison Auditorium. North Carolina A&T alumna Kimberly Gatling '96 moderated the conversation.

The couples drew from personal experiences to discuss navigating relationship challenges, trust and communication, knowing when you've met the "right one" and intimacy issues, all in the context of developing and maintaining healthy interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships. The objective of the town hall was to provide attendees with a greater sense of how to "level up" in their relationships.

The Kodjoes are best known for their breakout roles as Damon Carter and Teri Joseph in Showtime's award-winning original series, "Soul Food," which earned them a combined eight nominations for NAACP Image Awards.



**The objective of “Relationship Goals” was to provide attendees with a greater sense of how to “level up” in their relationships.**

**T.D. Jakes began by painting a picture of all the ancestors who paved the way for every student to be sitting in the audience seats they occupied.**

**“Artistic Evolution” participants agreed the industry can be difficult, particularly for African Americans and women; however, they concurred that it all begins and ends with personal strength.**



T.D. Jakes

Jakes masterfully merged the series theme and principles of his then soon-to-be-released book, “Crushing.” His quotes of motivation and inspiration echoed the sentiments of understanding, developing and embodying the strength and fortitude to regroup and continue forward even in the midst of what may seem to be a crushing defeat.

“How you withstand the crushing is what’s on trial in your life right now.” Jakes questioned, “Are you tough enough to withstand what’ you’re up against?”

“If you’re not careful, you’ll think the crushing is there to destroy you ... but because you fought back when you didn’t think you could come back, you’re really strong and tenacious.”

Having recognized their own power to succeed beyond present and seemingly crushing circumstances, attendees were standing to their feet by the end of the event, armed with concepts for living their best lives.

Students in attendance were given advance copies of Jakes’s book.

### **Artistic Evolution**

The spring town hall (April 25) focused on “Artistic Evolution,” and performers Loretta Devine, Jasmine Guy and Chloe x Halle provided insight and inspiration drawn from their careers and experiences.

While all the special guests, including moderator and N.C. A&T alumnus Kevin Wilson Jr. ’11, work in the entertainment industry, the stories and advice they shared were applicable across all disciplines.

Oscar-nominee Wilson began the conversation sharing his personal story of following his dreams, even when family and friends told him to follow the safe path, get a business degree and a respectable job. Instead, he chose to pursue his passion in the arts, where he ultimately thrived beyond his wildest dreams.

While others may not understand or believe in you, it’s critical that you believe in yourself, stressed Guy, who is best known for her portrayal as Whitley Gilbert in the hit TV series, “A Different World.”

“Proving yourself is part of the game ... transition is often difficult, but you have to have heart and tenacity,” she said.

Sharing the trials and tribulations of being young, somewhat unknown and African American, Chloe x Halle, who star in the “Black-ish” TV series spinoff, “Grown-ish,” echoed Guy’s sentiments with a small caveat.

“In this day and age, all you have to do is put something out there with your whole heart and see where it lands,” said Halle, the younger of the two. “Social media has really been helpful and special for us. If it weren’t for YouTube, we may not be here.”

“Getting the ball rolling is a little easier than keeping the ball rolling. That’s the hard part about Hollywood,” said Devine, whose star-studded stage and screen career spans nearly 40 years. Summing it up, she added, “Ultimately, you must be able to inspire yourself.”

All agreed the industry can be hard and difficult, particularly for African Americans and women; however, they concurred that it all begins and ends with personal strength.

“As black women, it’s important to know your voice and power,” said Chloe. “And always remember, you do have power. Yes, the industry is difficult, but be kind and find kindness.” ■

Left to right: Halle Bailey, Kevin Wilson, Chloe Bailey, Loretta Devine and Jasmine Guy





NORTH  
CAROLINA  
A&T STATE  
UNIVERSITY

# TOWN & GOWN

UNIVERSITY AND COMMUNITY  
CELEBRATE THE ARTS

Asha Duniani and Joshua Suiter

By Jordan M. Howse

On April 26, North Carolina A&T held its inaugural Town & Gown event to recognize and celebrate the relationship between the university and the surrounding Piedmont Triad community. The College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences hosted the event.

The Town & Gown brought together 315 community leaders, friends and supporters of N.C. A&T with the university for a red carpet-worthy evening of fellowship (dinner) and artistic performances from talented A&T musicians, dancers and singers, as well as displays by student visual artists and a special presentation of "Ain't Misbehavin', The Fats Waller Musical Show."

"We have a well-earned reputation for STEM education at this institution," said Chancellor Harold L. Martin Sr. at the Town & Gown dinner. "That reputation should not overshadow the amazing gifts of our artistically inclined students in the visual and performing arts department, and tonight it's all about them."

Earlier in the day, master classes in acting, dancing and film directing were conducted by stage and screen actress Loretta Devine, triple threat Jasmine Guy and Oscar-nominated filmmaker Kevin Wilson '11, respectively.



**"N.C. A&T's College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences has one of the top five theatre programs designed for African-American students."**

— CHANCELLOR HAROLD L. MARTIN SR.

Devine captured national attention for her role as Lorrell, one of the three original "Dreamgirls." She transitioned to film to create some of her most memorable roles in movies such as "Waiting to Exhale" and "This Christmas" as well as on television on "A Different World," "Being Mary Jane" and "Grey's Anatomy."

Guy is best known for her role as Whitley Gilbert on "A Different World," but she has seen success on the big screen in Spike Lee's "School Daze" and Eddie Murphy's "Harlem Nights." She also has performed as a part of The Alvin Ailey Repertory Company and in Broadway hits such as the "The Wiz" and "Chicago."

Wilson, an alumnus of A&T, won the Gold Medal at the 44th Student Academy Awards for "My Nephew Emmett," his 20-minute short film based on the true story of the 1955 murder of Emmett Till. Months later, Wilson received an Oscar nomination for Best Live Action Short Film at the 90th Academy Awards.

"As one of the nation's top producers of undergraduate degrees awarded to African Americans in visual and performing arts, N.C. A&T's College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences has one of the top five theatre programs designed for African-American students," Martin said. "(It also) boasts recipients of the Irene Ryan National Action Scholarship Competition at the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, and, is home to the Mattye Reed African Heritage and H. Clinton Taylor Collections.

"The university and the communities beyond our campus are enriched and strengthened immeasurably through our many shared endeavors. We are truly stronger together, and this debut Town & Gown event underscored that in myriad, vibrant ways." ■



Pictured clockwise from top right: Kaetlin Sifford, Kevin Wilson, Emmanuel Thomas, dance master class with Jasmine Guy (third row center) and Loretta Devine (front)



**CAPITAL  
CAMPAIGN  
ALLOWS THE  
UNIVERSITY TO  
DO  
MORE GOOD  
FOR MORE  
PEOPLE**

*By Jordan M. Howse*

The tagline for North Carolina A&T's capital campaign is a testament to everything Aggies have done, are doing and can do.

The Campaign for North Carolina A&T focuses on four pillars: students, faculty, program support and infrastructure. Ken Sigmon, vice chancellor of university advancement, said those pillars are what make N.C. A&T great.

"A&T got started from the power of do," Sigmon said. "Private support got us out the basement of Shaw University and that's what it's going to take to help us become a preeminent land-grant university."

## Nearly 130 years of DOing

The university has been harnessing the power of do for 128 years, which led to it becoming the No. 1 public and largest HBCU in the country. It continues to be a top three research institution in North Carolina.

"There's never been a better time to advance the reach of A&T," Sigmon said. "We have an opportunity to build a new era of preeminence and recognition to create an unprecedented idea of what a 21st century HBCU can be."

The campaign for North Carolina A&T allows the university to do more good for more people. The research done by faculty and students at N.C. A&T can help communities and can be continued through more support.

Whether funding research on the production of allergen-reduced peanuts, health disparities, or a medical device to treat gallstone disease, private funds play a growing role at this doctoral, higher-research activity university.

Around \$3.75 million came from private donors in 2017 to fund the high-level research that students and faculty engage in.

"We're solving real-world challenges that we all face," Sigmon said. "Through this, we're supporting the collective power of do. There really is a power in people deciding to make things happen and we can do that with the investments."

The A&T Preeminence 2020 strategic plan set A&T on the path to achieve ambitious goals that would encourage creative exchange, commit to excellence in teaching, position the university as a premier research institution, embrace the entrepreneurial spirit, foster diversity and inclusion and achieve academic an operational excellence.

While some of those goals remain the same, Preeminence 2023 added the elevation and expansion of public service, community engagement and stewardship. The campaign put A&T on the road to making the strategic goals more attainable.

As faculty prepare A&T students for careers of the future, the infrastructure of the university has to keep pace. With increased enrollment growth, there will be a need for more student housing and campus parking, and a greater capacity for communications, internet and Wi-Fi, development systems and other student needs.

"With the help of the dedicated A&T students, faculty, alumni, friends and community, are showing the world what Aggies can do," Sigmon said.

That support is being used to enhance academic programs, fund facilities, strengthen scholarships and provide for faculty needs at what is now America's No. 1 public historically black university, according to U.S. News & World Report's 2019 Best Colleges rankings.

"At its heart, the Campaign for North Carolina A&T stands for transformation and the abiding idea that by exercising our power, individually and collectively, we can move mountains," Chancellor Harold L. Martin Sr. told the more than 400 guests assembled at the kickoff event. "Our university will be a different institution when this campaign concludes, I promise you." ■





**“I KNOW THE DIFFERENCE THAT A&T MADE IN MY LIFE, AND THAT MOTIVATES ME TO MAKE THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO TODAY’S STUDENTS AND THE GENERATIONS THAT WILL FOLLOW THEM.”**

– WILLIE DEESE,  
CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIRMAN



“We have the power to attract the best and brightest minds in our students and faculty, improve and expand programs and build state of the art labs, classrooms and residence halls for our campus.”

Ralisha Mercer, associate vice chancellor of development, said “The Power of DO” was a natural progression of Aggies DO.

“When we discuss change, we equate it to the movement and the power,” she said. “When we continue to push the power, that’s when we ‘do.’ Like we say, we are better than yesterday but never as good as tomorrow. That’s the ‘Power of DO.’”

The campaign is being led by co-chairmen Willie Deese and Royall M. Mack Sr., both alumni of the university.

“I know the difference that A&T made in my life, and that motivates me to make the same opportunities available to today’s students and the generations that will follow them,” said Deese, a retired pharmaceutical executive who was recognized as the lead donor with \$6 million in support of the campaign.

Before the public phase of the campaign kicked off, the leadership phase appealed to alumni and community partners to set the pace.

Through the Campaign for North Carolina A&T, the university is continuing and building upon its historic commitment to excellence. That commitment has only succeeded because of generous giving from alumni and friends.

“Our alumni have really stepped up with more [and larger] gifts,” Sigmon said. “We’re deepening our relationships with current donors and we are where we are today because of these relationships. Campaigns can sometime feel like they are just about the counting. For us, it’s about the sacrifice. All size gifts matter and help get us across our goal line.”

That goal is \$85 million by 2020.

When about \$68 million were raised, the public phase launched with a kickoff event (Nov. 8, 2018) boasting what Aggies have already accomplished and what can be accomplished with support from the A&T community. Another \$6.77 million has been raised since the public launch, currently making the total more than \$74 million.



## The Atkinson Sisters

Jasmine and Lauren Atkinson are a picturesque pair. Sisters from Raleigh, North Carolina, Jasmine is in her second year at North Carolina A&T and Lauren is in her first.

They both came to N.C. A&T on scholarships that have helped relieve their worry and stress about loans.

Lauren, who received the Dr. Dorothy Prince Barnett Endowed Scholarship, said she originally didn't want to follow any of her three sisters to college. But she visited A&T her sophomore year of high school and knew that's where she wanted to go. When Jasmine decided to attend, Lauren still didn't want to follow her to college, but earning scholarships helped her change her mind.

"Scholarship support means the world to us," Lauren said. "This scholarship and others have paid for my freshman year, allowing me to really focus on my work here and not think so much about debt."

A supply chain management student in the College of Business and Economics, Lauren said that securing this scholarship was a confidence booster for her.

"Scholarships can sometimes be the only way people can go to college," she said. "Receiving a scholarship [makes] me feel good about where I am and what I can do."

Jasmine came to A&T in 2017 as an accounting major. Her full departmental accounting scholarship covers all of her expenses.

"Being able to obtain higher education without the burden of student loans is a blessing," she said. "Every day, I thank A&T for the opportunity they have given me and strive to prove that their investment in me will have great returns."

Attending A&T with her sister is another blessing, Jasmine says.

"We've always been very close," she said. "We're each other's best friend. We're able to be there for each other whenever we need it. We get to watch each other develop and our relationship has grown so much stronger."

Jasmine said that her scholarship has afforded her all kinds of opportunities. She interned with Bank of America in Charlotte as a global human resources development analyst last summer and will intern with the bank as a financial management analyst in New York this summer.

She also was able to participate in GE's AggieMagination pitch contest where she and her team developed a new product that used emerging technologies and analyze its predicted performance. Jasmine's team won first place for developing a digital tool that used artificial intelligence and artificial reality technologies to bridge the gap between education and hands-on experience for underprivileged students.

Jasmine said she would not have had the time to participate in the contest if it wasn't for her scholarship.

The Atkinson sisters love attending college together. Just like at home, they remain close at school.

"I'll borrow some of her clothing if I need to, she'll come to my room just to hang out, and we grab dinner sometimes as well," she said.

Lauren said that her sister made her transition to college so much easier by offering understanding and be a familiar face when she needs advice.

"Walking across campus to or from a class and seeing Jasmine will always feel funny, but I wouldn't trade it for the world," Lauren said. "I never imagined going to school with my sister, but I'm glad I do." ■

While A&T is a public university that receives state and federal funds, Sigmon says that those public funds are restricted and cannot be used for things like endowed scholarships, faculty and athletics. Campaign funds will fill in the gaps to allow students to stay in school, recruit new faculty and the best athletes.

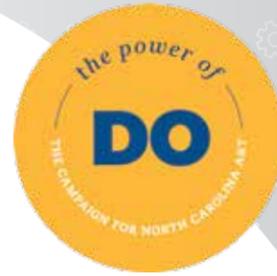
"We [public institutions] find ourselves on the short end compared to private institutions," Sigmon said. "As costs for higher education rise, we have even more of a commitment to our students and have to raise even more funds."

Mercer said that endowed scholarships are a large way that help students for years and years.

"Endowments are there for students to use forever," Mercer said. "They are perpetual investments in the university and in our students. Endowments transcend generations."

A&T supporters gave more than \$4 million to support endowed scholarships for the second consecutive year, while gifts to support current-use scholarships exceeded \$3 million. Scholarships are of major importance to the university: Two-thirds of A&T's enrollment comprises students who are the first in their families to go to college, which means family resources to fund their education can be in short supply. Here are four examples. ■

## Terrence Christian



Terrence Christian knew that being the first person in his family to go to college would be a big deal when he decided to attend North Carolina A&T.

Being a first-generation college student has been all about learning for Christian. It has allowed him to research more and take full advantage of everything N.C. A&T has to offer, including scholarships.

Christian, a senior computer engineering student, was a recipient for the Dr. and Mrs. George Evans Endowed Scholarship.

"Scholarship support means I can focus more on becoming a better student during the semester and serves as a motivator to perform well academically because others are willing to invest in my education," Christian said.

In addition to academic success, the Evans Scholarship helped Christian study abroad in Shanghai, China, last fall.

"I was able to collaborate on engineering projects with students from around the globe, learn a new language and experience the culture of multiple Asian countries," he said. "A lot of people don't study abroad because of the financial part of it, so I'm glad I was able to get the scholarship and get culturally educated."

Christian said the scholarship not only impacts his life while he is in college but also will help him toward financial freedom after graduation.

"Student loans are a pain for anyone, and scholarships help drastically," he said.

Christian came to A&T unsure of exactly what he wanted to do. He attended a science and technology high school and wanted to continue learning in a STEM field.

"I didn't know a lot about computer engineering, but A&T has given me the chance to do an internship at Visa and eBay," he said. "When I graduate, I'd really like to work as a product manager, leveraging new technologies like machine learning, augmented reality or virtual reality."

Christian also has interest in the "internet of things"—everyday appliances, electronics and vehicles connected to the internet.

"I'd like to use the internet of things to deliver new features and software products on mobile applications and wearable devices," he said.

Christian said that studying abroad has influenced him to want to own restaurants serving international foods.

Almost two-thirds of A&T's enrollment are first-generation college students and navigating the new experience can be challenging, Christian said.

Every December when he returns to Maryland for the holidays, Christian goes to his former high school and talks to students about his experiences in college.

"Passing on that knowledge of college, the value of HBCUs, applying for scholarships and studying abroad is very important to me as a first-generation college student," he said. "I've had to have open ears all the time to really know what to do and what's going on. Hopefully, talking to students gives them an idea of what to expect from college." ■



# WAYS TO GIVE

Through The Campaign for North Carolina A&T, the university is building upon its historic commitment to excellence. Your support will make the difference between good and great.



### ANNUAL GIVING

Operating support for the university



### MAJOR GIFTS

Scholarships  
Endowment  
Multi-year support for the university



### PLANNED GIVING

Deferred commitments (e.g., real estate, bequests, life insurance, retirement assets, trusts)



### CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS AND FOUNDATION GIVING

Student scholarships  
Faculty development  
Innovative research



### MATCHING GIFTS

Increase the impact of your generosity

Make an online gift today at [WWW.NCAT.EDU/GIVING/GIVE-NOW.HTML](http://WWW.NCAT.EDU/GIVING/GIVE-NOW.HTML), send cash or check (payable to North Carolina A&T Real Estate Foundation Inc.) to the address below, or contact us at 336-334-7600 to discuss how to give and help others participate in the Aggie experience.

**ADVANCEMENT OPERATIONS**  
NORTH CAROLINA A&T STATE UNIVERSITY  
DOWDY BUILDING, SUITE 400  
1601 E. MARKET STREET  
GREENSBORO, NC 27411



## Tylar Lewis



Tylar Lewis was not going to settle for her second choice in colleges. She knew she wanted to attend North Carolina A&T and she was going to figure out how to get from Detroit to Greensboro, North Carolina.

"A&T was always my dream school," she said. "When I applied the first time I was deferred, so I worked really hard to get my grades up and got a 4.0 my senior year."

In addition to admission, Lewis's hard work made the sophomore biology student eligible for several scholarships.

"Scholarship support is a kind of wake-up call," Lewis said. "It lets you know that people are paying attention and that there are people in the world other than my family who want to see not only myself, but my peers, succeed even when they have no idea who we are."

Although she intended to join ROTC when she came to N.C. A&T, her path led her toward Biology Scholars and Aggie Success Leaders. In those groups, she is able to play a leadership role and help younger students find their way in the new experience of college.

Lewis mentors nine freshman women with whom she talks to every day.

"I'm only a sophomore, but I know some of the things they are going through as freshmen," Lewis said. "It can be hard to move to a whole new place and adjust to a different type of atmosphere, so I'm just here for them."

Lewis also tutors in biology and helped restart the Undergraduate Student National Dentist Association, which had not had a presence on campus since 2012. USNDA's mission is the advancement and retention of minority students within the field of dentistry.

"It was something I was interested in being a part of, but we didn't have a chapter here anymore," she said. "I talked to my adviser and we worked with other students and now we're trying to get the word out to other students and local dentists."

Because of her scholarship, Lewis is traveling to Europe with the University Honors Program. In May, she'll travel to Amsterdam and Paris.

"I haven't been out of the country since sixth grade," she said. "I'm excited to experience the culture."

Lewis wants to become a dental hygienist and, ultimately, an orthodontist. ■

**"WE HAVE  
THE POWER TO  
ATTRACT THE BEST  
AND BRIGHTEST  
MINDS IN OUR  
STUDENTS AND  
FACULTY ...."**

**— KENNETH SIGMON,  
VICE CHANCELLOR FOR  
UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT**



# HOME GROWN

**Alumnus Randolph Keaton follows his passion and the road home to teach underserved youth and families in rural North Carolina.**

*By Jordan M. Howse*

He didn't foresee returning home to Columbus County after graduating from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, but Randolph Keaton '84 followed his calling to lead youth in agriculture.

Keaton is the executive director of Men and Women United for Youth and Families CDC, a small nonprofit organization located in Delco, North Carolina, that serves Bladen, Brunswick and Columbus counties. The nonprofit works with every member of the rural communities from job seekers to children.

The organization provides many of the services urban dwellers can take for granted, Keaton said. It promotes education and resource awareness; provides services to assist in creating independent, self-sufficient youth and families; offers a job center and help with travel; and is the first youth-led Food Policy Council in the state.

The council works around food and justice advocacy. The students are partnered with farmers and gardeners in the tri-county area to learn how to tend to gardens. They also learn skills such as public speaking and marketing.

"In the rural community, we have to be strategic about job opportunities," Keaton said. "We have plenty of land, farms and gardeners, so we can teach these kids [about] work ethic and they have an opportunity to raise things on their own and learn about careers in agriculture."

Because of his work, Keaton won the Rural Leader of the Year from the NC Rural Center. The program offers participants like Keaton the opportunity to learn collaborative leadership skills and rural development strategies to help them return and make a meaningful difference in their rural communities.

"Keaton has a lot of knowledge of agriculture and is very passionate about his work," said Misty Herget, director of programs at the center. "He offers great insight and has been a great leader for his organization and ours."

Keaton has made connections to other nonprofit directors, legislators and funding sources that can help his organization continue and advance the work they do in the area.

"We've been able to expand the reach of our programs and better engage the community," Keaton said. "It's been uplifting for the kids and others in the community to see people want to invest in the future of rural North Carolina."

The youth engagement programming keeps expanding and grows more produce each year, helping to secure the future leaders of the tri-county area.

This year, Men and Women United for Youth and Families awarded scholarships to seven teens across three counties. It has given out more than \$40,000 in scholarships over the past decade.

"We want to get to a point where we can help more students attend agricultural universities like A&T," Keaton said. "But we are glad we can help students get the education and skills they can use back home for the benefit of everyone." ■

*Randolph Keaton '84  
(Photo courtesy of NC Rural Center)*



## 1960s

**ALVIN "AL" ATTLES SR. '60**, one of North Carolina A&T's most successful athletes in the sport of basketball, will be one of 11 honorees enshrined in the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts, on Friday, Sept. 6. The Newark, New Jersey, native played for the Aggies under coach Cal Irvin, 1956-1960, and led the team to consecutive CIAA titles in 1958 and 1959.



In 1960, Attles was drafted by the Philadelphia Warriors, playing 11 seasons with the team in Philadelphia and then in San Francisco (now the Golden State Warriors). Since 1970, he has held numerous roles in the franchise including coach (1970-1983), team executive and ambassador to the community. He led the organization to an NBA Championship in 1975, and he is one of five Warriors to have his number retired.

In February 2015, Attles was the first player in N.C. A&T history to have his number retired. His no. 22 jersey now hangs from the rafters in Corbett Sports Center. ■

## 1970s



**BETTYE PERKINS '70**, president and CEO of Today's Students Tomorrow's Teachers (TSTT), was one of five winners nationally of 2018 AARP Purpose Prize awards, which are presented to those 50 and older for outstanding work in public life and social good. Each winner received \$60,000 to further her/his organization's mission.

The TSTT program finds and mentors students from economically challenged and diverse backgrounds to pursue careers in education. According to the U.S. Department of Education, only 18 percent of the nation's 3.5 million teachers are teacher of color. The national program has produced over 800 students with five-year retention rate of 90 percent compared to 50 percent across the U.S.

A former IBM executive, Perkins started the program 20 years ago to address the lack of diversity in the classroom and has graduated 165 teachers. ■

## 1990s



**RODERICK MCLEAN '92** has been named vice president and general manager for Lockheed Martin's Air Mobility & Maritime Missions organization, where he is responsible for the C-130, LM-100J, C-5 and P-3 programs. McLean also serves as the leader for the Marietta, Georgia, facility and oversees sub-assembly sites in Clarksburg, West Virginia, and Meridian, Mississippi.

A 25-year Lockheed Martin employee, McLean most recently led the Integrated Fighter Group. He also previously served as deputy for that group, as well as deputy for the F-16 program. ■

2000s



**“TERRENCE J” JENKINS '04** is the Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF) National Ambassador.

TMCF is the nation’s largest organization exclusively representing the black college community (publicly supported HBCUs and PBIs). Through scholarships, capacity building and research initiatives, innovative programs and strategic partnerships, TMCF is a vital resource in the K-12 and higher education space. The organization is also a source for top employers seeking top talent for competitive internships and good jobs. To date, the organization has awarded more than \$300 million in such assistance to its students and member-schools. TMCF distributes 98 percent of its awards exclusively to HBCUs and PBIs, which is more than any other organization that supports the black college community.

From hosting to acting in worldwide box office hit films to penning his first literary work, Jenkins has shown skill and versatility in a number of different arenas. After seven years of hosting BET’s “106 & Park,” as the former co-anchor of the international program “E! News,” as a producer and host for “Miss USA 2016” and “Miss USA 2017,” and as an actor in box office hits such as “Think Like a Man,” “Think Like a Man Too” and “The Perfect Match.” Jenkins is one of the most recognizable faces in Hollywood.

Jenkins is a former TMCF scholarship recipient who participated in related programming as a student at N.C. A&T. He recently served as a presenter at the TMCF 31st Anniversary Awards Gala and hosted the 2019 NAACP Image Awards. ■



**CORY WEATHERS '06**, deputy chief engineer for United Kingdom Military Flying Training System (UK MFTS) at Lockheed Martin, won the 2019 The Linda Gooden Legacy Black Engineer of the Year Award (BEYA) for Managerial Leadership at the STEM Global Competitiveness Conference. The national award honors the best and brightest African-American professionals working in STEM fields.

The UK MFTS is a more than \$500 million program within the Lockheed Martin Rotary and Mission Systems business area. In his role, Weathers is responsible for engineering and technology scope, cost and schedule performance. He has worked at Lockheed Martin for 11 years.

Weathers mentors STEM students and regularly volunteers with K-12 and professional organizations in his local Orlando community.

Weathers earned his master’s in industrial and systems engineering at N.C. A&T. ■

IN MEMORIAM

ALUMNI

- Nakia D. Allen '05
- Jacqueline Hopkins Alston '78
- Odie L. Bullock Jr. '76
- William Burns '57
- Jean H. Charlton '80
- Adrien Forbes '92
- Pamela W. Glover '73
- Vernon E. Hedrick '76
- W.H. Land '62
- Kevin Mckoy '03
- Jeffrey A. Nixon '86
- Maxine F. Riley '71
- Sadie Lee Brown Smith '56
- Gloria Jean McCollum Swann '52
- Willia J. Turner '44
- Clayton Washington '58
- Spencer E. White Jr. '54
- Devaki N. Williams '00

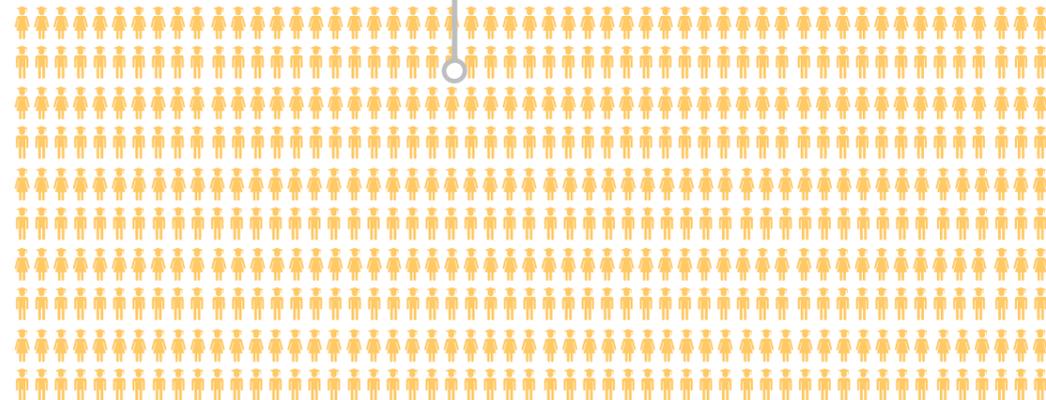
STUDENT

Daniel Atherton, junior

FACULTY & STAFF

Wendy Green, *library technician*  
 Sharon Hoard, *director of leadership and engagement*

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# BEING ACCOUNTABLE

*Alumna endows professorship to honor those who inspired her and to lift the next generation of accounting students.*



Hilda Pinnix-Ragland '77 benefited from the discipline and strong expectations of the professors and deans who lifted her as a student at North Carolina A&T. Now she is taking the steps to lift the next generation of accounting students in the College of Business and Economics (CoBE).

Pinnix-Ragland, a retired Duke Energy corporate affairs and business executive, has donated \$250,000 to help fund a new professorship in the accounting department. The professorship will allow N.C. A&T to attract the best and brightest faculty to teach students in innovative ways.

"CoBE was established and accredited under an exceptional and visionary leader, Dean Quiester Craig," Pinnix-Ragland said. "I wanted to honor prior professors such as Craig, Bill Griggs, Lydell Hyman, Katie Dorset and Danny Poe, and provide additional support to attract the best accounting professors who aligned with A&T's model."

N.C. A&T attracts exceptional accounting students each year. Pinnix-Ragland said that the level of excellence exhibited by the university's students must also be shown in its professors to help the students succeed here and at the next level.

"An accounting student's overall success is directly aligned with their readiness from high school, exceptional professors and diligence and discipline to perform," she said. "As a student launches into the next chapter for graduate school or work, the excellent performance in undergraduate propels them through ranks within corporate America, government and as successful educators."

Pinnix-Ragland serves on the university's board of trustees as secretary, as well as on corporate boards as an independent director. After receiving her bachelor's from A&T, she went on to earn her master's degree in business administration from Duke University in 1986. She also completed graduate studies in taxation at St. John's University and the executive program at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government.

She is a Chapter Fellow of the National Association of Corporate Directors, a member of Women Corporate Directors, and the recipient of the Triangle Business Journal's Lifetime Women in Business Award and 4-H Lifetime Achievement Award.

Pinnix-Ragland credits her success to her persistence, education and her Aggie Pride.

"As the largest HBCU, it is imperative that we invest in financial resources to strengthen the current curriculum and align with the criteria for a top tier university," she said. "An investment in our school today leaves a lifetime of economic prosperity for future generations." ■

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This year the **CLASS OF 1969** celebrates its golden anniversary as alumni of North Carolina A&T. In May of 1969, the class endured an uprising in Greensboro on and around the N.C. A&T campus that resulted in several riots, an invasion by the N.C. National Guard and the death of A&T sophomore, Willie Grimes.

