From growing pines in the wild...
TO GROWING MINDS
on a state-of-the-art campus.
DEAR ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,

If you had visited our little corner of the Panhandle in the mid-1960s, you would have seen a pine forest full of possibilities, with a group of dedicated visionaries driving hope and a plan for future growth. That plan came to fruition in Fall 1967, when the University of West Florida first opened its doors to about 1,200 students.

Fast forward 50 years. That pine forest is now a beautiful, sprawling college campus that is home to 13,000 students, with more than 82,000 alumni scattered across the globe. We’ve also branched out to serve students and the region at UWF on the Emerald Coast, as well as at our Historic Pensacola and Arcadia Mill properties in downtown Pensacola and Milton, respectively. The last 50 years at the University have been marked by profound transformation, or as we like to call it, Sea Change.

This special 50th Anniversary issue of Connection shares the UWF story—one of hopeful beginnings, perseverance through obstacles and innovation to steer us into a future marked by even more possibilities. As you will read throughout the magazine, this isn’t just the story of an institution. It’s the story of individuals who have been impacted by UWF and gone on to make their own impact on campus, in the community and around the world. These are alumni and friends who believe in the power of higher education to change lives for the better.

Since 1967, great progress has remained our constant. That is what we hold onto as we step forward into a future sure to be marked by creation, innovation—and even more transformation.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. Martha D. Saunders
President, University of West Florida
GREETINGS ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,

We are in one of the most exciting years in the University of West Florida’s history, as we celebrate where we have been over the last 50 years, and even more importantly, where we are heading.

We have exceeded our goal for the 50th Anniversary capital campaign with nearly $63 million raised thus far. Our success is a wonderful reflection of the dedication and generosity of our alumni and friends, as well as the impact of our University in our community, region and state.

In this issue, you will learn more about notable alumni who have led accomplished careers in their respective fields, crediting UWF with providing the knowledge and skills needed to excel.

As part of our milestone year, we have also welcomed our new president, Dr. Martha Saunders, whose visionary leadership is leading us toward our future as a University of distinction in our region, state and country.

Since 1967, UWF has experienced change, overcome obstacles and transformed into the institution it is today. But our story does not end here—together we confidently look forward to the next 50 years of transformation, innovation and creativity.

Sincerely,

Howard Reddy
Interim Vice President,
University Advancement
UWF ranked in top three in Florida Board of Governors performance-based funding model

UWF earned 82 points out of 100 on the Board’s performance-based funding model results from the 2015-16 academic year, earning a top three spot in the rankings alongside the University of Florida and the University of South Florida.

Free online course launches, highlighting research in the Gulf

UWF Innovation Institute launched the first in a series of free online courses that focus on UWF research in the Gulf of Mexico. The series, titled Gulf Stories, opens with Mother Mother Ocean or MMO 101. The first course highlights the work of five UWF scholar researchers and touches on everything from history and archaeology to the economy and the environment. MMO 101 consists of five modules of roughly two hours each, for a total time commitment of about 10 hours.

NSA names UWF as National Center of Academic Excellence Cybersecurity Regional Resource Center for Southeast region

UWF was named by the National Security Agency as the National Center of Academic Excellence Cybersecurity Regional Resource Center for the southeastern region. In this role, the UWF Center for Cybersecurity will provide leadership to advance cyber defense education among colleges and universities in the region and support new and existing CAE institutions. The University is working with the NSA CAE program office and other regional and national hubs across the country to enhance cybersecurity education and expand the CAE program across the nation.

Historic Trust lights up museum with Fiesta gift

The UWF Historic Trust made lighting and projection enhancements to its flagship museum, the T.T. Wentworth, Jr. Florida State Museum, using a $125,000 gift commitment from the Fiesta of Five Flags Foundation. Through the use of projection and lighting, the museum has become the centerpiece of Pensacola’s vibrant, unique and dynamic downtown. The programmable lighting highlights the architectural features of the iconic building. Using technology, several of the figures who are a part of Pensacola’s history are brought to life in some of the windows. These enhancements provide a focal point for cultural heritage tourism in Pensacola.
President Saunders announces leadership and division changes

UWF President Martha Saunders announced new appointments to the University’s executive leadership team as well as the merger and development of two divisions. Dr. George Ellenberg accepted the position of provost and senior vice president, while Dr. Joffery Gaymon and Dr. Kim LeDuff oversee two new divisions with a focus on serving students: the Division of Enrollment and Student Affairs and the Division of Academic Engagement. Gaymon was named vice president of enrollment and student affairs, with LeDuff named as vice president for academic engagement. Additionally, Pam Langham was named general counsel.

Members First Credit Union gifts $100k to name hitting facility

UWF received a $100,000 gift from Members First Credit Union of Florida to name the hitting facility used by the baseball and softball teams. The facility is slated to be named Members First Credit Union Hitting Facility.

Student body president elected chair of Florida Student Association

The Florida Student Association elected UWF Student Body President Kishane Patel to serve as chair for the 2017-18 academic year. The FSA is composed of 12 student body presidents from Florida’s state universities and their respective staffs. With a commitment to quality education, the mission of the Florida Student Association is to advocate the interests of the state university students at all levels of government. As chair, Patel will serve as the student representative and voting member of the Florida State University System’s Board of Governors.

For more UWF news, visit news.uwf.edu.
When the doors to the University of West Florida opened in the fall of 1967, it didn’t just mark the beginning of classes. It marked the beginning of a story—the UWF story. Since then, the University has undergone a profound transformation, or as it’s known on campus and in the community, Sea Change. This timeline details the University’s history over the past five decades, characterized by vision, hope and strategic growth. Where we’ve been is only the beginning—our foundation for the future. Here’s to the next 50 years of creation, innovation and transformation.

### 1963

**Establishment of UWF**

*May:* The Florida Legislature allocates funding to develop UWF, which became the sixth university in the State University System of Florida.

### 1964

**President Crosby**

*July:* Dr. Harold Crosby assumes office as the first UWF president. Crosby oversees construction of the campus and a litany of firsts for the University including the undergraduate programs receiving accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, the UWF Foundation being chartered, opening of the John C. Pace Library and establishment of the UWF Fort Walton Beach Center.

### 1965

**Groundbreaking**

*April:* Groundbreaking for UWF takes place on April 16, 1965, on the 13 parcels of land that Escambia County purchased for $1.2 million.

**Official Emblem**

*May:* President Crosby selects the chambered nautilus as the official emblem, alongside the poem, “The Chambered Nautilus” by Oliver Wendell Holmes.

### 1966

**President’s Office**

*June:* President Crosby moves into building 10, one of the first three completed buildings.

### 1967

**First Semester of Classes**

*September:* UWF opens as an upper division school, with students enrolling in Fall 1967.

**University Mascot**

*November:* The student body selects the Argonauts, the crew of the ship Argo who sought to capture the golden fleece under the leadership of Jason in Greek mythology, as the mascot.

**UWF Athletics**

*December:* The men’s basketball team beats Valdosta State 76-75 in the first athletics event for a UWF team. UWF fields three men’s teams—basketball, golf and tennis—during the school year.
1968

Library Dedication

January: President Crosby dedicates the library to John C. Pace, a prominent supporter of higher education in Northwest Florida and first chairman of the State Board of Regents.

1969

Graduate Programs

May: The Board of Trustees approves the first master’s programs in English, elementary education and history to begin in September that same year. The Board also approves courses leading to master’s degrees in professional education and aeronautical systems beginning in September.

1979

Traditional Colleges Organization

July: The University organizes into a traditional structure by establishing three colleges: the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Business and the College of Education. UWF previously operated with three resident colleges, Alpha, Gamma and Omega, designed for upper-level and graduate students.

1981

Establishment of WUWF

January: WUWF Public Radio makes its inaugural broadcast. The station was established with a mission to create a more informed public—one challenged and invigorated by a deeper understanding and appreciation of events, ideas and cultures. Through innovative community partnerships, the station produces, acquires and distributes programming that meets the highest standards of public service in journalism and cultural expression.

1983

Fort Walton Beach Expansion

August: UWF and Okaloosa Walton Community College, now Northwest Florida State College, open a joint-education facility at the former Oakland Heights Elementary School.

Lower Division

August: UWF establishes a lower division and freshmen enroll for the first time after authorization from the Florida Legislature.
1988

Academic Realignment

**July:** The Department of Computer Science moves from the College of Business into a fourth college, the College of Science and Technology.

President Marx

**September:** Dr. Morris Marx assumes the presidency and serves for 14 years before retiring as president in 2002. Marx oversees significant expansion, highlighted by the opening of the Fort Walton Beach location and ushering in the education specialist program and facilities such as the Center for Fine and Performing Arts, College of Education Complex, student services building, psychology building, residence halls and on-campus apartments.

1991

Center for Fine & Performing Arts

**October:** President Marx dedicates the newly opened Center for Fine & Performing Arts as the heart of artistic expression for UWF and a primary destination for arts and culture in Northwest Florida.

1992

New Fort Walton Beach Location

**August:** UWF and Okaloosa Walton Community College, now Northwest Florida State College, build and open a new joint location where the two institutions administer their programs.

1993

National Champions

**May:** The UWF softball team wins the NAIA softball national championship, marking the first team national championship in UWF athletics history.

1994

NCAA Membership

**August:** The University transitions from the NAIA to full membership in the National Collegiate Athletic Association Division II and the Gulf South Conference.

1995

Library Renovation and Expansion

**September:** UWF unveils an expanded and renovated John C. Pace Library, featuring the addition of the eastside structure, which includes distinctive, curved first and second floors and a four-story stairwell.

1999

Academic Realignment

**August:** The colleges reorganize into the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Business and the College of Professional Studies.
Go Argos!

The UWF men’s tennis team celebrated the University’s 50th Anniversary in 2017 by winning the ninth team national championship in the athletic department’s storied history. View all nine of the Argonauts’ team national titles below.

- 1993: Softball
- 2001: Men’s Golf
- 2004: Men’s Tennis
- 2005: Men’s Tennis
- 2008: Men’s Golf
- 2011: Baseball
- 2012: Women’s Soccer
- 2014: Men’s Tennis
- 2017: Men’s Tennis

UWF Historic Trust

**July:** Following a repeal by the Florida Legislature, the Historic Pensacola Preservation Board transfers its building and collections to UWF. West Florida Historic Preservation, Inc. is established as a direct support organization of the University. In 2013, the organization’s name changes to UWF Historic Trust to emphasize that the sites, structures, collections, programs and exhibits of the organization represent a public trust.

2001
First NCAA National Title

**May:** The men’s golf team wins the first NCAA Division II national championship in UWF athletics history.

2002
President Cavanaugh

**July:** Dr. John Cavanaugh becomes president and serves for six years. Under his guidance, the Florida Legislature approves a four-year nursing program at UWF, the University establishes a degree in hospitality, recreation and resort management and graduate classes in historic preservation begin in Historic Pensacola Village.

2006
Health, Leisure and Sports Facility

**March:** The new Health, Leisure and Sports Facility opens, which includes offices, classrooms and labs for use by recreation and academic departments, as well as a 10,000-square foot fitness center, racquetball courts, an indoor running track, multiple gyms and workout spaces and a 36-foot climbing wall.

2008
President Bense

**July:** Dr. Judith Bense takes office as the fifth UWF president and serves for eight years before retiring as president in 2016. Bense focuses on growth and visibility, while enhancing the student experience and creating partnerships to make UWF a first-choice university. She builds a network of community partners and identifies regional workforce needs, and UWF increases its enrollment and strengthens its academic programs during her tenure.

2010
Science and Engineering Building

**February:** UWF opens a new science and engineering facility. The $30.6 million, state-funded building embodies the principles of Project Kaleidoscope, an advocate in the U.S. for building and sustaining strong undergraduate programs in science, technology, engineering and math fields.

2010s
Heritage Hall

**August:** Heritage Hall opens to offer housing that eases the transition from a traditional residence hall to living in an apartment.
2011

Student Wellness Center

**December:** The Student Wellness Center, totaling 16,144 square feet, opens and houses Counseling and Psychological Services, Student Health Services and Wellness Services.

College of Business

**Education Center**

**August:** The College of Business opens a brand new facility, offering a state-of-the-art location for business students to gather, study and network on campus. The three-story, 44,380-square-foot College of Business Education Center provides modern, high-tech conveniences for engaging in interactive learning.

2012

College Reorganization

**August:** The former three-college structure transitions into four academic colleges: College of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities; College of Education and Professional Studies; College of Science, Engineering and Health; and the College of Business.

 Presidents Hall

**August:** UWF opens its newest residence hall, Presidents Hall. The twin of Heritage Hall, Presidents Hall houses 250 residents in a suite-style building with both double and single rooms.

2015

College of Health

**August:** UWF announces formation of the College of Health, dividing the former College of Science, Engineering and Health into two separate colleges in order to position the University as a major player in the development of innovative solutions to substantial health care challenges.

Luna Settlement

**December:** UWF identifies the archaeological site of the Luna settlement in a developed neighborhood in Pensacola. The first multi-year European settlement in the United States existed from 1559-1561.
2016

Hal Marcus College of Science and Engineering

**January:** Hal Marcus donates $5 million to the College of Science and Engineering. The college is named the Hal Marcus College of Science and Engineering, becoming the first named college at UWF.

Inaugural Football Season

**September:** UWF football kicks off its inaugural season under Head Coach Pete Shinnick. Argos beat Ave Maria 45-0 in their opener and proceed to sell out each of their five home games at the Blue Wahoos Stadium.

Pensacola Museum of Art

**June:** UWF takes ownership of the Pensacola Museum of Art. This agreement complements art education at UWF as the University assumes responsibility for nurturing an endowment and maintaining the museum’s art collection, including several hundred pieces of 20th and 21st century art on paper, as well as three-dimensional works.

2017

President Saunders

**January:** Dr. Martha Saunders assumes the presidency after previously serving in a variety of roles, including provost and executive vice president. President Saunders’ vision for UWF is for it to grow beyond its beginnings as a regional comprehensive university. She plans to build on the University’s strengths and its undergraduate traditions while creating programs that will attract the faculty and research funding needed to make the leap to the next level.

Usha Kundu, MD College of Health

**February:** Dr. Usha and Mahadeb Kundu donate a gift in excess of $5 million to name the UWF College of Health the Usha Kundu, MD College of Health, marking the second named college at UWF.

Division Changes

**January:** The University creates the Division of Research and Strategic Innovation to advance the state’s economy and strengthens its workforce by nurturing and applying innovative ideas in funded research, scholarship, business development, strategic partnerships and outreach.

**July:** The University merges the Division of Student Affairs and Office of Enrollment Affairs to create a new Division of Enrollment and Student Affairs to focus on student recruitment, admissions, strategic graduation initiatives, student life programs and high-quality services that support student success. The new Division of Academic Engagement supports students as they make the journey to graduation and entry-level employment.
Before Lacey Collier became a federal judge, he was a naval aviator stationed at Naval Air Station Pensacola who heard people talking about “the new University in the woods.” One day, he took his wife and three children for a drive to see what the fuss was all about.

“Riding around, we were struck by the beauty of the place,” Collier said. “We saw the sign for Building 10, and I thought I’d get a catalog to see what was offered.”

Without meaning to, his spontaneous day trip landed him on the path that would chart the course for his post-Navy career, as well as the lives of his daughter and grandchildren who would later follow in his footsteps as Argos.

UNEXPECTED BEGINNING

After a persistent administrative assistant directed him to Dr. Tom Freeman, then-chair of the political science department, Collier was convinced to enroll in the new political science graduate program. In 1972, he was the second person to graduate with that degree.

“That was the best experience I ever had,” Collier said. “We were taught by real, live professors with doctorates, and the biggest class I was in had eight students. It was real learning, and I loved it.”

Collier returned to the University later that year, hoping to audit accounting courses to get more knowledge on the subject. History repeated itself when another insistent administrative assistant directed him to Dr. Tom Committe, the accounting department chair, who convinced Collier that he should just enroll in the program and earn a bachelor’s degree in accounting.

FAMILY TIES
Creating an Argo Legacy

BY BRITTANY SWINFORD '11
“I was looking for a way to pass the time and keep my mind sharp before I retired from the Navy in 1975 and attended law school at Florida State University,” Collier said. “But Dr. Committe wouldn’t take no for an answer, and that’s the story of my UWF experience. I’m thankful for all they did for me, though, and because of Dr. Committe, Dr. Freeman and many others, UWF can take the blame for whatever I’ve done in my life and my career—or they can take the credit, whichever they prefer.”

GIVING BACK


No matter how high up the ladder he climbed, though, Collier said he always prioritized giving back to the University. A longtime member of the UWF Foundation, Inc. Board of Directors, he previously served as president and was elected as a Fellow of the Foundation in 1996. He currently serves on the Board of Directors for UWF Business Enterprises, Inc.

In addition to giving time, Collier also gave something even more valuable—his family legacy. Collier’s daughter, Lorrie Berry, granddaughters Lacey Berry and Kristi Frease and grandson Grayson Berry each followed in his footsteps to earn degrees from UWF.

FAMILY TIES

Grayson Berry, lead optimizer at DigiPro Media and co-owner of Between Boutique, said he tried a few colleges in Florida before heeding his grandfather’s advice to attend UWF. He then learned why Collier is a lifetime advocate for the University.

“I attended UWF because I was ready to learn,” the 2005 graduate said. “I appreciated the intimate class sizes offered at UWF, which is why I made that choice after completing my associate degree at Tallahassee Community College. The option to have a self-directed major like interdisciplinary humanities was also a big factor.”

Lorrie Berry’s path to UWF was somewhat untraditional. After completing three years of undergraduate education at FSU, she got married and moved with her military husband to Washington, where she focused on raising their family. She decided to return to UWF to complete her degree in philosophy once her youngest child was in high school and graduated in 2006, a year after her son.

“It’s a strange position, to be a student with kids your own kid’s age,” the current ship captain said. “But I enjoyed being with the younger students and acted as a mentor. Their minds were completely focused on school, while I was working and raising kids, on top of my schoolwork. It was a neat melding of generations, and I provided some perspective that I think helped them.”

“I’m proud of my father’s legacy. I’ve enjoyed watching him embrace it and seeing how it has grown to become a special place in his heart.”

—Lorrie Berry

Kristi Frease, a 2007 graduate, said she wanted to pursue a nursing degree at UWF based on the experiences of her family members and local friends.

“UWF always felt comfortable for me,” said Frease, a nurse at TriStar Centennial Medical Center in Nashville. “I recognize now that level of comfort was linked not only with my family’s involvement with the school, but also to the impact that Pensacola’s own culture has on the University. The school felt like a home or a family because, in many ways, it was.”

Deciding to attend UWF for graphic design was “fairly simple” for Lacey Berry, a freelance graphic designer and co-owner of Between Boutique. The 2012 graduate said she wasn’t thinking of completing her grandfather’s legacy when she enrolled.

“I wasn’t aware there was a ‘legacy,’” she said. “It was just my turn. UWF has been a constant in my life. It wasn’t a forced decision, more like a given.”

ONGOING LEGACY

While each member of the family had unique experiences at UWF, they all share one common thread: pride in the one who started it all.

“My three children have no choice but to further cement our legacy,” he said. “UWF is a very special place, and I hope a big effort is made to maintain that sense of community that made it so special to me 15 years ago.”

Collier said he’s proud of the legacy he started when UWF was a new University nestled among the pine trees.

“I love it because it’s part of the family,” he said. “Every one of them has their own story as to why they ended up, but I think my having gone and telling them about it over the years has made an impact. It’s family, and it’s still a beautiful place.”
Learn more about other families with multiple generations of Argos.

BUFFINGTON Family

With a family legacy cemented in academic and athletic excellence, the Buffington family credits UWF with not only providing great memories, but a solid foundation for successful careers.

Gary Buffington Sr., ’97, retired emergency room physician; president, Buffington Sports Products; medical consultant, Social Security Administration

Gary Buffington Jr., ’87, store manager, Edwin Watts Golf Shops

Gary Buffington III, ’14, audit associate, BDO USA

What role has golf played in your family, as well as your college experience?

Gary Jr.: I started playing golf in seventh grade, when my family moved to Pensacola and I could play at Scenic Hills. I have always loved the challenge of the game and play once or twice a week to this day. I’m incredibly proud of the fact that both myself and my son, Gary III, made Academic All-American at UWF, although he won many more things than me.

Gary III: My whole life has been golf, so it was only natural that I wanted to play in college. Not many people can say they played golf at the same college as their dad, and it’s a blessing that I still get to play with him often. We’ve made countless memories as a family on the golf course.

What was the highlight of your experience at UWF?

Gary Sr.: My experience was different from that of my son and grandson, in that I went after having a successful medical career to learn more about business for my entrepreneurial efforts. Everyone assumed I didn’t know anything about business as a doctor, so I decided to enroll in the Master of Business Administration program. It was a lot of work, but I enjoyed it. I was mostly interested in the process of business, and learning every new chapter was exciting to me.

What did UWF give you that has helped you most in your career?

Gary III: My freshman year, we missed winning a tournament by one shot and coach Steve Fell gave us a lecture on the importance of one shot. The next year, we made it to the national championship by one shot. That in itself was the biggest thing UWF taught me—the importance of taking pride in doing the little things well, because they make all the difference in the end.
This family legacy started at the very beginning, with Mary Peaden, member of one of the first graduating classes at UWF. It was carried on by her son, Ted, and his wife Cindy, and it continues today with her grandson, Cole.

Mary Peaden, ’70, retired owner, Peaden’s Office Supplies  
Ted Peaden, ’99, Project Manager III, Navy Federal Credit Union  
Cindy Peaden, ’94, ’08, guidance counselor, Pace High School  
Cole Peaden, junior, software engineering major

**Why did you decide to attend UWF?**

**Mary:** My family moved to the area from a small town in West Virginia after my dad was hired at the Naval Air Station Pensacola, and with no opportunities to attend college where we came from, I was eager to start at Pensacola Junior College. My education was interrupted when I got married and had children, but when we heard about the University opening, my husband told me that this was my chance. He brought the kids, then a toddler and an infant, to my graduation so they could see me walk.

**Cole:** I really loved the way the campus felt. I toured other schools, but those campuses didn’t feel like home to me, and UWF did.

**Why are you proud to be part of a UWF legacy?**

**Mary:** I never dreamed when I was wanting to go to college that one day I’d have three generations out there. I couldn’t be happier or prouder to witness the University’s growth over the years. That school has enabled me and my family, and so many others, to earn college degrees, and for that I will always be thankful.

**Cindy:** UWF has been a great University that has served our family well for generations.

**What do you think of the changes and growth of UWF since you attended?**

**Ted:** UWF has gone from a small campus on the outskirts of Pensacola to an institution that is nationally known for producing top quality professionals in a variety of degree fields. It continues to grow because it’s added programs to keep up with industry demands, reached out into the community to team up with industries and provide for the ever-changing business markets and has continued to provide classes outside of traditional schedules to assist working men and women who want to earn a degree. Our area is incredibly fortunate to have UWF.
Every story is best told by those who lived it.

As the University celebrates its 50th Anniversary, we invite you to meet some of our extraordinary alumni who embody the optimism, excellence and drive that is synonymous with UWF.

You may recognize these names and faces. Many of those featured were nominated by their fellow Argos. Each person represents a dynamic life path or a life-changing career. From Broadway to robotics, classrooms to laboratories, they all have one thing in common: UWF as their foundation for success.

As you read about your fellow Argos, reflect on your own experiences on campus and the role you played in the making of this University, as well as the role this University played in the making of you. We all hold a piece of UWF’s first 50 years. And this is only just beginning.
The alumni you will meet here are trailblazers—the first to attend classes at UWF. Students who took a chance with a new institution during a time of great turmoil for our country. North Vietnam launched the Tet Offensive and support for the Vietnam War was waning. The assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy happened within months of 58 students walking across the commencement stage to become the University’s first graduating class in June 1968.

How did your background in accounting and sales and managing Digital Systems of Florida benefit you when starting up your car dealership?

In my story, each chapter of my life was built on my past experiences. In the car business, I became a full-time manager which required the critical skills that I had gained in my prior jobs and roles. The combination of my management, accounting and sales experiences were all necessary for me to begin a new enterprise like the car business.

Why is giving back, especially in the form of college scholarships, important to you?

In the area of scholarships, I truly realize and appreciate the value of education. I know that I have been unbelievably blessed and want to pass that same blessing on to others. Education opens doors and allows young people the opportunity to get good jobs. They are able to create their own opportunities to support their families and ultimately achieve their goals and dreams.

In what ways do you stay involved in golf today?

I continue to play golf several times a week. I’m glad that my father introduced me at an early age, and I had the pleasure of introducing my son to golf. My grandsons are beginning to play and I enjoy watching them improve.

Local philanthropist and businessman Sandy Sansing is perhaps best known as owner of Sandy Sansing Dealerships. He received UWF’s first golf scholarship and earned a place in UWF Athletics Hall of Fame for his golf achievements.

ROBERT “SANDY” SANSING
Owner, Sandy Sansing Dealerships
What’s your background before attending UWF? Did you always know you wanted to study sociology?

UWF was the perfect size and fit for me at that time in my life. The school was new and innovative, and encouraged students to make an impact in the growth of the University. I always knew I wanted a career involved with helping people find a better life experience. As a sociology major, I learned to analyze and understand group behavior.

How did your studies at UWF prepare you to open Okaloosa County’s first geriatric residential treatment facility?

My studies advanced my interest in working with individuals and groups who were living with a psychiatric diagnosis. My time at UWF gave me the confidence to know I could succeed in my career. Beginning a new treatment facility was not only a mental health experience, but it also taught me about building construction, licensing and permit rules, as well as learning to hire residential mental health staff.

What, in your opinion, is the significance of UWF to our region?

UWF is of utmost importance to this region of Florida. The University provides a focus for academic and cultural excellence through its wide array of national and internationally recognized programs. The University is a hands-on partner in the local community and with other colleges and universities throughout the state of Florida. UWF is recognized for its leadership, academic programs and great investment in the students it serves today as well as those it will serve tomorrow.

“Due to the size of the student population, the administration and faculty knew all the students by name, and provided a focused and thriving living-learning experience. It was a mutually beneficial sense of community, because the University needed the students as much as the students needed the University. UWF provided me empowering opportunities for personal growth, education and leadership.”
How did UWF prepare you for your successful career?

Since I was married, I did not have an opportunity to enjoy campus life except for classes. Majoring in English communications enabled me to achieve success working on Capitol Hill for the U.S. House of Representatives and, after retirement from the House, working for an international non-profit charitable organization with 4,500 members, which I am still doing.

What do you consider your greatest lesson learned from UWF? Your career?

The greatest lesson learned from UWF was being able to communicate and write well. In my career, the greatest lesson learned has been how to work successfully with many different people. In the House, it involved dealing with people on both sides of the aisle. In the international organization, it has involved communicating with members from over 40 countries and dealing with issues on many different levels.

What was your motivation to remain active at UWF as an alumna?

My motivation was to give back, or forward, to an organization that gave me invaluable expertise and motivation to succeed and to go down a different path than many women.
MARTHA HAYNIE
Retired Comptroller, Orange County, Florida

What did you find most rewarding about serving as comptroller?
I was in a position to use my professional education and experience as a CPA to give credibility to this elected CFO office. With a professional staff, my role was to present and explain the county's financial issues to the elected mayor and commissioners. It was extremely satisfying to create and foster a culture of customer service, and gain a reputation for providing excellent and thoughtful service to Orange County's citizens.

How are you spending your time in retirement?
For now, I am wrapping up my term on the Board of Planned Parenthood of Southwest and Central Florida and my time on the Board of Advisors at the Hamilton Holt School at Rollins College. I am also campaign chair for my church’s capital drive. I just began a term on the Board of Directors of the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra. I have also spent wonderful time with my three-year-old grandson and his 19-month-old sister.

How do you stay connected to UWF?
My former husband and I attended local alumni events from time to time, and after I was elected, I discovered that both the Orange-Osceola Public Defender Bob Wesley and Orange County Commissioner Pete Clark are fellow alumni. Also, my son Scott’s attendance at UWF for two years, from 2004-2006, was also a great connection to UWF.

Martha Haynie was elected and served as comptroller in Orange County for seven terms before retiring in January 2017 with 28 years of service. Named the 1998 Outstanding CPA in Government by the Florida Association of Certified Public Accountants, she was the recipient of the UWF Distinguished Alumni Award in 2008.

MORT O’SULLIVAN
Managing Member, Warren Averett, LLC | Chair, UWF Board of Trustees

What do you love most about your job?
I love to help other people. If you can find a way to communicate and let your heart guide you in doing what you love to see improvement for your clients and the people who work with you, you’ll be rewarded richly throughout your life.

What do you consider your greatest achievement?
My greatest personal achievement has been staying married for 46 years and being blessed with the family that my wife, Nancy, and I have created. Professionally, having found great partners and teammates to work with and build what is today one of the dominant CPA firms in our region has been a truly great accomplishment.

What is your inspiration behind staying active at UWF and giving back to the University?
It’s a common cliché, but “don’t forget where you came from” and “pay it forward” are true themes in my life that I believe ought to guide what we do. The University played a critical role in my life at a time when I needed guidance and direction, and I’ve never forgotten that. I will owe the University for the rest of my life, and I truly think it’s our duty to make this a better place for those who come behind us.

“The University of West Florida stands apart for its close, personal attention and deep level of caring and concern for students. That isn’t commonly found across the country, in my experience. We find a way to make do with what we have, provide opportunities and improve the lives of people in our region.”
The Honorable Jerry Maygarden
Retired Public Servant
Former Mayor of Pensacola, Former Legislator and Majority Leader in the Florida House of Representatives, Former President of Baptist Health Care Foundation, Former President of the Greater Pensacola Chamber of Commerce

Public service is quite obviously your calling. How were you called to serve?
I was raised by a family committed to the notion of giving back. My father frequently underscored the belief that a great place to live, work and play cannot be purchased with tax dollars—it takes sweat equity. You have to find a place to make a contribution and do your best to improve the human condition.

Why is UWF important to this community?
I think the University is an exceptional contributor to the region. Outside of Luna’s landing and the birth of naval aviation, there’s not a larger contributor than UWF to our social, political and economic life. Pensacola is a different place today because of the University. I’m grateful to have been a part of it.

What does it mean to you to see how the University has grown?
I am fiercely proud of our University, and I want the best for the faculty, staff and students, because they deserve it. I am pleased to have had a direct hand in the advancement of higher education in the state and region.

Right out of high school, Jerry Maygarden helped build the road leading into the University. While serving as student body president, he funded the Natatorium. Later, in the legislature, he lobbied for the Health, Leisure and Sports Facility and had a hand in purchasing 600 acres that expanded the campus by 60 percent. The former mayor of Pensacola said his time at UWF prepared him for a life of public service.
When did you know you wanted to work in advertising?
I was groomed for the family business, working as a janitor at Appleyard Agency even before high school. I moved on to other jobs and later worked at WCOA and Mayes Printing, and I continued to learn the inner workings of the business.

What do you find most rewarding about your business?
The opportunities to own your own business in your hometown and make contributions to the community are the most rewarding aspects.

Do you have a favorite memory from your time at UWF?
I played basketball at UWF and during my senior year, I was part of the first integrated basketball team to play in South Africa, which organized its own games in Johannesburg when the country had been kicked out of the Olympics due to Apartheid. Earl Watson, a health, leisure and sports professor at UWF, organized that team that included several UWF players. We held our own against the competition, and I had job offers in coaching and marketing while I was in South Africa.

“UWF professors have significantly impacted us and our careers. Our success at the Appleyard Agency is due in part to the training we received at UWF. It is exciting to see the current faculty and others affiliated with the University who are influencing today’s students and the community. UWF is a vital part of Pensacola, and I’m proud of how it has grown.”

Carolyn, Dick and their son Rick are all proud graduates of UWF and are still involved with the University individually and as part of the Appleyard Agency.
The University of West Florida was a beautiful campus, with blooming azaleas everywhere. The campus was much quieter because UWF was more of a commuter school at the time, and I was one of the handful of students living on campus. Today, the campus is alive with activity.

Having been a student when the campus was less than 10 years old, it’s been incredible to witness firsthand the transformation that has taken place since then to get us to the 50th Anniversary.

What role has UWF played in your success?
I’m the co-founder of the 20th largest CPA firm in the U.S., with 1,800 employees and partners across nine states. This started for me with an accounting degree from UWF.

Why is it important to you to be involved in the University today?
I had the honor and privilege of financially bearing the burden of putting myself through college, so I know firsthand the impact of scholarships on a student’s education. The University Foundation is what makes a quality education possible for students like me, and it was important to me to give back by serving on the Board of Directors. I have the means to contribute to the University annually and also strongly encourage others to do so.

What advice would you give to current students on how to be successful?
Success is not measured in money and fame. I always say, “You’re here, you’re healthy, you’ve got a brain. Feed your brain, make the most of your education, and work, and good things will happen to you.”

Ron Jackson
Shareholder, Saltmarsh, Cleaveland and Gund Certified Public Accountants and Consultants

What is your proudest career achievement and why?
I’m most proud of serving as president of our firm for 25 years and helping create a work environment that is recognized as superior by the young professionals who have worked at other larger firms. That environment has also facilitated movement to another generation of management rather than being forced to merge into a larger firm.

What stands out as your fondest memory while a student at UWF?
A few of the accounting department faculty were very good tennis players, so this was a way to relate to them outside the classroom. They loved the challenge of playing against students and it provided an excellent opportunity to be mentored outside the classroom. I met my future wife while at UWF and we spent a lot of time on the tennis courts as well.

As a mentor in the UWF College of Business Executive Mentor Program, what have you tried to instill in students and what have you learned from them?
I’ve tried to instill the values of honesty, integrity and hard work. Do the right thing, always, and be involved in the community to make it a better place for the next generation. From the students, I have learned how challenging it is to get started today in the business world. The students are trying to find a way to connect with others in their fields and to be successful.

Steve Riggs
Partner, Carr, Riggs & Ingram

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Steve Riggs
Partner, Carr, Riggs & Ingram
UWF students in this decade saw the creation the College of Arts and Sciences, the College of Business and the College of Education. Freshmen enrolled for the first time in Fall 1983. It was a time of incredible change and economic prosperity, with the invention of the first personal computer and the first video game, while MTV was changing television and music forever.

Why did you choose to pursue a career in the National Park Service?

When I was in college, I learned that the National Park Service had positions available to history graduates. National Park Service employees are charged with preserving the most valuable historical assets in the country, and I knew that was something I was interested in and prepared to do, thanks to my education.

What was the highlight of your career?

Becoming the first female superintendent at Yellowstone was an obvious highlight. It’s the most recognized park in the world, and being able to oversee it was an honor. The second highlight would be developing the Timucuan Ecological and Historical Preserve in Jacksonville. I spent six years acquiring land, totaling 46,000 acres, and was able to partner with the state to have them donate the Kingsley Plantation. It’s one of the best sets of resources associated with slavery in our nation, and having it as part of the preserve was a huge accomplishment.

What role has UWF played in your success?

I’ve spoken in public countless times and attributed my successful career to UWF. The personal atmosphere and small class sizes provided me not only with a quality education, but close relationships with professors and a great sense of self confidence that served me well throughout my years in the National Park Service and even today.

During her 32-year career with the National Park Service, Suzanne Lewis shattered the glass ceiling several times as the first female superintendent of five national parks across the country, including Yellowstone National Park and the Timucuan Ecological and Historical Preserve in Jacksonville, Florida, which she played a prominent role in developing. Now retired, she continues to pursue her passion and dedication to public lands preservation programs through her work with the Sonoran Institute in Tucson, Arizona.

SUZANNE LEWIS

Retired Superintendent, Yellowstone National Park

’78
How can your success be tied back to your experience at UWF?

UWF provided a more intimate learning environment—one that allowed students to actively engage with our professors. It created a deeper learning experience and instilled confidence in my ability to translate these experiences into my work life.

What advice do you have for current students?

Enjoy learning because no matter what you do in the future, the foundation you lay today is built upon each and every day. Keep learning, ask questions and seek to understand.

How do you define a great leader?

Great leaders lead! They inspire teams or organizations to fulfill the highest of aspirations. Great leaders often think of themselves as coaches, and with that analogy, they celebrate the success of the team, not themselves.

LINDA EVANCHYK

English and Journalism Teacher, Choctawhatchee High School

Linda Evanchyk has served as an educator for 38 years and in 2010, she received the honor of a lifetime when she was inducted into the National Teacher Hall of Fame.

What did it mean to you to be inducted into the National Teacher Hall of Fame?

It put public validation on the work I had done as an educator. It put me in the company of the most accomplished professionals in the field of education in our country. While this was a mark I aspired to reach, it still doesn’t seem real that others felt I had reached that mark.

How did your studies at UWF prepare you for the classroom?

Although my undergraduate degree is in communications, I knew I wanted to teach so I took electives that helped me prepare to obtain a teaching certificate. I wanted to teach in a creative field such as journalism, speech or drama as well as in English. By combining that at UWF, I was given the best of both worlds. I had the content knowledge with communication arts, and I also received the experiences I needed to prepare me for teaching, including psychological foundations and a methods of teaching course.

Which UWF faculty member or members most influenced you and in what ways?

Jack Gregory was instrumental in my success as an undergraduate. I remember his advice, “It’s okay for the students to see you as a person. Be the kind of teacher you are, not someone you aren’t.” That advice has served me well.

Years later, as a graduate student in communication arts, Dr. Martha Saunders was my most influential instructor. Dr. Saunders started as a high school teacher, so she could relate to me. I was teaching all day and then taking her classes at night. As time went on, I admired how she accomplished so much with her research, her teaching and then taking on administrative duties. She served as chair for my master’s thesis, helping me work with it even when she was in London for a semester conducting research for her own work. I admire her as an accomplished educator, and I am so excited she is now the UWF president.
ALONZIE SCOTT
Director, NAVSEA’s Enterprise Talent Management Office

What led you to NAVSEA?
The Navy recruited me to work in what the Navy calls “quality of life services.” I progressed quickly and found my way to an initiative called community management, an area on how to develop people in an organization. I went to the Pentagon for a two-year tour in the same area and delivered strategic presentations on civilian community management. One of those meetings involved with the Naval Sea Systems Command. A year later, a NAVSEA senior executive offered me a job.

Do you care to share one project you’re particularly proud to see in action?
The NAVSEA Recruiting Partnership is the best example for folks to read about today. I convinced six naval system command senior executive directors to join forces with NAVSEA to create a recruiting structure called the Navy civilian careers. This network allowed the Navy to recruit like any corporation by joining our resources under one framework thus lowering our recruiting cost fivefold while delivering the right civilian talent to the Navy to fill its mission critical occupations.

How did your experiences at UWF ready you for your career?
Positive experiences with faculty and staff at UWF were critical to my success. They led the way to my involvement in various campus activities, which prepared me for my career today. The books in my program or suggested by faculty, staff and other students resonated with me. The formal and informal education experiences allowed me to think in terms of being a better collaborator, team player and networker.

DR. MICHAEL SUMMERS
University Distinguished Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry, University of Maryland, Baltimore County

In May 2016, Michael Summers became one of only 84 people from 14 countries to be elected to membership in the prestigious National Academy of Sciences. One of the highest honors that a researcher can receive, Summers’ election recognizes his exceptional contributions to the scientific community, along with his work to retain underrepresented populations in science.

Tell us about your research.
My research focus is on HIV-1, the retrovirus that causes AIDS. Using an imaging technique called nuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy, we have helped to develop new ways of inhibiting the virus, providing insight into how it functions and how new drugs could be developed.

How are you working to retain future scientists?
In the last 20 years or so, there has been a quantitative loss of interest in science. It really scares me to know that even more so, large numbers of minorities and women start college intending to study science, but then end up changing majors. It’s about letting students know you’re paying attention to them, and you’re there to offer your support. That was something I had—something that was just part of the culture at UWF.

What is your stand-out memory from your time at UWF?
I remember one day, I showed up to Dr. Jerome Gurst’s organic chemistry class wearing flip-flops. It just wasn’t safe, because we’re in there working with glass and acids. It was clearly not one of my better choices, and he promptly threw me out of his lab. The chemistry professors at UWF are deeply committed and supportive of their students but hold them to very high standards.
What led you to the integrative branch of psychology?

I was a quite ill as a child and even had a number of surgeries. Throughout my life, I felt there was a serious lack of dealing with the whole person (body, mind, heart and soul) in the health care profession. In fact, because the doctors only treated my body and not my mind or spirit, it resulted in some chronic post-traumatic stress for me which I deal with to this day. In addition, as a result of being a philosophy and psychology major at UWF, I explored root causes and not simple symptom reduction. This led to me being very successful in helping others by trying to reach the essence of their life issue. I have found that to fully understand a client’s world, it is imperative to look at the whole person, and that requires an integrative approach to health and wellness.

How do you incorporate your diverse set of talents and skills into your practice?

Next to my consulting room, I have a yoga/meditation/sound-healing room where I keep many yoga mats, bolsters and musical instruments. These tools help people to disconnect from the stories in their minds while reconnecting to their bodies and hearts. Creativity, yoga, meditation and time in nature have all shown to be inherently healing. Ultimately, each of these components contribute to one journey towards health, healing and wholeness.

How did your experience at UWF shape who you are today?

I had an amazing experience at UWF that is still very much reflected in my work today. Particularly impactful was my work with Dr. Bill Mikulas (transpersonal and Buddhist psychology), Dr. Yolanda Reed (theatre), Dr. Jack Keller (existential psychology) and Dr. Dan Hermann (existential and phenomenological philosophy). Each of these instructors taught me to discover what was true for me, and they fueled my passion to become a lifelong learner. They fully supported my desire to have a more integrative, interdisciplinary approach to health, healing and wellness.
Why did you choose to attend UWF for your graduate studies?

UWF had the best relationship with the armed service, then and even today. When I was there, I was still active duty Army, and the University was amazing about working around my schedule. A couple of times during that tour, I had to leave town for a while and every time I came back here, they would have a tailored package of makeup work waiting for me. My wife was in the Navy and also attending UWF. Between the two of us, it was crazy, but we felt like the whole campus was here to support us.

What role has your master's degree in education technology played in your career?

It's opened doors, even in the armed service. At that time, I don't know how many schools offered a degree in education technology, and we spent as much time on the technology as we did on the education. When I left active duty, I was able to return home and get a position at Navy Technical Training Center, Corry Station, in Pensacola, not only because I had an Army background, but also because I had a master's degree in educational technology. For me, everything fell into place with the master's degree.

What advice would you give to students on how to be successful in today's world?

This got me in a lot of trouble, and it still does with guidance counselors and career advisors, but I have never had a "five-year plan." The best advice I ever received professionally was from an Army major for my ROTC program who said, "Don't ever grow up, and don't ever say 'this is what I'm going to do with the rest of my life.' Just find some thing you're passionate about and keep that in your life, but be open to new opportunities. Don't write the five-year plan because it'll be wrong."

Halvorsen is a longtime federal technology executive with a resume highlighting his success. He recently joined Samsung's leadership team after the culmination of an illustrious government career that included roles as CIO for the U.S. Department of Defense and the Department of the Navy as well as deputy commander of the Navy Cyber Forces and the Naval Network Warfare Command, among others.

TAD IHNS

Founder and President, Avalex Technologies Corporation

Your company has seven product lines and serves customers nationally and internationally. Did you envision this level of growth when you began?

When I started, I was your typical guy in a garage with a computer. I moved into an initial office space in Atlanta, and as the company grew, we added staff and moved to larger space. We wanted to be closer to our family here in Florida, so we made the decision to move our headquarters here. It's given us the capacity to expand our capabilities and serve a broader client base, but I certainly didn't expect this in the beginning. Today, we have over 70 employees.

You have been an advocate for the growing tech sector in Northwest Florida. Why is that important to you?

We have a number of technology-focused companies in Pensacola that are growing, and the more we can establish a critical mass of talent and opportunities here, the more we will be able to attract professionals to our community and contribute to a growing local economy.

What inspired your business?

I always had an interest in flying. I got my pilot's license over 30 years ago. Professionally, I was working in the IT industry when my wife suggested combining the knowledge and experience I'd gained with my passion for flying.
Dr. Ken Ford
Founder and CEO, Florida Institute for Human & Machine Cognition

What do your responsibilities at IHMC entail?
I have the privilege of leading a great team of researchers and staff at IHMC as we explore new ways that science and technology can amplify and extend human cognition, perception, locomotion and resilience. This involves staying abreast of emerging areas of science, medicine and technology as well as continually building collaborations that promote IHMC on a national and international level. It’s an ongoing challenge and one that I enjoy. Every day brings new challenges, ideas and opportunities.

You have served on numerous boards, committees, councils and the sort. Which one stands out for what it accomplished and what were those accomplishments?
Two that stand out include service on the National Science Board and serving as chair of the NASA Advisory Council. The National Science Board is the governing board of the National Science Foundation and plays an important role in advising the president and congress on science policy issues. In 2007, I became a member of the NASA Advisory Council and in 2008 was named as chairman, a capacity in which I served until October 2011.

What do you most remember about your years at UWF as a student and professor?
I have many fond memories of UWF as a gutsy student-oriented University willing to encourage and support interdisciplinary perspectives to teaching and research, well before it was trendy. Of course, I made many lifetime friends among faculty, staff and students during my many years as a professor.

“Anyone who’s been a student at UWF will tell you the same thing: you’re a name and not a number there. It held true for me and part of what I appreciate about UWF is how it recognizes the value in every student.”

K.C. Clark
Senior Vice President, Energy Equity Capital Markets at Raymond James and Associates

Describe your role as senior vice president at Raymond James and Associates.
I work in equity capital markets, essentially helping companies that are public, or want to be public, sell stock. I’m the interface between the company who wants to issue stock and the investors who buy it.

How does your background in accounting benefit you in your current position?
I have to understand the financial position of the companies trying to issue stock and I have to be able to respond to any of the investor’s financial questions. Accounting taught me about being able to clearly understand and interpret financial statements, which is pretty critical in my job.

You have served on every single board at UWF. What motivated you to get involved in so many?
After graduating and getting a good job, I realized it was because of high-quality education and faculty who cared about their students. My time at UWF was a unique experience that I wanted other people to appreciate and enjoy. When I find something I believe in, I’m willing to work for it and offer whatever I can, and being part of the boards at UWF was one of the ways I felt I could offer some assistance.
1987 to 1996

This decade in UWF’s history is marked by the opening of the Center for Fine and Performing Arts in 1991 and the expansion and renovation of the John C. Pace Library. The Argonauts competed in NCAA Division II sports for the first time. Operation Desert Storm, the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Hurricane Andrew were some of the major news stories at this time—and a little thing known as the Internet got its start.

“UWF is a place where people begin to make their dreams come true. It’s a bridge and a path. For me, it was an unbelievable resource that really fueled who I am today and what I’m doing.”

DR. MONA AMODEO
Founder and President, idgroup | National Speaker on Branding and Innovation

**Why did you choose UWF?**

I came to UWF in search of something. It was a time of growth and excitement, with the documentary program just being launched. I ran the Nautilus News as a graduate assistant, and traveled to film in Central and South America. When you think of Pensacola, these aren’t the kinds of opportunities you might expect. UWF offered an opportunity right here in my backyard that was as good or better than anything I could have gotten anywhere else.

**Your company helps organizations tell their stories. How did you find your calling?**

Traveling with the documentary team and later becoming an instructor at UWF probably set the stage for my work at idgroup. All the skills and experiences I gained here were foundational in our success. I don’t know if I ever thought of myself as a storyteller before UWF. It opened my eyes to my own talents and gave me the courage to go try something—like start a business, which I did with my last paycheck from the University.

**Share why giving back is so important to you.**

When we founded idgroup, we wanted to do great creative work and have fun. That’s still our core. We evolved because we saw a need in the marketplace not only to tell the story, but to help companies live their stories. We believe businesses can make a difference in the world. What we do and how we do it has an impact. We try very hard to make sure that impact is positive.

**What does UWF mean to Pensacola?**

I think we’ve grown with Pensacola. We have worked with UWF over the years to help position it, and I hope we have contributed to what it is today. Sometimes, when you look in your own backyard, you don’t realize what you’ve got. I think the University and its presence are a huge factor in why Pensacola has been able to propel. It’s an important engine.
Tell us more about your incredible military career.

During my 29 years of active duty, I served 81 months in hostile fire zones, traveling to battlegrounds around the world, including Panama, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan. My career eventually led me to become a Green Beret in the U.S. Army Special Forces. I retired from military service as a colonel this past summer, and it feels like the time flew by.

We heard you helped a former president jump out of an airplane. Can you tell us more?

I served as the commander of the Golden Knights U.S. Army parachute demonstration team from 2007 to 2010. One of the highlights from this time was coordinating former President George H.W. Bush’s parachute jump in celebration of his 83rd birthday.

How did the UWF ROTC program build the foundation for your career?

ROTC gave me the mental fortitude and training to do well in the Army’s advance camp and later on in ranger school. I remember we were in these field training exercises, wading waist-deep in the swampy waters near campus, learning how to navigate, read a map and work together as a team—that stayed with me throughout my career. I think a key to success is surrounding yourself with good people and giving them the ability to do good.
Describe the dynamic between you and Susan as business partners and co-workers.

It’s a great partnership because we approach things differently. Susan brings a voice to my ideas, makes details come to life and handles the business side, while I can focus on shooting and “big idea” concepts. She thought of submitting my film for the Emmy, our first commercial piece for a video project. She’s always looking out for things I might not have considered.

When did your pursuit of photography lead to cinematography?

For me, the interest was always there. I love both still photography and videography and I view them similarly. I consider myself a storyteller. In still, when composing and using lighting, the challenge is to create an interesting photo that people will want to look at because there are no moving parts. When you use video, you can tell the story differently because you have additional elements to work with, like motion and sound.

What were your thoughts after revisiting UWF in 2016?

It was really fun to go back and see a blend of the old with the new. The nature trails were still there, which I always loved. I was blown away by the University’s growth, new buildings and a football team.

You both attended UWF for your Master in Accountancy degrees. Why did you want to support UWF?

[BP] We have supported higher education since 1991. Too often, I have seen students who plan to attend college but are unable to do so; the passion and desire is there, but the financial requirements to make it happen are not. Our gift gives students the opportunity to pursue higher education and learn real-world skills and expectations of employers before they get into the professional world.

What skills will students learn through the Professional Readiness Initiatives?

[KP] Students will have the chance to combine critical thinking, problem solving, communication and leadership skills with their classroom work to solve more comprehensive, often unstructured, problems. If students are able to gain experience while obtaining a degree, they will already have a step up in the workplace.

How does UWF uniquely prepare students for careers in business?

[KP] The size of UWF truly benefits the students because of the personalized programs and practices. At UWF, students get these preparation activities in addition to an excellent degree.
Tell us about your philosophy on art and how you approach your work.

Art doesn’t have to be made with precious materials or using a complicated process. If you can get the viewer to make the leap from something mundane or unexpected to another imaginative reality, it is very exciting.

In 2015, you returned to UWF for a solo exhibition, “Pink Autumn.” What was it like being back on campus?

This was my first time being back on campus for an extended period of time since I was a student. Returning to UWF was a wonderful and strange experience. It was like returning home to visit family after being away for a long time. You’re reminded of who you are and where you come from.

How did your UWF education prepare you for a career as an artist?

The faculty offered divergent views on art. More seasoned professors often championed a formal approach to artistic disciplines and their respective processes, while a younger generation supported an interdisciplinary crossing over between media. I emerged from UWF with a respect for and delight in traditional craftsmanship and simultaneously a need to break the rules in order to say something new.

Patrick Jacobs
Artist in Brooklyn, New York

Why did you choose UWF for your advanced studies?

After graduating with my bachelor’s degree in mechanical engineering from Penn State, I did my research on where to get my master’s degree. After discovering that UWF’s MBA program has a great reputation, I looked further into the program. The costs were reasonable, and I could attend classes at night. It fit well into my budget and busy schedule. I graduated from the MBA program in 1994.

You have had a distinguished career as an engineer, even serving as a faculty member at UWF. How did it feel to come full circle, teaching students where you used to study?

I have always had the opinion that our country would be much better off if every single person was to teach the next generation something of value. It could be teaching someone to read, how to grow vegetables, engineering or anything of value. Teaching to me was more than just personally satisfying—I felt like it was my duty.

Why would you recommend UWF to potential students?

While I was at Penn State, I accidentally found a quote in the library by playwright Steele MacKaye, the building designer of the Grand Theater for the 1893 World’s Fair. That was 40 years ago, and although I have forgotten a lot of what I learned in college, I still remember this quote: “When you can convert what is work for others into play for yourself, you can achieve anything in life.” Graduating from UWF is a great beginning. From here, you can study and learn until you are full of more knowledge than you can remember.

MARK SPITZNAGEL
Retired U.S. Navy Lieutenant Commander and Graduate of the U.S. Naval War College | Owner and President, LandMark Engineering & Land Planning

“After traveling throughout the U.S. and in many other countries, I was very pleased when I arrived in Pensacola and discovered a reputable university that was convenient and affordable. Many young people in Pensacola don’t realize how blessed we are to have UWF in our city.”
Jose Fernandez
Spanish Teacher, Niceville High School

Why did you pursue a career in teaching after soccer?
I started coaching a high-school boys team in 1997, and I felt very comfortable teaching the game. It was then I realized that education was my calling. I was offered a teaching position and made a career change from architectural design to full-time teaching. I’ve taught architectural drafting and mechanical drafting. I also taught English as a second language and was the program advisor. I currently teach Spanish.

How do you stay involved in soccer today?
I call it ‘futbol.’ Since my UWF career, I’ve been fully immersed, whether playing, coaching or watching. I have shared my passion through the years coaching many recreational, competitive and high school teams in Texas, Oklahoma and Florida, winning numerous state and regional championships as a player and coach. Currently, I’m the director of coaching at Real Athletic Development Futbol Club in Destin, Florida.

Any words of advice for fellow student-athletes at UWF balancing sports with academics?
When you combine all daily practices, all the travel to away games, late home games, soccer ‘parties’ and the rigor and demands of your academic field, it all really sounds impossible and looks like a recipe for failure but it isn’t. Set your priorities, stay focused and commit to reaching your goals. Surviving as a student-athlete is the best preparation for real life.

“UWF was a home to me. My professors, coaches and academic advisors were instrumental in helping me get through it all, and I left with a lot of great memories that will last, especially one in particular—I met my wife Kelly there.”

Jose Fernandez holds an all-time scoring record in UWF soccer and earned his place in the UWF Athletics Hall of Fame. After playing soccer professionally in Mexico, Texas and Oklahoma, Fernandez discovered his niche in teaching and stays involved in soccer through coaching today.
LUMON MAY
Co-owner, May Construction | Escambia County District 3 County Commissioner

Following the model set by his parents, Lumon May has dedicated himself to bettering the lives of others, helping local youth and neighborhoods in need, through his work as Escambia County District 3 County Commissioner and co-owner of May Construction.

“Although I can never repay my mentors, what I can do and try to do every day is mentor, sponsor, raise money for, or start a program for our youth in the hopes that one day they will give back, too.”

Matthew Novak
President, St. Joseph’s Hospital South

In what way does your role as president of St. Joseph’s Hospital-South differ from other positions you’ve held in the past?

Working my way through BayCare in a variety of leadership roles, each position was completely different from the next. This role is different because there’s a lot more autonomy and with that, more accountability, which you have to be comfortable with and prepared for.

What’s one perk and one drawback of working with a new hospital?

It’s interesting because I went from the oldest hospital, at 101 years old, to the newest hospital in the BayCare Health System. It’s not often new hospitals are built, so having the opportunity to shape a hospital strategy and future from infancy is something special. We’re doing exceptionally well, but I have to remember to temper expectations because we’re still expanding and don’t have all resources that come with the maturity of an older hospital.

How did UWF prepare you for your future career?

UWF really built a foundation for me. It gave me baseline knowledge, confidence and experience in my field. It opened doors for me through my internship with Baptist Hospital. Dr. Martha Saunders was also a huge influence.

How do you carry on your father’s legacy?

My father lived by two mottos: rebuilding souls and people, and rebuilding buildings. When he passed, it was important to carry on the family business. I still use the skills that my dad taught me in the field. He also taught me to give back to the community, and that’s what I continue to do.

Why is giving back to the community important to you?

It’s really a long answer, but I contribute a great deal of it to how my parents raised me. We were involved in church and our neighborhood. When I told my dad I wanted to help kids in third world countries, he said to remember where I grew up. Since then it has been a way of life, I don’t know what else to do but positively influence young people in our community.

In what ways did UWF prepare you for your path in politics and beyond?

The University prepared me for leadership by teaching me about politics, compromise and understanding. I was successful because I had mentors who believed in me and challenged me to think about the future.
How did you wind up in finance after earning your degree in marketing from UWF?

A local bank was the first place to offer me a job. A few years later, an opportunity came up for an extensive training program in commercial banking. There were 25 people in my class, all from larger schools like Florida State University and some Ivy League schools, who were mostly recent grads with better GPAs. I had learned sales skills, and I was able to sell myself. That’s how my marketing degree helped. I’ve always liked numbers and people, but I never thought I’d be in banking. It’s been 19 years now.

What do you believe sets UWF apart from other universities?

I really attribute it to the smaller size. In the College of Business, we did presentations, hands-on group activities and papers. We received a significant amount of feedback and interaction with our instructors that I don’t think the larger schools provide. It was really beneficial. I had good, quality professors, and I had access to them.

Why do you choose to give your time and talents to the UWF Foundation?

I think there are a lot of people like me at the University who need to know there are opportunities here. You can make your way in Pensacola, have a career and raise a family. I feel I have achieved that success because of UWF, and I want to help others do the same.

“I feel very fortunate to have been able to attend the local University, graduate and find solid employment where I choose to live. I was told that there weren’t many jobs available here and that I would need to move. I disagreed with that, because I saw so many successful people here.”
College is a formative time in one's life. How did UWF shape you as people?

[KA] So much discovery of who you are and who you want to become happens within the collegiate experience. UWF provided an environment where I felt comfortable trying new things and exploring what’s out there. My study abroad experience through UWF was life changing.

[BT] I got to mold and create so much while I was at UWF. That’s what I’ve always loved about the institution—it was a place for creativity. It was a cluster of greatness in this magnificent little place of Pensacola, Florida that I never expected to find.

Your nonprofit provides resources, tools and educational materials to promote social change around sexual violence. Tell us some of the places your message has reached.

From all over Pensacola to the White House to now over 60 countries around the globe, we’ve been able to share our message with so many people. We’ve served as consultants for Dateline NBC and have been featured on The Fox Morning Show, ABC, CBS, CNN, NBC, NPR and Marie Claire.

Tell us about the card game you developed for college students.

It’s called “Sexversations®” and is designed to encourage honest and healthy conversations about sex and consent. It encourages people to answer questions and address beliefs, issues and attitudes in order to create a sexually empowered culture by removing barriers and stigma while providing accurate and inclusive sex education.

How did you decide to become a minister?

Before I became a senior pastor, I first recognized a calling to youth ministry. It was in 1998 when I was living in Tulsa, Oklahoma. In 1999, I moved back to Pensacola to bring a children’s church and youth program to our church. My father was the senior pastor and he trusted me to use my gifts to reach young people. My mother was a strong advocate for me as well.

Of the many leadership roles you’ve held in Pensacola, what causes are most important to you?

I’m the proud father of two children, and I’ve felt most valued serving organizations that help youth. Of the 22 boards I’ve served on, Gulf Coast Kid’s House is the one experience that has been the most emotional, just to see the need for advocacy for abused and neglected children. I’m in the process of working with UWF to develop a youth swim program for children who have not had access to lessons. There is a real need given the number of drownings in Florida.

What did you appreciate most about your time as a UWF student?

Dr. Barry Arnold and Dr. Paula Rappe found a way to tap into the passion I had for ministry. The interdisciplinary degree track they designed was foundational to my schooling in pastoral care. Dr. Arnold played a pivotal role and helped the trajectory of my life. I may not have attended seminary without his support and belief in me.
Tell us some of the most memorable people you’ve interviewed and events you’ve covered.

Some memorable interviews include Elton John, the Beach Boys and Snooki, and I’ve covered countless awards shows, including the Academy Awards, the Grammys and the Emmys.

You were very involved on campus as a student. What were some of your UWF activities?

I worked as an assistant in the student activities department, a resident advisor and director at Martin Hall, as well as serving as an editor of the student newspaper, The Voyager, and being involved in the Student Government Association. I was offered many opportunities at UWF that I likely wouldn’t have been given had I pursued an education somewhere else. These diverse experiences helped set me apart from the pack when it came to applying for important internships and fellowships.

How did you get started in the journalism field? What was the “tipping point” of your career?

I was awarded a UWF Alumni Association scholarship that enabled me to spend a semester interning in New York for Entertainment Weekly, through the American Society of Magazine Editors internship program. This opportunity laid the foundation for my career as a national entertainment journalist.

I love being able to write about extraordinary, creative and innovative individuals. I have a passion for storytelling, and I’m able to do that almost every day.”

What are some of the Broadway tours you’ve performed in?

“Wonderful Town” (First National), “42nd Street” (Asia), “Le Fantôme de l’Opéra” (Europe), and Bye Bye Birdie” (National). Off-Broadway productions include “The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe” (St. Luke’s) and “Pageant Princess” (Bleecker Street).

Tell us about your involvement with regional theatres throughout your career.

Some of my favorite regional theatres include Seaside Music Theater, Oklahoma Shakespeare and the Orlando Repertory. I was the resident associate artist at Seaside, which is one of the South’s largest and most respected regional theatres. I performed in numerous principal roles there and served as a faculty member in Seaside’s educational program.

As a professor of theatre, voice and communication, I’ve taught at Marymount Manhattan College; HB Studios; the American Musical and Dramatic Academy, New York and others.

ROCKFORD SANSON

Actor and Educator in New York City

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**Ask Crawford**

CEO, Intelligent Retinal Imaging Systems

JASON CRAWFORD

Why did you choose UWF?

I knew UWF had a good business school with the right credentials, but I didn’t realize how awesome the campus was until I arrived. Once I got involved, it was a wonderful experience both in the classroom and in student life.

How did your studies at UWF prepare you for your career?

I grew up at UWF. The student organizations I was a part of served as a launching pad to learn vital communication and leadership skills. Those experiences gave me a chance at an early age to lead a group of peers, hold responsibilities, and get in trouble and be called into the Dean’s office. Those successes and failures challenged me to be a better person. Later, the MBA program taught me business strategy and management.

How does UWF cater to military students?

The original reason I went into the Army was to get money to go to college. I chose UWF, and my experience was great. The veteran’s office on campus was key to helping me figure out how to use my military benefits. The evening classes also help a lot of military students. There is no doubt that UWF is a patriotic campus that goes out of its way to cater to the military student.

Serving eight years in the U.S. Army, you were wounded in Iraq before earning the Purple Heart. How did this change the trajectory of your life?

That experience gave me a sense of urgency to make a difference in life. Looking back now 14 years, it was a blessing to have served in the Army and have those experiences that now give me the courage to handle any situation.

How is UWF both the same and different since you graduated?

As a student at UWF, I took full advantage of the beautiful UWF grounds. I really enjoy the outdoors and would go hiking and biking around campus. The fishing in Pensacola isn’t bad either! These are all things students still enjoy today. The University certainly has grown since my graduation, and we are very proud to be part of a big milestone for UWF.

As a student, you majored in math. How does that connect with your business today?

As a sports construction contractor, I use math every day, from creating estimates and accounting to job site elevations and measurements. My UWF degree has helped me excel tremendously in what I do today.

How did working on your University’s new football field feel?

Being a fellow Argo, this project was constructed with not only the best quality, but with a passion for UWF and the new football program.

“I am forever grateful to the University for the education and opportunities I was given. Those experiences encouraged, molded and challenged me. I believe the University has the opportunity to impact another one like me, so for me and my family, we will support UWF with our time and giving.”

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‘04, ‘10

JASON CRAWFORD

CEO, Intelligent Retinal Imaging Systems

Jason Crawford served eight years in the U.S. Army and received the Army Commendation Medal and the Purple Heart.

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ERIK MEDLEY

Owner, Medley Sports Construction

Medley’s firm won the contract to build the UWF turf football field.
Emily Ley is the creator of the Simplified Planner®—a minimal agenda designed for managing what matters most. She has been featured in Forbes, Family Circle, Better Homes and Gardens, Glamour, Good Housekeeping and HGTV.com, and has been recognized with numerous awards, including Best New Product at the National Stationery Show as well as Top 10 Designers to Watch by Stationery Trends Magazine.


How did UWF prepare you for a successful career?

I really enjoyed my professors in the English department at UWF. They gave me the confidence and courage to think outside the box and to utilize my creativity to the best of my ability.

What do you consider your greatest achievement to date?

My greatest achievement is creating a career that allows me the flexibility to be the kind of mom I want to be, and also writing and releasing my first book, “Grace Not Perfection.” As a former English/creative writing major, it’s a dream come true.

What advice would you give to anyone wanting to venture off the “traditional” career path to create their dream job, like you did?

Don’t feel like you have to have the perfect plan right out of the gate. Try your hand at a few different things to find what you really connect with most. If you love your job, it’ll never feel like work. Also, be wary of putting yourself in debt to start an entrepreneurial endeavor. We’ve run our company debt-free for nine years. It’s hard, but totally worth it.
How does a typical day look for you?

The first thing I do is plan the day with my assistant, creating an action list. I love lists. Then I stay up to date with world news, trends in marketplace and daily digest from Spain since BBVA Headquarters is in Madrid. After that it’s all about the client, from reaching out to potential clients or following up with current ones.

What are your plans for the Community Foundation of Northwest Florida?

For more than 15 years, the Community Foundation of Northwest Florida has been assisting donors in establishing long-term charitable giving that reflects their individual philanthropic interests while positively impacting our local communities. Since I’ve become chairman, I have been extremely involved and invested in growing our assets under management so that we can meet our common goal of giving back to the community where we live and work.

Tell us about your UWF experience and how it helped you get to where you are today.

During my final year, I participated in an internship with a local financial adviser and that really helped me discover an interest in the world of finance. The communications professors greatly impacted my experience. I learned a lot about crisis communications, public speaking and marketing management, which has proven to be valuable knowledge that I am now able to use in the finance industry.

What does being an operations services director mean to you?

My primary responsibility is to ensure our team and front-line clinicians have the right tools and resources to do their jobs. In addition, I work with our leadership team to define and implement strategies for the growth and development of the heart and vascular service line. What I am most proud of is our team’s ability to provide quality and innovative cardiovascular care in this community, where patients and family members are able to seek care right here at home.

Why are organizations like Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwest Florida and Pensacola Young Professionals important to you?

I am very passionate about mentorship, which applies to both organizations. I wholeheartedly believe that mentorship can have a direct impact on anyone. I am an advocate of Big Brothers Big Sisters because I know how they positively impact the children in our community. Through my involvement with PYP, the organization has taught me how to become a better leader and build my professional network.

How has your time at UWF helped you get to where you are today?

UWF was such a great springboard for me. I met my future co-workers in the program. Outside of networking and connections to getting my first professional career, I was able to use and apply what I learned in both masters programs to my work environment. UWF provided me with the foundation to build a successful career. Go Argos!
Facility growth marks this time period in the University’s history with the opening of the Science and Engineering Building, Heritage Hall, the Student Wellness Center, the College of Business Education Center and Presidents Hall. Academic reorganization led the transition to five academic colleges.

Our recent graduates are part of a global workplace. Information and news are available 24/7, and the only constant is change during this time of great division and unprecedented interconnection. If history has shown us anything, UWF alumni will rise to the challenges of today’s world and make it their own.

JOHN CARFF
Research Associate, Florida Institute for Human & Machine Cognition

Tell us about the IHMC’s humanoid robot and the 2015 robotics challenge.
The Darpa Robotics Challenge was a world-wide robotics competition that began in December 2013 and ended with the finals in June 2015. The goal of this program was to advance human-supervised robotic technologies for disaster-response operations. For this challenge IHMC used an Atlas robot developed by Boston Dynamics, but all controls and software were developed in-house. We placed in the top two in all three of the challenges over the year, beating out teams from all over the world, including more commonly known teams like MIT, NASA, Lockheed Martin, CMU and many others. Our success is accredited to our advanced humanoid control techniques as well as an advanced user interface that I developed as my master’s thesis at UWF.

How long have you worked on Atlas?I have been working at IHMC for the past 14 years, and for the last four years, my primary focus has been on Atlas development. I have taken the user interface I developed for my master’s thesis and turned it into a very powerful robot operator interface. My user interface has not only been used to operate our Atlas robot but also NASA’s Valkyry robot, various drones and other ground vehicles. Unlike other robotics interfaces, my software affords the robot more autonomy by using a coactive framework that uses supervised autonomy to allow the robot and operator to work as a team through a single intuitive user interface.

The human-robot team navigation system was very novel at the time you were working on it as a graduate student. How did the UWF program encourage this type of innovation?
I credit Dr. Eman El-Sheikh, the director of the Center for Cybersecurity for always pushing and encouraging me. She suggested that I publish and present my research, and as a graduate student, I was able to do that at the IEEE International Conference on Intelligent Robots and Systems. The same system is still used today to control a number of different robots at IHMC and NASA.
CHRISTINA KRUSE  
Environmental Health & Safety Specialist, The Mosaic Company

How did you become interested in environmental science?
I have always enjoyed being outside and I wanted the ability to help people. I always wanted a career in the environmental field because I knew there was a right way to do things. In my current role, I help my company use resources in a smarter, better way, while keeping employees and the environmental safe.

In addition to degrees in environmental science, you earned a graduate certificate in geographic information science. How has that been important to your career?
In the mining industry, GIS mapping is a tool we use daily. Before we clear land, we survey for threatened and endangered species and we use GIS maps to report where they are located. After mining, we use GIS to restore the land, so we look at the topography and use mapping to determine where to locate wetlands and new plantings.

Do you have a favorite memory from UWF?
I enjoyed every aspect of my experience at UWF, from the honors program to playing intramurals as well as being active in Alpha Gamma Delta and SGA. I met my husband, Matt Kruse, ‘06, ‘07, during my first day on campus, but we didn’t hit it off immediately. We had the honors program and some mutual friends in common, and we eventually started dating. We’ve now been married for six years. As a graduate student, I had internships with Escambia County and the EPA, which provided great exposure to the field.

KATIE GARRETT  
Founder and Owner, Old Hickory Whiskey Bar

How did UWF prepare you to become a successful business owner in your 20s?
My undergraduate education has had the greatest influence on my current career, as I focused on Jacksonian-American history. My love for this period led me to name Old Hickory Whiskey Bar after President Andrew Jackson. My experience during my graduate education in historic preservation assisted in preserving artifacts during the renovation of the space.

What do you consider your greatest professional achievement to date?
The idea of Old Hickory Whiskey Bar came to me when I was working in an entirely different industry. I was so determined to build this bar that I never acknowledged how being young female in a male-dominated industry, facing the expected hurdles of opening a new venture and presenting a new concept to this city would pan out. I wanted to combine my love for whiskey and Pensacola history into a concept that others could enjoy. In the bar’s youth, Old Hickory has received a number of accolades that have contributed to building Palafox Street and bringing a spotlight to Pensacola.

What excites you most about the future of UWF?
UWF has an ever-growing presence in downtown Pensacola. Seeing the changes at the Historic Trust and the focus on ensuring the Historic Pensacola Village’s future gives me a great appreciation for how UWF honors our community’s past. The implementation of the Interpretive Master Plan coming to life through the Museum Plaza is an excellent example of future growth of UWF’s presence in the downtown area.
**Dr. Thanh Nguyen**

Optometrist, Center for Sight

**Why does the Light Up the Night cause hold such a special place in your heart?**

When I came back to Pensacola in 2015, I met up with college friends and we talked about how we could impact Pensacola. We lost a dear friend to suicide and it really left an imprint on our lives, so we decided to make something positive out of it. I founded the event that year, and with the help of generous local sponsors, we were able to turn an idea into reality in less than six months.

**What is one of the most rewarding aspects of what you do as an optometrist?**

My interaction with my patients is the best part of my job. Vision is inherently a gift that you rarely have to work for, so when you lose any aspect of your vision you feel lost. My job is to help you visually find your way, and that is my passion.

**Any thoughts to share on the recent expansion at UWF?**

With the new infrastructure as well as the addition of the football team, the University is really making a name for itself. UWF is essentially a microcosm of Pensacola, having all the amenities of a bigger entity without losing the interpersonal relationships that come with a smaller town.

“UWF prepared me for my future career because of the relationship I had with my professors. If I had concerns, they were always a quick office visit away and that was invaluable to me.”
**KYMBERLY PALMER**  
Charge Nurse, Sacred Heart Pediatric Subspecialty Clinic

**What inspired you to pursue a career in environmental studies?**
Growing up on the gulf coast of Florida, I have always been surrounded by and appreciated the beauty of the natural resources around me. I gravitated towards a degree in environmental studies and UWF was the perfect fit for me. My coursework gave me the tools to pursue a career that established my appreciation for environmental work and the link between nature and manmade environments. The degree I received from UWF prepared me well for my first role out of college in New York City, where I served as an AmeriCorps member, working on environmental issues in an urban setting.

**What is your favorite thing about your job?**
It’s fun to be a part of something so new. Building the pediatric subspecialty clinic from the ground up is a huge task, and it’s given me a new-found passion for what I do. The challenges are exciting.

**How do you stay connected with UWF?**
I served as scholarship advisor for my sorority, Alpha Delta Pi, until the last couple of years. It was such a rewarding experience to help mold this next generation of leaders. My family and I also love attending alumni tailgates at UWF football games.

**ERIN PERCIFULL**  
Associate Planner, Ecology and Environment Inc.

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**What do you consider your greatest achievement to date?**
Serving as an AmeriCorps member in New York City. I worked at the NYC Housing Authority, the largest and most complex municipal affordable housing agency in the nation. There, I helped establish Resident Green Committees, designed to provide education of climate change and empower residents to incorporate energy efficiency practices in their daily lives. The time I spent in public service coupled with my degree from UWF, assured me a place at Columbia University where I obtained a masters in public administration.

**How do you see yourself making an impact on Pensacola today and into the future?**
I am excited to be back in Pensacola where I can contribute to a city and community that gave me my start. Since moving back to Pensacola in October 2015, I’ve engaged in a host of civic organizations that are doing great things for the environment and the community. All communities, no matter size or location, have a role in conserving and enhancing the environment. I plan to continue to make an impact and reinforce environmental sustainability at the community level here.
Why did you choose UWF?

After a long journey exploring a variety of other universities, I realized UWF was the perfect fit for me. Here, I truly was more than a number. My professors not only knew my name, but they gave me their time and wisdom. They listened, facilitated dialogue, encouraged curiosity and challenged us. (The scholarships were hard to turn down, too.)

How did your studies prepare you to enter the workforce?

In many ways, the University’s engaging, high-impact practices best prepared me to enter the workforce, such as my internships and on-campus leadership roles, as president of Alpha Delta Pi, in particular. These experiences allowed me to get a small glance into how organizations function as a team, navigate conflict and work toward outcomes.

How did UWF shape your commitment to giving, both personally and professionally?

This University recognizes that students arrive on campus, or virtually, as a whole person, not just a student sitting in a classroom. UWF encourages the blend of academics, service, community and self-development. It was through my time at UWF that I grew to love Pensacola and Northwest Florida in a deeper way, by diversifying my experiences and relationships.
How did studying at UWF differ from your schooling in Kenya?

In general, everything is more convenient here in the U.S. Education is different in terms of learning resource availability. At UWF, study materials were conveniently located within my reach online. My classmates were from diverse walks of life and very interactive. Actually, most of them were commissioned officers already, and, to be honest, I was a bit intimidated being junior enlisted (E-4). With time, we really bonded and helped each other out in class. Professors were also readily available even on weekends. That is why I was able to complete some of my classes while I was deployed to Kuwait.

Why did you want to study public health?

Throughout my childhood, I witnessed the burden of easily preventable public health problems such as poor water hygiene and sanitation. I considered public health my best opportunity to protect people en masse through life changing roles in research, education, policymaking, and other aspects of the career field. Already, I have been granted an opportunity to serve as a public health officer in the U.S. Air Force, Biomedical Sciences Corps, where I play leadership roles to protect health and wellbeing of my fellow Airmen.

What are your immediate plans and career goals?

I am scheduled to leave my current logistics readiness responsibilities at Dyess Air Force Base for a five-week commissioned officer training in Alabama, after which I will proceed to my next duty station. My midterm goal is to earn a doctorate, and take on more leadership roles in the military. Ultimately, I hope to retire from the service and pursue public health challenges on global stage, preferably in Africa.

DANIELA CRUZ MEJIA
Professional Soccer Player, Saprissa Fútbol Feminino
Costa Rica Women’s National Team

Cruz plays defender and midfielder for Saprissa Fútbol Feminino and the Costa Rica Women’s National Team, which made history in 2015 when the team competed in the country’s first ever FIFA Women’s World Cup in Canada. She has also played professionally in Serbia and has over 33 international appearances.

What drives you to perform at such a high level?

The love I have for the game and being a perseverant person drives me. I give my best in every practice and I always try to improve each day. Every time that a door closes, I see it as a challenge and not as an obstacle. We will always have adversities in life. We are not in control of these situations, but we do have control over how to face these adversities.

Besides competing, what are your plans for the future?

I’m head coach for the U13 and U15 teams of Saprissa women’s soccer. I’m also studying Portuguese. After I finish my career as a player, I would like to get a master’s degree, and I want to keep studying and preparing myself as a coach. I also would like to open a coffee shop in Costa Rica and take a volunteering trip.

How would you describe your time at UWF?

I grew up so much in those four years. I was a completely different person when I first came to UWF to when I graduated. I will be forever grateful for the time I had at UWF and even more grateful for the people I met during my time as a student-athlete.

KOECH BELLION
Staff Sergeant, United States Air Force | Logistics Technician

Bellion immigrated to the U.S. from Kenya in 2011, at 24 years of age. Aspiring to become a naturalized citizen, he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in 2013. While serving on active duty, Bellion enrolled in and completed the online Master’s in Public Health program at UWF.

How did studying at UWF differ from your schooling in Kenya?

In general, everything is more convenient here in the U.S. Education is different in terms of learning resource availability. At UWF, study materials were conveniently located within my reach online. My classmates were from diverse walks of life and very interactive. Actually, most of them were commissioned officers already, and, to be honest, I was a bit intimidated being junior enlisted (E-4). With time, we really bonded and helped each other out in class. Professors were also readily available even on weekends. That is why I was able to complete some of my classes while I was deployed to Kuwait.

Why did you want to study public health?

Throughout my childhood, I witnessed the burden of easily preventable public health problems such as poor water hygiene and sanitation. I considered public health my best opportunity to protect people en masse through life changing roles in research, education, policymaking, and other aspects of the career field. Already, I have been granted an opportunity to serve as a public health officer in the U.S. Air Force, Biomedical Sciences Corps, where I play leadership roles to protect health and wellbeing of my fellow Airmen.

What are your immediate plans and career goals?

I am scheduled to leave my current logistics readiness responsibilities at Dyess Air Force Base for a five-week commissioned officer training in Alabama, after which I will proceed to my next duty station. My midterm goal is to earn a doctorate, and take on more leadership roles in the military. Ultimately, I hope to retire from the service and pursue public health challenges on global stage, preferably in Africa.
Established by one of our founding families, the Pace gift changed the course of the University. In 1993, UWF learned that John C. “Jack” Pace Jr. bequeathed his estate to the UWF Foundation. Pace’s father, John C. Pace, was an influential West Florida business leader and founding member of the Foundation. The $13 million gift was matched by the state of Florida for a total contribution of $26 million.

The Bear Family Foundation Inc. has made many generous contributions to UWF, including a $1 million gift to support the engineering department and the supply chain logistics program. The foundation contributed $700,000 to help establish a mechanical engineering degree, as well as $300,000 to fund an endowed professorship in supply chain logistics.

As the University celebrates 50 years of service to our students and community, we look back at the major gifts that have helped us expand our reach and quality as an institution of higher learning. These gifts, all $1 million or above, have been transformational in creating our Foundation, changing our landscape and establishing UWF as a top Florida university.

Quint and Rishy Studer

The Studers announced a partnership to develop the Center for Entrepreneurship at the UWF College of Business to seed economic growth in our region, with a contribution of $1 million. They also funded the Pensacola Pledge Scholar Program with an additional $1 million gift to provide financial support for graduating seniors of Escambia and Santa Rosa County Public Schools to attend UWF or Pensacola State College.

Stanley Schmerken

Stanley Schmerken established a need-based scholarship program to create opportunities for students who otherwise may not be able to attend college. Schmerken created a charitable gift annuity in the amount of $3 million to UWF, providing an income stream to his family while contributing an estimated $1.26 million to the University through the Stanley Schmerken Scholars Program.

John C. Pace, Jr.

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50 Years of TRANSFORMATIONAL GIFTS

Major gifts have significant impact on educational offerings at UWF

BY ASHLEY KAHN SALLEY
In 2016, UWF received its largest gift from a living donor when Harold E. ‘Hal’ Marcus allocated $5 million to the College of Science and Engineering, which now bears his name as the University’s first named college.

Pen Air Federal Credit Union

Pen Air Federal Credit Union made a $1 million gift to support UWF football. The gift named Pen Air Field, home of UWF football on the Pensacola campus. Previously, Pen Air has shown its support by partnering with the Alumni Association, College of Business and other athletic events.

Dr. Bob Kimball

A UWF professor of marketing and economics, Dr. Bob Kimball, created the Bill and Ellie Kimball Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship in the amount of $1 million in memory of his parents. In total, Kimball has given $3 million to the University.

Dr. Usha and Mahadeb Kundu

In 2017, UWF received a gift in excess of $5 million from Dr. Usha and Mahadeb Kundu to name the College of Health. After calling Pensacola home for 37 years, the Kundus were inspired to make a gift to health education with the hope it would do good for the community.

“In Gifts of this magnitude have created opportunities for our students, whether in the form of new academic programs or a new football team. We cannot adequately express our gratitude to the generous donors who believe in UWF as a place that puts our students on the path to success.”

—UWF President Dr. Martha Saunders

American Dream Scholarships

An anonymous donor gifted $3.1 million to establish this scholarship program to enhance accessibility to higher education for UWF students, with preference given to immigrants and refugees.

Fred G. Levin

Fred Levin made a $550,000 gift to establish the Reubin O’D. Askew Institute for Multidisciplinary Studies, allowing UWF to create one-of-a-kind teaching and learning experiences. More than 20 years ago, Levin gifted an endowed professorship at UWF in honor of his father, Abe Levin, which is now worth more than $400,000. He also recently made a $100,000 gift in support of UWF football.
In 2012, Argie received a makeover to reflect the updated brand for UWF Athletics.

A new Argie was unveiled in 2010, featuring a more modern design.

On Nov. 10, 1967, the University of West Florida tasked the student body with voting on a mascot for the University. Six days later, students selected the Argonaut, now fondly known as Argie, as their official representative.

Deriving from the Greek myth Jason and the Argonauts, the term Argonaut describes Jason’s band of followers and faithful crew members. The Argonauts, including well-known hero Heracles, fought diligently and traveled extensively to retrieve the Golden Fleece. Argie is named in commemoration of the devoted crew.

Over the years, Argie has gone through many aesthetic changes, including three major wardrobe makeovers. Standing at nearly seven feet tall, Argie serves as an ambassador of UWF to the greater community. With a sword and shield to protect, Argie dons the green of the sea and the blue of the sky, the official school colors, and exemplifies steadfast pride in the institution.

Argie celebrates his birthday each year on Sept. 25 in recognition of classes starting at UWF on that date in 1967. Always present at major campus events and athletic competitions, he maintains a close-knit camaraderie with faculty, staff, students and friends of the University. Argie has embodied lasting tradition, along with sustained growth of programs, locations and people over the last 50 years.
FELLOW ALUMNI,

It’s an honor to serve as your association president as we celebrate the University of West Florida’s 50th Anniversary. We are more than 82,000 alumni strong, and this milestone is a chance to reflect on our college days and share in the enthusiasm for a bright future.

UWF was only a senior-level institution when I began my college career. After completing my first two years of study and playing baseball at a junior college, I received a scholarship to complete my degree and play baseball at UWF. I came home to Pensacola and obtained a bachelor's degree in management from our College of Business. My UWF experience is filled with great memories and lasting friendships. Beating the University of Kentucky my senior year was a baseball highlight that I will never forget. I’m grateful for the experience of being a student-athlete, the discipline it required and the support we received from coaches and faculty.

My wife, Michelle, and I are proud that our sons, Seth, ’08, and Spencer, ’15, both earned degrees at UWF. Our daughter, Sydney, is currently a junior communication major. I’m thankful for what this University has meant to all of us and for the anticipation of even more good things to come.

As I attend alumni events around the country, I’m delighted to share the great things happening at UWF today. Our primary message to our alumni is to get involved and join in the excitement. Make sure we have your current contact information, attend our events, follow us on social media and be an advocate for UWF. There has never been a more exciting time to get involved with your alma mater.

Go Argos!

Brett A. Barrow ’87
President,
UWF National Alumni Association
Meet the UWF National Alumni Association Board of Directors

DAWN GRESKO, ’15

Jennifer Hammond ’93 and ’95
Board Member
Vice President of TTR Sotheby’s International Realty, Host of “The Jennifer Hammond Show”

How do you balance time between being a realtor and talk-show host?
The two jobs blend together perfectly. My radio show is focused on real estate, therefore, I share insights, challenges and experiences of my real estate job each week.

How did UWF prepare you professionally?
I hosted two TV shows while I was at UWF and that experience of interviewing prepared me for live radio with a worldwide audience.

Harriet Wyer ’92
Alumni Association Vice President
Oncology Sales Specialist at AstraZeneca Pharmaceuticals

Describe one of your favorite memories from UWF.
I remember telling my professor I wanted to be a history major and he said I should try a marketing class. That was a defining moment in my life because now I have a career in sales.

How did UWF prepare you professionally?
We learned firsthand how to market a product and outline sales with real-world scenarios. I also received a great internship with IBM, which opened a lot of doors.

Sonya Daniel ’14
Board Member
Program Coordinator at Escambia County Supervisor of Elections Office

How did UWF prepare you professionally?
I had the opportunity to build a communications training curriculum and then teach it. I walked away with a hands-on degree applicable for my field.

What has changed since your time at UWF?
Now, UWF is everywhere. It’s part of the bigger community. It’s downtown, it’s the Emerald Coast and we’re seeing that connection in more places.

Brett Barrow ’87
Alumni Association President
Senior Vice President of Commercial Banking at Regions Bank

Describe one of your favorite memories from UWF.
I was a student-athlete who spent time practicing or playing baseball. I have many memories from the sport where I formed long-term and lasting friendships.

How has UWF evolved since your time as a student?
The University is much more integrated in the community today than it was when I attended. UWF is a big part of our area and a key player in the community.

Jeff Bedenbaugh ’92, ’02
Board Member
Director of Advanced Analytics at Florida Blue

Favorite spot on campus?
The new College of Business and football field. I bring my family with me, we’re very active in the football program.

What does being a UWF alumnus mean to you?
I’m so proud of the University—what it was, what it is and what it’s becoming. UWF is a part of me no different from an arm or leg, and now I’m happy to say my family is tied to UWF, too.
How has UWF helped you get to where you are today?
The approach professors took in terms of teaching students to think and work through problems taught me the value of education. I don’t think I would be in the same place today without it.

What does being a UWF alumnus mean to you?
Service to others is what it means to me. Being able to give back to the university, community and new students, it’s very important to me and our alumni.

Describe one of your favorite memories from UWF.
I have two. The first was being president of a sorority and seeing it take off. The second was completing my master’s program.

Among the faculty and staff at UWF, who influenced you most?
Dr. Brendan Kelly. I’m honored to consider him a mentor and friend. He had a family and still managed to be involved, teach intense classes and invest in each of us very differently, which says a lot.

Stephen Hester ’81
Board Member
Training Director at Saber Power Services

Where was your favorite spot on campus?
We called it The Rathskeller, or The Rat. Back then, Thursday night was when everyone gathered there to play Space Invaders and Asteroids and drink.

Why did you decide to serve on the Alumni Board?
I wanted to give back to the University that’s allowed me to be successful in my career. I’ve been serving 14 years, trying to make a difference. That’s my goal.

Joel Balistreri ’98
Board Member
Director of Telecom Services at West Corporation

Who among the faculty and staff at UWF influenced you most?
Bill Healey, who really cares about students like they’re his own kids. I brought him to Costa Rica for my 40th birthday. That’s how important he was and is to me.

Why did you decide to serve on the UWF Alumni Board?
Since my time as a student ambassador, I’ve always wanted to become involved because I saw it as a way to give back to an institution important to my career and development.

Paul Pratofiorito ’81
Board Member
Staff Customer Operations Analyst at Gulf Power Company

Why did you decide to serve on the Alumni Board?
I wanted to give back to the University that’s allowed me to be successful in my career. I’ve been serving 14 years, trying to make a difference. That’s my goal.

Board Member
Workforce Development Coordinator at Gulf Power Company

Describe one of your favorite memories from UWF.
I think my favorite memories are from teaching classes and labs as a teaching assistant, and then receiving real feedback from my friends.

Among the faculty and staff at UWF, who influenced you most?
Dr. Brendan Kelly. I’m honored to consider him a mentor and friend. He had a family and still managed to be involved, teach intense classes and invest in each of us very differently, which says a lot.

Luke van Blaricom ’00, ’02
Past President
Director of the Scholars Program and Senior Assistant Director of Undergraduate Admissions at University of Central Florida

Describe one of your favorite memories from UWF.
Being a student ambassador. It’s one of the life-changing experiences I had because it made me realize what I was good at and enjoyed.

Why did you decide to serve on the Alumni Board?
Since my time as a student ambassador, I’ve always wanted to become involved because I saw it as a way to give back to an institution important to my career and development.
Smile!

Whether we gather at a celebration, a garden or light up downtown Pensacola, our events provide the perfect opportunity to show our appreciation of your continued support. They are also a wonderful chance for you to socialize with fellow alumni, current students, staff, faculty and friends of the University. Don’t miss out! We continue to add new events to the mix. For a look at upcoming events, visit alumni.uwf.edu.

To view more, visit uwf.edu/snapshots.

President Martha Saunders celebrates her installation as the sixth UWF president at a ceremony at the Emerald Coast location.

Alumni reminisce at the annual UWF Black Alumni Reunion.

The women’s basketball team poses at the UWF Argonaut Athletic Club Donor & Student-Athlete Banquet.

“Gangsta Gardener” Ron Finley interacts with the crowd at the UWF Community Garden.

A high school student participates in a robotic event at the Northwest Regional Science Olympiad Competition.

Fireworks shoot off of the John C. Pace Library roof during the inaugural Argo Launch Party.
1960s

‘68 Kay Traube, B.A. English; Joyce Kay Simpson and Philip Traube celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary in 2017. They were married on June 11, 1967 at the Virginia Tech War Memorial Chapel.

1970s

‘70 & ‘73 Rosalind Hussong, B.A. Psychology and M.A. Psychology; received a Ph.D. in cultural psychology.

‘73 Robert Spencer, M.S. Aeronautical Systems; received the Wright Brothers Master Pilot Award. This is the most prestigious award that the Federal Aviation Administration issues to pilots certified under Title 14 of the Code of Federal Regulations (14 CFR) part 61. This award is named after the Wright Brothers, the first U.S. pilots, to recognize individuals who have exhibited professionalism, skill and aviation expertise for at least 50 years while piloting aircraft as “Master Pilots.”

‘74 Kenneth Benoit, B.A. Music Education; has had three of his compositions performed recently. His “Sonatina for Bassoon and Piano” was performed at the Society of Composers Inc. Region VI Conference at the University of Texas at Arlington on Feb. 2, 2017. His “Work for Unaccompanied Flute” was premiered at the Louisiana State University Composers Forum on Feb. 17, 2017. Dr. Benoit’s “Shakespeare Songs: The Comedies” was premiered at the Southeastern Composers League Forum at Washington and Lee University on Mar. 25, 2017.

‘78 William Bowers, B.A. Political Science; was named by Georgia Trend Magazine among the 100 Most Influential Georgians.

1980s

‘80 Susan Smith, B.A. Accounting; was added to Bullard Independent School District Wall of Honor.

‘82 Anthony Atchley, B.A. Accounting; was named vice president of sales for the Pensacola Blue Wahoos.

‘83 David Hawkins, M.A. Psychology; was appointed to District Board of Trustees, Florida State College at Jacksonville.

‘84 Stanley Harper, B.A. Communication Arts; was selected to attend the American Diabetes Association’s 2017 Call to Congress in Washington, D.C., on March 29-31, 2017. Call to Congress is a unique opportunity for diabetes advocates to meet face-to-face with members of Congress and their staff to discuss actions Congress must take to cure diabetes.

‘85 William Marshall, B.A. Accounting; was named in the Top 50 Over 50 for Birmingham, Alabama for 2017.

‘87 Laurie Babin, MBA; named chief revenue officer at ResCare.

‘88 Tracy Arner, B.A. Accounting; was welcomed as a new board member for the Georgia United Credit Union.

‘89 John Stopper, B.S. Management; co-owner of the Chick-fil-A Gulf Breeze and was named the 2016 Business of the Year by the Gulf Breeze Area Chamber of Commerce.

‘89 Eric Miller, B.A. Criminal Justice; was named Florida’s chief inspector general by Gov. Rick Scott.

1990s

‘90 Anne Stopper, B.A. Elementary Education; co-owner of the Chick-fil-A Gulf Breeze and was awarded 2016 Business of the Year by the Gulf Breeze Area Chamber of Commerce.

‘90 Sharon Nobles, B.A. Accounting; was named chief financial officer of North Mississippi Health Services.

‘93 Jarl “JT” Young, MBA: was named Community Leader of the Year at the Pensacola Chamber of Commerce PACE Awards.

‘95 Kevin Hogan, B.S. Health Education; opened East Hill Medical Group and brought together services that were under multiple roofs in various states into one downtown location. East Hill Chiropractic Medicine, East Hill Laser & Aesthetics and East Hill Family Medicine are all part of Hogan’s East Hill Medical Group on South Alcaniz Street in downtown Pensacola.

‘97 Dennis Godwin, B.S. Engineering Technology; was named president/CEO of Toray Resin Company.

‘98 Charles Tellis, B.S. Health, Leisure, & Exercise Science; was named Commander of Defense Logistics Agency Distribution Bahrain, Southwest Asia.

‘99 Charmetra Parker, B.A. Legal Administration; was one of six attorneys recommended to Chief Judge Morin for D.C. Superior Court Magistrate Judge vacancies. Parker is currently a section chief in the Family Services Division, Child Protection Section of the D.C. Office of the Attorney General and has been employed at the Office of the Attorney General since 2005.

2000s

‘00 Matthew Christian, B.S. Business Administration; was named managing director of SVN Commercial Advisory Group.


‘02 Phillip Williamson, B.S. Business Administration; was promoted to accounting senior at Bloomer, Geri & Company.

‘02 John Hair, B.A. Political Science & B.A. Philosophy; was hired as committee designee of the House Financial Services Subcommittee on Housing & Insurance.

‘03 Jeremy Ochoa, B.S. Business Administration; was promoted to accounting senior at Bloomer, Geri & Company.

‘03 Derrik Lang, B.A. Communication Arts; was named senior editor of American Way, the inflight magazine of American Airlines.

‘03 Samuel Mayhew, B.S. Health, Leisure, & Exercise Science; was hired as the director of campus recreation at East Tennessee State University.

‘03 Mitchell Seal, M.Ed Educational Leadership; was selected as dean for the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences (USU) recently established College of Allied Health Sciences.

‘04 Radovan Chrz, B.S. Business Administration; was inducted into the Gulf South Conference Hall of Fame as part of the Class of 2017.
'07 Jordan Williams, B.A. Psychology; earned his master’s in nursing degree from the University of South Alabama.

'07 & '15 Jennifer Walling, B.A. Criminal Justice & B.S. Nursing; was promoted to director of rehabilitation nursing at the West Florida Rehabilitation Institute.

'08 & '15 Vernon Stewart, B.A. Communication Arts & M.S. in Administration; was awarded Emerging Business Leader of the Year at the Pensacola Chamber of Commerce 2017 PACE Awards.

'09 Sara Goff, B.A. Criminal Justice; was named 2016 Gulf Breeze Police Officer of the Year by the Gulf Breeze Police Department.

'09 Kathy Davis, B.S. Business Administration; passed the Certified Public Accountant Examination and was promoted to accounting supervisor at Bloomer, Geri & company.

'09 Hilary Liccini, M.Ed; was promoted to assistant director of the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities at Minot State University.

'09 Sandra Bostic, B.S. Health, Leisure, & Exercise Science; was promoted to coordinator of Blue River Career Program’s Adult Education in Shelbyville, Indiana.

2010s

'10 David Bell, M.A. Accountancy; was promoted to partner at Carter & Company, CPA, LLC.

'10 & '12 Cheryl Riggs, B.S. Business Administration & M.A. Accountancy; passed the Certified Public Accountant Examination and was promoted to Accounting Supervisor at Bloomer, Geri & Company.

'12 Logan Bauer, B.S. Health Science; appeared on latest season of “The Amazing Race” and placed third overall.

'11 Andrew Gagliano, B.A. Communication Arts; was appointed as public relations associate by Maier & Warner.

'12 Alexandra Henwood, B.S. Introduction Science; was named education curator of Riverside Discovery Center.

'13 Jarred Brown, B.S. Business Administration; was awarded the Pursuit of Excellence by Prosperous I.M. Inc. a leading digital marketing agency for SEO in Pensacola.

'14 Denisha Merrweather, B.A. Interdisciplinary Social Sciences; accepted an invitation from President Donald Trump to attend his address to Congress on Feb. 28, 2017. Merrweather is an advocate for voucher programs and school choice programs.

'14 & '16 Cameron Smith, B.S. Business Administration & M.A.; was hired at West Florida Regional Planning Council.

'14 Brian Michie, M.Ed; was recognized by Florida’s Department of Education and earned Florida Best & Brightest Scholarship. Florida’s Best & Brightest Teacher Scholarship Program rewards Florida’s teachers who have been evaluated as highly effective and who have earned college entrance exam scores that indicate they were exceptionally well-prepared for college-level coursework.

In Memoriam

'68 Dell Carr, B.A. English

'69 Ransom McClung, B.A. Sociology

'69 Vicki Wahl, B.A. Interdisciplinary Social Sciences

'70 Paul Lambert, B.A. Industrial Technology

'70 Emmalyn Owens, B.A. Elementary Education

'73 & '77 Steve Burgess, B.S. Management & B.A. Accounting

'73 Juliana Horn, B.A. Interdisciplinary Humanities

'73 Byron Hood, B.S. Health, Leisure, & Sports

'74 Mildred Clark, B.A. Elementary Education
‘74 Eloise Shuford, M.Ed
‘74 Lawrence Westfall, B.A. Theatre
‘75 Dolores Thompson, B.A. Accounting
‘76 James Roberson, B.A. Accounting
‘78 Stanley Inman, B.A. Interdisciplinary Social Sciences
‘78 Ruth Mock, B.S. Nursing
‘79 Pauline Holland, B.A. Elementary Education
‘79 Kevin Slattery, M.A. Psychology

‘80 Robert Ward, B.A. Criminal Justice
‘80 & ‘88 Thomas Jacobi, B.A. & MBA Studio Art
‘81 Delia Weekley, M.A. Interdisciplinary Humanities
‘81 Leora Jones, M.Ed
‘85, ‘85 & ‘87 Arnold Kennedy, B.S. Technology, B.A. Psychology & M.Ed Vocational Education
‘87 Pamela Chesser, MSA Health Care Administration
‘89 Ronald Josh, B.A. Education

‘90 Thomas Connolly, B.S. Industrial Technology
‘92 Kenneth Meharg, M.Ed Leadership
‘92 Cornelia Boone, B.A. Anthropology
‘95 Kenneth Milstead, B.A. French
‘97 Donald Orr, B.A. Elementary Education
‘03 & ’05 John Landey, B.S. Engineering Technology & MPA
‘04 Kathy Hardley, B.A. Introduction Social Science
We’re Making Waves

UWF is among the top-performing universities in the state.
The University of West Florida ranks in the three top-performing public universities in the state based on the Florida Board of Governor’s performance-based funding model.

Learn more at uwf.edu/BOGMetrics.