

Spring 2015

UNLV Magazine

Tony Allen

University of Nevada, Las Vegas, tony.allen@unlv.edu

Michael Blasky

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Afsha Bawany

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Shane Bevell

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Su Kim Chung

University of Nevada, Las Vegas

See next page for additional authors

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/unlv_magazine



Part of the [Arts and Humanities Commons](#), and the [Education Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Allen, T., Blasky, M., Bawany, A., Bevell, S., Chung, S. K., DeVore, H. I., Formoso, J. A., Gray, M., Rakola, M., Sodoma, B., Stroud, D. (2015). UNLV Magazine. In C. Weeks (Ed.), *UNLV Magazine*, 23(1), 1-44.

Available at: https://digitalscholarship.unlv.edu/unlv_magazine/50

This Magazine is protected by copyright and/or related rights. It has been brought to you by Digital Scholarship@UNLV with permission from the rights-holder(s). You are free to use this Magazine in any way that is permitted by the copyright and related rights legislation that applies to your use. For other uses you need to obtain permission from the rights-holder(s) directly, unless additional rights are indicated by a Creative Commons license in the record and/or on the work itself.

This Magazine has been accepted for inclusion in UNLV Magazine by an authorized administrator of Digital Scholarship@UNLV. For more information, please contact digitalscholarship@unlv.edu.

Authors

Tony Allen, Michael Blasky, Afsha Bawany, Shane Bevell, Su Kim Chung, Holly Ivy DeVore, Julie Ann Formoso, Madeline Gray, Matthew Rakola, Brian Sodoma, and David Stroud

UNLV

MAGAZINE

SPRING 2015

+ **THE MEDICAL SCHOOL** HERE'S HOW WE'RE MAKING IT A REALITY P26
WATCHDOGS TWO ALUMS KEEP POLICE AND POLITICIANS IN CHECK P28



We're Ready

PRESIDENT JESSUP ON UNLV'S BIG INITIATIVES, HIGHER ED'S TOUGHEST CHALLENGES, AND HIS OWN PATH TO LEADERSHIP P22



Almost There

As advocacy director for the Campaign for Fair Sentencing of Youth, alumnus **James Dold** has traveled to courthouses and legislatures across the country to change how we treat children. For this image, photographer Matthew Rakola placed Dold on the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court building early one Sunday morning. "To me, it sort of says, 'We're close but not quite there yet,'" Rakola said. See "**Watchdogs**," page 28.



Concerted Effort

16 English language learners, math proficiency, special education — Clark County School District is ground zero for the issues rumbling in schools across the country.

ON THE COVER

'This University Is Ready'

22 President Jessup on UNLV's big initiatives, higher ed's toughest challenges, and his own path to leadership.

Going For It

26 Once the ball got rolling, the UNLV School of Medicine fast became a reality. Here's what's next.

Watchdogs

28 Meet two UNLV graduates who are uncovering issues and making our criminal justice system a better place.

Plus: How UNLV is helping Metro evaluate body cameras.

2 VOICES
4 THE FLASHLIGHT
8 GREAT WORKS
10 SPORTS

12 RESEARCH
14 MY THOUGHTS
34 CLASS NOTES
40 THE BACK STORY

A Moment Passes

GERI KODEY, '85 BA Criminal Justice, retired May 5 as director of photography, leaving UNLV in a much better place than she found it. As a student here, Kodey worked part time in a local portrait studio; by the time she graduated, she had found her vocation.

After a decade as a photographer for the Clark County School District, she joined UNLV in 2002 and soon took over the photo services department. Not one to suffer fools gladly or compromise quality easily, she turned things around in a department that had yet to enter the digital age. She recruited a talented staff and put proper equipment in their hands. She reorganized the archives and she kept press operators on their toes. And she brought back national awards for consistently turning out stunning images.

But most important, she began encouraging her campus clients to think bigger. They'd request a standard "grip-and-grin" or "mugshot"; she'd deliver images that illustrated the story of how UNLV was changing her subjects' lives. The pages of *UNLV Magazine* certainly became the better for it.



One of our favorites is a 2006 image of a girl fishing. She was participating in a UNLV Public Lands Institute program, which gave children from impoverished

city schools an opportunity to learn about and enjoy Nevada's natural resources.

Among Kodey's favorite shots, she said, is a candid of actor **Tony Curtis and his wife, Jill Vandenberg**. She captured the intimate interaction between them at a 2005 reception when he was inducted into the Nevada Entertainer/Artist Hall of Fame at UNLV. After his death, she found out it had become a family favorite. "Connecting (with your audience) is all about those moments — the ones that show real emotion," Kodey said.

—CATE WEEKS

FROM THE UNLV NEWS CENTER >

ON THE EXTENDED ONLINE VERSION OF "TAPPING A NEED" (PAGE 37), ABOUT THREE ALUMNI WHO FORMED A NON-PROFIT TO ENSURE "TAPS" IS PLAYED AT VETERANS' FUNERALS:

"(When I was) doing my master's degree in trumpet, I was in Washington, D.C., and volunteered to play 'Taps' when the field bands were too short-handed. It meant so much to the loved ones of those heroes' families; most of the time there was not a dry eye. In their grief, seldom was a thank you given, but it was always in their eyes. Congratulations gentlemen, you are doing a great honor to many who gave us so much more."

Ben Stanford
Houston, Texas

ON A NEWS RELEASE ABOUT THE COLLABORATION BETWEEN THE WOMEN'S RESEARCH INSTITUTE AND VEGAS PBS TO PRODUCE THE DOCUMENTARY, "MAKERS: WOMEN IN NEVADA HISTORY":

"Congratulations to Dr. Goodwin and (KLVX Vegas PBS) for bringing this important segment of Nevada's history into the limelight. Women have provided leadership in Nevada for all of the 150 years we have been a state of the union. Young people, especially, need to know that, and young women need to understand that their way has been paved by some incredibly strong, humble, dedicated women."

Barbara Agonia
'71 BA English
Las Vegas

Read the full stories online
unlv.edu/news

KEEP UP WITH US

The **UNLV News Center** will keep you connected to the campus in between issues of *UNLV Magazine*. In addition to feature articles, you'll find videos, slideshows, and links to events. Sign up for its weekly newsletter: news.unlv.edu/newsletters.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR >

One of the First Rebels

I cannot help remembering Nevada Southern University in 1956 and be immensely proud of the institution that became UNLV.

I registered as a foreign student in 1956 (at age 32). Not yet an American citizen, I was labeled a "special student." I am 91 now but my memories of the university are vivid. I had the impulse today to contact the university — prompted by

documents of that time I found in the recess of a drawer; we truly were pioneers.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to complete my education, (which had been) rudely interrupted by World War II in 1942. I am proud to have been one of the first foreign students at UNLV.

Jacqueline Mongeot
'65 BS Secondary Education
Las Vegas

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Rediscovering UNLV

I first stepped foot on this campus about five years ago as a consultant to the Lee Business School's entrepreneurship programs. I came back three years later to evaluate the school as a member of an external accreditation team. That gave me a glimpse into the many ways this university is educating the state's students, building its research programs, and engaging its resources to effect change in this community.

Returning to campus now as UNLV's 10th president only affirmed my initial assessment: Much like the community it serves, UNLV is a unique place, filled with people doing amazing work.

On these pages, you'll find ample evidence for that. I recently toured our anthropology lab and talked with researchers like Brian Villmoare, [PAGE 12](#). His groundbreaking discovery, if you'll pardon the pun, was published online by the highly regarded journal *Science*. Subsequent broadcast and print media coverage of his work brought further international attention to UNLV.

In April, engineering professor Paul Oh unveiled his new UNLV Drones and Autonomous Systems Lab. Already a leading researcher in his field, he moved his lab here because, like me, he believes in the

opportunities here. He is working to turn Las Vegas into a major center for robotics research. Does such an ambitious vision seem like fantasy? He'll convince you otherwise, [PAGE 14](#).

In addition, you'll find several stories on alumni who are making a profound difference in their communities. James Dold and Lawrence Mower, [PAGE 28](#), have shed a light on injustices in our country's criminal justice system; their work directly led to sweeping changes in police departments and better laws to protect children. Principal Kathleen Decker focused on engaging the community immediately surrounding her elementary school and as a result turned one of the city's worst performing schools into a model for the country, [PAGE 34](#).

Their accomplishments, and the work of everyone featured in this issue, make me proud to be a Rebel now. I have no doubt that this is the right place, at the right time to make a profound difference in our world.

Len Jessup
UNLV President

(Above) Len Jessup takes time for a selfie with this year's student body Vice President Kanani Espinoza and President Elias Benjelloun at a May 5 event.

EDITOR
Cate Weeks

ASSOCIATE EDITOR
Diane Russell/Class Notes

PHOTOGRAPHERS
Geri Kodey
Aaron Mayes
R. Marsh Starks

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Ched Whitney

CONTRIBUTORS
Tony Allen
Michael Blasky
Afsha Bawany
Shane Bevell
Su Kim Chung
Holly Ivy DeVore
Julie Ann Formoso
Madeline Gray
Matthew Rakola
Brian Sodoma
David Stroud

Vice President for Advancement:
Bill Boldt

Senior Associate Vice President for
Marketing, Communications & Brand
Strategy: Vince Alberta

SUBSCRIPTION UPDATES

Update your address
and submit Class Notes
information at:

unlv.edu/classnotes

COMMENTS AND LETTERS

UNLV Magazine welcomes letters
from our readers. For the full letters
policy and submission form, visit:
news.unlv.edu/unlvmagazine

Reprint permission

Articles may be reprinted with
permission. Contact us at 702-895-
2626 or cate.weeks@unlv.edu.

Postmaster

Please send address changes to
UNLV Magazine
4505 Maryland Parkway, Box 1024
Las Vegas, NV 89154-1024.

UNLV Magazine
is published by the
University of Nevada, Las Vegas
University Communications Office
www.unlv.edu

UNLV is an AA/EEO institution.



Ugh, Allergies

Revived pollen count program helps allergy sufferers figure out what's tickling their noses.

BY AFSHA BAWANY

Clark County residents now have a better idea of what causes their sneezing and wheezing during allergy season. UNLV and the Clark County School District (CCSD) have revived a monitoring program to track the pollen in Southern Nevada's air. The partnership includes the Clark County department of air quality.

"Las Vegas has many non-native invasive species because they don't require a lot of water. At the same time, these non-native species are allergy and asthma

triggers," said Dennis Bazylinski, UNLV life sciences professor. "It's important to know what areas have a high concentration of pollen so individuals know what allergy or asthma triggers exist for themselves or for their children."

Tracking changes in pollen counts can help inform policy decisions, Bazylinski said. Mulberry, for example, is a notorious pollen producer, especially male varieties often spotted in Las Vegas. Clark County banned new plantings in 1991 to help improve the health of the community.

Pollen count programs are common nationwide but Las Vegas became one of the only metropolitan areas without this system during budget cuts in 2010. The revived program is now funded through the school district. The county department of

air quality is tasked with providing power to the six stations. UNLV collects and analyzes the pollen data and maintains the stations. CCSD provides the land for the stations. Its science curriculum experts also work with UNLV to provide educational resources for teachers and students regarding the pollen data.

"CCSD is very excited to be a part of this collaborative project," said Mary Pike, the school district's director of science, health and physical education. "Not only will Southern Nevadans benefit from being aware of the concentration of airborne pollen on a day-to-day basis, but we will also be able to provide a variety of educational opportunities (for our students)."

More: Pollen counts from the program are posted daily on the American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology website, aaaai.org.

Debate Town, USA

The Thomas & Mack Center might become center stage during the 2016 presidential campaign. Las Vegas is throwing its hat into the political arena, vying with 15 other cities to be an official host site for a presidential debate. The Commission on Presidential Debates is expected to announce the four host cities this fall.

Co-chairing the committee to bring the debate to Las Vegas are Rossi Ralenkotter, president and CEO of the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority, and UNLV President Len Jessup.

“Presidential debates bring a unique energy — and the national spotlight — to a campus and enrich the education of students by allowing them to experience the political process up close,” Jessup said. “UNLV has one of the most diverse student bodies in the country and is an ideal venue for the candidates to debate issues.”

With its early caucus, Nevada will be a battleground state in the election. Las Vegas previously has hosted primary debates and presidential speeches. It also has been considered by both the Republican and Democratic parties for their conventions. If selected, the debate will take place in fall 2016.

Something to Write About

UNLV receives the largest gift ever to support international literary program.

In March, the Black Mountain Institute received a \$20 million gift from The Rogers Foundation to further support UNLV’s creative writing programs. The gift is one of the largest to UNLV and it adds to the \$10 million that the foundation gave just two years ago to the institute. It is formally named the Beverly Rogers, Carol C. Harter Black Mountain Institute (BMI).

BMI plans to expand its curricula to include a literary nonfiction track as well as a new dramatic writing partnership with the College of Fine Arts. The gift will help hire new faculty and 15 graduate assistants. It will fund the new Black Mountain Institute Prize, a biennial \$50,000 award that will be judged by a panel of highly regarded writers. Additionally, funds will be used to help UNLV expand BMI’s office space from 1,400 square feet to 4,500, allowing BMI and the English department to be housed together in the newly named Beverly Rogers Literature and Law Building this fall.

“Few dollars flow these days to humanities and creative arts programs compared to other disciplines,” said Carol Harter, UNLV president emerita and executive director of BMI. “We are doubly grateful for the Rogers gifts and for having the wonderful Beverly Rogers as our dear friend and colleague.”

The foundation’s gifts have allowed BMI to increase the annual stipends for students in the doctoral creative writing program to \$25,000. Funds also are supporting foreign travel for MFA students; stipends for writers in the Diana L. Bennett Fellows Program; and underwriting for *Witness*, BMI’s literary magazine, and its Rainmaker Translations books.

The institute’s acclaimed City of Asylum program has been revived to support two writers



A packed audience listens to the panel of dissident writers for the Black Mountain Institute’s “Blood, Sweat & Tears.” It featured Russian Masha Gessen, who wrote a controversial biography of President Vladimir Putin; Nigerian Wole Soyinka, the first African to win the Nobel Prize in Literature; and Iranian Azar Nafisi, who wrote the best-selling memoir *Reading Lolita in Tehran*.

each year. The program provides a safe haven for international writers whose voices are muffled by censorship or who are living with the threat of imprisonment or death. It was founded in 2001 as the first program of its kind in the United States; several other cities followed suit in establishing such sanctuaries. City of Asylum Las Vegas alumni include Syl Cheney-Coker (Sierra Leone), Er Tai Gao (China), and Hossein Mortezaeian Abkenar (Iran). “UNLV aims to be a top-tier university in research, teaching, and community engagement. This gift certainly does that,” said President Len Jessup.

Beverly Rogers and her late husband, James E. Rogers, a dedicated philanthropist and former Nevada System of High Education chancellor, created The Rogers Foundation.

Tougher Course Load, Better Grades

It stands to reason that taking more courses would get you to graduation faster, but it also keeps students better engaged in their studies overall. In 2013, the Nevada System of Higher

Education launched its “15 to Finish” campaign to encourage undergraduates to take full course loads. UNLV also introduced block scheduling in which incoming freshmen automatically are en-

rolled in 15 credits for their majors.

The success of the efforts is clear. In fall 2012, only 36.2 percent of all first-time, degree-seeking students at UNLV took 15 or more credits; just two years later, the number was a whopping 63.6 percent. Undergradu-

ates aged 18-24 who took a full load in fall 2014 had an average 2.94 GPA, compared to 2.51 for those taking fewer than 15 credits. They were also much more likely to continue their studies in the spring 2015 semester: 91.8 percent vs. 75 percent.



(Above) UNLV Honors student Tre Norman swims through an obstacle at a Tough Mudder competition. He was among the 40 Honors College students who trained for the grueling event.

(Opposite, top) Facing her biggest fear, Anna Gingrich exits the Arctic Enema's freezing waters ahead of Nick Baker.

(Opposite, below) Kelly Schmidt gets her game face on before the event, while Andrew Garcia is ready for the showers afterward.

Fear and Mudding

Honors College students hit it hard to prepare for a big test: a grueling obstacle course.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY AARON MAYES

Tre Norman lounges in the back of the bus as it journeys down I-15 toward the day's battle. Feet kicked up, book in lap, headphones on, he's relaxed — he's got this. He and 40 other students formed the Honors Rebellion team to become confident athletes, ready for the 10-plus-mile, military-style obstacle course before them. It's part of a new program in the UNLV Honors College.

"It was a little weird," senior Natalie Schibrowsky thought when participating in a Tough Mudder was first proposed. "I thought, 'Nerds and exercise? Hmm, this is going to be interesting.'"

What Schibrowsky and the others found was a community of driven students ready for a new challenge and happy to break down the stereotypes in the process. Tough Mudders are torturous events, but they're not about who crosses the

finish line first. Winners are those who complete what they can and then help others do the same.

"This team represents what we do in the Honors College," said Daniel Coyle, director of development and an academic advisor in the college. "We're not just here to get you a degree or a career, but to help you become the person you want to be."

Coyle first assembled a student team for the 2014 Las Vegas Tough Mudder. As an extracurricular activity, that event was a success, but Coyle saw the need for a more formalized training program. He turned to Trisha Cain, UNLV's fitness and health education coordinator, to help create a one-credit class. It's taught at Camp Rhino near Sunset Park by experienced trainers. The class trained together through the semester and then competed in the Los Angeles event at the end of March.

At one point during the event, Norman's running partner, Shiloh Johnston, began flagging. Johnston told him to go ahead but Norman refused. "It's not about the individual," Norman said later. "The Tough Mudder was great, but having (Shiloh) there kind of just humbled me ... Our

Ooh La La!

How were the artistry, imagination, and elegance of the Parisian stage show transferred to the Las Vegas Strip?

“French Connection: ‘Lido de Paris’ and ‘Folies Bergère’ in Las Vegas,” is a free exhibit on display through October in UNLV’s Lied Library. It explores the origins of two of the city’s first French revues as well as the dancers and showgirls who brought an entire entertainment tradition to life.

The exhibit features costume sketches, set designs, programs, and photographs from UNLV University Libraries Special Collections as well as original costume pieces from the Nevada State Museum, Las Vegas. It shares the story of how two 1950s Paris imports, the “Lido de Paris” and “Folies Bergère,” ushered in the use of large-scale production shows and helped define the showgirl for years to come.

“‘French Connection’ was inspired by my fascination with how these Parisian shows gained such a foothold in Las Vegas, a city just a few generations removed from its frontier origins,” said Karla Irwin, special collections librarian and the exhibit’s curator.



that picture. I have not heard one student say they were happy they got involved because they became more physically fit — not one. They all talk about it as a personally and communally transformative experience.”

Pressures faced by the college’s students can be intense, said freshman and first-time Mudder Isabel Guerra. “We’re expected to go to these very far places. So there’s that constant fear of ‘What if...,’” she said. *What if we don’t get good enough grades? If we don’t get into*

a graduate program? Or med school? “Doing Tough Mudder (helps us understand) you don’t know how far you can actually go and how much you can actually succeed unless you do it — unless you just face that fear head on.”

First-time Mudder Mike McGrady put it this way, “For seven years, I played on a competitive lacrosse team consisting of young men who grew to be my wingmen,” he says. “In all those years, I never experienced the sense of camaraderie that is present within the Honors Rebellion. The students that make up the Rebellion have come together to create an environment that not only supports fellow teammates, but pushes them to reach greater heights.”

More: Read the full story and view the slideshow at news.unlv.edu.

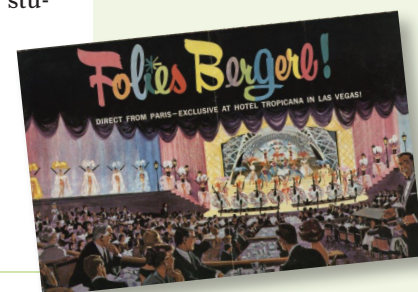
friendship has grown tremendously.”

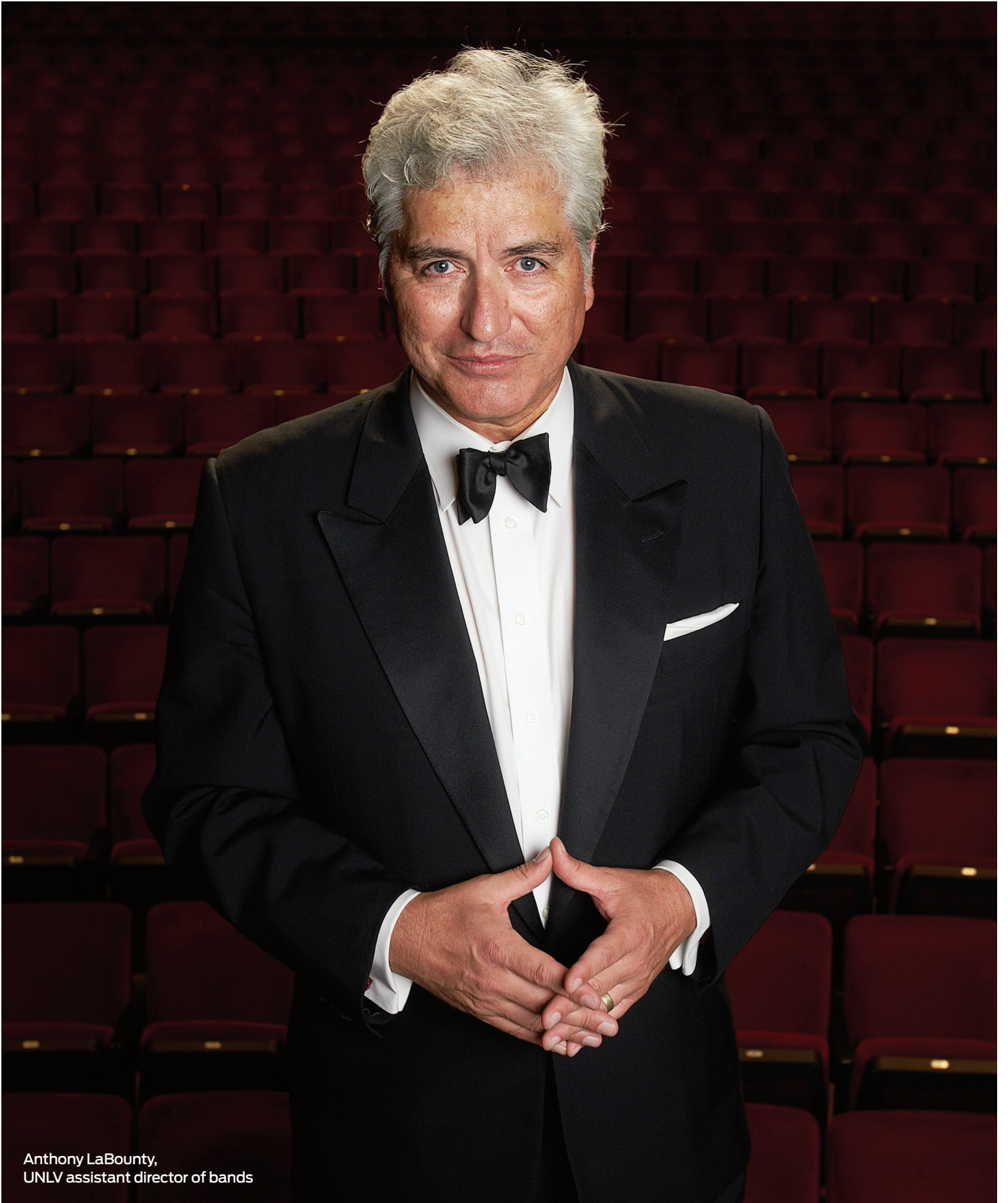
And so did his academic career. Norman, a second-year student, said the Honors College wasn’t a perfect match for him initially. “I felt like an outsider,” Norman said. “I didn’t feel like I could fit in the Honors College because of my own assumptions. You rarely saw me in the Honors College (before the class). But now I’m in there every day, just doing work.”

Norman’s story bolsters Honors College Dean Marta Meana’s belief in the unorthodox approach to confidence building in her participating students.

“The Honors College is not just about getting A’s and getting into grad school,” she said. “It’s about empowering students to further develop as fully rounded, open, and generous individuals. That involves ‘getting out of yourself,’ leaving your comfort zone, and connecting with others.

“The whole (Mudder) thing fits beautifully into





Anthony LaBounty,
UNLV assistant director of bands

A Solemn Debut

***Psalm 92* inspires UNLV's longtime director of bands to put down the conducting baton and pick up the composing pen.**

BY DIANE RUSSELL

WHEN ANTHONY LABOUNTY, assistant director of bands, was in grade school, he already was writing arrangements of popular radio songs. Over the years he kept arranging — and eventually composing, his skills growing steadily, until last year he hit what has been the pinnacle of his career thus far. His composition *Psalm 92*, made its world premiere at Carnegie Hall.

“It was pretty surreal: A concert hall graced by many of the greatest musicians of all time — Anton Dvorak, Louis Armstrong, Tchaikovsky, Ella Fitzgerald,” LaBounty said of the Nov. 25 premiere. The original work for wind symphony had been commissioned by Travis Pardee, director of Foothill High School Wind Symphony in Henderson. The group debuted the piece at Carnegie Hall and then performed LaBounty’s arrangement of *Pie Jesu* accompanied by Las Vegas headliner Marie Osmond. LaBounty had written the arrangement specifically for her.

His inspiration for *Psalm 92* came when he attended a summer workshop that challenged participants to sing through the psalms as was done thousands of years ago. The namesake passage is about exhorting praises to God. “After the text to Psalm 92 caught my eye, I literally started ‘hearing’ the melody using this form of ‘free singing.’”

FIT TO PRINT

In March, *The New York Times* named alumna and English instructor Brittany Bronson to its slate of opinion writers. Bronson, '14 MFA, writes about the intersection of the working and professional classes. In “Your Waitress, Your Professor,” she wrote about waiting on a student’s family in a Strip restaurant: “My perhaps naive hope is that when I tell students I’m

not only an academic, but a ‘survival’ jobholder, I’ll make a dent in the artificial, inaccurate division society places between blue-collar work and ‘intelligent’ work.”

Another piece explored the role of diversity in a city’s livability ranking: “If livability means transforming the places where people already live into places where more wealthy people want to, then I hope it’s not what Paradise strives for.”

She begins “Can You Be a

Waitress and a Feminist?” with “This week I will be sexually harassed on the job, and like many women in the Las Vegas service industry, I will count my tips at the end of my shift and decide that it is worth it.”

LOOKING BACK

Music has been a part of LaBounty’s life as long as he can remember. His mother, a trained classical pianist, started his piano lessons when he was 6. At age 8 he began learning classical guitar from his grandfather. His mother would have him perform at church events and nursing homes. He joined his school band in sixth grade.

Today he considers the trumpet to be his principal instrument, although he often uses the piano for composing.

He didn’t begin composing original works until 2005. Inspired by a telecast he saw during a trip to Hong Kong, he composed *Le Sentier*, French for “The Path” or “The Way.” It was published in 2007. His latest composition, “Sharakan,” was written for a symphony orchestra. Sharakan means hymn in Armenian, and he wrote it with the 100-year anniversary of the Armenian genocide in mind.

HIS DAY JOB

LaBounty is known around campus as the guy who directs UNLV’s Star of Nevada Marching Band, the Runnin’ Rebels pep band, and the UNLV Community Concert Band.

While composing orchestral works and directing bands are two very different things, he finds them “equally challenging and satisfying. I am always impressed at how unique the students can be, and how, regardless of the win-loss record of the athletic teams we support, UNLV students in the marching band and basketball pep band continue to be a positive public face of the university.”

LaBounty, who arrived at the university 27 years ago, said, “I thought then, and still do now: UNLV is a goldmine of potential.”

Waitress and a Feminist?” with “This week I will be sexually harassed on the job, and like many women in the Las Vegas service industry, I will count my tips at the end of my shift and decide that it is worth it.”

Bronson is at work on a book of short fiction. She plans to pursue her doctorate with the hopes of landing a full-time position in academia.

 @BrittanyBronsol



SHORT STORIES

Changing the Game: Women at Work in Las Vegas 1940 – 1990
University of Nevada Press, 2014



In her book, Joanne Goodwin, professor of history and director of the Women’s Research Institute of Nevada, looks at the lives of real women as they worked in the hotel, gaming, and entertainment industries in Las Vegas from the days before the entry of the United States into World War II, through the post-war years, and through years of both recession and a booming economy. She uses the stories of those who worked a variety of jobs, including dancer, casino owner, housekeeper, and labor organizer, to dispel some of the myths surrounding women in the workforce during that half century.

Reno, Las Vegas, and the Strip: A Tale of Three Cities
University of Nevada Press, 2014



UNLV historian Eugene Moehring once again delves into the history of Las Vegas in his latest book, but this time concentrates on the different trajectories Nevada’s two largest cities have followed since World War II. He also brings into the mix what he proposes is a virtual third major metropolitan area, the famous Las Vegas Strip, located in the unincorporated county outside the city limits of Las Vegas. It is the Strip, he maintains, that played a major role in the growth of Las Vegas as a worldwide gaming mecca, even as Reno, which once had been a top gaming destination for Americans, began to lose ground and started searching for other industries on which to rely.

A Las Vegas Guy

UNLV looked in its own backyard to find a coach to take on the challenge of turning around the football team. Here's why he'll succeed. **BY CHED WHITNEY**

There's a postcard-perfect view of the Las Vegas Strip out one of the windows of Tony Sanchez's corner office in the Lied Athletic Complex. But as UNLV's new head football coach starts talking recently, he points out the other window, the one that overlooks campus and the Las Vegas suburbs beyond. That view means home to him.

"I left here last night, right at 5:15 — something I won't be able to do very often," Sanchez said, pointing out that other window. "I jumped in my car and headed to one of my kid's Little League games. And I was sitting out there, just one of the parents."

He's embraced this community as his own; now it's time for the community to do the same for its hometown college football team, he said.





Reitz Calls It A Career

The so-called dean of UNLV coaches, swimming's Jim Reitz, is retiring. Here he looks back on 35 years at UNLV:

We all go through ups and downs. *The one thing I love to do is coach swimming. Early on we didn't do as well as I wanted, and I was crushed. That changed when I got married and had a family. I got a little perspective.*

Obviously, Las Vegas was a small desert enclave (in 1980). *I visited Phoenix and talked to a couple high school seniors and one of them laughed at (the idea of coming to UNLV). I was struck by the work I had to do to change their perceptions. But now our university is respected. People know about our academic quality now, and they know we're running an international swimming program.*

College sports has become a gigantic industry. *There's a wall between the haves and have-nots. I would like to limit the number of scholarships (schools can award) to level the playing field for nonrevenue sports.*

I have a little bucket list now: *Go back to school, travel the Amazon, maybe start a business.*

REITZ BY THE NUMBERS

- 42 All-Americans coached
- 10 Mountain West Conference titles won in past 11 seasons
- 17 Top 30 finishes at NCAA Championships
- 15 Conference coach of the year honors

The former Air Force kid started his coaching career in 1996 as a graduate assistant at New Mexico State University, where he had played wide receiver. After a couple of high school gigs, he became a head coach for the first time, turning around a moribund program in San Ramon, Calif. That success caught the eye of Bishop Gorman High School in Las Vegas.

With Sanchez leading, Bishop Gorman reached unprecedented heights in Nevada high school sports: an 85-5 record, state titles in each of his six seasons, and a No. 1 national ranking by *USA Today*. The private high school's winning teams brought in the donations as well as very well appointed athletic facilities.

Meanwhile, across town, UNLV football suffered disappointments season after season. In its three previous searches for a head coach, UNLV had taken decidedly orthodox approaches.

A big name: In 1999, the Rebels hired John Robinson, who led the University of Southern California to five Rose Bowl wins and the 1978 national title. Robinson, who also coached the NFL's Los Angeles Rams, had just one winning season (2000) at UNLV.

A rising-star coordinator: Mike Sanford was offensive coordinator at the University of Utah in 2003 when the Utes went 12-0, averaged more than 45 points per game, and had the No. 1 NFL draft pick in quarterback Alex Smith. At UNLV, Sanford had just 16 wins in five years.

A coach with success at a lower level: In seven seasons at Montana, Bobby Hauck averaged 11 wins a year and took the Grizzlies to three Division I-AA/FCS championship games. While Hauck's 2013 Rebels posted a winning record and UNLV's first bowl game appearance in 13 years, the other four seasons here produced just eight wins.

Only a handful of coaches have ever made the jump from high school to Division I head coach. The last one to do it — Todd Dodge — had a record much like Sanchez's when he took over at the University of North Texas in 2007. Dodge had racked up four state 5A titles in high school football-mad Texas. His only loss with the Southlake Carroll High School in five years had been a 2-point defeat in the 2003 title game. But Dodge's record in just under four seasons at North Texas was practically the opposite: six wins, 37 losses.

But there was something Dodge didn't have: Las Vegas to sell.

"I can talk to parents about living here in Las Vegas," Sanchez said. "We have 310 days of sunshine a year. I'll sell that. You sell the fact that you're three

and a half hours from Southern California, five from northern, eight from Phoenix. Two million people right here. It's easier to recruit to a warm weather area."

Sanchez talks often about a football program's mission — "winning games" and "developing young men." The latter, he said, doesn't differ much between high school and college student-athletes. "We're getting younger as a country. Just 20 years ago, if you were 20 years old, you'd already have a job. Today, people are getting married later and starting careers later in life.

"And there's some immaturity that comes with that. So we have to teach maturity."

Sanchez sometimes points to Houston Texans superstar defensive end J.J. Watt's comment about the relatively short time he'll play football: "I have the rest of my life to have fun and drink beer," Watt has said.

The lesson in that, Sanchez said, is learning to make sacrifices for success. As coach, that means becoming involved in even the minute details of the program: "If you're not willing to become intimately involved in the everyday aspects, you're not going to change the culture."

Before he took the job he had three questions he needed to answer. "Number 1 was, 'Do I truly believe we can win at UNLV?'" Sanchez said. He took into account Las Vegas' size, location, and TV market. He studied post-college economic opportunities for student athletes. His answer: he could do it.

"Secondly, I thought, 'Would I be able to live with myself if I don't take the job? Is that something I'd be OK with?'" He wasn't.

"And the third one — and I don't have an answer yet — 'Will the community support it?'"

Sanchez's hiring brought a lot of excitement and national media attention. Around town, came a lot of pats on the back and well wishes.

"(But) that means nothing if you're not willing to jump in," Sanchez said. "Saying you're excited is great — then get (yourself) in the stadium. We need facilities here, right? Then donate and support it."

Sanchez pointed to past Mountain West Conference members Utah and Texas Christian, where investments were made before those schools jumped to larger conferences.

"If you look at (Mountain West Conference member) Boise State, and the success they've had and the revenue they've generated," Sanchez said, "it wasn't just great coaching; it was community support."

"That means nothing if you're not willing to jump in. Saying you're excited is great — then get (yourself) in the stadium. We need facilities here, right? Then donate and support it."

Conversation Changer

Ramona Denby-Brinson has built her career by changing conversations about teen pregnancy, foster care, and social policy. Now the conversation is about her. A social work professor and a senior resident scholar with UNLV's The Lincy Institute, she is the first female to win the Harry Reid Silver State Research Award, the university's top research award.

Her research has delved into family and children welfare, the foster system, teen pregnancy, and children's mental health.

"I don't see it as an award for me as much as I see it as an award for the team of social science researchers across campus," Denby-Brinson said. "The university is recognizing the value of social science research and the ability to change the landscape of the community with the type of research we do."

The Las Vegas native received a master of social work from UNLV in 1990 and joined the faculty in 1998. She has earned more than \$12 million in grants from the National Institutes of Health, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the Lois and Samuel Silberman Foundation.



Gap Tooth

A 2.8-million-year-old jawbone fills in section missing from human evolution's timeline.

BY DIANE RUSSELL

THE RESEARCHERS WERE doing what they do most days in Ethiopia's Ledi-Geraru research area — walking across the desert sands, eyes down, scanning for fossils. Digging blindly is pointless, said UNLV anthropologist Brian Villmoare. They could dig endlessly without finding anything of value to our ancient history.

So instead the research team members use their eyes, hoping rain or shifting sands had brought something worthwhile into view. And then there it was, protruding from a sandy hill: a 2.8-million-year-old fossilized jawbone.

"We knew what it was right away," Villmoare said. "We had been looking for human fossils in that area for more than 10 years."

Still, "It caught us off guard. We were completely overwhelmed," he said, recalling that team members were literally jumping up and down in excitement.

AN EVOLUTIONARY FIRST

The age of this particular fossil is especially important because it falls into a million-year gap that had existed in human fossils, he explained. Many fossils have been found older than 3 million years as well as some less than 2 million years old. But fossils from that irksome million-year gap have long eluded the world's bone hunters. No more. The Ledi-Geraru jawbone now is the earliest evidence of the genus *Homo*.

"It is a critical time period," Villmoare explained. The older fossils represent a time when "we looked very apelike. We were hairy, not using tools, not eating meat, living very apelike lives." But the more recent fossils showed "something recognizably like us. We would have been using stone tools, eating meat.

"Obviously, this million-year gap (into which the newest fossil falls) includes an important transition period," he said. "To have a glimpse of the very earliest phase of our lineage's evolution is



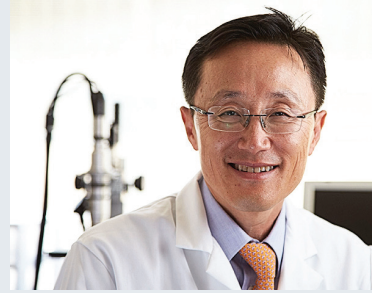
Anthropologist Brian Villmoare and an international team of researchers unearthed a fossil from the earliest phases of the *Homo* lineage.

particularly exciting."

Villmoare is co-director of the international research team that found the jawbone in 2013. The discovery was the subject of an article in this year's March 4 online issue of the prestigious journal *Science*. Villmoare was the lead author.

The fossil preserves the left side of the lower jaw, or mandible, along with five teeth. The area where it was found is about 25 miles from Hadar, the spot in Ethiopia where the famous fossilized "Lucy" skeleton was discovered in 1974.

The jawbone analysis, led by Villmoare and William Kimbel of the Institute of Human Origins at



Engineering Top Honors

Mechanical engineering professor Kwang Jin Kim received the Nevada System of Higher Education's prestigious Regents Researcher Award. Kim is the first researcher from UNLV to win the award since Warren Burggren did so in 1997.

Kim, who is the Southwest Gas Professor of Energy and Matter, has worked on projects that led to numerous patents related to artificial muscle development, polymer sensors for catheters, and enhancements to car headlamps. His patent pending work on a condenser coating could save power companies millions and lead to decreased electricity costs for consumers around the globe.

In UNLV's Active Materials and Smart Living Laboratory, Kim is developing battery systems that could offer advantages over conventional batteries, including a longer cycle life and unlimited scalability of energy capacity. Kim is also developing artificial muscle systems for marine and space use.

His research has earned funding from the U.S. National Science Foundation, NASA, the U.S. Department of Defense, the U.S. Department of Energy, private companies, and other organizations.



Arizona State University (ASU) where the Ledi-Geraru Research Project is based, revealed advanced features. For example, the fossil has slim molars, symmetrical premolars, and an evenly proportioned jaw.

"The Ledi jaw helps narrow the evolutionary gap between *Australopithecus* and early *Homo*," said Kimbel. "It's an excellent case of a transitional fossil in a critical time period in human evolution."

CELEBRATING THE FIND

Villmoare's life hasn't been quite the same since the article was published. Back in the United States less than 48 hours, he found himself giving interviews to everyone from National Public Radio, to media in Austria and Singapore, to reporters from the BBC. The BBC interviewed him

four times in less than 18 hours — the last time at 1:30 a.m. Villmoare's time. "I hope I made sense," he joked.

The person who first spotted the jawbone, Chalachew Seyoum, was an ASU graduate student — who just happens to be from Ethiopia. The find was obviously particularly meaningful for him, Villmoare said.

Once team members got the jawbone back to camp, they reassembled it because they had discovered it broken in two pieces. And then they celebrated.

How does one celebrate what Villmoare described as one of the biggest anthropological finds of the last 20 years? "There was a little town nearby. We sent someone out to buy beer," he said. "By the time he got back, it was warm, but we didn't care."

Smart robots, capable of sensing situations and thinking of solutions on their own, have long been the subject of science fiction. But Paul Oh is determined to make interacting with them no longer something only imagined. The engineering professor moved his Drones and Autonomous Systems Lab to UNLV in 2014, in part because he believes the state and the university are making smart investments right now in economic development. And Las Vegas, he said, is ripe to become the elite hub for robotics.

ROBOTIC WONDERS

Paul Oh, Lincy Professor for Unmanned Aerial Systems

Robots inspire wonder. People dream about a robot to help with their chores or who would be a buddy, a protector, or a companion.

In your kitchen, there are dozens, if not hundreds, of micro-controllers. They're in microwaves to toaster ovens. As robots evolve, they will become transparent too. You won't even realize they're around.

The first device I built was a custom joystick that allowed me to design my own arcade games. Consumer computers were kind of a novelty. This was before the World Wide Web and the Internet. I started to design my own computer games and my own hardware. I guess that was good training for robotics.

I lived in Asia for a time in the late 1980s and early 1990s. There was a lot of criticism that American products and manufacturing were behind those in Japan and Korea. When I returned to the United States, I wanted to take the things that I learned and put it into American robotics. The real advantage for Asian countries was that they used robots to improve their manufacturing processes. I felt obligated to bring that back to the United States.

Many people know what they do. Some people know *how* they do it. But very few people know at the core *why* they do what they do. They may say it's for money. But that's not really why. That's just an outcome.

My lab has had three real watershed moments. The first two — 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina — forced us to ask ourselves, "Is there a way that robotics could have a real impact in disaster response?" That became a real driver in what we do. Then I spent 10 weeks at Boeing Corp., which in Asia is a world leader in humanoid robotics. In America, we're a leader in artificial intelligence. It just seemed sensible to combine those two fields. It also helped me appreciate the need for my own lab to be very global.

I have a lot of things cooking. In the near term, our focus is the DARPA Robotics Challenge to develop a robot for humanitarian and disaster relief. We were one of just 25 groups selected by the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency for the competition.

Over the next two to five years, I want our robotics lab to dazzle. Whether it's with drones, vehicles, or legged-

robots, we feel we could really make an impact by partnering with business. It's part of putting Southern Nevada on the map in the robotics world.

The five- to 10-year plan is more grandiose. I call it Roboland or maybe Robouniverse.

It will be educational, like the Smithsonian. It will have some rides, like Universal Studios, so families can get their kids excited about science and engineering. And it will be the place to unveil robotics technology, like (Consumer Electronics Show). People come from all over the world to see tomorrow's electronics or the fantasy of future cars at CES. We can do the same for robotics.

I think people have forgotten that Las Vegas has a very rich heritage in high-tech. It was once the place for aerospace and aeronautical systems, thanks to people like Howard Hughes.

We kind of let other regions emerge and we lost a lot of that pool of talent. It's impacting future generations and students who are living in this region.

People will come to Vegas again for technology. But we must create the infrastructure to

draw them back. And the timing it right.

We know that our school systems can rank much higher than they currently do. We know we want to offer our children more career options. They need a stage to show off their God-given talents and apply them to a real-world application. But we need a pathway. I really want to be a part of this conversation.

It's no surprise to me that companies in California or Arizona just scoop up our top graduates. But as a state school, our job is to prepare students for our own state's future. We have to give them opportunities they deserve. Experiences like the DARPA Robotics Challenge really connect the students and the faculty.

I think the fear that people have of robots taking jobs is a misunderstanding. Some jobs should be taken over. Some jobs put people in incredibly dangerous situations. Some jobs are so mundane that people shouldn't be subjected to them. But I don't see a robot taking over the human spirit. And that human spirit is about creativity, expression. It's about caregiving. It's about kinship. It's about inspiring wonder.



“My favorite sci-fi movie would have to be *Blade Runner*. It’s very existential. The robots have an expiration date. They’re ultimately trying to find purpose. *Why were they created and who created them?* I think that’s a very human question.”



学习者 E
EG

MATH
= $\sqrt{\pi}$

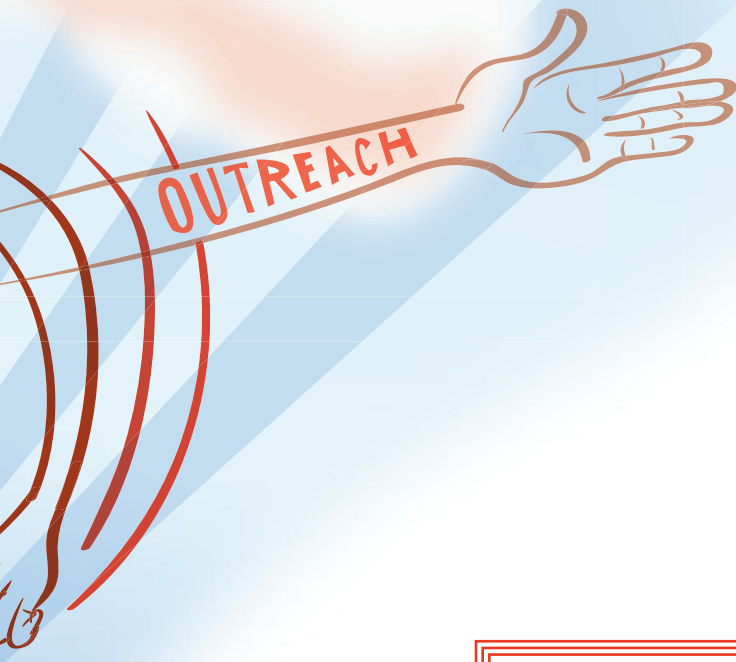


SPECIAL
education



Concerted Effort

ENGLISH
ESTUDIANTES
ÉTUDIANTS



Clark County School District is ground zero for the issues rumbling in schools across the country. By linking UNLV research and outreach programs to the needs of our community, Las Vegas can become a testbed for the solutions.

SYMBIOSIS IS ONE OF THOSE WORDS so easily turned into glib corporate-speak. In the case of the relationship between UNLV's College of Education and the Clark County School District (CCSD), however, it is fitting. The link between the two never has been stronger than it is now, according to Education Dean Kim Metcalf. He said he and CCSD Superintendent Pat Skorkowsky "agree that the success of each of our organizations is dependent to some substantial degree on the other one."

STORY BY DIANE RUSSELL
ILLUSTRATION BY DAVID STROUD

The College of Education has grown from a training ground for entry-level teachers to serving the professional development of educators at all levels — bachelor's, master's, and doctoral. But feeding the job market isn't UNLV's only goal. Administrators also are ensuring that research and community outreach programs directly tie into challenges faced by the nation's fifth largest school district.

Metcalf describes CCSD as a fascinating "urban context" unlike any other. "The issues themselves are not so unique, but the district is," Metcalf said. "In other large metropolitan areas, such as Atlanta, Chicago, and Los Angeles, there tends to be a doughnut of suburban districts that surround the urban school district."

That makes it easy for suburbanites to distance themselves from some of the challenges in their neighboring urban district, Metcalf suggested. But these issues are increasingly touching all educators across the nation.

In Southern Nevada, those issues already are concentrated in one spot. CCSD is a massive district that includes both the urban core



“Investing in the College of Education is a wise investment ... people really can make a difference in the world.”

and the suburbs. With such a microcosm of national issues, Metcalf said, the College of Education has a unique opportunity to help CCSD meet its challenges while creating models that will help other districts down the line.

MATH PROFICIENCY

In 2013, approximately 28 percent of Nevada high school graduates enrolled in a remedial course during the summer or fall semester immediately following graduation, according to a 2013-14 report issued by the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE).

“That’s one of the reasons we have to look more closely at what we are teaching at all levels,” said William Speer, director of UNLV’s Math Learning Center and former interim dean of the College of Education. “We need to pay greater attention to problem solving and reasoning — quantitative literacy, but not less attention to important mathematical skills.”

Students do not have enough opportunity to develop creative, thoughtful interactions with mathematics, he said. They are doing, but not understanding — eating, but not digesting. “Students who do not appear to be on track for college or careers need our attention, not more remediation,” he said.

This spring, Nevada administered a new 11th grade math assessment for all high school juniors. He believes the assessment

will help both the K-12 system and NSHE identify the gaps between the high school exit requirements and college and career entrance expectations.

“Too many students are caught completely unawares. Now the game-changer is that (this) assessment will tell them if they need to work more diligently to get up to speed for college,” Speer said.

To go hand-in-hand with that assessment, Speer is working with the school district to develop a special math experience for 12th graders whose scores on the 11th grade assessment show they are not yet ready for college math courses. He anticipates the program will be in place by next academic year.

Other UNLV academic units also are involved. Last summer, for example, biochemistry professor MaryKay Orgill of the College of Sciences and education professor P.G. Schrader, along with several other UNLV faculty and graduate students, led a summer institute for 23 high school and middle school teachers from throughout Nevada. The goal was to show participants how to integrate STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) subjects through an engaging storyline.

The participants were asked to find answers to a “big question”: “What would an alien eat?” They then participated in a series of hands-on activities in order to collect evidence that would allow them to develop an energy bar for a fictional alien in need of a stable supply of food to meet its daily caloric requirements.

Orgill said the institute was a success and another is being planned for this summer. It will focus on the math and science behind baking bread.

This year they are hoping for between 48 and 60 participants from Gear Up schools, schools that have a particularly high number of low-income students. The goal of the federal GEAR UP program is to increase the number of low-income students who are prepared to enter and succeed in postsecondary education. The UNLV team is focused on helping the STEM teachers strengthen their own skills so their students will be better prepared for college success.

There are numerous examples across campus of programs reaching into CCSD schools. In February, for example, UNLV’s

College of Sciences hosted Math Day for CCSD students enrolled in magnet programs at Clark and Rancho high schools. About 120 students learned about various facets of mathematical studies and heard from speakers in a variety of professions who use math in their jobs.

“We wanted to talk to these math students about the universe of opportunities, in a huge spectrum of fields, that await them as they continue their studies in mathematics,” said Tim Porter, dean of the College of Sciences. “It is sometimes difficult for high school students to look well beyond their existing math courses to see what awaits them in fields that increasingly rely on mathematical skills.”

ENGLISH LEARNERS

Another challenge faced by CCSD is educating students who arrive at school speaking little or no English. These students aren’t limited to the elementary grades. Students of all ages with limited English skills enroll in CCSD schools.

As of the 2012-13 school year, 16.5 percent of CCSD students were classified as English Language Learners (ELL), according to a 2012 Annenberg Foundation report. Overall, Nevada has one of the fastest growing ELL



“Students who do not appear to be on track for college or careers need our attention, not more remediation.”

populations in the country, said Tracy Spies of UNLV's clinical and educational studies department. The top two non-English languages spoken among CCSD students are Spanish and Tagalog.

"A unique challenge when working with ELL is just because a child doesn't have proficiency in English doesn't mean they don't have a strong academic background," Spies points out. While one child may come to the CCSD with limited schooling because their life has been transient, a child of migrant workers, for instance, another child designated as ELL may arrive with a solid academic background, but learned in a different language.

Teachers have to overcome their stereotypes about students' cultures to be successful, Spies said, explaining that they must have an understanding of students' academic, linguistic, cognitive, and socio-cultural needs.

To work effectively with English learners, teachers need additional training in second language acquisition and culturally relevant pedagogy, she said. The Education College offers four courses specifically for ELL teachers, leading to an endorsement that can be attached to teaching licenses.

Over the past three years, the college expanded the number of faculty in this area from just one to four to better address this growing community need. This has infused UNLV's teacher education programs with greater expertise in English language, content-area literacy, special education, and early childhood education, particularly for master's degree students.

The college also has played a role in the implementation of the district's ZOOM schools. These schools, which have high percentages of ELL students, receive additional resources, including pre-kindergarten programs, full-day kindergarten with smaller class sizes, free summer school, and reading skills development centers.

In addition to overall ZOOM program evaluation, UNLV faculty members also now provide a series of weekend professional development training sessions to teachers in the district's ZOOM schools.

Spies said responsiveness has been one of the keys to the successful partnership in the ZOOM schools. UNLV professors listen closely to what the ZOOM teachers



"Just because a child doesn't have proficiency in English doesn't mean they don't have a strong academic background."

tell them so that they can tweak academic and workshop curriculum to align with what the teachers are experiencing in their classrooms.

SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS

The challenge of providing excellent education to students with disabilities in the CCSD recently became easier to achieve by virtue of a record-setting financial gift to UNLV.

In October 2014, UNLV announced that the late local philanthropist Kitty Rodman had left \$12.9 million to the College of Education specifically to support scholarships and graduate fellowships for UNLV students studying special education, one of the college's areas of strength. It is the largest gift ever received by the college.

"The Rodman endowment will allow those already talented folks to move (the special education department) from being respected to being a top-tier program in the country," Dean Metcalf said. "I also hope we can use it to demonstrate to people that investing in the College of Education is a wise investment — that things can get done, that people can really make a difference in the world."

The UNLV Foundation, the branch of the university that handles donations and bequests, anticipates that fund will become fully endowed in 2017-18 and eventually

will award more than \$400,000 per year to UNLV students.

Kyle Higgins, a professor in the education & clinical studies department, said the gift will help the College of Education train more special education teachers. Across the nation, school districts struggle to fill much-needed positions for that specialty, and CCSD is no exception, she said.

The college already has been hard at work to find innovative ways to fill the gap, said Joe Morgan, also a professor in educational & clinical studies. It is one of the areas for which UNLV has created alternative-route-to-licensure programs. The programs address the teaching shortage a couple of ways. First, they offer current teachers an efficient way to gain the specialty credentials in high-need areas. Second, they target recruitment efforts and student support to career changers likely to be attracted to teaching and then design the curriculum around their particular needs.

This year, for example, the college is expanding its alternative licensure programs to attract military veterans with bachelor's degrees in other fields. The veterans will jumpstart their new careers during an intensive, five-week summer session. They can then teach under a conditional license as they complete the remaining courses that lead to full licensure.

All these efforts, Metcalf said, will strengthen UNLV as a whole as much as CCSD. "Top Tier universities around the world established and sustain their reputations by meaningfully improving the lives of their constituents and stakeholders — locally, nationally, and internationally," Metcalf said. "For this reason, it is no surprise that the most prestigious U.S. universities also are home to similarly respected colleges or schools of education.

"As UNLV begins its journey to becoming one of the top public universities in the country under President Len Jessup, the College of Education and its faculty have already begun the process of helping to reshape education in Nevada and beyond."

Related: UNLV alumna Kathleen Decker turns around a struggling school.



Thanks for the Memories, Tark

WHEN NEWS BROKE of the Feb. 11 death of legendary basketball coach Jerry Tarkanian, the campus naturally flocked to the bronze statue installed on campus in his honor. Along with flowers, many left hand towels as a fitting tribute to the coach's habit of chomping on them to relieve stress during games.

A week later, more than 40 properties along the famed Las Vegas Strip, as well as the famous Reno arch, dimmed their lights for Tark. That rare honor came about thanks in part to a social media campaign started by communication studies alumni Tony Cordasco, '83, and Scott Gulbrandsen, '95.

On March 1, the Thomas & Mack Center — The Shark Tank, as it is often called — filled with more than 4,000 fans during a televised memorial service emceed by former UNLV quarterback and ESPN personality Kenny Mayne, '82 BA Communication Studies. On display was the 1990 NCAA Championship trophy and on hand were such former players as Reggie Theus, Moses Scurry, Jackie Robinson, Ricky Sobers, Leon Symanski, and current head basketball coach Dave Rice.

Before the ceremony fittingly closed out with Frank Sinatra's "My Way," Eldridge "El Hud" Hudson, who played under Tark 1983-87, said, "It's amazing a man this big can change a whole valley."

[Aaron Mayes/UNLV Photo Services]

More: Visit unlv.edu/tark for more on the coach Tarkanian's history and the OneforTark memorial fund.

Tark's T

1980
1981
1982
1983
1984
1985
1986
1987
1988
1989
1990
1991
1992
1993
1994
1995
1996
1997
1998
1999
2000
2001
2002
2003
2004
2005
2006
2007
2008
2009
2010
2011
2012
2013
2014
2015
2016
2017
2018
2019
2020
2021
2022
2023
2024





This university is ready

PRESIDENT JESSUP ON UNLV'S BIG INITIATIVES, HIGHER ED'S TOUGHEST CHALLENGES, AND HIS OWN PATH TO LEADERSHIP. BY CATE WEEKS

That Sen Jessup's bookshelves are filled with leadership tomes is to be expected.

UNLV's new president started as a business professor. He draws on the wisdom in presidential histories and the memoirs of corporate greats, finding in them the pithy or poignant words that cement grand concepts. He often quotes them in his own campus talks, before turning the rooms over to a comfortable back-and-forth dialog with his audience. At the March memorial service for legendary Runnin' Rebels coach Jerry Tarkanian, for example, Jessup invoked a favorite from Teddy Roos-

evelt's "The Man in the Arena" passage: *It's not the critic who deserves our notice, it goes, but the one who dares greatness no matter the outcome.*

But Jessup's all-time favorite genre is science fiction. He first picked up Isaac Asimov's Foundation series as he headed off to the College of the Siskiyous to play baseball. In it, a mathematician foresees a barbaric future for society. To counter the coming dark forces, he forms his Foundation of both engineers and artists to preserve and expand human knowledge.

"I love science fiction because it's all about what's possible, what could hap-

pen," Jessup said soon after moving onto the seventh floor of the Flora Dungan Humanities Building. Science fiction grounds what seems so distantly conceivable into ideas readily attainable, he noted.

Perhaps Asimov's world also offers Jessup a corollary for the world of higher education. His mathematician, after all, blended the physical and social sciences into a new science, and the artist was as pivotal to his galaxy's success as the engineer. Such interdisciplinary thinking, Jessup said, is exactly what it will take for UNLV to fully realize its potential as a force for economic and social development in the region.

That's a future he has no trouble seeing.

ty,



LEN JESSUP

Education:

'83 BA Information and Communication Studies and '85 MBA, California State University, Chico; '89 Ph.D. Organizational Behavior and Management Information Systems, University of Arizona

Hometown:

Grew up in San Francisco; the fourth of five children and the first to graduate from college. "Given where I come from, I've undertaken a lot of things I have zero experience in. You have to give yourself permission to try and have enough confidence to think it's possible."

Family:

Partner Kristi Staab, owner of Kristi Staab's Rock Star Training; daughter, Jamie, 17; and son, David, 12. "My personal definition of success is about finding balance. I've always told students that success is when you get up in the morning, you can't wait to go to work because you love what you do. But also, at the end of the day, you can't wait to get home and be with the people you care about most."

A challenge:

"It's not always a positive thing to always be planning for what's coming next. I have to force myself to be in the moment sometimes."

Like so many Rebels today, Jessup was the first in his family to graduate from college.

His grandparents emigrated separately from Italy and eventually landed in San Francisco. They'd left the poverty of their fishing towns and became working-class families filled with small entrepreneurs. His dad supplemented his fireman's salary with a little trucking company on the side at one time, and Jessup's many odd jobs growing up included baling hay and cleaning bowling alleys.

Jessup's three older siblings got jobs and started families after high school. Were it not for his athletic ability, he'd likely have done the same.

"There wasn't a lot of talk about college around my house," Jessup recalled. "I don't think my dad stepped foot on a college campus until my graduation. To him, I was going off to junior college to play baseball. I thought the same thing, actually."

At Siskiyous, he played in the highly competitive California junior college league but soon figured out that a career in the majors was not in the making. He figured he'd finish the college's business certificate program and then head back home. His coach encouraged him to get a bachelor's degree instead. "It was the first time anyone in a leadership role had counseled me to pursue my education," he said. "He saw something in me I didn't see."

Small encouragements from professors along the way led from a bachelor's and an MBA at California State University, Chico, to a doctorate in organizational behavior and management information systems from the University of Arizona.

"So now I feel a responsibility, not only to my family but to everyone else who helped me along the way. It's a privilege to work in higher education and to help this generation of students see and achieve the opportunities," he said. "I know what it's like for higher education to lift you up from a place with limited options to one that's wide open."

While there was no grand vision behind Jessup's early academic career, there were pivotal moments at which he saw what was coming and shifted to make the most of the potential opportunity.

When he headed to Arizona for his doctorate in 1985, personal computing was just

emerging. In a computer lab there, faculty and students were developing software to promote team collaboration. "It was the precursor to the social media on the Internet as we know it today," he said. "I was excited to see something being developed right before my eyes (and I could see how) that would impact the way we do business every day. I caught the research bug right then and there."

To ground his management degree in an applied field, he added the minor in information systems. He credits that choice for landing his first academic job — at California State University, Long Beach — when the market was tight for management professors. Then when a new campus in San Marcos opened, Jessup seized the chance to be a program builder, something seldom afforded young faculty members. Undaunted by challenges and despite his lack of experience, he began landing more and more administrative assignments.

To gain experience at a major research institution, he headed to Indiana University for five years before returning to the West for an endowed position at Washington State University, where he grew the management information systems department. When the business dean left abruptly, Jessup threw his hat in the ring.

But he hadn't quite realized what he was stepping into. The university was going through budget cuts and the business school was in serious jeopardy of losing accreditation — something that had been kept from faculty by the previous administration. "It was a real crisis for the college. It could have been a complete disaster."

Jessup chose transparency and collaboration over dictatorial wrangling to turn the college around. He literally pulled the accreditation report out of the drawer that he found it in and laid out all the embarrassing details in a staff meeting. "I told them, 'You're on the inside now, which means you have to help fix it, too.'"

Corporate consultant Bill Maynard was an adjunct instructor and a member of the college's advisory board. "It was really something to see — I felt like he literally turned into a great leader right before my

eyes," he said. "One faculty meeting I remember started off so contentious, but Len turned the room. He showed he genuinely cared about the people, and he really believed that they could accomplish so much more than they realized. He showed them he could be trusted."

Simply fixing the accreditation issues wasn't enough for Jessup. He compelled the college to reposition itself and develop a much more forward-thinking and ambitious strategic plan. That success led to another turnaround assignment, this time leading Washington State's advancement division, which oversees fundraising and public relations activities.

It was a task well suited to Jessup's collaborative leadership style, he said, noting that donors, particularly alumni, often have connections to a university that long precede and outlast any one president or dean or development officer. "Raising money, getting faculty buy-in for initiatives, getting legislative support — it's all about the same thing. It's all about helping people see their role in the university's future."

That's the "Jessup Juice," says his partner, Kristi Staab. He has a natural ability to build enthusiasm and trust in an institution, she said. He won her over at an alumni event for the Eller School of Management at the University of Arizona. He had returned to his doctoral alma mater to become dean in 2011; she was being honored for her accomplishments as a leadership development consultant.

When Jessup took over, Eller was already a top-ranked business school, particularly in his own field of management information systems and in entrepreneurial studies. He led its transition to a fully self-sustaining college and oversaw a huge expansion of its online education and executive education offerings. He was instrumental in creating the University of Arizona's technology transfer and commercialization program, Tech Launch Arizona.

"He's an academic, but he's also a businessperson," Staab said. "All that is a must-have for a university president, of course. But when it comes down to it, Len leaves things in a better place at the end of the day — I mean, everything, every single day. He's got the kind of energy that makes people want to be on his team."

During his interview process, Jessup found a disconnect between his impressions of UNLV and comments that came from some corners of the community. Perhaps it was the natural weariness that settles in after a tough economic downturn, he said, “but I don’t think people realize how good UNLV really is. There are very talented people here. They just seem to be waiting to hear, ‘Go for it.’”

He’s giving the green light in the form of UNLV’s new plan to become a top-tier public research university by 2025. The effort, started by former Presidents Carol Harter and Neal Smatresk and interim President Don Snyder, will roll out fully this fall. The plan lays out how UNLV will improve student achievement, expand its research and creative activities, and shore up the infrastructure that eroded during budget cut-backs. It also calls for UNLV to leverage its resources to support economic diversification efforts and to succeed in establishing a fully accredited School of Medicine, something sorely lacking in Southern Nevada.

All this will make UNLV bigger and rise in rankings, Jessup said, but the real value is in making Nevada a better place to live. UNLV’s increased research activity will have a multiplier effect on the state. With some wise investments, he envisions UNLV robustly spinning out new businesses and even more resources dedicated to tackling community issues. UNLV will return even more revenue to the state through out-of-state tuition and grant dollars. It will help the state retain its best young students and increase the resources we offer to our diverse student body to ensure their success. And it will strengthen the global network of alumni and the value of their degrees.

“That sounds big but it’s not only possible, it’s going to happen,” he said, and he paraphrases another famous quote, this time from hockey great Wayne Gretzky. “You have to skate to where the puck is going, not where it is or to where it’s been. I can see where UNLV is going, where the city is going, where our state needs us to be going. We have a shared destiny, which means people will work hard to help our success. If I hadn’t gotten a strong sense of that, I wouldn’t have come here.

“Now it’s just a matter of helping other people see that, too.” §



At a campus town hall meeting March 12, Jessup discussed the development of UNLV’s strategic plan.

➔ **Organizational change:**

“I don’t get too ruffled by resistance. You have to remember that those are valid and legitimate feelings. If you’re in a situation where the majority of the people feel the opposite, then change really isn’t possible. But if you have the majority, the group can bring the minority along. They will catch on or they’ll move on to something else that suits them.”

➔ **Student debt:**

“When I went to college, California was heavily subsidizing education for its students. When it comes down to it, I was lucky to be born at the right time in the right place. So the financial burden now on students really does trouble me, and I have a duty to address those issues.”

➔ **The rankings game:**

“The traditional way to rise in rankings is to tighten standards ... to take pride in excluding people and then call that quality. Policymakers now are starting to look at the degree to which an institution helps students succeed, particularly those who are economically disadvantaged.”

Going For It

OUR START

FALL 2013

MAKING THE CASE >

After months of work across the state, the Nevada System of Higher Education (NSHE) approves a detailed plan for public medical education that includes the new UNLV School of Medicine. The case is easy to make. A report commissioned by The Lincy Institute notes the state's ranking of 48th in primary care physicians per capita. "Nevada is unable to support the current health care needs of residents let alone the projected population growth," the economic impact report by national consultant Tripp Umbach states.

MAY 2014

FINDING A LEADER >

UNLV hires Dr. Barbara Atkinson as the planning dean. She previously led a major expansion at University of Kansas Medical Center. Within months, she crafts the school's vision statement, recruits key staff, and develops its budget. "There's really not much pushback on building this school — the need is so apparent," she says.

AUGUST 22, 2014

IT'S OFFICIAL >

The UNLV School of Medicine is officially established when the NSHE Board of Regents approve a two-year budget and submits it to the governor and the Legislature. The next month, UNLV begins the 18-month accreditation process and submits its application to allow it to welcome its inaugural class in fall 2017. "Close to 80 percent of students who complete medical school ... will stay to live and practice in that state," says Regent Kevin Page. "We have been working diligently over the past year to develop a coordinated and comprehensive plan for expanding public medical education throughout Nevada."



WHAT'S NEXT

JUNE 2015

BUDGET SET >

The Nevada Legislature, with authorization from Gov. Brian Sandoval, will determine how much the state will fund for the 2016-17 fiscal years. When fully built out, only 18 percent of the school's budget will come from the state. The remaining revenues will come from clinical services, grants, tuition and fees, and philanthropy.

AUGUST 2015

MODERN CURRICULUM >

The School of Medicine will submit its curriculum for review as part of the accreditation process. "Building the medical school from scratch allows us to take all the best ideas in medical education and put them together in a new way," Atkinson said. "We won't have many lectures or routine dissections in gross anatomy. We'll have virtual gross anatomy with MRIs and CT scans, the same technology doctors use every day in practice. Our curriculum will be problem-based. (Students) will be focused on solving the problem, in much the same way that they'll have to as practicing physicians."

JUNE 2016

THE GREEN LIGHT TO ACCEPT STUDENTS >

After an 18-month process, the accreditation agency for medical schools will determine if the school has its approval to begin accepting students in the fall with full accreditation by 2021, the same year its first doctors will graduate.

Once the Nevada System of Higher Education set its sights on expanding medical education in the state, things moved fast. Here's how far the UNLV School of Medicine has come and what's next.

OCTOBER 2014

BUILDING ENGAGEMENT >

The school establishes its Community Advisory Board with nearly 40 members from the health care, education, and business sectors. "Those in the medical community here are just as frustrated as patients," Atkinson says. "Early major supporters of this new school have been the large physician groups and hospitals ... They can't recruit fast enough to fill the extraordinary demand, particularly for specialists."

DECEMBER 2014

IDENTIFYING A POTENTIAL HOME >

Ten acres of land in the heart of the Las Vegas medical district is reserved as the possible location for the school's central facility. It is located a block away from the UNLV School of Dental Medicine and the system's Clinical Simulation Center near Charleston Boulevard and Shadow Lane.

APRIL 2015

STUDENT RECRUITMENT >

The school announces its "60 by 16" campaign to fund full-tuition scholarships for the entire 2017 charter class. Within weeks, local philanthropists, business leaders, and UNLV administrators commit to funding more than three-quarters of the scholarships. They are part of the school's recruitment strategy. "In a state starving for doctors, expectations will be high for the school's first students," Atkinson says. "We need to attract high-quality students in Nevada and across the nation who will elevate the school's reputation and set the tone for long-term success."



AUGUST 2017

INSTRUCTION BEGINS >

The inaugural class of 60 will start their medical education at UNLV. "The School of Medicine is one of the best investments we can make in our own community," said UNLV President Len Jessup. "It will bring direct economic impact in terms of fostering a biotech economy and keeping our health care dollars local. And beyond that, it will help make this a healthier place to live."

**THE
IMPACT**

BY 2030

UNLV'S SCHOOL OF MEDICINE WILL IMPROVE ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE AND MAKE OUR ECONOMY STRONGER

8,000 new jobs created

\$60 million in new revenues for the state

\$1.2 Billion annual economic impact



Watchdogs

Abuse as a teenager and rejected applications didn't hold James Dold, left, back from law school. Once there he found his purpose in changing the juvenile justice system. • Lawrence Mower jumped into journalism just as newsrooms were cutting back. That gave the young reporter a chance to dig into the numbers to expose corruption in public agencies. **STORIES BY MICHAEL BLASKY**

James Dold

'06 BA Criminal Justice and Psychology

There's hypocrisy in the U.S. criminal justice system. If an adult has sex with a child, the child is a victim. But if that same child accepts money for sex, the child is, in many states, a criminal.

James Dold, '06 BA Criminal Justice and Psychology, can't let that injustice go unchallenged.

"It's a conflict in the law where a child who can't legally consent to have sex can still be prosecuted for prostitution," Dold said. "We place restrictions on children and have criminal laws to protect them from bad influences and those who would prey on them." But then we turn them into criminals, he said. And sometimes we make sure those mistakes follow them for life.

Dold is the advocacy director for the Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth. He's been in Washington, D.C., since getting his law degree from the University of Maryland, but his work has taken him across the country — and back to Nevada. In 2013, he successfully lobbied for a state law that increased the penalties for pimps who traffic children. The law passed.

His focus is on extreme penalties for youths convicted of crimes, particularly life sentences without the chance of parole — a cause that has reunited him with his alma mater. He's working with the Juvenile Justice Clinic in UNLV's Boyd School of Law to organize the push in Nevada. That lobbying coalition also includes the ACLU, the public defender's office, formerly incarcerated youths, lawyers, and other community members.

Mary Berkheiser, director of the Juvenile Justice Clinic, said Dold has brought a national perspective to their efforts. "James also has the added benefit of being a Nevadan who understands the dynamics on the ground here," she said. "The time and energy he has devoted here will be crucial to enacting legislation. Right now, those sentenced to life without parole will die in prison for crimes committed when they were just kids. New legislation will give them an opportunity to appear before the parole board and demonstrate their maturation and readiness for life outside the prison walls."

If Dold's history as a judicial reform advocate is an indication, he has a great shot at changing Nevada law. In his prior position with Polaris Project, he was one of several advocates who in 2010 argued

SEE **DOLD** PAGE 30

Lawrence Mower

'06 BA Journalism & Media Studies

Lawrence Mower's career as an investigative journalist began with death. But his reporting in the wake of tragedies has made life safer for residents in Las Vegas, said his mentor and UNLV journalism professor Mary Hausch.

"He'll never know who they are," Hausch said, "but he saved people's lives."

Mower, '06 BA Journalism & Media Studies, is now a watchdog reporter known for sweeping investigations into public agencies. An investigative reporter for the *Palm Beach Post* in Florida, he cut his teeth in UNLV's backyard at the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*, Nevada's largest newspaper. Within five years of graduating, he had proven himself to be one of the top investigators in the state.

His 2011 investigation "Deadly Force" was an exhaustive study of about 400 police shootings over two decades in Las Vegas. The series was sparked by the shooting death of a small-time marijuana dealer named Trevon Cole, who was unarmed when he was shot and killed by police in his Las Vegas apartment with his pregnant girlfriend in the other room.

Shootings by police were a common occurrence in Las Vegas, often discussed strongly in the media and public for a few weeks but then fading away without any changes to address the problems. Mower had only a few years' experience as a reporter, but he knew that this story couldn't fade.

"It stunk to high heaven," Mower said. "I just knew something was deeply wrong with the system here."

Mower's interest grew after the Cole shooting and another controversial shooting in 2010. Generally such shootings were treated as solitary events in media coverage. Mower, then a police beat reporter, wondered about the deeper questions: Were police officers in Las Vegas using deadly force more often than those in other departments? Could the shooting deaths have been prevented? And if so, how?

He figured he'd find the answers to his questions in the data, and used the sources he'd developed on the police beat to guide him in the right direction.

But that would prove a bigger challenge. The police department fee for fulfilling the records requests was \$11,000, a steep amount for any newspaper, and a big investment to make in a reporter with

SEE **MOWER** PAGE 31



“Looking back I felt like we were all helpless in some ways and at the mercy of a system that either did not know we existed or did know, but did not care.”

Dold

FROM PAGE 29

against the life-without-parole sentence of Sara Kruzan, a victim of child sex trafficking who was convicted of killing her pimp in 1994 in California. She was just 16 when she killed the man who had trafficked her since she was 13 years old.

Activists urged then-Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger to commute Kruzan’s sentence because she was a victim of years of psychological manipulation and physical and sexual abuse. She was paroled after the work of advocates and her lawyers resulted in an executive commutation. They also succeeded in getting a new law that gave the parole board the ability to consider the mitigating factors of youth in determining whether to grant parole to child offenders.

“That was a really eye-opening experience for me,” he said. “I knew human trafficking would be one of the most important issues in

my life that I’d work on.”

Dold went on to help pass 40 new laws to combat human trafficking and worked in more than half the states in the country. Eleven states have abolished life-without-parole sentences for minors. Dold also played a pivotal role in the passage of several of those laws and in working with the American Bar Association to pass a resolution on the issue.

He received the inaugural Louis Henkin Memorial Award from Rightslink at Columbia Law School and the Josephine Butler Abolitionist Award for his work fighting to protect vulnerable men, women, and children from human traffickers.

TRoubled Past, Uneasy Path

Dold credits former history instructor James Murphy, ’03 JD, for helping steer his career toward law. Murphy, who taught the

class while attending UNLV’s William S. Boyd School of Law, is now a senior lawyer at the Laxalt & Nomura firm in Las Vegas. “He took me under his wing a bit because of my writing ability and the assignments I did for him,” Dold said. “I think he probably stuck out in my mind in terms of a profes-

sor who encouraged my development down the legal path.”

And that path wasn’t easy. He grew up in inner-city Las Vegas and worked to put himself through college, leaving little time to rack up the extracurricular activities and internships many law schools seek in applicants. He was rejected from all 15 law schools he applied to after his senior year.

He worked as an assistant beverage manager at Caesars Palace while he gained internship experience on the side with the

SEE DOLD PAGE 32



“I was thinking that if this was a casino, someone would have taken these people into back rooms and asked them some tough questions.”

Mower

FROM PAGE 29

little experience.

Hausch, a former managing editor at the paper, notes that the *Review-Journal* hadn't had a strong track record of battling agencies for public records. “I was shocked the *R-J* paid it, and I think the police were shocked they paid it,” she said, adding that “it's one of the reasons newspapers' roles are so important.” But the newspaper paid the fee, and its investment paid off.

SWEEPING CHANGES

Mower spent a full year away from daily assignments and focused only on his investigation, which revealed a history of excessive deadly force — disproportionately against African-Americans — with very little discipline for mishandling situations.

By the second day of his five-day series, an official at the U.S. Department of Justice

made inquiries into the Clark County sheriff's office. Within a few years, the department completely overhauled its use-of-force policies, reducing shootings and increasing transparency. As a result of the changes, the department fired an officer for mishandling a police shooting for the first time in its history.

While it was his idea, Mower said he couldn't have done it alone. Other reporters, editors, photographers, and managers helped produce the award-winning investigation, which is still the largest examination into police shootings with that level of detail, he said. Jim Wright, an editor at the paper with a background in investigations, did much of the organization. He also helped Mower form the blueprint of the project.

“I had no concept of the hours it would take,” Mower said. “It was a great idea.

What I really needed was someone to point me in the right direction. Just the organization part was astounding.”

RUNNING THE NUMBERS

Mower's coverage of police defined his time at the *Review-Journal*, but he wasn't always sure it was for him. He majored in accounting at UNLV, but switched to journalism after three years — late in the process for most college students. That background brought a new element to his reporting, he said. Reporters tend to be word people.

“I took statistics, economics, all those prerequisites for accounting,” he said. “I think that really makes you comfortable thinking about how numbers play into real-world situations.”

He first interned at the *Review-Journal*

SEE **MOWER** PAGE 32

Dold

FROM PAGE 30

Nevada attorney general's office and the county's public defender.

"I got to see both sides of a prosecution and defense," he said. "This was important because I hadn't had the type of exposure I probably needed to make decisions as a lawyer."

He fared slightly better in his next round of applications, but only slightly. Seattle University's law school offered him a partial scholarship, but Dold knew his heart wanted to be closer to the country's decision makers. Dold was near the top of his class in Seattle when the University of Maryland accepted his transfer application, he said.

Using his legal skills to protect endangered children is personal: He was just 13 when the mother of another child from his Boy Scout troop molested and abused him, he said. The woman undermined Dold's relationship with his parents and extended family and then convinced him to live with — and work — for her, he said. The woman treated him like an indentured servant for about two years until Dold realized how she was manipulating him.

Dold told his story to the Nevada Legislature in 2013 to support a law that would strengthen penalties for people who force labor or services from minors. Testifying was cathartic, he said, because he'd never get justice for himself. By the time he gained the maturity to understand the crime, the statute of limitations had expired.

"Looking back, I felt like we were all helpless in some ways and at the mercy of a system that either did not know we existed or did know, but did not care," he said. "I felt helpless because of the odds we all faced in having to overcome growing up in a low-socio-economic environment, a broken school system, and a never-ending struggle against drugs and crime."

More: Read about James Dold's work at fairsentencingofyouth.org.

Mower

FROM PAGE 31

while still a student at UNLV and a writer for *The Rebel Yell* student newspaper. He landed the job after investigating several crimes at UNLV, including shootings, fatal car crashes, and mysterious campus deaths. Mower credits Hausch for getting him in the door at the *Review-Journal*.

Hausch said Mower's talent and enthusiasm were apparent the first time he stepped into her class at UNLV, and she still points to him to inspire her current students.

"None of his success has surprised me," she said. "He looks at the world a little differently from other people."

His editors at the *Review-Journal* quickly threw the eager intern into the fray. Mower recalls being sent to every fatal accident early in his career. It was sometimes tedious work, but it got him out of the office and sharpened his reporting skills. One of his first front-page stories included a piece on Henry Prendes, a Las Vegas patrol sergeant who was gunned down while investigating a domestic disturbance.

Mower transcribed the 911 call in which a witness describes Prendes' killing. "It was pretty graphic and awful," he said. "I was like, 'I'm not sure I want to be doing too much of this.'" But he thrived as he developed his skills on the always eventful police beat.

LUCKY HUNCH

Other publications took notice of the "Deadly Force" series. In 2013 Mower joined the staff of the *Palm Beach Post* as a full-time investigative reporter. It didn't take him long to find his next story. He read an article in *Wired* magazine about a Canadian who discovered a flaw in the lottery's scratch-off games. He wondered if the same thing was happening in Florida, which has one of the biggest lotteries in the U.S. "It was just a hunch. Not even a hypothesis at that point," Mower said.

After requesting Florida's database of lottery winners, Mower didn't find fraud with scratch-off cards — he found something even bigger.

The data proved that the state's top winners statistically couldn't have been winning as often as they had. He identified some suspects who ran ticket-cashing schemes, sometimes for the mob. And he found that some storeowners were likely keeping winning tickets for themselves, defrauding their customers.

In a bit of irony, Mower left Las Vegas before he began investigating gambling fraud. "I was thinking that if this was a casino, someone would have taken these people into back rooms and asked them some tough questions," he said.

The state's lottery officials had access to the same data Mower used, but hadn't analyzed it. And they didn't act on the issue until Mower widely exposed the system's flaws in the series "Gaming the Lottery."

A few days after the series published last year, the state began raiding the stores he'd identified in the investigation. The story had impact across the country. Media in Boston; Atlanta; Dayton, Ohio; and Los Angeles used Mower's data-mining techniques to identify fraud in their own state's lottery systems.

Next? Mower is returning to the subject that made his career: police shootings and law enforcement corruption, this time in Florida. While such incidents continue to make headlines, thanks in large part to the rise of video, he is concerned about dwindling resources for investigative journalism. He developed his skills by going to crime scenes, talking with victims and suspects, and listening to concerned cops. An emphasis on being first with breaking news has led newsrooms to focus less on the depth and uncovering trends. Without the time to develop sources, his stories would have lacked important context, and he doesn't think he would have progressed as quickly as a reporter. "You don't learn anything sitting at your desk," he said.

More: Follow Lawrence Mower on Twitter, [@lmower3](https://twitter.com/lmower3).

Conduct on Camera

UNLV researchers team up with police department to study the effectiveness — and drawbacks — of officer body cameras.

BY MICHAEL BLASKY

A POLICE SHOOTING is often over in only a few seconds. But crucial details are lost forever. Officers, paralyzed by adrenaline, can't recall exactly what they said or how many shots they fired. Witnesses, if they exist, often give conflicting statements. How do you protect an officer who acted lawfully, but is accused of lying? How do you get justice for a victim wrongfully killed by the police?

As a national debate about the need for police transparency exploded last year, UNLV researchers were quietly in the middle of an unprecedented study that could change how departments across the country use technology to investigate — and hopefully prevent — officer-involved shootings.

William Sousa, a criminal justice professor, partnered with the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department for the yearlong study into the effectiveness of body cameras. The study began in March 2014, several months before President Barack Obama requested federal funding to provide departments 50,000 body cameras in the wake of police-involved deaths in Ferguson, Mo., and New York City.

Half of the 400 Las Vegas officers in the study have been randomly assigned to wear body cameras mounted on their shoulders. The other half are the control group and won't wear cameras.

It's the largest study of its kind, Sousa said. "There are other studies going on, but not to our level of randomized assignment. This is really the gold standard in determining if there's an effect."



SUBTLE EFFECTS

While the study is focusing on the effects cameras have on use-of-force incidents and citizen complaints, Sousa also will try to establish context for their use. By analyzing the cameras' influence on day-to-day interactions between officers and citizens, he hopes to address the potential drawbacks to their use.

Will people be wary to speak with police if they know they're being recorded? Will officers become more legalistic in their approach — writing more citations and making more arrests rather than issuing warnings and diffusing situations with tact?

"We know from the last 20 years of research that when police are more proactive, that's the best way to manage problems in a community," Sousa said. "There's concern that officers wearing cameras might revert to a more reactive mode." They might, for example, ignore somewhat suspicious activity to avoid having their reasons for approaching a situation scrutinized later.

There are privacy concerns as well. An officer's day typically involves responding to traffic incidents and managing family

disputes — times when people are vulnerable or coping with highly stressful situations. "We have to remember, the cameras are capturing all of that as well," he said.

FROM SKEPTICISM TO ENTHUSIASM

The study was financed by the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), which awarded Virginia-based research firm CNA a nearly \$550,000 grant. The grant covered the UNLV research and helped purchase body cameras and the hardware required for storing large data files. CNA previously helped the Las Vegas police conduct the extensive research needed to revamp the agency's deadly force policies a few years earlier (Read about alumnus Lawrence Mower's role, page 29). Sousa's past research with Metro includes an analysis of "saturation" teams, which operate in the city's most crime-ridden neighborhoods.

Las Vegas police Lt. Dan Zehnder, who is overseeing the department's camera program, said officers were initially skeptical of the new technology, which isn't mandatory, and the study. But the study's volunteer roll filled within weeks of the officer-

involved shooting death of Michael Brown in Ferguson. "Nobody wants to be the next cop who isn't wearing a body camera in that situation," Zehnder said.

After the last volunteer completes a year with the camera, the full report will be published by the National Institute of Justice. But anecdotal evidence from officers has been positive. "Officers feel very comfortable carrying the camera. They feel it helps them prevent a lot of incidents," Sousa said. People who know they are on camera tend to temper their behavior, he said.

The cameras are already helping to clear officers. Zehnder said there had been 21 internal complaints against officers wearing cameras between the start of the study and March; 20 officers were cleared immediately. The last complaint is under review.

Why would a citizen complain about an officer, knowing the officer is recording? Zehnder said a person's perception of an incident can be skewed by their emotions at the time. A local principal, for instance, was ticketed after speeding in a school zone. She later accused the officer of being rude to her, but the video showed the officer was firm but polite, he said.

Other potential benefits include reducing the cost of lawsuits against police and providing clear evidence for prosecutors to use at trial. The key for a department's success is adopting clear, strong policies. How long will footage be stored? Is the footage a public record? How do you protect citizens' privacy rights? What happens when an officer fails to turn the camera on?

"Once departments have clear policies established, I think the benefits will ultimately outweigh any disadvantages," Sousa said.

Alumna **Kathleen Decker** turns around a struggling elementary by reaching out beyond the school grounds.

Magnetic Principal

BY BRIAN SODOMA

A dozen years ago, Kathleen Decker, '94 M.Ed., was an eager, new principal. Walter Bracken Elementary was an underperforming school near downtown Las Vegas needing plenty of fresh perspective. Today, Decker has helped make Bracken a model for other schools — even some from as far away as Costa Rica, Japan and Columbia. They come to see how the magnet school with a STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Arts Mathematics) curriculum has made the steep climb into the top 5 percent for performance in the Clark County School District. They come to learn from Decker, who in 2013 was named Principal of the Year by Magnet Schools of America.

“I made a lot of mistakes,” she admits about her 14-year run at the school. “It took some time to get the amazing staff we have now.” The key to the turnaround? “This school is no longer a part of the community — it’s the hub of the community.”

BRACKEN TODAY

Located near Eastern and Stewart avenues, the school is in one of the poorest areas of Las Vegas. When Decker arrived, the walls were painted a cold gray. Today the sand-yellow halls are filled with massive displays of student achievement, art, and other reminders that Bracken is now a success story. Watching change occur slower than she wanted was perhaps Decker’s biggest challenge through the years. “If you know me, you know that I like people to dive in

with success in mind and it always works out. Having some people who need to see it before they believe is challenging for me because I believe in it right away when it is best for kids.”

Bracken’s list of changes is long and ever-growing, as is its partnerships. The school won a Boston Museum of Science grant to help create on-grade-level engineering lessons. A local nursery and the Rotary Club help fund a garden and provide expertise on how to grow the vegetables. The garden has become part of lesson plans and Bracken students tend the vegetables, harvest them, and sell them at a farmer’s market.

Opportunities for students to rub elbows with working world elements aren’t overlooked. A recent *Aladdin* production, for example, put more than 60 students to work. There were actors, sound people, and makeup artists, but also marketing and blogging teams to promote the event.

Art and math are conspicuously and purposefully intertwined so students know how subjects mesh. One art class builds animal structures out of popsicle sticks. But the project employs measurement skills to ensure the structures are stable. Separating art from math and engineering is silly to Decker. “Have you ever met an engineer who was not creative?” she asked on a campus tour.

BEYOND THE MIDDLE

The greatest turning point for Bracken occurred about seven years ago, when it became an empowerment school. Under that model, the staff person closest to the student makes many big decisions.

“It was a big game changer here,” Decker said. “Our data was kind of stuck. We had moved our kids out from the bottom quite a

“All kids can do better; all schools, including mine, can always improve. We need to empower creativity in our leaders and let them know that there’s the flexibility in place to use that creativity. This will help them succeed.”



bit, but we were kind of stuck in the middle.”

Under empowerment, Decker gave up an assistant principal position to use the funds for teaching supplies, tutoring services, and a volunteer coordinator position. Parent volunteers now help gather support materials for teachers and make their photocopies, allowing educators to focus on instruction instead of administrative tasks.

Decker also reached out to community partners through the years, but not just for project funding. Leaders from MGM Resorts, Zappos, and other businesses shaped her perspective about her employees. “I had a lot of people talk to me about management style and empowering employees so we can get better results,” she said.

Decker also says her years at UNLV helped create an enthusiasm in her for making Las Vegas better. “I love this com-

munity and the people in it, and they deserve nothing less than the best.”

TURNAROUND TAKES COMMITMENT

One of Bracken’s greatest successes is its Book Expo program, which encourages students to read series. This brought in the Advanced Reader program, which assigns point totals to books by level of difficulty and implements short quizzes to assure the students read the materials. “We found even with our ELL (English Language Learner) kids this is highly successful because they become familiar with a character and they’re not staring at a bookshelf for an hour trying to figure out what to read.”

Decker said the changes have also created a culture of literacy. “When you’re walking the hallways, they’re talking about books.

... And yes, our reading scores have shot through the roof.”

With others studying her model, Decker is often asked why so many other schools can’t see similar results. She says turnarounds are a serious commitment, and you need to be willing to make mistakes to find answers. This can be difficult for some school leaders to embrace.

“They don’t know what they don’t know,” she said. “All kids can do better; all schools, including mine, can always improve. We need to empower creativity in our leaders and let them know that there’s the flexibility in place to use that creativity. This will help them succeed.”

More: Learn how UNLV is working with CCSD to take on the toughest challenges in education, page 16.

DON'T MISS IT
.....

Takin' Care of Business Golf Tournament: Join the Lee Business School's third annual tournament, including a happy hour reception, silent auction, raffle prizes, and awards. June 10, Cascata Golf Club, Boulder City.

Rebel Business Network Luncheon: Political journalists Jon Ralston and Steve Sebelius will dissect the 78th Nevada legislative session from taxes and regulations impacting your business to funding for education. Learn what big changes are headed your way. June 17, Richard Tam Alumni Center.

More Alumni Association events: unlv.edu/alumni.

Dating Divas

Alumni take two different approaches to building businesses to help clients find their matches.



Dallisa Hocking

'03 BA Communication Studies; Founder of LoveFrogKisser.com

DAY JOB: Director of alumni and constituent relations at the Neeley School of Business at Texas Christian University, where colleagues helped her develop her business plan. "Launching a company has not been great for my insomnia, but sometimes my best ideas are born in the middle of the night."

HER NICHE: The "matchmaking" part involves pairing a client with the right FrogKisser advisor. The advisors work one-on-one with clients, helping them find the own dating approaches and improve their presentation online and in person. "It's really not about age or other demographics, but instead about where a person is in their life and their desire to find love."

HER START: It was a natural outgrowth of her career in promoting institutional engagement, and she was frustrated by her own online dating experiences. "I began to realize that most online daters didn't understand their personal brand, and were therefore not getting the attention or interaction they wanted. It was time to take dating back to basics and blend the technology and breadth of online dating with personal branding that is both authentic and appealing."

DATING ADVICE: It comes down to figuring out your non-negotiables and when to be flexible. "It is important to take time for self-reflection and to keep your heart open ... You have to understand that you are worthy of love and that it's okay to have standards and not settle."



Lauren Peña

'04 BA Communication Studies and '07 JD; Co-founder of DuoVegas.com

DAY JOB: A Las Vegas bankruptcy attorney. She draws a distinct line between her two vocations. She wakes up at 5 a.m. to work on DuoVegas for a couple hours, reaching out to clients, blogging, and maintaining the website, and then tends to it again in the evenings.

HER NICHE: A matchmaking service for affluent professionals who want to avoid the online grind. Her male clients pay for the service; women join for free after a vetting process. One matched couple plans to marry in May, a first for Project Duo.

HER START: Peña has had a knack for pairing up friends since high school; her co-founder Steven Peralta encouraged her to turn the hobby into a profession. In 2014, she gained certification from the Matchmaking Institute and follows the research of Rutgers professor Helen Fisher on personality types. "[Matchmaking] was completely for fun and a labor of love," she said. "I realized there was a market for it. It just snowballed from there."

BIGGEST CHALLENGE: Peña's world comes with its share of unrealistic expectations. Wealthy but unhealthy males looking for fit and active 24-year-olds. A woman who won't date a guy who drives a Ford. Another woman who won't go near a man shorter than 5 foot 11 inches tall. "In the beginning, Steven and I were like 'Everybody wants love' ... We just wanted to help as many people not be lonely as possible. Now we are able to see a lot quicker who is really looking for a relationship and who is [not]."



Trumpeters
Gary Cordell
and Larry
Ransom, '02
BA Music.

Tapping A Need

In 2013, with their trumpets sounding the poignant “Echo Taps,” Larry Ransom and Gary Cordell closed the funeral for the grandfather of Ransom’s wife. The pair had considered it a privilege to honor the former World War II B-29 Bomber pilot with their talent. Afterwards they learned such live performances are rare. While the U.S. Veterans Administration provides a headstone and burial flag, it does not furnish trumpeters for veterans’ funerals.

Ransom, '02 BA Music, Cordell, and Joseph Durk had met while taking music classes at UNLV. They teamed up to establish the nonprofit TAPPS (Trumpeters Alliance to Perform Patriotic Services) to provide free live performances at the funerals of veterans and public servants.

Ransom has played with “Phantom The Las Vegas Spectacular” and is a contract member of the Las Vegas Philharmonic Orchestra. Cordell has performed with top headliners Billy Joel, Elton John, and Gladys Knight; while Durk has performed with Andrea Bocelli and Placido Domingo. Ransom and Cordell also are both Country Financial representatives.

They arranged for TAPPS trumpeters to be paid modestly and to earn union credits toward health insurance benefits. The group’s eight trumpeters performed at more than 100 funerals last year, and Ransom expects performances to double in 2015.

“My goal would be to replace the electronic bugle ... Every veteran signs on the dotted line that they’ll put themselves in front of the bullet first. It would be disrespectful not to show up and thank them for it,” he added.

NOTES

1960s

Keith Davis, '63 BS Zoology, retired after working for the U.S. government for 37 years. In June he will celebrate his 50th wedding anniversary. He is the father of three and the grandfather of five. His hobbies include fly fishing, hiking, and working out at the gym. He lives in Bend, Oregon.

1970s

Mac MacDonald, '71 BA Psychology, recently wrote two articles regarding experiences in Normandy, France. “Reflections from Normandy” has been published in various magazines, and he was among the speakers at a 70th-year D-Day ceremony in Carentan, France. The second, “The Lessons of World War I,” was to appear in the *Los Angeles Times* to mark the 100-year anniversary of that conflict.

Steven Floyd Stucker, '71 BS Accounting, has been an attorney since graduating from Southern Methodist University Law School in 1974. He is married and has two grown children and several grandchildren. He enjoys photography, bicycling and sports and resides in Reno.

Earl N. Sheehy, '75 BS Hotel Administration, is the CEO of Ray County Memorial Hospital in Richmond, Missouri.

Marlon Beavers, '77 BS Hotel Management, worked in customer service for Delta Airlines from 1977-2008. His hobbies include reading and writing short stories. He has three children and seven grandchildren.

Randy A Garcia, '77 BS Business Administration, the founder and chief executive officer of The Investment Counsel Co., was chosen the top financial advisor in Nevada and one of the Top 1,200 Financial Advisors in the nation by *Barron's* magazine. As a proud supporter of UNLV, he is an UNLV Foundation Board of Trustees member, UNLV Alumni Foundation member, and scholarship sponsor for the UNLV Foundation General Scholarship fund.

1980s

Larry Henley, '80 BA and '02 MA Theatre, has been the director of artistic production at the UNLV Performing Arts Center since 2002. He had previously worked at the UNLV PAC as facilities manager from 1988-2002 and as a theatre facilities specialist from 1986-88. He has also worked at Pikes Peak Center in Colorado Springs and as a freelance theatrical lighting designer with College of Southern Nevada, UNLV, West, Music Theatre of the Rockies, and Nevada Dance Theatre.

He is married to **Aura Elizabeth Wiley Henley**, '81 BA Theatre, '92 MA Special Education, and has three children – Brian, Kristen and Shannon. Additionally, he is a sports fan, especially of the Los Angeles Dodgers, and a music fan.

David A. Hernández, '81 BS Hotel Administration, was awarded the rank of professor emeritus and plans to retire in May after 21 years at the College of Southern Nevada, where he is director of the casino management program. His hobbies include traveling throughout Europe and Latin America, conducting gaming industry seminars, working on his cars, spending time with family, reading, and writing. He is married to **Hope Hernández**, who attended UNLV when it was known as Nevada Southern. She went on to earn a bachelor’s degree in education from their native country, Cuba.

Charisse V. Ciabrone, '82 BA Sociology, '07 Master Education, teaches Nevada high school equivalency math in adult education at College of Southern Nevada as well as English as a second language. She has been married for 27 years and has two daughters. She lists her hobbies as reading, cooking, and working on her Ph.D. She published a thesis in 2007.

Tom Cook, '85 BS Hotel Administration, is the associate vice president of investments for Stifel Nicolaus, a brokerage and investment banking firm, in Hawaii.

1990s

Danny Salter, '91 BS Computer Science, retired from the U.S. Army after 26 years, most recently serving as lieutenant colonel at Joint Base Elmendorf Richardson in Anchorage, Alaska. He is married to Linda with sons William and James. His hobbies include hiking and camping. He resides in Eagle River, Alaska.

Lynn Ann Marlett, '92 BS Nursing, '98 MS Nursing, has been a nurse practitioner at SMA Gastroenterology for 11 years. She has been married for 26 years with two daughters, who both attend college in Texas on softball scholarships. The Henderson resident is a member of Mt. Olive Lutheran Church and enjoys sewing, crafts, and scrapbooking.

R. Scott Barber, '93 BS Hotel Administration, is a 23-year veteran of the gaming industry, spending the initial eight years in Las Vegas and the past 15 years with Caesars Entertainment. He is a regional president overseeing the Horseshoe Tunica and Tunica Roadhouse properties in Mississippi, Harrah’s Cherokee in North Carolina, and Caesars Travel Management programs in Las Vegas. He serves on the boards of the Tunica Convention and Visitor’s Bureau, the AutoZone Liberty Bowl, and the United Way Mid-South. He is working on an MBA at University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. He lives in



Therese Koelbaek, '11 BS Management, became an LPGA Tour rookie in 2015. After graduating, she played on the Symetra Tour, finishing 26th on the money list and making every cut in 2011. After contending with a back injury she competed a full season on the Symetra Tour in 2014 and then qualified for the LPGA Tour by finishing in a tie for 16th at the LPGA qualifying school. While at UNLV, the Denmark native was a two-time All-American. She lives in Scottsdale, Arizona.

Germantown, Tennessee, with his wife and two children.

Scott Gulbransen, '95 BA Communication Studies, returned to Las Vegas to become global head of digital content at Haymon Boxing Management, which manages top fighters including Floyd Mayweather, Danny Garcia, and Shawn Porter. He manages all digital marketing for the company. He is married to **Eliete Muniz**, '96 BA Criminal Justice.

Tonya Jung Stagner, '96 BS Nursing, is adjunct faculty for nursing at University of Saint Mary. She earned her master’s degree in nursing in 2008 from University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, and received board certification as a family nurse practitioner in 2008. She is married to an active duty U.S. Army officer with two children, two dogs and one cat and is currently posted to the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia. Her hobbies include reading, baking, cooking, and enjoying the culture of Indonesia. She is also active in International Military Attache Spouses Association.

Sarah Mason Thornton, '96 BA Communication Studies, launched Sarah Thornton Public Relations in 2007. Its current clients are in the law, renewable

NOTES

energy, medicine, real estate, retail, financial services, public affairs, and entertainment industries. She is a board member of the Colorado chapter of the Public Relations Society of America and vice president of programming for the International Association of Business Communicators Colorado. She is married and lives in Castle Rock, Colo.

Timothy Gupton, '97 BA Romance Languages, is assistant professor of Hispanic linguistics at University of Georgia. He recently published the monograph "The Syntax-Information Structure Interface: Clausal Word Order and the Left Periphery in Galician" with DeGruyter Mouton, a leading linguistics publisher.

Edward "Ted" Stringer III, '97 BS Finance, began a new position with Wells Fargo in March as vice president, operational risk consultant IV, supporting Consumer Credit Solutions. Primary responsibilities include supporting the lines of business with implementing the new regulatory compliance risk management policy.

Debra A. Worden, '97 BA Psychology, was employed as the director of veterans affairs for St. Clair County, Michigan, from 1998-2014 in addition to serving as director of veterans affairs for the County of Lapeer, Michigan, from 2005-14. She recently relocated to Utah to be near her two daughters and three grandchildren. She loves to golf, bowl, and watch football and baseball.

Dan Barry, '99 MA Ethics and Policy Studies, published his first memoir, *Ready Aim Trust*, which chronicles his 30 years of policing in Las Vegas, from working as an undercover cop at a high school to collaborating with the FBI. He is presently the chair of the College of Criminal Justice & Security at the University of Phoenix, Las Vegas campus. He enjoys volunteering with his church, visiting his children and eight grandchildren, exercising, and spending time with his wife, Allison.

2000s

Erin DeGloria Dustin, '00 BS Hotel Administration, owns the electrical subcontracting business MD Electric with her husband, Matthew Dustin. The company works primarily on the Strip in tenant improvements at hotel casinos and shopping malls. She has two daughters and her hobbies include hiking, mountain biking, gardening, off-road racing, and entertaining.

Amy Fiene, '01 BS Mechanical Engineering, is an associate at the law firm Workman Nydegger in Salt Lake City and focuses on patents and trademarks. Prior to law school, she was a patent manager at Actividenty and a biomedical researcher for Palo Alto Veterans Affairs Hospital's Research and Development Center. She earned a master's degree in mechanical engineering from Stanford University and graduated from J. Reuben Clark Law School at Brigham Young University.

Christopher Hinojos, '01 BA History, married Aisha Acosta on Oct., 18, 2014, at Las Vegas Country Club. He works as a regional sales manager for Apartments.com, a CoStar company.

Ian Zabarte, '01 BA Communication, works as an electrician at Bombard Electric and lives in Las Vegas.

Joseph Garrett, '02 BS Managerial Finance, '04 MS Accounting, has been promoted to partner of Rich, Wightman & Co., CPAs. He has been with the



Melissa Ritz, '06 BA Dance, '13 MFA Theatre Performance, received the Best Emerging Actress Award for her one-woman show "Journey of a Bombshell: The Ina Ray Hutton Story." She debuted her show with the United Solo Theatre Festival at Theatre Row in New York City, selling out all four performances. In March, she presented it at Las Vegas Little Theatre Studio Theater. She says that "I couldn't have accomplished this without the training I received at UNLV!" Prior to UNLV, she served in the U.S. Air Force and performed in its *Tops in Blue* show. **More:** www.JourneyOfABombshell.com.

firm for over 11 years and practices in multiple areas including federal and state taxation, financial reporting, and strategic planning. He is a certified valuation analyst and a certified fraud examiner.

Kyle Konold, '04 Ph.D. Education, received Vegas Inc's 2014 Top Tech Exec Award in the education category. He is the founder and executive director of Delta Academy in North Las Vegas.

Cassandra Rohracker Mor, '04 BA Public Relations, is the owner/broker/property manager of The Mor Group Real Estate Services. She is married to **Adi Mor**, '01 BS Hotel Management, and has an amazing daughter, Mia Cassadi Mor. She says that her hobbies are cooking and eating. She lives in Henderson.

Kristi Dickinson, '05 MS Hotel Administration, has been named spa director for Mayflower Grace in Washington, Conn. Previously, she was the spa director at Montage Deer Valley in Park City, Utah, and prior to that at the Golden Door Spa in Telluride, Colorado.

Heather Doane, '07 M.Ed. Health Promotion, owns and operates ZEROlevel Fitness and Wellness at McCarran International Airport, a facility for employees of the airport. Among the company's employees are three UNLV alumni and two current students. She also works as a fitness consultant on the design and layout of fitness and wellness facilities at corporate sites, multi-family housing, private training studios, physical therapy clinics, and other locations. Passionate about inspiring people to live healthy lives, she has been a personal trainer and fitness instructor for over 12 years and taught personal training courses at UNLV. She enjoys working out, reading, personal

development, shooting baskets, and playing catch with the football.

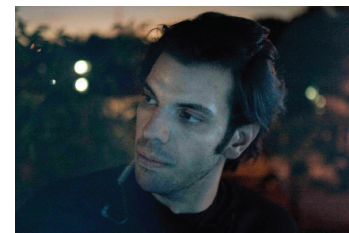
Kerry J. Doyle, '07 J.D., opened his own law practice earlier this year in Las Vegas called Thunder Law, with a fellow Boyd graduate **Tyler Crawford**, '07 J.D. Prior to co-founding the law practice, Kerry practiced law in Las Vegas and Reno. He is married to **Lisa O'Rourke Doyle**, '08 Education, who is a former "Rebel Girl" and is a middle school English teacher.

Mark Johnson, '07 BS Biology, is owner-operator of LD Tours transportation, a charter bus company serving Las Vegas and the Southwest. He lives in Las Vegas.

Wiley Meade, '07 M.Ed. Sports Leadership, is in his 18th year in education as a high school science teacher. He is also a robotics, football, and track coach. Hobbies include outdoor adventure, real estate remodeling, fitness, and paintball. He and his wife, Ellen, live in Liberty, Missouri.

Renato N. Estacio, '08 MM Applied Music, was appointed by Gov. Susana Martinez to the New Mexico Music Commission for the 2014-18 term. He also serves as interim music director with the Albuquerque Civic Chorus and started the Southwest Arts Group, which performs professionally with the New Mexico Film Foundation and other groups. The Albuquerque resident is married and has two cats and a dog. Hobbies include meditating, coaching, singing, and mentoring.

John Gregory Green, '08 Ph.D. Civil Engineering, is a principal rail engineer for AECOM in its Chicago office; a plan commissioner on Village of Plainfield, Ill., Plan Commission; and chairman of American



Timothy L. Anderson, '05 BFA Film, announced that his first feature film, *Two Hundred Thousand Dirty*, concluded its festival run at the Ankara International Film Festival in Turkey last year and enjoyed a select theatrical release in Italy, France, and the United States. The film, starring Coolio and Mark Greenfield, is available on various digital platforms including NetFlix, Hulu and iTunes. **More:** www.200kdirty.com.

Railway Engineering and Maintenance-of-way Association (AREMA) Subcommittee 24-01 "Railway Engineer Development." He is married and has three sons – Matthew Henry who was born Jan. 13, 2015, John Gregory Jr., and Joseph William.

Ryan Hart, '08 BS Business Management, is a freelance camera assistant, operator, and photographer and lives in Henderson.

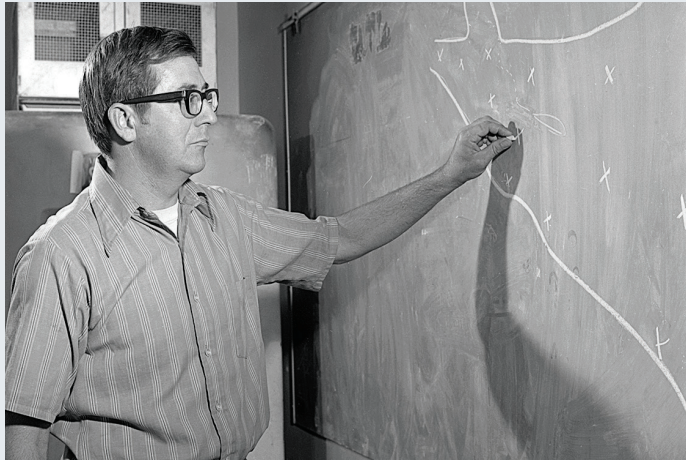
James Mulford, '08 BS Mechanical Engineering, worked as a civilian engineer for the U.S. Navy in Washington, D.C., after graduation. After earning a master's degree in mechanical engineering with a focus in combustion from Georgia Tech in 2013, he took a position in Connecticut with a power plant construction company and then moved back to Washington, D.C., to work with the Navy on aircraft carriers.

Mihaela Neagos, '08 J.D., is a public defender in Las Vegas. Among her hobbies is running.

Veera Khare Asher, '09 DMA Voice Performance, joined the national faculty of the United States Sports Academy and is also the only member of the National Strength and Conditioning Association with a DMA and CSCS (Certified Strength and Conditioning Specialist). Beyond her work as a provider for Grammy MusicCares, she also sits on the committee Athletes and the Arts as an American College of Sports Medicine member. She says that "I want to thank my success to two UNLV faculty who continued to mentor me post-graduation: Dr. Carol Kimball (emerita) and Dr. Dean Gronemeier." She lives in Santa Monica, Calif.

2010s

Angela Brown, '10 BS Workforce Education, is a gaming lab assistant at College of Southern Nevada's department of hospitality management



Deacon, 1972

OBITUARIES

James Deacon, Distinguished Professor emeritus in the departments of environmental studies and biological sciences, died Feb. 23. He joined the UNLV faculty in 1960, retiring in 2002. He served as chair of the department of biological sciences and as founding director and later chair of the environmental studies department. A specialist in desert fishes, he played a major role in saving the tiny Devil's Hole pupfish from extinction. Two species of fish were named in his honor: the Spring Mountains springsnail (*Pyrgulopsis deaconi*) and Las Vegas dace (*Rhinichthys deaconi*). Among his survivors is his wife, **Mary Dale Deacon**, who formerly served as dean of UNLV Libraries.

David Holmes, who retired as a professor emeritus in 2009 after a 33-year career at UNLV, died Oct. 8, 2014, following a long struggle with Lewy body disease. During his time at UNLV he taught in multiple colleges, including the Harrah College of Hotel Administration and the College of Human Performance and Development. A native of Indiana, he was a world-class parachutist and a proud veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps.

Brenda Mason, '74 BA Sociology and '77 MS Educational Psychology, died Feb. 18. She was

the first African-American to serve on what today is known as the NSHE Board of Regents (1974-79). Born in Paris, Texas, she received a law degree from Thomas Jefferson School of Law in San Diego.

Timothy McGlynn, '89 BS Business Administration, died suddenly Nov. 28, 2014. He was a resident of Canyon Lake, Calif.

Jack Lund Schofield, '95 Ph.D. Education, died March 14 at age 91. He was a member of the NSHE Board of Regents (2003-14). He earned his doctorate at the age of 72. He served in both the Nevada Assembly and the state Senate and was a decorated World War II veteran. Jack Lund Schofield Middle School is named in honor of the former school district teacher, coach, and administrator.

Tish Smyer, associate dean and professor of nursing, died Jan. 26. A faculty member since 2006, she also served as president of the Nevada State Board of Nursing. Under her leadership, UNLV's online graduate nursing programs were ranked sixth in *U.S. News & World Report* for 2014.

Jerry Tarkanian, famed coach of UNLV's Runnin' Rebel basketball team, died Feb. 11 at age 84. Under Tarkanian's leadership, the Rebels



Tarkanian



Schofield

went to four Final Fours, bringing home the national championship in 1990 and setting the record for greatest margin of victory in a national men's basketball championship game by defeating Duke 103-73. He was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2013 in recognition of his achievements as a coach. That same year, a bronze statue of the towel-chomping "Tark the Shark" was installed



Mason



Smyer

outside the Thomas & Mack arena, where the court is also named in his honor. (See page 20.)

William "Tom" White, emeritus professor of economics and founding dean of what today is the Lee Business School, died Feb. 5. He joined the UNLV faculty in 1967 and retired in 1986. Before coming to UNLV, he served 26 years in the U.S. Air Force.

as well as a self-published author. She has been recognized for her poetry, including such works as "Unsung Words of Wisdom" and "Insolvency and the Cost of Sugar."

Brian Garcia, '10 BA Psychology, works for USA Today Sports and is part of the radio show "MMAjunkie Radio" on Sirius Sports Zone channel 92, which broadcasts weekdays from a studio inside the Mandalay Bay Race and Sportsbook. He recently went to Afghanistan as part of an Armed Forces Entertainment tour with UFC fighters Jake Ellenberger and Amir Sadollah and UFC cutman Jacob Stutch Duran. Their website recently won its fifth World MMA Award as "Best Media Source." He loves all sports but mainly focuses on mixed martial arts and UNLV men's basketball.

Matt Rumfield, '10 BS Mechanical Engineering, started work as a NASCAR Sprint Cup design engineer at Roush Fenway Racing in October 2014.

Lindsey A. Williams, '10 BS Business Administration, '14 J.D., joined Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck as an associate in its Las Vegas office where she advises clients on the development, protection, and enforcement of intellectual property rights, technology transactions, and drafting and negotiation of intellectual property rights. Previously, she was managing editor of *Nevada Law Journal* and a teaching assistant at Boyd School of Law. She also served as an extern for the U.S. District Court Judge Philip M. Pro and clerked at Claggett & Sykes Law Firm in Las Vegas.

Anthony Alegrete, '13 BS Marketing, published his first book, *Rabbit in the Jungle*, which traces his rise from the streets of Los Angeles, through the penal system, to the halls of academia and the competitive business world of Las Vegas. He is working on his second book, *Back in the Jungle*. He has recently been promoted to vice president of sales and marketing for a merchant

services company based out of Los Angeles with offices now in Las Vegas.

Alexa Hayon, '14 BS Business, is currently the operations manager at ZEROlevel Fitness & Wellness, a facility for employees of McCarran Airport. The company is owned by fellow UNLV alumna **Heather Doane**, '07 M.Ed. Health Promotion.

Cally Martin, '14 BS Social Work, is employed at Catholic Charities as a case manager at St. Vincent Apartments transitional living, where she helps individuals transition from homelessness to permanent housing. She plans to get married in May and to start her master's degree in criminal justice at Arizona State University this fall.

Kandis McClure, '14 J.D., joined Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck as a policy analyst in the firm's government relations department, focusing on Nevada. Her background includes work in the public policy, political and health-care sectors. She

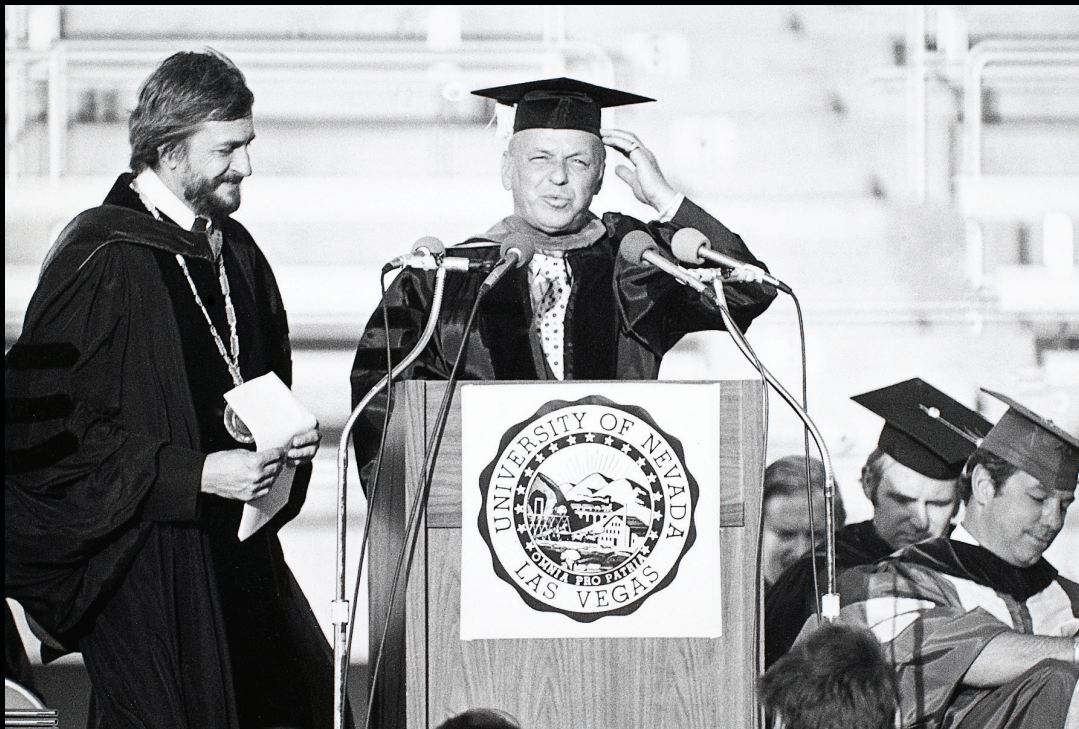
earned her master's degree in public health, global health leadership from Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California.

Alyssa Rao, '14 BS Business Administration, is brand manager for the media company Crowd Siren. In May, she will begin managing its new Denver office. She specializes in content creation, social media management, campaign creation, and design. She says she loves all things outdoors, especially hiking and rock climbing, as well as travel, crafting, and do-it-yourself projects at home.

Nicolas Riell, '14 BS Kinesiology, currently works as a personal trainer and in front desk operations at ZEROlevel Fitness, a facility for employees of McCarran Airport. It is owned by alumna **Heather Doane**, '07 M.Ed. Health Promotion. He also contracts in private personal training. Previously, he worked at UNLV Student Recreation and Wellness Center as a fitness desk attendant and personal trainer. His hobbies include body building.



Comedian and talk show host Jimmy Kimmel, 2013 (Geri Kodey)



Singer Frank Sinatra, at the podium, with UNLV President Donald Baepler, 1976 (University Libraries Special Collections)

And the honorary degree goes to ...

Although UNLV has been awarding honorary doctorates to notable figures since 1964, it wasn't until 1970, that the first celebrity, legendary comedian Bob Hope, was presented with his Doctor of Humane Letters degree. Hope had headlined a charity benefit for the UNLV athletic program earlier that year. Six years later, it was none other than "Ol' Blue Eyes" himself, **Frank Sinatra**, who held court on the commencement podium on a blustery May afternoon at Sam Boyd Stadium. Noting that his education primarily had come from "the school of hard knocks," Sinatra was suitably touched by his award. "This is the first educational degree I have ever held in my hand. I will never forget what you have done for me today."

Other luminaries to receive the honor include "Mr. Las Vegas," Wayne Newton, in 1980; and singer Diana Ross in 1984. Alumnus Anthony Zuiker, '91 BA Communication Studies, upgraded his degrees with an honorary doctorate in 2003. He is better known around Hollywood as the creator and executive producer of the wildly successful *CSI* television series and its spinoffs.

In 2013, comedian and talk show host **Jimmy Kimmel**, a one-time UNLV student (1985–86), joked that he had worked harder on his acceptance speech than on all the homework he'd had at UNLV. No doubt it was one of the funniest commencement speeches ever given at UNLV but Kimmel's primary message to students — finish what you started and do it well — is timeless.

—Su Kim Chung

We can be a *little* dramatic



Check out our upcoming events
unlv.edu/calendar



UNLV

UNLV

University of Nevada, Las Vegas
UNLV Magazine
4505 Maryland Parkway, Box 451024
Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-1024

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
LAS VEGAS, NV
PERMIT # 2543

Did YOU know?



- ▶ The UNLV Alumni Association is over 50 years old and serves more than 100,000 alumni.
- ▶ Roughly 56% of all alumni are Women and 49% are under the age of 40.
- ▶ UNLV Alumni have contributed more than \$43 million to the university.
- ▶ The Alumni Association supports over a dozen scholarships each year.
- ▶ More than 60% of all alumni live in Clark County.

You can become a UNLVIP.

Membership is only \$50 per year and has a value of over \$1,000 for Rebel events, entertainment, and much, much more.

GET MORE OUT OF BEING A REBEL.
Become a UNLVIP Today!

Join at www.unlvalumni.org

