

Connection



UNIVERSITY of WEST FLORIDA

Fall 2025 | Alumni & Friends Magazine

P.15

**LEGACY
FORGED ON
HOLE 10**



NATIONAL CHAMPIONS

2025 NCAA DII

**BUILDING SUCCESSFUL
TALENT PIPELINES
FOR NORTHWEST
FLORIDA BUSINESSES**

07

**THE SEARCH FOR
FORT KIRKLAND**

21

**A DECADE OF IMPACT:
UWF'S USHA KUNDU, MD
COLLEGE OF HEALTH**

23

Connection

CONNECTION MAGAZINE

Fall 2025

INTERIM PRESIDENT

Manny Diaz Jr.

VICE PRESIDENT, UNIVERSITY ADVANCEMENT

Howard Reddy

ADVANCEMENT AND ALUMNI RELATIONS

Claire Stewart

Katie Schutts

Robin Zimmern '16

EXECUTIVE EDITOR

Brittany Sherwood '14, '25

MANAGING EDITOR

Zachary Farrington '14

DESIGN DIRECTION

Jennifer Peck '08, '25

DESIGN

Hannah Bledsoe '21

Carly Richards '25

PHOTO DIRECTION & PHOTOGRAPHY

Brian Butler

Conlan Taylor '23

Joe Vinson '23

WRITERS & EDITORS

Paige Hennessy '24

Allison Morgan

Micayla Yates

CONTACT US

Web uwf.edu/alumni

Email alumni@uwf.edu

Phone 800.226.1893

Mail UWF Alumni Association,
11000 University Pkwy., Building 12,
Pensacola, FL 32514

TO GIVE

Online uwf.edu/give

UWF Connection is published semi-annually by Alumni Relations and University Marketing and Communications. The purpose of Connection is to communicate and engage with UWF alumni, donors, friends and others interested in the activities of UWF.

Inside

- 2 LETTER FROM THE
THE PRESIDENT
- 3 LETTER FROM THE
VICE PRESIDENT
- 3 NEWS & NOTES
- 7 TALENT CATALYST
- 10 CHAMBERED NAUTILUS
- 13 FACULTY SPOTLIGHT:
KC MA
- 15 MEN'S GOLF NATIONAL
CHAMPIONSHIP
- 21 FORT KIRKLAND
- 23 UKCOH 10TH
ANNIVERSARY
- 26 ALUMNI EVENTS
- 27 ALUMNI PROFILE:
JD THOMAS
- 28 ALUMNI PROFILE:
JESSICA KLODNICKI
- 29 SNAPSHOTS
- 31 CLASS NOTES
- 34 FAREWELL LETTER

15

THE UWF MEN'S GOLF

TEAM battled hard for their win over Colorado Christian University. Read more about the journey to securing the Argonauts' third national title in men's golf and their first since 2008.



07



21



23





Letter from the President

DEAR ARGOS,

It is an honor to introduce myself as the interim president of the University of West Florida. As someone who has dedicated my career to advancing education and creating meaningful opportunities for students, I am excited to serve your alma mater.

From the moment I stepped onto campus this past summer, I've felt the energy and passion that define this University. Whether it's our commitment to academic excellence and workforce development, the strength of our research, or the pride that shines through our spirited campus life, UWF is a place where bold ideas and lasting connections thrive.

In this issue of Connection Magazine, you'll read about our men's golf national champions, as well as inspiring updates from across campus and beyond. From exploring our rich history to celebrating a decade of health at UWF, these pages are a reflection of our spirited Argo community.

Thank you for your continued support and pride in the University of West Florida. I look forward to the journey ahead.

Go Argos!

Manny Diaz Jr.
Interim President
University of West Florida





Letter from the Vice President

ARGO ALUMNI AND FRIENDS,

As we honor the legacy of Dr. Martha Saunders, we welcome Interim President Manny Diaz Jr. as he begins his journey leading our University. The very nature of change presents exciting new opportunities to continue our journey together.

President Diaz brings a bold vision to build upon our strong foundations, explore new innovative pathways and further strengthen our commitment to academic excellence, student success and regional economic development.

As we successfully navigate the final stages of our Here For Good capital campaign and break ground on the new Darrell Gooden football stadium, UWF continues to forge new horizons.

The Argo spirit we all share continues to drive us forward. Your support and advocacy plays a critical role in ensuring we consistently reach our full potential. We are very grateful. Go Argos!

Sincerely,

Howard Reddy
Vice President,
University Advancement

News & Notes

Recent news from the University of West Florida

BY BRITTANY SHERWOOD '14, '25

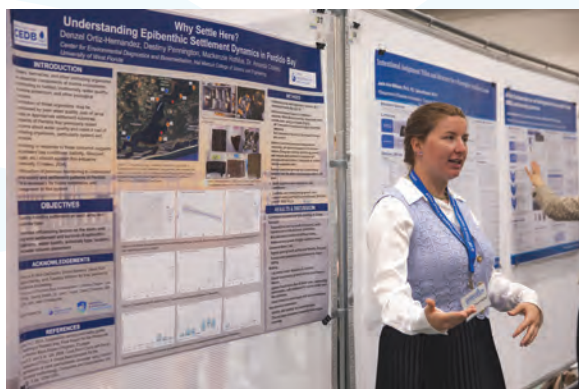
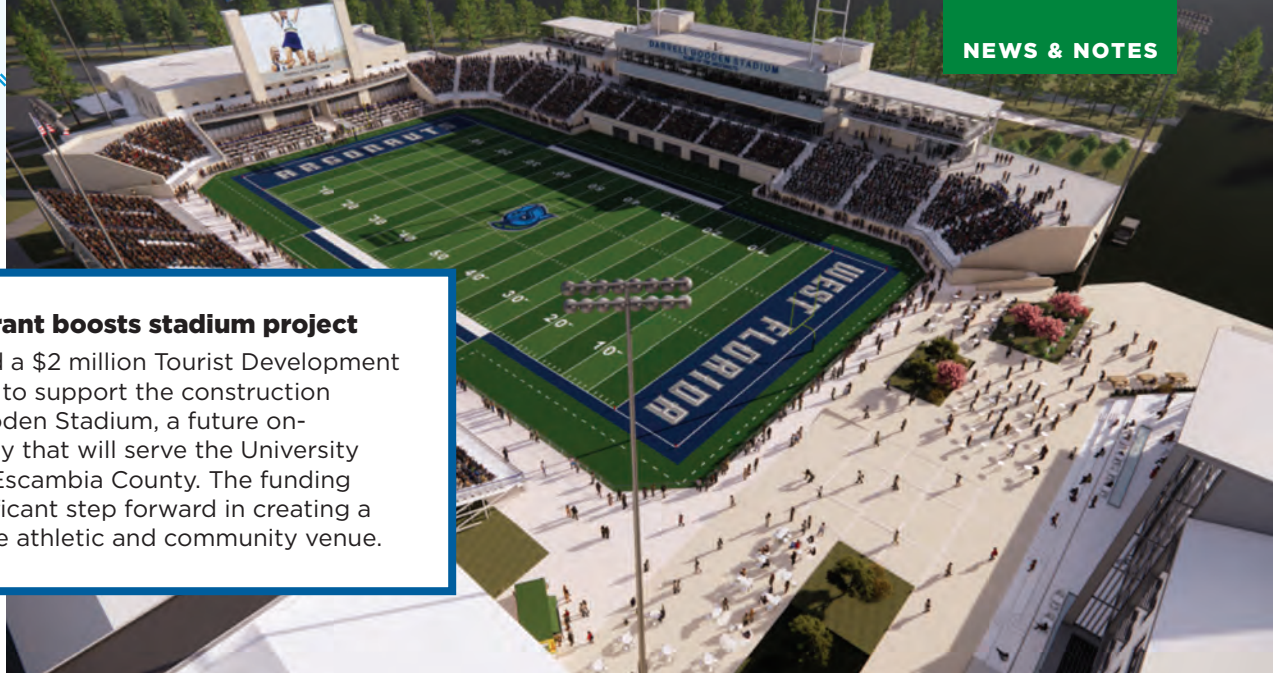


UWF ranks among top 3 in state performance metrics

The University of West Florida earned its highest-ever marks in the Florida Board of Governors' 2024-25 performance-based funding model, securing 91 out of 100 points. UWF ranked third among the 12 State University System institutions, tying with Florida State University and trailing only Florida International University and the University of Florida. UWF placed in the top three in four separate performance metrics, underscoring its continued upward trajectory in student success, affordability and academic excellence.

\$2 million grant boosts stadium project

UWF received a \$2 million Tourist Development Council grant to support the construction of Darrell Gooden Stadium, a future on-campus facility that will serve the University and broader Escambia County. The funding marks a significant step forward in creating a transformative athletic and community venue.

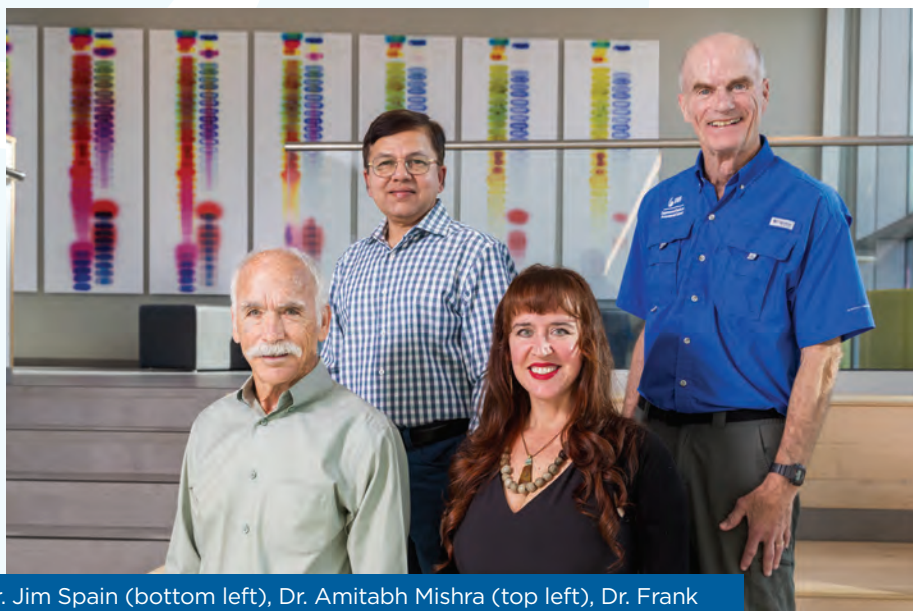


UWF achieves prestigious Research 2 status

For the first time, UWF has earned a Research 2, or R2, classification from the Carnegie Foundation, recognizing the University's high research spending and strong doctoral output. This milestone reflects \$40.5 million in research expenditures and 29 research doctorates awarded during the 2022-23 academic year. The R2 status places UWF among a distinguished group of universities committed to growing their research footprint and graduate programs.

Four faculty named among world's top scientists

Four UWF faculty members earned a place on Stanford and Elsevier's elite Top 2% of Scientists list, recognizing global research impact. Drs. Jim Spain, Frank Gilliam and Amitabh Mishra were honored for their career-long achievements, while Dr. Allysha Winburn joined the 2023 annual list. The rankings reflect significant scholarly influence and research output across diverse disciplines, including environmental science, cybersecurity and anthropology.



Dr. Jim Spain (bottom left), Dr. Amitabh Mishra (top left), Dr. Frank Gilliam (top right) and Dr. Allysha Winburn (bottom right) placed on Stanford and Elsevier's elite Top 2% of Scientists list.



Students score big with March Madness experience

Nine UWF sport management students gained valuable real-world experience working behind the scenes at the NCAA Men's Basketball Final Four in San Antonio, Texas. In addition to assisting with event logistics and sustainability efforts, they networked with industry professionals, including Steve Zito, assistant director at the Alamodome and advisory board member for UWF's Sport Management Program. The trip highlighted the program's commitment to experiential learning and industry engagement.



NIH grant powers Alzheimer's breakthroughs at UWF

Dr. Rodney Guttman, biology professor in the Hal Marcus College of Science and Engineering, received a prestigious \$420,000 NIH grant renewal to further his research into early detection of Alzheimer's disease. This brings his total NIH funding to \$860,000 over six years. Guttman's work focuses on identifying blood-based biomarkers that could enable earlier diagnoses, potentially transforming how the disease is detected and treated. The grant also supports student researchers engaged in this vital work.



Third external University mural installed on the John C. Pace Library

Designed by University Marketing and Communications and executed with the assistance of local muralist Eniko Ujj '13, a campus beauty inspired mural was installed on the outside of the John C. Pace Library in Spring 2025. It is the largest external institutional mural to date and highlights both the University's beautiful campus nature and iconic elements such as the Cantor al Sol archway. It features a quote by Theodore Roethke reading "Deep in their roots, all flowers keep the light," speaking to the resilience of both our beautiful campus and the people of UWF, carrying their experiences, knowledge and hope with them no matter the challenges they face. This is represented visually with the right side showing the sun and brighter colors contrasted by the left showing the moon and darker colors. The intersection of both walls in the center provides a perfect spot for a photo op.



Argos dominate in national and statewide competitions

From finance to forensics, cybersecurity to kinesiology, UWF students continued to shine on the national stage throughout the semester, earning top honors across a range of prestigious competitions.

The UWF Speech and Debate team delivered a standout performance at the Florida Intercollegiate Forensic Association State

Championship, bringing home multiple state titles against competitors from 11 other institutions.

Business students impressed at the 2025 Global Portfolio Competition in New York City, with the Argo Bond and Argo Small Funds each earning second place, and the Argo Growth Fund taking third among

more than 130 participating universities. In a separate event, finance majors Alexander Francis and Lorenzo Weber won first place at the 2025 Southeastern Hedge Fund Strategy Competition, besting teams from eight countries.

Two Ed.D. teams from the Department of Instructional Design and Technology swept the top spots at the International Society

for Performance Improvement's student case competition, while UWF's psychology quiz bowl team clinched their second consecutive win at the Southeastern Psychological Association's annual meeting.

Adding to the list of honors, two students in Movement Sciences and Health received national recognition from the American Kinesiology Association for academic excellence and contributions to the field.

These achievements reflect UWF's commitment to academic success, high-impact learning and preparing students to lead in their fields.



Ahnalie Layman (left) and Rick Vigo (right) were named Undergraduate Scholar and Master's Scholar, respectively, by the American Kinesiology Association.



Nursing graduates outpace state and national exam rates

UWF's School of Nursing continues to raise the bar. In 2024, 97.67% of Bachelor of Science in Nursing graduates passed the NCLEX-RN licensure exam on their first try, outpacing both state and national averages. UWF posted the second-highest pass rate in the Florida State University System. Impressively, students recorded a perfect 100% pass rate during the first two quarters of the year, demonstrating the program's strength in preparing students for real-world clinical success.

Submit an idea for a story at uwf.edu/connection.



UWF Talent Catalyst Program Builds Successful Talent Pipeline for Northwest Florida Businesses

BY MICAYLA YATES

When students at the University of West Florida reach graduation, they are more prepared than ever to enter the workforce.

In the 2024-25 academic year, 80.1% of UWF bachelor's graduates were employed or continuing their education within a year of graduating — the highest percentage in University history and second-highest in the Florida State University System.

That kind of success is no accident. It's built through high-impact practices like mentoring, on-the-job training and career-connected learning — all core components of the UWF Talent Catalyst

program, launched in 2024 by the newly formed Office of Workforce Development.

The program matches full-time UWF students with paid, part-time positions at local businesses, pairing each student with a mentor to help guide their professional and personal development. Designed to align education with in-demand career skills, the program is helping UWF strengthen the talent pipeline in Northwest Florida. It's a win-win.

In addition to their job, students take a professional development course taught by Dr. Sherry Hartnett, professor and founding director of the Office of Workforce Development. The course focuses

on cultivating essential soft skills, including effective communication, teamwork, professionalism, critical thinking and problem-solving. Her class helps students reflect on their work experience, articulate their growth and build confidence in navigating the workplace.

Impressed by the success and strength of the program, Landrum became the first named program sponsor in August 2025 by supporting the initiative for the next three years.

In its pilot year, the program placed 21 students with seven business partners: American Magic, BlueWind Technology LLC, GE Vernova, Landrum Workforce



LEFT Leaders from UWF Talent Catalyst partnering organizations connect at a program networking event.

RIGHT Dr. Sherry Hartnett, UWF professor and founding director of the Office of Workforce Development.



Solutions, LifeView Group/GCE, LocaliQ and UWF. One key benefit for employers is streamlined hiring, as Hartnett and Assistant Director Laura Swann manage most of the recruiting, sourcing students through UWF Talent Catalyst, Amplified by Landrum job postings and connecting with them in the right classrooms and student organizations.

Elleanna Schilling, a mechanical engineering major entering her senior year, was hired by GE Vernova and was paired with Genevieve Lunceford, the site's environmental health and safety leader, as her mentor.

"The most powerful thing I learned was how much your outlook shapes your outcome," Elleanna said. "This program gave me more than work experience. It taught me how to navigate the real world."

At GE Vernova, Elleanna updated manufacturing instructions, created new tooling solutions and implemented 5S efficiency standards across the plant. But what stood

out most was her mentorship experience.

"Genevieve was someone I could be honest with. Whether I had a question or a rough day, she listened and gave advice," Elleanna said. "Those conversations shaped how I approached problems, both at work and in life."

The UWF Talent Catalyst, Amplified by Landrum program structures the mentoring experience around monthly meetings and written reflections — a framework both students and mentors appreciated.

"What's unique about this relationship is that the student leads the conversation," Genevieve said. "Elleanna would bring in lessons from class and ask how they applied to the work she was doing."

As the program heads into its second year, momentum is growing. All seven original employers committed to participating again in the fall, and with more companies already coming on board, Hartnett expects the number of student participants to nearly double this year.

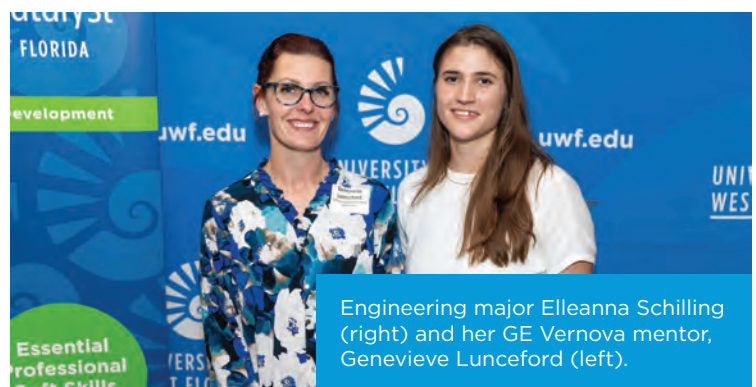
"Partnering with forward-thinking employers and seeing our students grow with the guidance of dedicated mentors has been truly rewarding," Hartnett said. "We're not just building a strong talent pipeline for Northwest Florida — we're transforming lives. Nothing brings me more joy than empowering students and business leaders to thrive in their careers. We're just getting started, and the best is yet to come."

Elleanna, who will return to the program this fall in a new role within the same company, encourages other UWF students considering the program to apply.

"Just do it," she said. "If you want to grow, get out of your comfort zone and experience what a real-world job is like, this program delivers."

"If you want to grow, get out of your comfort zone and experience what a real-world job is like, this program delivers."

— Elleanna Schilling, '25



Engineering major Elleanna Schilling (right) and her GE Vernova mentor, Genevieve Lunceford (left).

HERE FOR GOOD



THE CAMPAIGN
FOR UWF

...for the good of our community.

At the heart of our University are the people, driven by a desire to impact others and our community. Scholarships are essential to not only advancing opportunities for learning, but also elevating our communities to new heights.

uwf.edu/HereForGood



THE Heart OF UWF

A story of UWF's origin and identity: who we are, where we have been and where we are going

BY ALLISON MORGAN



*Chambered
Nautilus*



When the University of West Florida was established in 1963, it marked the beginning of UWF's story. The University's foundation for the future was shaped in the years to follow, when important and everlasting decisions were made on how the University would be represented visually.

The University's first president, Dr. Harold Crosby, began shaping UWF's identity when he selected the chambered nautilus as UWF's official emblem in 1965.

The symbol accompanied the poem "The Chambered Nautilus" by Oliver Wendell Holmes. "The Chambered Nautilus" was first published in 1858 and spoke about a nautilus, a small sea creature, and its ability to craft its own home. The story is synonymous with UWF's enduring commitment to discovery, growth and innovation.

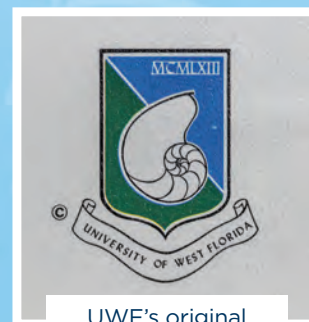
"In the poem, the nautilus grows and he builds a new room, and he moves into that; and as the nautilus gets larger and grows, he creates another room. Dr. Crosby equated that to our students growing in knowledge until they emerge into the world," said Dean DeBolt, University archivist and librarian. "The neat thing about the nautilus shell is

that it's considered sacred geometry. Every room that the nautilus makes is a larger exact replica of the earlier room."

According to DeBolt, the artist that Dr. Crosby commissioned to design the first logo purposely made the University's Nautilus Shell upside down, because the artist thought it looked better and resembled a horn or trumpet shouting off, making the University's presence known in the world. The institutional seal featured the chambered nautilus and two foundational colors: a deep royal blue representing the expansive sky, and a rich kelly green representing the sea. The seal includes the date MCMLXIII, which is the date of the University's origin.



Argonaut
The "Paper Nautilus"



UWF's original emblem found currently within the Presidential Seal.



ABOVE: Early UWF Athletics logo mark featuring the Argonaut

BELOW: Goldie the Fleece spirited element



The theme and spirit of the sea would continue to be embodied when UWF's first students selected the Argonaut as the mascot. The Argonaut mascot was voted on in a poll by the first student body in 1967 to represent the strength of an athletic legacy to come and was selected based on a Greek myth from the saga of Jason and the Argonauts, telling the story of a band of heroes that took to the sea in search of "the golden fleece."

"Seeking a degree is a voyage, and the golden fleece is an acronym for a diploma because at the end of the voyage you are awarded your golden fleece," DeBolt said.

The "golden fleece" image has become an endeared spirited element for students that has joined the ranks of other student-facing UWF icons. Goldie the Fleece lives alongside campus creatures that have been iconized such as the Argodillo, Sheldon the turtle, Albie the albino squirrel and Bud the deer, representing the robust wildlife found on the UWF main campus.

The Argonaut represents adventurous individuals seeking new experiences and challenges. Further, this meaning deepens through the mascot's connection to the mollusk argonaut, a cephalopod relative of the chambered nautilus, known to similarly voyage the sea.

HISTORIC EXAMPLES of the nautilus shell in UWF marketing materials, courtesy of the UWF library archives.



"The neat thing about the nautilus shell is that it's considered sacred geometry. Every room that the nautilus makes is a larger exact replica of the earlier room."

— Dean DeBolt, University Archivist and Librarian



You can find nautilus shells hidden in the architecture all around UWF's Pensacola campus.



More than 50 years since its inception, the nautilus shell icon remains prominent in UWF's brand and can be found in UWF's new brand campaign, "Happens Here." UWF is aiming to build upon increasing awareness and recognition to raise the profile and positioning of the University through the campaign.

"Our iconic nautilus shell speaks to our constant pursuit of progress and growth and is celebrated in the visuals alongside the people and spaces that make UWF, UWF," said Jennifer Peck, creative director, University Marketing and Communications. "The shell 'rays' have been broken out to create new patterns that give the campaign dimension and movement. This treatment provides a nod to our history and our future."

The campaign sends a message that anything is possible Here.

"'Happens Here' is a perfect vehicle to highlight our various unique strengths that are a source of pride for our stakeholders," Peck said. "It's a natural progression from touting there are 'No Limits' to what we can do and that that atmosphere has yielded innovation, growth, creativity and so much more, and it is all happening right here at UWF. It also provides an organic transition from our capital campaign, 'Here for Good.'"

UWF is defined by innovative learners, caring faculty and staff, champion athletics, and rich traditions. The University's brand reflects the innovation and transformation occurring within our campus community, and the nautilus shell continues to serve as a visual source of pride and unrelenting spirit that exudes from Argonauts everywhere.



Learn more about our new campaign at uwf.edu/HappensHere.

Dr. Kwan-Chen Ma

Ma forges one-on-one relationships with students, helping them manage money and learn valuable life lessons



PROFESSOR MA poses with his students after an Argo Growth Fund Stock recommendation public presentation.

BY ALLISON MORGAN

“One day, I walked in the class and started teaching. Two-thirds into it, I noticed the kids were all looking at me funny,” Ma laughed. “All of sudden, I realized that everyone was wearing black t-shirts, khaki pants, and had parted their hair in the middle, just like me.”

Ma provides students with knowledge that spans from decades of experience in finance, both on Wall Street and in the classroom. Ma earned a bachelor’s degree in engineering from National Chiao-Tung University in Taiwan, and in the early 80’s, he earned an MBA Ph.D. in Finance from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He went to Wall Street for 10 years and then started his own hedge funds. His investment company, KCM Asset Management, has been the manager for many top ranked hedge funds. Over the course of his career, he has taught at several institutions. Most recently, Ma taught a student investment program at Stetson University until 2019, when he was asked to build a student-managed fund program at UWF.

For the last 15 years, under his capacity, the student-managed portfolios secured 15 championships and four second-place awards for actual stock and bond portfolio performances in the national R.I.S.E and G.A.M.E. Competitions. The G.A.M.E. competition gathers some of the most successful people in finance together to share their knowledge, expertise and outlook for the future with graduate and undergraduate students. Lorenzo Weber ’25, was one of a group of students who won the 2025 Southeastern Hedge Fund Strategy Competition, hosted by the J. Mack Robinson College of Business at Georgia State University in the Spring of 2025.

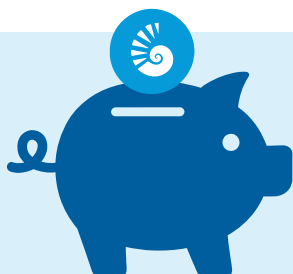
“Dr. Ma didn’t just teach us theory; he showed us how to navigate the real world of finance,” Weber said. “From using Bloomberg and analyzing market data, to building presentations that are engaging and keeping the audience interested, his classes were packed with practical, hands-on lessons. His mentorship during the Southeastern Hedge Fund Competition was a game changer. His insights and honest feedback were critical to our team winning first place. That experience, along with everything he taught us, directly opened the doors to the opportunities I’m pursuing in finance today.”

In his spare time, Ma enjoys spending time with his pets, raising koi and gardening.

Dr. Kwan-Chen Ma not only develops students into finance experts, but he also equips them with life skills, setting them up for personal and professional success. So much so, his students have likened him to fictional character Mr. Miyagi, who taught Daniel-san karate in the movie, “The Karate Kid.” Instead of just teaching the basics of how to kick and punch, Mr. Miyagi taught life lessons in his exercises. Ma prides himself on doing the same as a Mary Ball Washington/Switzer Bros. Endowed Professor of Finance in UWF’s Lewis Bear Jr. College of Business.

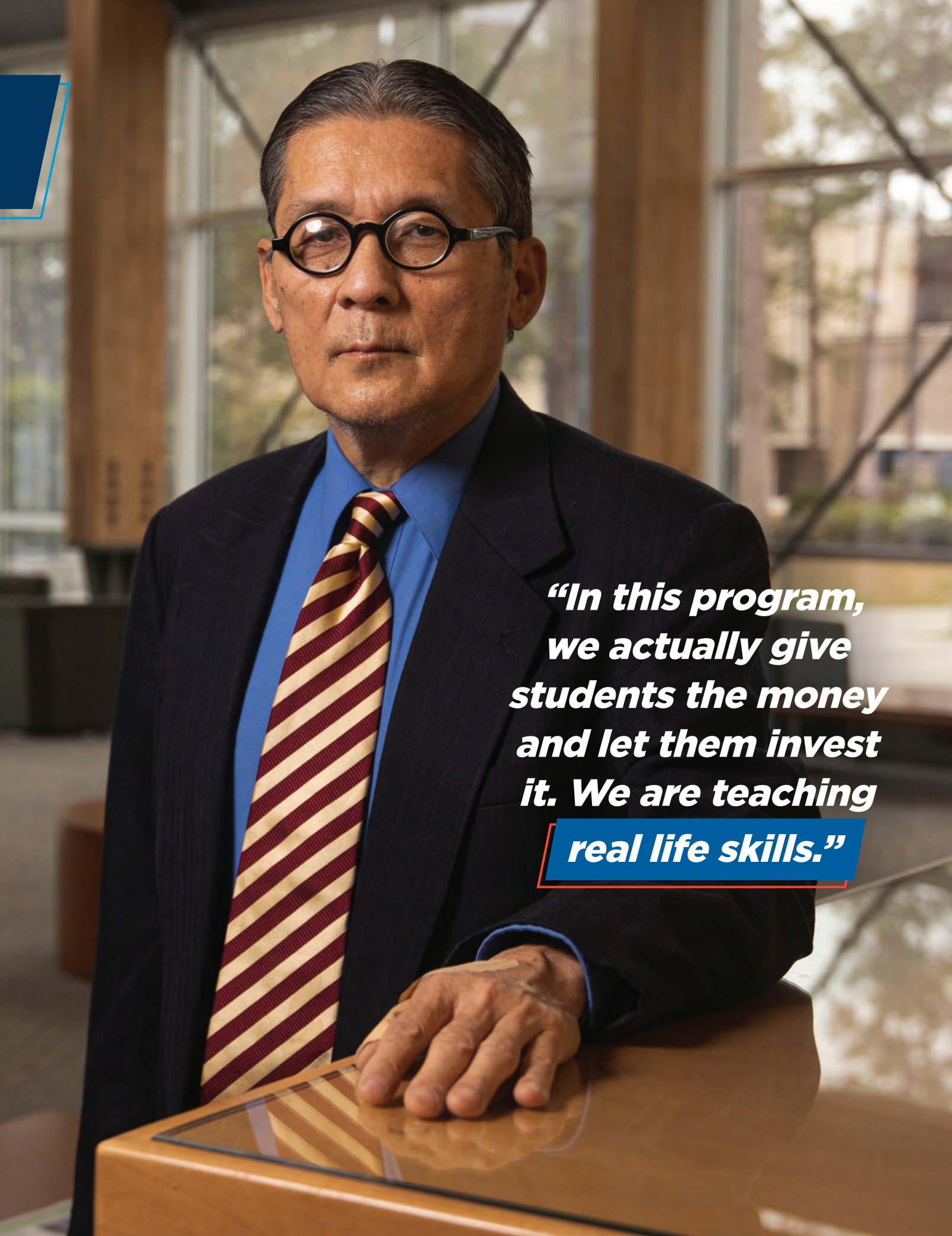
“On Halloween one year, one of my students dressed up as me in the costume of Mr. Miyagi, and the other student as Daniel-san,” Ma said. “In this program, we actually give students the money and let them invest it instead of just giving them a lecture, making them learn formulas and regurgitating on an exam. We are teaching real life skills.”

In the Argo Investment Program, students are mentored by Ma and have the unique opportunity to manage real money with the UWF Foundation funds. Ma has the responsibility of reporting results and board governance. Ma says helping each student with their portfolios individually allows him to have a one-on-one relationship with students. And while they talk numbers a lot, they also have fun.



“Dr. Ma didn’t just teach us theory; he showed us how to navigate the real world of finance. From using Bloomberg and analyzing market data, to building presentations that are engaging and keeping the audience interested, his classes were packed with practical, hands-on lessons.”

— Lorenzo Weber ’25

A middle-aged man with dark hair and glasses, wearing a dark suit, blue shirt, and a red and gold striped tie. He is standing in front of a large window with a wooden frame, looking directly at the camera. His right hand is resting on a wooden surface in the foreground. A blue graphic element is visible in the top left corner.

***“In this program,
we actually give
students the money
and let them invest
it. We are teaching
real life skills.”***





2025 NCAA DII NATIONAL CHAMPIONS



LEGACY FORGED ON HOLE 10

BY CLAIRE STEWART



On a rainy day in May, five UWF golfers were tasked with an unprecedented challenge.

It was day five of the NCAA DII National Championship tournament at the PGA National Resort in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida, and the Argos had been in a relentless marathon of play, completing six rounds of golf in five days.

They had outlasted 20 teams in competitive stroke play and navigated the intensity of match play, but it all came down to one single hole. The tension was palpable and the stakes were high. But just as the Argonauts of legend navigated impossible seas to claim their prize, this UWF team rose to the occasion, not only winning, but etching their names into the collegiate golf record books.



*“I knew that if anyone had a chance to beat them, **it was us.**”*

— Steve Fell, coach of the UWF Men's Golf team



Per Ekelund surveys his shot during the 2025 National Championships.

THE QUEST TO PLAYOFFS

Leading up to the national championship, the 2025 season had been a successful one for the Argos. They won five tournaments, including the GSC Championship – the team's 21st conference championship in program history. Four of the five players competing at the national championship had an individual tournament win under their belt.

Going into the competition, the team knew they would likely face a daunting competitor during the tournament – Colorado Christian University. CCU was ranked No. 1 in the nation the entirety of the season, had four First Team All-Americans, were defending national champions and won every tournament they competed in during the 2025 season at the Division II level.

“I knew that if anyone had a chance to beat them, it was us,” said Steve Fell, coach of the UWF Men's Golf team for the last 31 seasons.

In the championship match against the CCU Cougars, the Argos knew they needed to be methodical in their play.

PGA National is a notoriously tricky course, home to the infamous ‘Bear Trap’

– the four-hole stretch from 15 to 18. This challenging stretch can quickly break down a leading competitor's advantage and change the outcome of a tournament if the golfers aren't measured in their play.

“It is a strategic course. You can't just hit drivers and hope for the best. You have to be focused on the ultimate game plan,” said Phil Ebert, assistant athletic director for academics and student-athlete development. “When you are behind, it is easy to get aggressive. But they all stuck to the plan.”

Argo golfer TJ Thompson was paired against the top player in the country, Adam Duncan of CCU.

“To me, it didn't matter who I went up against in the final match – I just wanted to go out there and play my absolute best,” Thompson said. “Coming down the stretch, I started to feel the heat a little bit, and that's really when I felt like I had to do something for the team.”

After being down four strokes to Duncan, Thompson won three straight holes starting on No. 13 to cut the deficit to one. Thompson birdied the challenging No. 17 par 3 to tie the match. On the final hole, Thompson drilled a 20-foot putt to match Duncan's birdie.

Against the odds and fierce competition, the Argos fought hard and ended match play in a 2.5 to 2.5 tie with Colorado Christian.

**Eddie Lee
and his teammates
played 108 holes in 6
days at the National
Championship
tournament.**

THE FINAL PUTT

This year, a new NCAA rule determined that a tie in the finals would be broken by all five players from each team competing on a single hole, with the four lowest scores being combined to determine a winner. The teams squared off on hole No. 10, a 545-yard par 5.

Per Ekelund knocked in an incredible 70-foot putt to lock in an eagle on the hole, giving the Argos an early advantage. Thompson and Fabian Wennerlof both shot birdies, and Cooper Tendick made a bogey.

In the final moments of play, after an incredible 50-yard bunker shot, it all came down to junior Eddie Lee, who needed a two-putt to secure the victory. Earlier in the week, Lee finished tied sixth in stroke play, so his confidence was running high. As the crowd held their breath with anticipation, Lee buried his putt from eight feet out to seal the Argonauts' third national title in men's golf, its first since 2008.

"We talked about that moment – the winning moment – every day since the fall," Ekelund said. "It can't be put into words how special that moment was."



**Coach Steve Fell was
named GSC Coach
of the Year, South
Region Coach of
the Year and Dave
Williams Coach of
the Year Finalist.**





ACCOLADES ABOUND

As the first NCAA championship win in six years for a University of West Florida athletic team, the campus and community were buzzing with excitement for the team. After the tournament, the team and coach were recognized with multiple national and regional honors:

- Tendick was named GSC Golfer of the Year and a Jack Nicklaus Award Finalist.
- Coach Fell was named GSC Coach of the Year, South Region Coach of the Year and Dave Williams Coach of the Year Finalist.
- Mason Minkel, Ekelund, Lee, Tendick, Thompson and Wennerlof were named to the PING All-South Region team.
- Ekelund, Wennerlof, Tendick and Thompson were named All-GSC first team, and Lee was named All-GSC second team.
- All five championship players were named on the PING All-America Team List: Tendick (First Team), Ekelund and Thompson (Second Team), Lee and Wennerlof (Honorable Mention list).
- Tendick, Lee and Thompson were named NCAA Division II Cobalt Golf All-America Scholars.



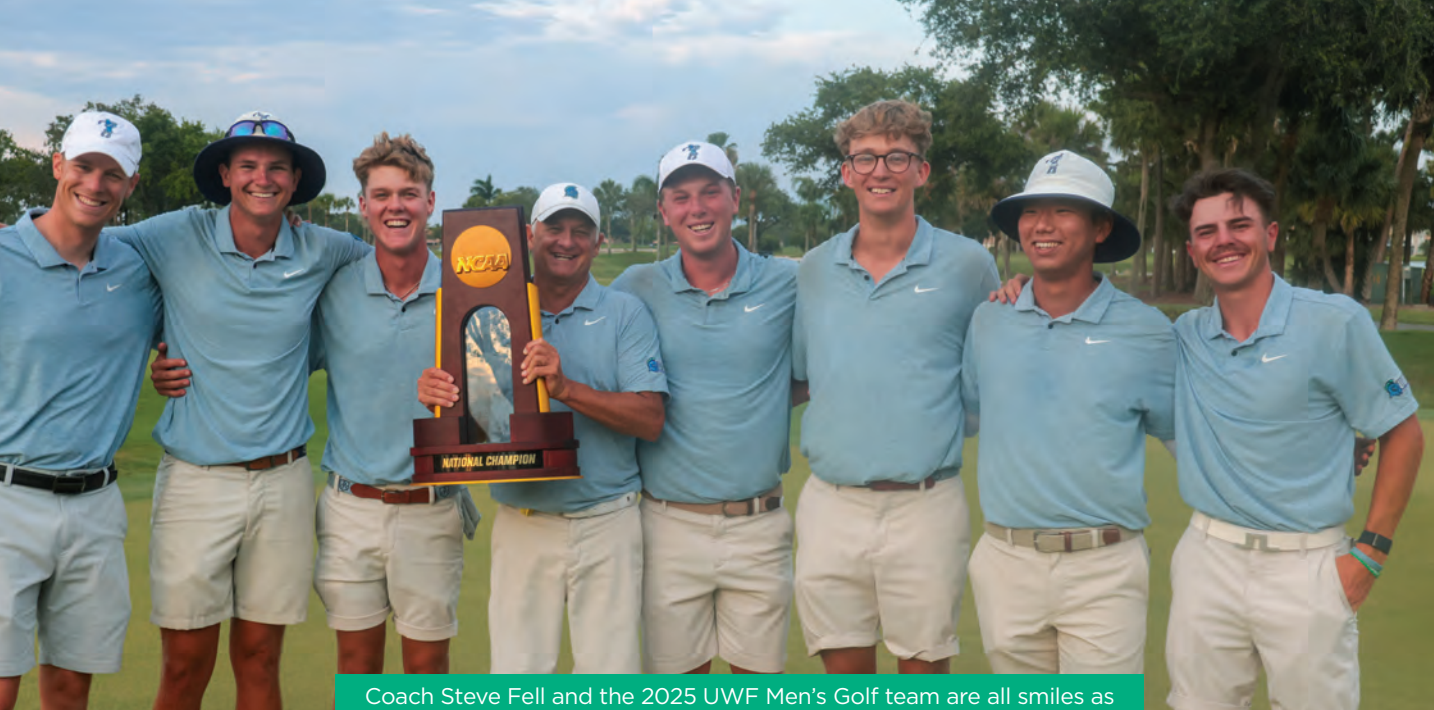
Above: Fabian Wennerlof examines a putt.

Left: Cooper Tendick drives a ball down course.

Below: TJ Thompson lets it fly.



GO



Coach Steve Fell and the 2025 UWF Men's Golf team are all smiles as they celebrate their NCAA DII National Championship win.

*“We talked about that moment – **the winning moment** – every day since the fall. It can’t be put into words how special that moment was.”*

— Per Ekelund

A CHAMPIONSHIP BUILT BY COMMUNITY

After three decades at the helm of the program, Coach Fell reflected on his history with the Argos, noting that while some aspects of his teams have remained steadfast, other forces have dramatically changed his teams for the better.

“One thing that has never changed is our culture,” Fell said. “We have built that culture over the years, and it represents a commitment to being the best and always being supportive of our teammates. From the start of the season to the very last day, we are focusing on each other and on winning a championship.”

What truly set this season apart, he explained, was the remarkable support he found within the UWF community, in-

cluding administrators, support staff, the Pensacola Country Club and other surrounding courses.

“First, I could not have done this without Phil Ebert, who assisted as a second coach throughout the championship and guided the players through difficult rounds and shots,” Fell said.

“Another crucial member of the team was Mason Minkel, our 6th player and alternate for the travel squad at the tournament. He helped me with pairings during match play and encouraged his teammates throughout the course each day.”

Coach Fell also said that his golfers would not have been able to successfully play 108 holes in six days without their strength and conditioning coach, Kyle Rank.

“In my opinion, he is the best in the country,” Fell said in regards to Rank. “Be-

cause of the critical workouts he put the team through during the season, they had better stamina than many other teams competing. It can be a tiring week, but they were able to push through and succeed because of their training.”

“Along with the nerves that we needed to manage, the fatigue of six days is something that we work all year to avoid,” Tenedick said. “We put in work at the gym to have the endurance so that the fitness aspect wouldn’t hold us back.”

Finally, members of the team mentioned the critical role that UWF supporters had on their success as a team.

“We are so thankful to our alumni and donors for their support,” Lee said. “These accomplishments would not be possible without them, and we will continue to bring more trophies and success to UWF.”

ARGOS



Archaeology IN ACTION

Finding Fort Kirkland

BY MICAYLA YATES

In the woods of Northwest Florida, a team of University of West Florida archaeologists and students are searching for a lost piece of history – Fort Kirkland, a 19th-century militia outpost that once stood during a pivotal moment in the region's past.

Thanks to a \$250,000 grant secured by Florida State Representative Patt Maney, the University of West Florida's Archaeology Institute is leading a multi-phase project to locate the lost site. Their mission: to uncover and honor a forgotten chapter from the Second Creek and Seminole Wars that serves as an important cultural touchpoint.

The project was sparked by growing community interest. For generations, residents of Okaloosa County have passed down stories of a "fort" built during a period of escalating conflict after Florida's transition from Spanish to American control in 1821.

"This project is about answering a question the local community has asked for generations," said Dr. Ramie Gougeon, director of the Archaeology Institute and chair of UWF's Department of Anthropology. "The stories passed down about Fort Kirkland may reflect a fortified cabin rather than a formal military installation, but that only deepens the historical value. It's a chance to uncover the everyday lives of families, militias and


TOP LEFT The field team carefully documents artifact "signatures" that may give them more clues as to where the fort was located.

BOTTOM RIGHT The field team discovered many bullet casings in the search for Fort Kirkland.



“This experience gave students a chance to apply GIS and georeferencing skills in a real research setting, using historic maps to better understand how people interacted with the landscape over time.”

— Jennifer Melcher,
UWF Archaeology Institute



The field team conducted a metal detecting survey near Fort Kirkland Branch, a river tributary that may hold clues to the site's location.

Native Americans whose stories don't appear in military archives — only in the archaeological record.”

The team began by conducting extensive historical research and spatial analysis. Students in UWF's Anthropology program used Geographic Information Systems, known as GIS, to compare 19th-century hand-drawn maps with modern satellite images, identifying high-probability locations for the fort.

“This experience gave students a chance to apply GIS and georeferencing skills in a real research setting, using historic maps to better understand how people interacted with the landscape over time,” said Jennifer Melcher, a faculty research associate with the UWF Archaeology Institute.

Fieldwork began in Spring 2025 with a metal detecting survey near Fort Kirkland Branch, a river tributary that may hold clues to the site's location. Students partnered with veterans from the Task Force Dagger Foundation and were trained by experts from Advanced Metal Detecting for the Archaeologist with the goal of uncovering artifact “signatures,” like metal tools, fasteners or ammunition, that might indicate 1800s activity.

Despite no confirmed physical evidence of a fort in the survey areas yet, the team remains optimistic. While some students uncovered only modern debris, like beer cans or bullets, each discovery helps narrow down the possibilities of the fort's location.

“Even if we never find Fort Kirkland, the information we gain while searching for it could still lead to other


historic discoveries,” said Nick Linzy, a UWF graduate student in historical archaeology who participated in the search.

Since March, the team has focused on community outreach to help move the search forward.

“We've been engaging with residents and community groups to gather any oral histories, family stories or place-based knowledge that might offer new leads,” said Nicole Grinnan, assistant director of the UWF Archaeology Institute. “Sometimes, the most valuable clues come from people who have lived on or near the land for generations.”

Additional fieldwork is planned for Fall 2025, with hopes of gaining access to more privately owned land parcels in the Fort Kirkland Branch area. If the site is confirmed, UWF has been asked to help install a historical marker and share findings with the public through talks and displays for local museums and libraries.

While the site remains a mystery for now, the UWF team continues seeking out new data that may yield new clues, training future archaeologists, and helping preserve the stories that have shaped Northwest Florida.



USHA KUNDU, MD COLLEGE OF HEALTH

Celebrates

A DECADE OF IMPACT

BY MICAYLA YATES

Since its creation in 2015, the University of West Florida's Usha Kundu, MD College of Health has rapidly become a regional leader in health education, research and community impact. In its first decade, the college has expanded innovative academic programs, forged strategic partnerships, invested in cutting-edge facilities and advanced groundbreaking research — all while preparing a skilled health care workforce to meet regional needs. This timeline highlights the major milestones and accomplishments that have defined the college's legacy over the past decade.

2015 A New College is Born

In August 2015, UWF launched the College of Health, completing a major academic reorganization designed to enhance efficiency, visibility and community impact. The new college emerged from the division of the former College of Science, Engineering and Health, bringing together key programs including nursing, public health, psychology, athletic training and more. Dr. Ermalynn Kiehl was appointed as the inaugural dean, bringing years of leadership and experience in nursing education. This milestone marked UWF's commitment to addressing critical health care challenges through innovation, collaboration and education.

2016

Innovative Partnerships and Cutting-Edge Tools

In 2016, UWF signed a landmark partnership with the Andrews Research & Education Foundation, opening new doors for collaboration in sports medicine research, education and community outreach. Later that year, the college opened its new Applied Anatomy and Physiology Laboratory, featuring three state-of-the-art synthetic cadavers, called SynDavers, that gave students immersive training in anatomy and clinical skills across multiple disciplines.

2017

A Transformational Gift and a New Name

In 2017, a \$5 million gift from Dr. Usha and Mahadeb Kundu — one of the largest in UWF history — led to the college being renamed the Usha Kundu, MD College of Health. The donation funded experiential learning, faculty development and advanced research equipment. Dr. Kundu, a respected OB-GYN and longtime Pensacola physician, said the gift was a way to give back to a community that had supported her family for decades.

2018

New Facilities and Breakthrough Research

The college made major strides in 2018, both in infrastructure and academic achievement. In April, UWF celebrated the grand opening of University Park Center, a 32,700-square-foot, \$7 million facility serving the Usha Kundu, MD College of Health, UWF Athletics and Florida State University College of Medicine's Pensacola campus. Now renamed the Darrell Gooden Center, the space deepened partnerships and expanded opportunities for collaborative medical training and research. The same year, UWF faculty member Dr. Youngil Lee published research showing that endurance exercise could help regenerate neurons damaged by Parkinson's disease. The research, featured in prestigious journals, elevated UWF's standing in biomedical science and positioned UWF at the forefront of innovative, multidisciplinary health research.





As the COVID-19 pandemic surged, UWF nursing students stepped up to serve the local community by administering vaccines across Northwest Florida. More than 50 students worked alongside licensed professionals at clinics in partnership with Ascension Sacred Heart and the Escambia County Health Department. Supervised by faculty, students delivered hundreds of doses daily, supporting public health efforts while gaining essential real-world experience.



In 2023, UWF faculty and students made strides in health technology and research, developing Pulsed Medical LED goggles for early Alzheimer's detection and partnering with Farcast Biosciences on a precision cancer treatment research program targeting lung, ovarian and breast cancers. Meanwhile, the college enhanced student learning with expanded virtual reality clinical simulations using UbiSim and introduced three Anatomage virtual dissection tables, offering immersive, interactive anatomy experiences for students.



A new agreement in 2024 facilitated a seamless transition from associate's degree programs at Coastal Alabama Community College to bachelor's degree programs in health care at UWF. That same year, UWF and Santa Rosa Medical Center launched the STAR Center, a cutting-edge simulation facility providing immersive, hands-on training for master's nursing students. Together, these efforts enhanced workforce development and addressed critical nursing shortages in the region.

Nursing Students on COVID-19 Front Lines 2021

Advancing Health Innovation and Student Training 2023

Expanding Nursing Pathways and Simulation Training 2024

2025 Achieving 10 Years of Success

2019

First Nurse Practitioner Class Graduates

In December 2019, the first cohort of the Earl and Nancy Hutto Master of Science in Nursing, Family Nurse Practitioner program graduated. The rigorous program equips students to deliver comprehensive, patient-centered care, addressing the growing need for health care providers, especially in rural and underserved areas.

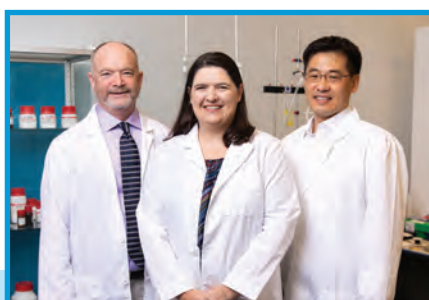
2022

Pioneering Early Alzheimer's Detection Technology

In 2022, UWF psychology professor Dr. James Arruda signed a licensing agreement with BIOPAC Systems Inc. to develop an affordable, non-invasive EEG device aimed at detecting early-stage Alzheimer's. The project exemplified UWF's growing impact in translating faculty research into real-world health care solutions.

In 2025, the college marked its 10th anniversary with a celebration honoring community leaders making an impact in health care and launching a \$25,000 scholarship endowment in honor of founding dean Dr. Ermalynn Kiehl to support students and college initiatives. The year also brought record academic success, with nursing graduates achieving a 97.67% first-time NCLEX-RN pass rate – well above state and national averages – reflecting the strength of UWF's academics and clinical training.

As it enters its second decade, the Usha Kundu, MD College of Health remains focused on innovation, collaboration and student success. With a strong foundation and a clear vision for the future, the college is poised to continue shaping the next generation of health care leaders across the region and beyond.



UNIVERSITY of WEST FLORIDA COLLEGE OF ARTS, SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES

PRESENTS

GULF COAST *Culture*

PENSACOLA NOIR

JOIN US FOR THIS SEASON'S

Gulf Coast Culture Series

An immersive celebration of the Gulf Coast's rich cultural tapestry, this year celebrating Pensacola Noir.

Visit uwf.edu/GulfCoastCulture for more information.



UNIVERSITY of WEST FLORIDA

MEET GREG THREADGILL

The New President of the
UWF Alumni Association

HELLO ARGOS!

I'm honored to introduce myself as the new president of the Alumni Association, alongside Vice President Kishane Patel '18. We have the distinct privilege of representing our incredible network of more than 100,000 UWF alumni across the world.

I graduated from UWF in 1992, and I have seen the University change and evolve over the years. I owe a lot to UWF including my valuable education, some lifelong friendships and a community that has supported me in every stage of my life. My love for UWF runs deep, and you can usually find me cheering on the Argos at many UWF sporting events. I hope to see many of you this fall at a football game!

As an alumni board, our primary focus is to foster connections with each and every one of you as we work to further enhance our alumni community. Your involvement and support is essential to our future success as a University. As alumni, there are many ways to connect with your Argo roots and contribute to the success of our beloved alma mater:

- Join us for an alumni event near you.
- Connect with us on social media using @uwfalumni and #UWFAumni.
- Become a Sustaining Alumni member.

I look forward to my new role, and I hope to meet many of you in the coming months and learn more about your experiences at UWF.



Greg Threadgill '92
President
UWF Alumni Association



UWF Alumni Association Vice President Kishane Patel (left) and President Greg Threadgill (right)

UWF HOMECOMING



SAVE THE DATE

Join us **October 6-11** for UWF Alumni Homecoming Week. To find a list of events for you to participate in, visit

uwf.edu/alumni/homecoming

JD Thomas

Regional Vice President of the South Central Region of the Americas, Crane Worldwide Logistics



JD THOMAS with his son and his wife, Kate, who is also a UWF alumna.



During his freshman year at UWF, JD Thomas chose to take an elective course in supply chain logistics. At the time, the decision to take the course seemed somewhat insignificant, but shortly after, he realized how opportune it was.

"I decided to take an intro to supply chain course with Dr. Scott Keller after a friend recommended it, and I very quickly realized that this might be how I'm wired; I became immediately fascinated by transportation and supply chain."

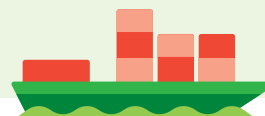
Thomas said UWF's Supply Chain Logistics Management Program gave him more opportunities to get hands-on experience and networking opportunities than he could've imagined, allowing him to see the industry from a variety of perspectives. These experiences further reinforced his passion for supply chain as his career.

"Dr. Keller was personally invested in my success," Thomas said. "He then helped network me into compa-

nies for internships and ultimately introduced me to the company I've worked with for 17 years. I left UWF with courage that I could do anything."

Thomas earned a BSBA in Finance from UWF and later an MBA from Texas A&M University. In his current role at Crane Worldwide Logistics in Houston, he runs one of the company's six regions and manages the operational and commercial teams in those markets throughout the southern U.S. JD and his wife Kate, who is also a UWF alumna, are based in Houston, Texas, where Crane Worldwide's Global Headquarters is located.

'08





Jessica Klodnicki

Former Chief Executive Officer, KT Tape®



'95

For Jessica Klodnicki, success hasn't just been about climbing the corporate ladder – it's been about aligning her work with what moves her.

Klodnicki built her career leading iconic active lifestyle brands like KT Tape®, Mizuno, Bell Helmets and CamelBak, driven by a deep belief that work should align with personal passion.

"My free time and work seamlessly integrated, making work feel like play," Klodnicki said. "It allowed me to work hard on behalf of my businesses, invest in the communities we served and have a really great time doing it!"

An avid mountain biker, Klodnicki founded Girls Rock, a women's mountain biking organization, and served on the boards of PeopleForBikes and the International Mountain Bicycling Association. She cur-

rently serves on the board of directors for footwear platform KNS International and outdoor recreation platform Gathr Outdoors.

Klodnicki's career path was shaped by her time at UWF, where a conversation with professor Dr. Martha D. Saunders led her to the communications and marketing field.

"She recommended that I take an advertising class over the summer, and I fell in love," Klodnicki said.

She changed her major to communications and interned with the U.S. Olympic Bobsled Federation, exposing her to the world of sports marketing and public relations.

"While in reality, even jobs you're passionate about come with challenges and hard work, I believe that if your work aligns with your passion, it will never feel burdensome."



AS AN AVID mountain biker, skier and yogi, Jessica Klodnicki loves to work on businesses and brands that align with her lifestyle.



Smile!

Whether we gather at commencement, a banquet, networking event or tailgate, 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.



Hosted in partnership with International Paper, the Arbor Day Market at UWF celebrated UWF's beautiful 1,600-acre campus and the University's recognition by the Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree Campus Higher Education. The event included tree giveaways, guided tours of the Edward Ball Nature Trail and vendor booths.



International Music Night provided an opportunity for students and community members from across the world to share music and dances from other countries, learn about new cultures and enjoy a night of fun.



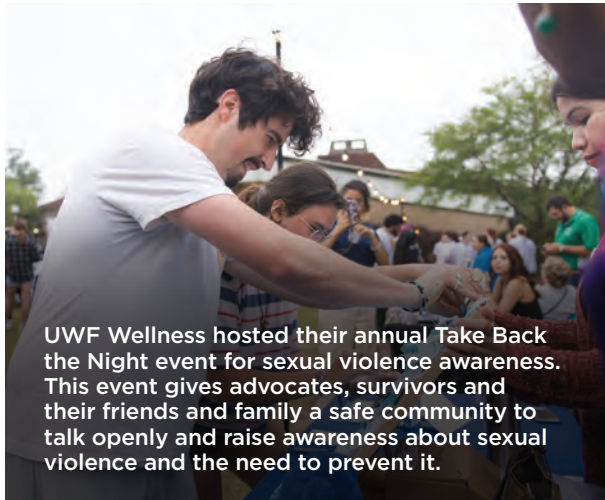
The UWF Department of Theatre presented *Fiddler on the Roof* in the Mainstage Theatre at the Center for Fine and Performing Arts.



UWF President Emeritus Martha Saunders served as the Pensacola Mardi Gras Grand Marshal for the 2025 Pensacola Grand Mardi Gras parade in downtown Pensacola.



The Art Gallery (TAG) at the University of West Florida proudly presented the "TAGGED" Student Art and Design Exhibition 2025, an annual juried showcase celebrating the creativity of UWF students.



UWF Wellness hosted their annual Take Back the Night event for sexual violence awareness. This event gives advocates, survivors and their friends and family a safe community to talk openly and raise awareness about sexual violence and the need to prevent it.



The UWF Aylstock, Witkin, Kreis & Overholtz Center for Leadership hosted the 11th annual Women in Leadership Conference in partnership with title sponsor, KIA Autosports. The conference reached a sold-out crowd of more than 430 students, young professionals and executives, as well as over 200 who attended online via livestream.



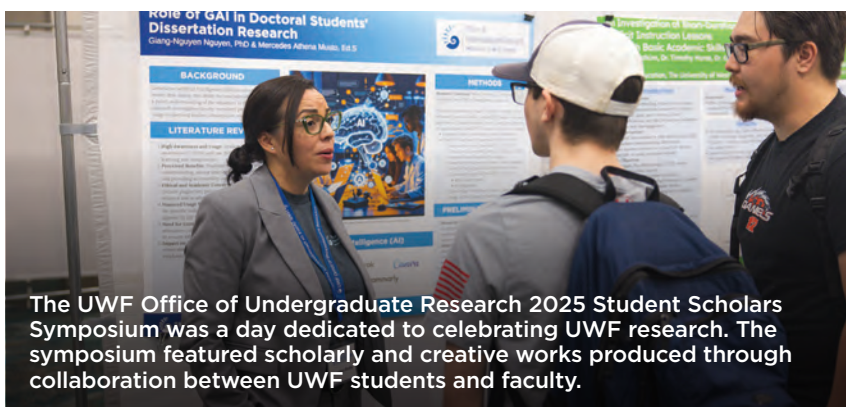
UWF held its annual Donor Recognition Dinner in the UWF Fieldhouse to thank the ardent donors that have provided continual support throughout the fiscal year.



The Haas Center at UWF celebrated its 30th anniversary with a luncheon at the Museum of Commerce to commemorate three decades of service to our region.



Hosted during Founders Week 2025, the Argo Pantry Food Fight challenged faculty, staff and students to see which group could collect the most nonperishable food items to replenish the Argo Pantry on the UWF Campus.



The UWF Office of Undergraduate Research 2025 Student Scholars Symposium was a day dedicated to celebrating UWF research. The symposium featured scholarly and creative works produced through collaboration between UWF students and faculty.



Argos Day of Service, hosted during Founders Week, included service projects like a beach clean up and volunteering at Manna Food Pantry. This day is an opportunity for alumni, staff and supporters to give back to their community with fellow Argos.

Class Notes

1960s

'69 **Eugenia Buchanan, B.S. Biology**; was elected to the Pensacola Historic Preservation Society Board.

'69 & '71 **Norma B. Muller, B.A. History & M.A. English**; was elected to the Pensacola Historic Preservation Society Board.

'69 **David L. Walby, B.A. History**; Walby was elected to the Pensacola Historic Preservation Society Board.

1970s

'70 **Richard M. Fountain, B.A. Accounting**; was recognized for Expertise in Law, Taxation, Higher Education, and Academic Administration in Marquis Who's Who.

1980s

'84 **Jennifer A. Dodrill, B.A. Communication Arts**; released the second book in the Empty Nesters Cozy Mystery series titled, "Where's the Quetzal?" in Feb. 2025.

'84 **Maj. Thomas L. Lusk (USAF Ret.), MBA**; was recognized for Excellence in Data Management and Integration in Marquis Who's Who.

'84 **Jennifer Stone, B.A. Accounting Information Systems**; was appointed Head of Audit at Pen Air Federal Credit Union.

'86 **Kenneth B. Dunlap, B.S. Physical Education**; was hired as the Visiting Clubhouse Manager for the Biloxi Shuckers minor league baseball team.

1990s

'91 **Dr. Cody J. Arvidson, B.A. Psychology**; was acknowledged by The Inner Circle as a Pinnacle Professional Member for her contributions to academic success and personal development.

'95 **Dr. Charles B. Alvaré, B.A. Middle School Education**; was selected as Florida's 2025 Assistant Principal of the Year by the Florida Department of Education.

'95 **Steven H. Goldsmith, B.A. Communication Arts**; joined Orlando-based Westgate Resorts as VP of Communications and Public Relations.

'95 **Gregory E. Stahel, MBA**; joined the DSC Dredge leadership team as director of manufacturing.

'97 & '05 **Dr. Kimberly J. Brewer, B.A. Elementary Education & M.Ed.**

Educational Leadership; was named assistant superintendent for Madison County Schools in Mississippi.

'98 & '99 **Kristie F. Kelley (Tittle), B.S. Preprofessional Biology & M.Ed. Educational Leadership**; graduated from Leadership Northwest Florida, a seven-month program designed to foster regional collaboration and development.

'99 & '00 **David J. Bryant, B.A. Accounting & MAcc**; was selected as the new Chief Audit Executive at the University of West Florida.

'99 **Shirley A. Graham, B.A. Music Education**; was recognized as Educator of the Year at Zachry Middle School in San Antonio, Texas.

'99 & '02 **Ildiko Hosman, BSBA Marketing & M.A. Communication Arts**; graduated from Leadership Northwest Florida, a seven-month program designed to foster regional collaboration and development.

2000s

'00 & '07 **Katherine C. Gartman, B.A. Communication Arts & MSA**; was named Vice President of External Relations for Baptist Health Care in Pensacola.

'00 **Christopher Hall, MBA**; joined the APMdigest Vendor Forum.

'00 **Jeremy L. Richards, Esq., B.A. Criminal Justice**; was appointed as a Criminal Attorney of the State of Tennessee's 10th Judicial District.

'01 **Jennifer M. Wakefield, B.A. Communication Arts**; was recognized with the Excellence in Public Relations by the Richmond, Virginia, Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America.

'02 **Stephen S. Wrighton, B.S. Computer Science**; was named Chief Technology Officer at Agile Auto, Inc.

'03 **Dr. Tina M. Penhollow, M.S. Health Education**; published her latest book, "Sex in the Villages: Unconventional Tips to Enhance Sexual Health and Wellness in Retirement."

'03 **Crystal Phelps, B.A. Elementary Education**; was named Elberta Middle School's Teacher of the Year in Lillian, Alabama.

'04 & '09 **Dr. Samuel K. Bland, M.Ed. Educational Leadership & Ed.S.**; was hired as principal of Geneva County High School in Hartford, Alabama.

'05 **Melissa J. Baker, B.A. Psychology**; was hired as the ninth head coach of the Women's Basketball program at Emporia State University in Emporia, Kansas.

'05 **Nicolle M. Cestero, M.A. Industrial/Organizational Psychology**; was selected to be the 13th president of American International College in Springfield, Massachusetts.

'05 **Jodi Dubose, B.A. Communication Arts**; was recognized as a member of the American Bankruptcy Institute's "40 under 40" program.

'05 **Dr. Summer N. Forester, B.S. Hospitality, Recreation and Resort Management**; was awarded Tenure at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota.

'05 **Sean J. Reeves, B.A. Criminal Justice**; was elected as a shareholder at Marshall Dennehey.

'05 & '08 **Timothy L. Roberts, B.A. & M.A. History**; was named Executive Director of the Rancho Los Alamitos Foundation, which is responsible for the Rancho Los Alamitos Historic Ranch House & Gardens in Long Beach, California.

'05 **LaNiece R. Tyree, MPA**; was elected president of the National Association of College Auxiliary Services.

'06 **Jason L. Booth, B.A. Music**; Petty Officer 1st Class Booth was named the Commander, 7th Fleet 2024 Shore Sailor of the Year.

'07 **Jeffrey E. Cole, B.S. Environmental Science**; served for 25 years in the U.S. Army and is now working at Florida Power & Light as a senior environmental specialist.

'08 **Ashley R. Kotwal, B.S. Engineering Technology**; was recognized for Excellence in the Field of Operational Management in Marquis Who's Who.

'09 **Jessica F. Leavins, B.A. Psychology**; was selected as first deputy city manager of Crestview, Florida.

2010s

'10 & '16 **Will F. Condon, B.A. Communication Arts & MSA Health Care Administration**; was added to ServisFirst Bank Northwest Florida Board of Directors. He also was awarded the Pensacola Area Commitment to Excellence, or PACE, Award for Professional Leader of the Year.

'11 **Kevin William Boyer, B.A. English**; was promoted to the newly created role of Project Compliance Manager for the City of Pensacola.

'11 **Tierra S. Terry, M.A. Counseling Psychology**; was selected as the new head coach for the Winston-Salem State University Women's Basketball team.

'12 **Hope B. Poole, BSN**; joined Southeast Health's Cardiovascular Institute in Dothan, Alabama.

'14 **Emerald A. Barton, B.A. Exceptional Student Education**; was a semifinalist in the 2025 Reader's Digest "America's Favorite Teacher" contest.

'14 & '16 **Ruthie Noel, B.A. Psychology & M.A. Industrial-Organizational Psychology**; served as President of Leadership Northwest Florida, a seven-month program designed to foster regional collaboration and development.

'15 **Jessica L. Gow, B.A. Political Science**; was promoted to partner at Cobb Cole in Daytona Beach, Florida.

'15 **Daryl D. Kornrardy, M.Ed. Educational Leadership**; was named principal at Deep Creek Elementary School in Englewood, Florida.

'15 MSgt Cailin Molina, B.A. International Studies; has served in the Air Force Reserves for 18 years and recently secured a full-time position in the Pentagon.

'16 Sarah Ayala, B.A. Exceptional Student Education; presented at the Louisiana Association of Special Education Administrators conference on the topic of preparing students with intellectual disabilities for university-based postsecondary education and transition programming.

'18 & '20 Tate A. Lehtio, BSBA Management & MBA; was named regional sales manager at employEZ.

'18 Kishane J. Patel, B.A. Political Science; was named one of Asian American Hotel Owners Association's "35 Under 35," a distinction celebrating leaders in hospitality who are driving innovation and redefining the industry.

2020s

'20 Dr. Madison A. Burt, B.S. Exercise Science; earned a Doctorate in Physical Therapy from the University of South Alabama in May 2025.

'21 D'Anthony J. Bell, B.A. Communication; signed with the Seattle Seahawks NFL team as a safety.

'21 Amber Mariano Davis, M.A. Political Science; is serving as an appointed senior policy adviser in the U.S. Department of Education.

'22 Janice Cooper Holmes, M.A. Strategic Communication and Leadership; joined Hilton as senior manager, platform activation in their Commercial Services Division.

'22 Elizabeth N. Long, B.A. Communication; was promoted to Marketing Manager at the Hyatt Regency Clearwater Beach Resort and Spa.

'22 Todd H. Sanderson, B.A. Communication; was hired as Creative Services Manager for the Biloxi Shuckers minor league baseball team.

'23 Shawna Cole, M.Ed. Educational Leadership; was named Assistant Principal at Pepperell High School in Lindale, Georgia.

'23 Olivia J. Wilson, B.A. Communication & B.A. Music and an Outside Field; Wilson and her sister's band, the Lightyear Sisters, debuted their first music video, 'Pancakes.' It was co-directed by '21 Chase Livingston, B.A. Communication.

'24 Virgil Lemons, BSBA Professional Accountancy; signed with the NFL's Tennessee Titans as an undrafted free agent.

'25 Dalton Neuschwander, BSBA Management Information Systems; was drafted by the Baltimore Orioles during the 2025 MLB draft.

In Memoriam

Alumni

'69 Alyne H. Farrell, B.A. Psychology

'69 Julian E. Harrison, B.A. History

'69 Alice C. Woolam, B.A. Mathematics

'70 & '85 Sharon Bint, B.A. Spanish & M.Ed.

'70 & '72 Jean P. Deschenes, B.S. Management & MBA

'70 Kenneth N. Manziek, B.A. Political Science

'70 Joseph F. Odom, B.S. Management

'70 Rod Presnell, B.S. Biology

'70 & '78 Jenese C. Truelsen, B.A. & M.A. Elementary Education

'71 James M. Bradley, B.S. Systems Science

'71 Janet D. Lopiccolo, M.A. Elementary Education

'71 & '78 Edward E. Nugent, B.A. Political Science & B.A. Social Work

'72 Louis D. Cannon, B.S. Industrial Technology

'72 David T. Franks, B.A. Accounting

'72 Patricia Harrington, B.A. Elementary Education

'72 Robert L. Sardo, B.S. Industrial Technology

'73 William S. Bentley, B.A. Social Work

'74 George M. Eidson, B.A. Accounting

'74 James A. Levitt, B.S. Management

'74 Charles L. Sneed, B.A. History Education

'74 William L. Williamson, B.S. Industrial Technology

'75 Carrie M. Henderson, B.A. Sociology

'76 Jack E. Grace, B.S. Health, Leisure and Sports

'76 Bettye Rich, B.S. Business Teacher Education

'76 Willie C. Suddieth, B.A. Elementary Education

'76 Donald W. Wetherhead, B.S. Systems Science

'77 George L. Maiberger, M.Ed. Educational Leadership

'77 Robert N. Wesley, B.A. History

'78 Alan V. Dorr, B.A. Accounting

'78 Joy P. Rowell, B.A. English Education

'79 Gary E. Arnold, B.S. Management

'79, '98 & '07 Dr. Laura D. Edler, B.A. Social Work, Ed.S. & Ed.D.

'79 & '81 Edward L. Taylor, B.S. Management & MBA

'80 Ronald T. Dudley, B.A. Accounting Information Systems

'80 Janis A. Metsker, M.A. Psychology

'80 Susan L. Miseroy, M.A. Psychology

'82 Richard A. Bigner, B.A. Accounting

'83 Jane L. Leppo, B.A. Elementary Education

'84 Tina M. Condon, B.A. Social Work

'84 Judy L. Irwin, B.A. Accounting Information Systems

'84 & '87 Charlene B. Reese, B.S. Vocational Studies & M.Ed. Educational Leadership

'86 Barbra B. Burgett, B.S. Vocational Studies

'86 Margaret A. Knott, B.A. Special Education

'87 Russell M. Sattelberg, M.S. Cell and Molecular Biology

'88 Tourey M. Guarino, B.A. Accounting Information Systems

'90 Carolyn F. Bauer, B.A. Communication Arts

'91 Peggy M. Allen, B.A. Special Education

'91 Jacqueline Sykes, B.A. Studio Art

'92 George R. Garnett, B.A. & M.A. Communication Arts

'92 Glinda S. Heiney, B.A. Middle School Education

'93 Nivia U. Drummond, B.A. Social Work

'94 Angela M. Cooke, B.A. Elementary Education

'95 Lynda G. Creed, M.Ed. Educational Leadership

'01 Alfred E. Hampton, BSBA

'02 Jennifer Denega, MBA

'03 Connie L. Lake, BSBA

'04 Carl S. Brassell, B.A. History

'04 Eliot G. Diaz, M.S. Computer Science

'04 Carrie L. Nesky, BSBA Marketing

'04 Dr. Jillian M. Threadgill, B.A. Social Work

'07 Marjorie L. Jacox, BSBA Accounting

'14 Noah J. Farabaugh, BSBA Marketing

'15 Jeffery K. Kendrick, B.S.E.E.

'15 Carla L. Savage, M.Ed. Educational Leadership

'16 Valerie G. Fisher, MSW

'20 Rebecca D. London, BSBA

Teachers of the Year

2026 Escambia and Santa Rosa Counties

'77 & '81 Vickie W. Davis

'88 Mary E. Woods

'89 Heidi A. Robar

'90 Tracy L. Eiser

'92 & '06 Kimberly A. Rayburn

'95 Sherri L. Carter

'97 Tina A. Fendley
 '98 Jina Hui K. Bradley
 '99 Jodie L. Holland
 '99 Jodie H. Langford
 '99 & '01 Obreonne R. Parker
 '00 Margaret M. Fox-McClellan
 '03 & '06 Sylvia E. Harvey-Thomas
 '04 Tammy M. Chuites
 '06 & '08 James P. Fox
 '07 Kerrie M. Densman
 '07 Duane S. McDonal
 '07 Maria Willis
 '08 Janie D. Hayes Powers
 '08 Shellie N. Macht
 '09 Maxine D. Mathis
 '10 Alicia A. Gifford
 '11 Amanda S. Byers
 '11 Tawnee A. Robbins
 '11 Kristen D. Whiddon
 '13 Kurt W. Chism
 '13 Theresa R. Restifo
 '14 & '15 Katie M. Cranford
 '15 & '24 Kristen J. Amerson
 '15 & '24 Lauren R. Schultz
 '16 Kheri L. Murphy
 '18 William Cone II
 '18 Stacy D. Jordan
 '19 April Cody
 '19, '21 & '24 Brooke M. Ferrara (Finalist)
 '19 Deja M. Ramsey
 '19 Jacey Taylor

Pensacola Inweekly

2025 Power List

'69 Sandy C. Sansing

'87 William M. Yarbrough
 '91 Leslie A. Perino
 '91 Brian P. Wyer
 '92 & '94 Allison Hill
 '93 Jarl T. Young
 '96 Katherine M. Sandstrom
 '01 Kimberly R. Adams
 '02 Kristin J. Longley
 '02 Grace R. McCaffery
 '04 Ryan N. Wiggins
 '05 & '07 Ryan P. Tilley
 '07 Hong D. Potomski
 '07 Whitney Vaughan Fike
 '07 Dr. Lusharon Woods Wiley
 '08 Lawrence J. Kuhn
 '10 & '16 Will F. Condon
 '10 & '14 Joshua D. Newby
 '14, '17 & '20 Dr. Lauren M. Anzaldo
 '17 Devin B. Cole
 '17 Ebony M. Cornish
 '17 & '18 Hale Morrisette

2025 Rising Stars

'11 Kathleen M. Kralick
 '12, '19 & '21 Chloe V. Fulton
 '12 Thomas J. Moody
 '12 Christina D. Rhodes
 '13 Richard R. Rodriguez
 '15 & '16 Elizabeth M. McDonald
 '15 Rachel E. Smith
 '16 Kaley N. Dawkins
 '17 Gregg E. Harding
 '18 Elyssa N. Forester
 '19 Blake A. Radford
 '20 Sierra E. Hobbs
 '21 Hannah O. Bledsoe

'21 Darien B. Horne
 '22 Reea W. Eqab
 '22 Turner B. Mitchell
 '23 Mary-Cathryn M. Cavazos
 '23 Daniel D. Russell
 '23 Lauren A. Watkins
 '24 Savannah M. Coates

Leadership Pensacola

Class of 2026

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

'07 Whitney Vaughan Fike
 Project Chair
 '10 & '14 Joshua D. Newby
 Class Chairperson
 '14 & '16 Ruthie Noel
 Class Co-Chairperson
 '16 Robin C. Zimmern
 Fundraising Chair

CLASS MEMBERS

'98 & '07 Diane A. Martinez
 '00 & '21 Gary S. Holloway
 '02 Pola W. Young
 '04 Jane M. Lauter
 '07 & '22 Bianca N. James
 '10 Larry C. Love
 '11 & '15 Cristin M. Peterson
 '12 Kasja B. Gauntlett
 '13 & '17 Heather N. Murray
 '15 Rachel M. Smith
 '23 Rachel E. McLellan



Alumni Benefits Program

Did you know that the UWF Alumni Association sponsors an Alumni Benefits ProgramSM as a service to our alumni?

The program offers a variety of attractively-priced products, most of which are available to alumni, students, faculty and staff, as well as their spouses, domestic partners, children, parents and siblings.

**For more information visit uwf.MeyerandAssoc.com
 or contact Meyer and Associates, the Program
 Administrator, at 800-635-7801.**



LIFE INSURANCE



LONG TERM DISABILITY INSURANCE



ADVISORY SERVICES



LONG TERM CARE INSURANCE



TRAVEL INSURANCE



ID THEFT COVERAGE



AUTO/HOME INSURANCE



PET INSURANCE



SUPPLEMENTAL HEALTH PLANS



DENTAL AND VISION PLANS



LEGAL PLANS



As I have wrapped up my time as president of the University of West Florida, I want to send a fond farewell to the best group of alumni and friends any University could ask for.

What a journey we've shared! Together, we've grown enrollment, broken fundraising records, earned national recognition, and launched programs that truly make a difference. We've faced challenges head-on and celebrated wins that lifted us all. I'm so proud of what we've accomplished — and grateful to have done it alongside you.

Our 100,000-strong alumni network is one of UWF's greatest strengths. You have taken the education you earned here and made it count in the lives you lead and your communities.

While I am stepping away from this role, I'll never stop cheering you on. Thank you for your support, your pride, and your unwavering belief in the University of West Florida.

Take good care of each other and keep making us proud.

Always an Argo!
Martha



NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PENSACOLA, FL
PERMIT NO. 183

Connection

University of West Florida

11000 University Parkway

Pensacola, FL 32514

uwf.edu/alumni

Katie Harris
Marketing, '25

HERE IS JUST THE *Beginning*

At the University of West Florida, opportunity takes shape across 1,600 acres of possibility. From innovative research to vibrant campus life, you'll build a future that's uniquely yours.

Whatever you're searching for, you can find it here.

uwf.edu/HappensHere



**UNIVERSITY of
WEST FLORIDA**