

Contact

School of Social Work

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

2020–2021 Issue 1



**Make no mistake about it:
We are fighting battles on two fronts.**

**WE ARE FIGHTING
AGAINST COVID-19.**

**WE ARE FIGHTING
FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE.**

**And UNC School of Social Work is
providing leadership and serving on
the front lines in both battles.**



Gary L. Bowen, Dean

Social work in an incredible time

Dear Friends,

Incredible. That's the word I'd use to describe the days since March 2020, when our University moved quickly and successfully to remote instruction in the first weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Incredibly smart. Incredibly creative. Incredibly caring. That's how I'd describe our faculty, staff and students, who have amazed me every day with their ability to craft new ways of teaching and learning and living. They have become more engaged with their work at a time when personal demands from family and finances and well-being have increased at an incredible rate.

Incredibly demanding. That's how I'd describe the workload, both intellectually and emotionally. Social work requires collaboration and teamwork, and our School community has worked harder than ever to forge strong connections within the remote Zoom environment.

Incredibly inspiring. That's how I'd describe the involvement of our School community in building a better world – and that begins with our School, where we are focusing our efforts on ensuring that our community, our policies, and our actions are antiracist. There is much work to be done, but I am inspired every day by our faculty, staff and students.

I am incredibly proud of everything our School has accomplished during this pandemic. And I'm incredibly excited to share this issue of Contact with you. It's our first issue distributed only in an online format, a decision prompted by the pandemic, and I hope you'll enjoy learning more about the incredible work underway at our School this year.

With warm wishes,



Gary L. Bowen, Dean and Kenan Distinguished Professor
UNC School of Social Work



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Advancing
EQUITY

Transforming
SYSTEMS

Improving
LIVES

Social Work in Changing Times

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The current issue of Contact magazine has been published only in a digital format for online access. This reflects a change from the School's traditional practice of printing and mailing a "hard copy" version of Contact magazine and is part of the School's response to challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic. Thank you for accessing Contact magazine online!



Where we've been, where we are and where we need to go

By Travis Albritton
Associate Dean of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

The current pandemic coupled with the constant social unrest in our country has made the past year difficult for many of us. The senseless murders of Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor and George Floyd – names now written into the violent legacy of our nation – further fueled existing deep racial tensions in our country. Moreover, the dangers that Black people face every day due to racial violence have been exacerbated over the last nine months by a virus that has also wreaked havoc on Black and Brown lives.

According to the Centers for Disease Control, COVID-19 has impacted people of color in this country at far more significant rates than others. Black and Brown communities have been hospitalized at four times the rate of white communities. Even more alarming, people of color have lost loved ones at nearly three times the rate of white individuals. This virus has only illuminated disparities and inequities that have long existed within our health care system.

This year has also revealed that we have so much more work to do to ensure that transgender and non-binary individuals can leave home and feel safe in their communities. The murders of Nina Pop, Tony McDade, and Selena Reyes-Hernandez have reminded us of the importance of dismantling patriarchal systems that have historically defined and determined that white cisgender lives are more important than others.

As I acknowledge these painful realities, I also accept a truth – I remain steadfast in my resolve to help lead our School in efforts to address and dismantle the structural and cultural systems that continue to allow such inequalities to exist.

Since August 2018, I have had the privilege of serving as the School of Social Work's first Assistant Dean for Diversity,

Equity and Inclusion. This role has enabled me to help set our School on course to be a campus leader in diversity, equity and inclusion efforts and given me the opportunity to witness significant growth in our School's commitment to and engagement in issues related to these endeavors. In recognition of the importance of my role and its direct reporting link to the Dean of the School, my position was recently elevated from Assistant Dean to Associate Dean.

The work and the progress that we've made as a School over the last few years gives me continued hope for what's to come. For example, we updated the generalist curriculum to include more critical theory content and developed a diversity focused summer reading program for incoming students. In addition, we hosted our first diversity faculty and staff retreat and, as part of our Centennial Speaker Series, we invited top scholars from across the country to help us think more deeply about how to be an anti-racist School of Social Work – a School in which policies and practices aimed at ensuring racial justice are implemented and enforced.

During the summer of 2020, the School of Social Work's Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion partnered with the Jordan Institute for Families to co-sponsor three webinars: one focusing on the racial disparities of COVID-19, the second focusing on policing and re-imagining community safety, and the third focusing on disrupting systematic racism in social work practice. All the webinars were well received by members of the community

Even as we celebrate these accomplishments, I am keenly aware that there is much more work to be done to create the inclusive community that we wish to become.

Our progress cannot only be measured by curricula improvements and new initiatives.

We have a responsibility to ensure that the culture of the School is one that allows anyone, regardless of background or identity, to thrive. We must constantly seek to center the voices of minoritized identities in ways that are consistent with the values of our profession. Doing so requires persistence and the humility to acknowledge where we can and where we must do better. I am committed to this work because I am a social worker and the ethical principles that guide our profession demand that we challenge social injustices wherever they exist.

I want the School of Social Work to be a model of diversity, equity and inclusion for both the larger campus

community and the profession. Achieving this goal starts with an acknowledgement of how we have fallen short and how we will continue to build on the foundation already in place. Our dean, Gary Bowen, made such an acknowledgement, as well as a clarion call for action in his June 5, 2020, message to faculty, staff, and students, which was focused on racial justice: "I believe that our School has fallen short in realizing its commitment to racial justice. We can do better, we must do better, and we will do better, right now and at every moment as we move forward."

Maintaining a school community committed to diversity, equity and inclusion requires dedication at all levels. Senior leadership must prioritize this mission in budget and academic planning, recruitment and hiring practices, and promotion and advancement policies. Faculty must engage in teaching and research that centers the voices of underrepresented groups. Students must continue to challenge both their faculty and their peers to take seriously the need to make diversity a central component of both their academics and their practice. And alumni must continue to hold administrators and faculty accountable for modeling the goals and ethics of our profession.

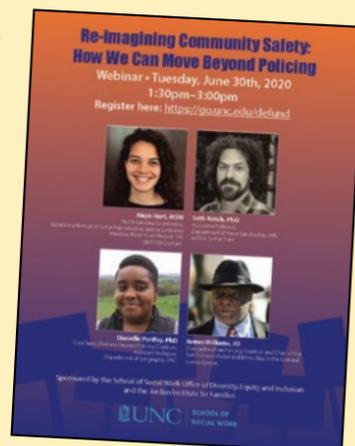
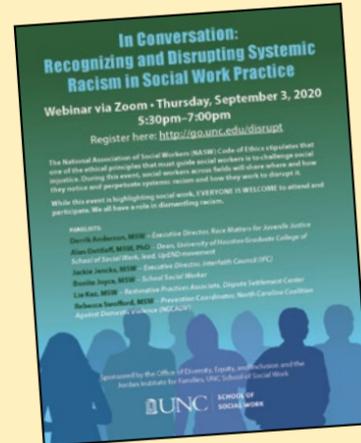
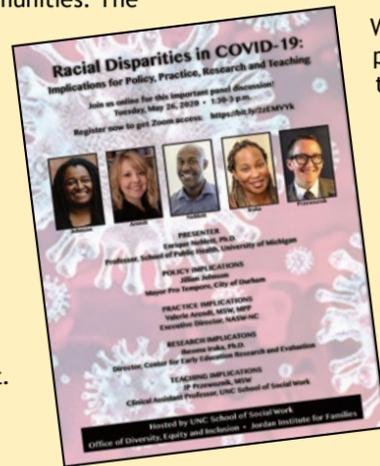
I am grateful to Dean Bowen who has made diversity, equity and inclusion a critical component of his deanship. And I am appreciative of the commitment of our Board of Advisors in working to increase its diversity. I am also thankful for the School of Social Work's Black full professors, who have challenged our School community to live out its stated commitment to anti-racism. Their work has been instrumental in our efforts to ensure our School is one that values and promotes racial equity. I also appreciate the many current and former students who have organized and demanded that our School take seriously calls for justice. The activism demonstrated by our students is a reminder of the work left to do and a welcomed and necessary component to building an inclusive community that acknowledges the voices of our most important constituents.

I am excited about the direction of the School of Social Work's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, and I am heartened by the tremendous support I have received from faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the School's Board of Advisors. Importantly, the School is working in close collaboration with the University's Office for Diversity and Inclusion, and I am pleased to sit on the University's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council. The investment so many people have in our School and the respect and credibility that the School has in the broader University community are what makes this a special place. My commitment to the diversity, equity and inclusion work

we have begun is unwavering. As we begin a new year, I look forward to engaging in meaningful dialogue and action that will enable us to advance equity, transform systems and improve lives. ♦



Travis Albritton



Want to watch these webinars? Recordings are available online.

"Racial Disparities in COVID-19: Implications for Policy, Practice, Research and Teaching" is available here: <https://vimeo.com/424055342>

"Re-Imaging Community Safety: How We Can Move Beyond Policing" is available here: <https://vimeo.com/434136296>

"In Conversation: Recognizing and Disrupting Systemic Racism in Social Work Practice" is available here: <https://vimeo.com/455894269>



Letters from faculty, students drive commitment to anti-racism

The Black Lives Matter movement grew in intensity throughout 2020, following the deaths of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, and other Blacks who were killed by police across the United States. Protesters demanded an end to police violence and systemic racism.

FACULTY MEMBERS SPEAK

Gina Chowa, Trenette Clark Goings, Michael Lambert and Iris Carlton-LaNey, faculty members who are Black full professors, drafted a letter and a call to action for UNC School of Social Work.

“As senior scholars of The University of North Carolina School of Social Work, we want to begin to uproot racism by beginning at home,” they wrote. “We are calling for a fundamental shift in the UNC SSW’s attitudes and behaviors towards racism.”

Racism is very much a system. If we are committed to our mission, the first system we should seek to transform is our own.

— *Gina Chowa, Trenette Clark Goings, Michael Lambert and Iris Carlton-LaNey*

“... Behavioral change manifests itself in how you treat people of color everyday – in meetings, in discussions, in responding to their requests, in personnel matters. We believe what you show us. Rather than seeking to not appear racist, be anti-racist.

“ ... Social work has a longstanding value of upholding and working toward human rights. Social workers are obligated to speak out against all forms of racism and address structural racism in our communities and the inequitable and racialized outcomes it produces. When we are silent or engage in racist acts, what are we teaching the next generation of social workers, our students?”

The professors listed six points of action for the School:

- Deans and associate deans to take leadership on behalf of the School against racism.
- Full professors, endowed professors in particular, to take a position in times of crises.
- Support career opportunities for people of color.
- Engage in anti-racist solidarity events as a School.
- Desist from meaningless emails, conversations and activities.
- Boldly declare our social work values of equity and human rights.

The letter was shared on the School’s faculty/ staff listserv on June 2. The School’s full professors met with Dean Gary Bowen twice and unanimously committed to action based on these six points. Chowa, Goings and Lambert recommended that the School form an Anti-Racism Task Force to address each point and volunteered to serve on the task force, meeting with Dean Bowen to discuss their recommendations. On June 19, Dean Bowen introduced the task force, which also includes Travis Albritton and Gary Cuddeback, to the School.

As part of its work to address the six points of action as a starting point for anti-racism, the School also planned for a reconciliation committee to serve as a forum for members of the School community to discuss individual or institutional acts perceived as discriminatory within the School. However, this initiative was paused in October after consultation with the Office of University Counsel and the Equal Opportunity and Compliance Office.

DOCTORAL STUDENTS SPEAK

Anti-racism work at the School has engaged students as well as faculty and administration. On July 6, a group of doctoral students at the School drafted a letter to the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) calling for the inclusion of “anti-racist” in CSWE’s Social Work Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice.

“Diversity and inclusion training alone without an explicit focus on anti-racist action and pedagogy will leave social workers complicit in systems that harm Black people,” the students wrote.

“... Anti-racism must be central to all student learning outcomes, educator performance evaluations, course competencies, staff performance evaluations and evaluations for tenure and promotion as well as to each school’s strategic plan.”

The students listed three points of action for CSWE:

- Acknowledge social work’s history with and complicity in anti-Blackness.
- Commit to recruiting and retaining Black faculty, staff, and students.
- Promote a trauma-informed, anti-racist culture.

Doctoral students LB Klein, Stefani Baca-Atlas, Anna Parisi, Melissa Villodas, Jonathan Phillips, Hayden Dawes, Brooke Jordan, Annie Francis, Anderson Al-Wazni, Alexandria Forte, Premela Deck, Gerard Chung, Anjalee Sharma, Brittney Chesworth, Melissa Jenkins, Ting Guan and Daniel Gibbs signed the letter.

The students also posted the letter online (the full text is available here: <https://bit.ly/3oRqDHL>) and invited the School’s faculty and staff to add their signatures in support. Dean Bowen, along with 48 faculty and staff members, endorsed the letter.

“We have a significant amount of work ahead of us,” Dean Bowen said in a statement to the School community on Aug. 4. “I am asking for your full commitment and participation as we move forward to address the barriers, threats and challenges faced by people of color, especially our Black/African American colleagues, in our School of Social Work, on this university campus and beyond.” ♦

Students step up and engage to create change



MARIANNA DURFOR



HAYDEN DAWES



JILLIAN RILEY

By Susan White

When Marianna Durfor started her internship with Carolina Outreach's Assertive Community Treatment Team, she knew working with adults with persistent mental health and substance use issues would teach her a lot about serving vulnerable populations. What she didn't anticipate is that the experience would provide a valuable lesson in democracy.

Over the summer, Durfor and her colleagues focused much of their efforts on connecting clients with needed health, mental health, education and housing services. But in the middle

of a polarizing national election, an unprecedented and deadly pandemic, and widespread protests over racial injustices, Durfor often encountered individuals seeking a bit of additional information — how to register to vote.

"I think they got word this was an important election so a lot of them would just come up to us and ask about where to find their polling place," Durfor said. "A lot of the folks we serve are in their early 20s and had never voted before."

Durfor pointed questioners to the internet so they could independently research the various candidates, and she helped secure transportation to the polls. Given that the adults she works with are so often overlooked, Durfor was encouraged to see so many motivated to create change in their communities.

They are so vulnerable to the outcomes of elections, so it was important for them to educate themselves and decide who they thought would best represent them.

— Marianna Durfor

"And they were so very proud about voting when they did it. I think this whole process really opened my eyes to the importance of making sure that whatever population I'm working with, their opinions are just as valid as anyone else's, and they need to know how elections and the leaders who create policies can have a big impact on their lives," she said.

Durfor is among countless students at the School of Social Work who have spent the last nine months leaning a bit more into the social worker's ethical responsibility to promote civic engagement and challenge social injustice. Collectively, these MSW and Ph.D. students have helped to organize webinars, including sessions on reimagining community safety, worked through their field placements to register voters, volunteered to work the polls, and much more.

Such efforts align with the National Association of Social Workers' (NASW) ongoing call to action to address systemic racism, including within the profession, and to support marginalized communities, said Valerie Arendt, executive director of the NASW's North Carolina Chapter.

"Social workers are really needed now more than ever, especially as this pandemic has shown a brighter light on the health disparities facing so many of our underserved communities — disparities that were there all along," she said. "Social workers need to be at the forefront to help solve these problems and to make an impact within these communities."

For second-year doctoral student Hayden Dawes, the mission to speak out and push back against injustice culminated over the summer into a deeply personal column following the death of George Floyd, a Black man in Minnesota who was killed during an arrest after a police officer pinned Floyd to the ground. Dawes was angry and searching for a way to funnel his emotions.

The end result: "An invitation to White therapists," which Dawes published in June on Medium, an online platform with 170+ million readers. The column has received widespread attention for its honest assessment of the White mental health community, which Dawes called out for "failing to create space for Black and Brown people and the totality of their lived experiences."

As a result, these same professionals are not considering how anxiety and depression, in particular, are connected to the racial identity of their patients of color, he said. Moreover, they fail to understand how events such as Floyd's death, which was captured on video and played repeatedly across various media, are retraumatizing, especially to people who encounter racism on a daily basis, he added.

"I feel like in this time and space, I had no other choice but to say what has to be said," Dawes said.

I pointed out the mental health system's complicity in the silence and avoidance of having honest conversations about race and identity.

— Hayden Dawes

As a researcher focused on the mental health and social well-being of people of color and LGBTQIA+ individuals, Dawes said he's been encouraged by the overwhelming responses he's received, including from White clinicians. One woman, who had worked for years with Native Americans before retiring, thanked Dawes and expressed regret for not considering the lasting impact of the historical treatment of indigenous people in this country.

"The woman, now probably in her 70s, said she was trained that you don't bring something else up unless the patients broach the subject first and now, she was wondering how much she had missed," he said. "She said, 'Now, I am looking at all those years differently.'"

Others have embraced his column with a sense of urgency to improve the profession, which gives Dawes hope.

"I think a lot of people are hearing it as a call to action, and they are right, and I'm glad they are saying it and that they're realizing, 'I've got a lot of work to do, and I have a part to play in this.'"

Although student activism takes on many different forms with each entering cohort, Jillian Riley's decision to run for public office this year while enrolled as an MSW student may have been a first for the School. Riley, who has been politically and socially active since age 15, ran for local election in November, competing for Durham Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor.

Riley credits her family's heritage for influencing her decision to throw her hat in the political ring. Her grandfather grew up poor in Oklahoma and with limited employment opportunities, worked for years on oil rigs and in the fracked gas business — industries that have contributed to water and soil contamination and impacted the

overall health of communities. As an environmental justice organizer, Riley sees her work as a way of paying homage to her grandfather, while also recognizing the toxicity of that history.

Although she didn't win her race (coming in second out of five candidates), Riley said she's heard from supporters who were inspired by her passion and as a result, intend to remain politically and socially active in their own communities. She's hopeful those efforts will encourage others to consider how environmental justice is connected to the social justice movement.

"You cannot escape the environment we live in, whether that's the air we breathe, the food we eat, or the water we drink or the land we live on," she said. "It all relates to our health and to our economic opportunities."

Environmental justice literally impacts every aspect of our lives. We cannot have other forms of social justice and ignore the environment.

— Jillian Riley

With a little more than 200 social workers currently holding elected offices nationwide, Riley also sees an opportunity for other social workers to seek leadership roles in local, state and federal government.

Whether it's running for office, which isn't for everyone, volunteering in their communities or working with organizations to dismantle systems of oppression, social workers need to actively work to create change, Arendt agreed.

"Advocacy and activism within social work have been happening for hundreds of years, but change doesn't always happen overnight," she said. "It really is about the long game. So social workers need to continue to think about how they can engage and stay involved. That's our responsibility to the larger societal environment." ♦

Carolina Social Workers Action for Voting

Students, faculty and staff at UNC School of Social Work launched C-SWAV (Carolina Social Workers Action for Voting), a statewide project to increase voter participation in North Carolina, during the 2020 election season.

C-SWAV was developed to help social workers share information with their clients, friends and communities about the voting process. It was named as an official service project for the School's centennial celebration, with alumni encouraged to participate.

"This is a completely non-partisan effort with a focus on voting rights, getting out the vote and reducing barriers to voting," said Rebecca Brigham, assistant dean of field education.

Brigham and Sarah Verbiest, director of the Jordan Institute for Families (JIF), co-chaired the C-SWAV

committee, with support from Master of Social Work students Averyl Edwards and Madison Ferrera. Verbiest also served as the School's coordinator for "Voting Is Social Work," the national social work voter mobilization campaign.

"We clearly want to make this a major inclusive initiative," Verbiest said. "We have so much work ahead to make sure that all voices are heard this election season."

JIF hosted a C-SWAV webpage with resources for social workers, social work professors, field instructors, students and volunteers. The webpage included links to documentaries, TED talks, podcasts and other educational materials.

Throughout the fall 2020 semester, C-SWAV sponsored a series of voter engagement activities:

- Incoming students received voter registration information in their orientation "goodie bags."
- C-SWAV hosted a virtual movie night for the documentary "All In: The Fight for Democracy."
- Election Day (Nov. 3, 2020) was named an official "Day of Action" within the School. Faculty were asked to provide asynchronous activities for their classes on this day, providing both students and faculty with time to support local elections through volunteer opportunities.
- C-SWAV worked with the Vo+ER organization to host a non-partisan "text bank" (the digital version of a traditional phone bank), reminding individuals within each participant's network to vote and providing tips on how to vote safely during a pandemic.

- Edwards interviewed Jillian Riley, a MSW student who was a candidate for office in Durham County, for a feature on the C-SWAV website. (You can read the interview and watch a video of Riley's responses here: <https://jordainstituteforfamilies.org/2020/interview-with-jillian-riley-msw-student-and-2020-candidate>)
- C-SWAV committee members shared voter engagement messages through the School's social media accounts and their personal accounts. ♦



Want to learn more about C-SWAV? Visit its webpage:

<https://jordainstituteforfamilies.org/carolina-social-workers-action-for-voting>



MSW student Averyl Edwards (pictured here in line to vote) served on the C-SWAV committee.



Faculty member Denisé Dews and MSW student Emily Gelblum waited in line to vote in Chapel Hill.

How two MSW students supported voter engagement in Greensboro

Two UNC School of Social Work students spent part of their fall semester supporting voter engagement, putting their social work values into action as part of their field education.

Christian Cagle and Natalie Robinson are both Master of Social Work students who are interning at Triad Health Project (THP) in Greensboro, N.C., a nonprofit community service provider that is one of the largest HIV/AIDS service organizations in North Carolina.

"Christian and Natalie sought to fulfill their social work duties of engaging in social and political action by providing choice and opportunity for their clients to advocate for themselves by voting in the election," said Rebecca Brigham, the School's assistant dean for field education.

"This is encouraging THP clients to utilize their voice, as many clients are challenged with accessing resources like housing, transportation, identification documentation."

Cagle and Robinson used resources from the "Healthy Democracy Kit," which was developed by Vo+ER, a team of physicians, designers, and behavioral scientists committed to helping patients participate in the democratic process. They wore Vo+ER badges with Quick Response matrix barcodes (QR codes) that could be scanned with smartphones to access online voter registration in North Carolina.

They also developed a handout filled with information about voter registration, voting logistics and ways to stay safe while voting during a pandemic. That handout became the basis for an episode of THP's popular weekly Facebook program, "Lunch for Friends."

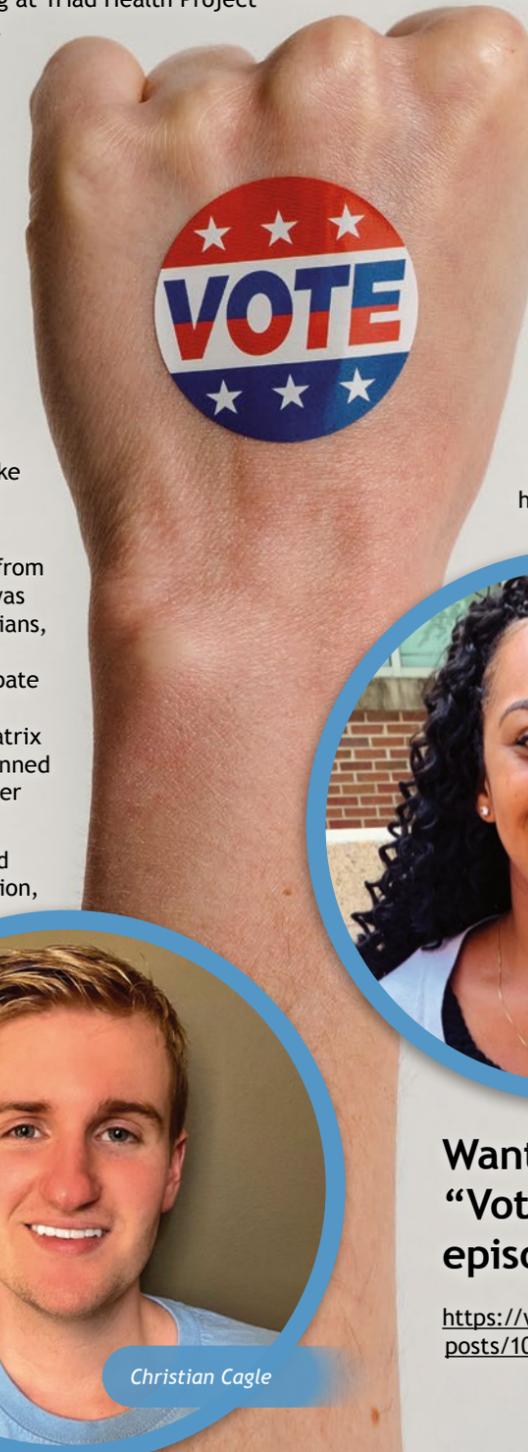
On Oct. 8, 2020, Cagle and Robinson joined Adriana Adams, associate director of Triad Health Project, for a "Lunch for Friends" episode titled "Vote for Friends" to remind THP

clients of the voter registration deadline. They responded to questions from Adams, reminded THP clients and other "Lunch for Friends" viewers that North Carolina registered voters could cast their ballots at early voting sites, and outlined the requirements for same-day registration.

Cagle and Robinson also posted links to resources that they mentioned during the episode.

"It is imperative that everyone utilizes their voice by voting in each election to make systemic changes and provide justice for all people," Robinson said. "We have learned so much through our research and dissemination of voting information to the public."

"Our goal is to provide access and accurate information during these difficult times," Cagle added. "Everyone's vote is important, and this is the time to make your voice be heard!" ♦



Natalie Robinson



Christian Cagle

Want to watch the "Vote for Friends" episode? Here's the link:

<https://www.facebook.com/TriadHealthProject/posts/10158884209358698>

Alumni help communities navigate pandemic's toll

By Susan White

For the past two years, UNC School of Social Work alumnus Yazmin Garcia Rico has worked closely with public and private partners in Alamance County to ensure that her community, especially its growing Latinx population, has access to vital health, education, and nutrition resources. These efforts have included connecting adults to diabetes prevention classes, organizing events around breast health awareness, ensuring the hospital provides Spanish language interpreters at community health education events, and helping to provide food and other basic necessities to those in need.

As the healthy communities program manager for Alamance Regional Medical Center, Rico knows this ongoing work has enabled her to build trust among the families she serves. So, in early March, when the coronavirus pandemic began sweeping across North Carolina, she also knew many of these same households would be looking to her and to a team of volunteers for even greater support.

"The need was immediate," said Rico, who graduated from the MSW program in 2018. "As the state shut down, we had clients who were losing jobs or being furloughed. We had families who were suddenly having to stay at home and now lacked access to healthy meals, and we had a community in need of information about where to get tested and to find masks."

Rico is among a countless number of social workers across the country, including other UNC alumni, who have spent much of this year helping communities navigate the physical, emotional and financial toll of an unprecedented public health crisis. These practitioners, many of whom were already on the frontlines daily, have sprung into action to further strengthen fragile systems of care that are vital to their most vulnerable and marginalized clients.

In Alamance County, Rico worked with members of a Burlington community center, the local United Way, and other nonprofit partners to organize the collection and distribution of masks, diapers, and thousands

of meals purchased from locally owned restaurants to support the local economy and to feed families in need. She also worked with the Alamance County Health Department and her hospital colleagues to provide mobile and free COVID-19 testing across the county.

"The first couple of months, we were focusing on basic needs of food, and now we're seeing families behind on rent and bills," she said. "They're worried about being evicted and losing their homes. And then you have families trying to

It's just been really stressful and a difficult time for families who we need to support in all the different ways that we can.

— Yazmin Garcia Rico



Yazmin Garcia Rico

figure out how they can work when they need to take care of their kids at home, especially if they are a single mom or their partner is working out of state."

In many big cities and rural towns across the country, the challenges of the pandemic have collided with the repercussions of a summer of racial unrest following police shootings of Black men and women and a wave of protests calling for criminal justice reform. As noted by the National Association of Social Workers, the intersection of COVID-19 with the epidemic of systemic racism has laid bare both historic and ongoing social and economic injustices within communities of color, including lack of access to health care and educational opportunities, higher rates of poverty due to increasing unemployment rates and lower wages, and lack of access to home ownership and affordable housing.

That these communities continue to bear a significant brunt of these pandemics is illustrated by the disproportionate rate of Black and Brown essential workers who have lost jobs across the nation, especially within the hospitality industry. Many more have also gotten sick because they are unable to work from home, and they can't afford not to work, Rico noted.

In Burlington, where Rico has spent more than half of her life, she has seen the virus spread quickly into communities of color on the east side of the city. As of November, the highest positivity rate for COVID-19 in the county was pinpointed in a zip code where mainly Black and Latinx residents live, she said. Rico isn't surprised that the virus has exacerbated health disparities in this area of town. Two years ago, a community health assessment found that residents in these neighborhoods have a 10-year life expectancy gap compared to community members in primarily white neighborhoods on the west side of Burlington.

"This pandemic has worsened a lot of situations for families who were already struggling," she said. "They were doing everything they should be doing, but the system is still

not made for them to succeed in many ways. So, it has been hard on many families. People are working two jobs to make ends meet and for those who are out of work, many didn't receive a stimulus check and weren't eligible for unemployment.

"Ultimately, I don't think we've seen all the impact of this pandemic just yet."

Jay Jahnes, MSW '13, echoes that sentiment. As a clinical supervisor for Family Service of the Piedmont (FSP), he works with a team that provides outpatient psychiatric and primary care services mainly to low-wealth clients in Guilford County. Over the last eight months, Jahnes has grown increasingly worried about the long-term effects of the pandemic on children.

For years, his organization has served a mixture of adults and youth, but after recognizing the need for additional

mental health services for children, FSP opened a new Center for Child Wellness in High Point in February — just before the pandemic hit and North Carolina ordered a widespread shutdown of businesses and schools.

"You couldn't have scripted a more difficult opening," said Jahnes, who manages a caseload of about 50 clients.

Although FSP had hoped to offer telehealth services down the road, the pandemic ushered those plans forward almost overnight. Therapists were forced to temporarily conduct most sessions remotely, a shift that presented its own challenges, especially when working with families who lacked computers or reliable internet. Jahnes and his team also worried that telehealth sessions might hamper their ability to monitor for subtle clues in shifting body language and speech, especially with younger patients with a history of physical or emotional abuse.

In addition to dealing with prior traumatic experiences, many of these same children are now facing new uncertainties and fears from the pandemic, he said.

"We removed these children from regular routines and structures that have kept them, at least, kind of safe," Jahnes said. "As imperfect as our school systems are, they offer a tremendous amount of support for our children. But we took these kids with already existing emotional and behavioral difficulties and placed them back into fragile family structures and we isolated them at home for long periods of time. And we did this on top of the added layer of financial instability and unemployment that the family may have been dealing with.

"So, I worry that we're just starting to think about and understand the tip of the iceberg on what the effects of this pandemic are on adolescents and children in terms of mental health."



Jay Jahnes

At the other end of the life spectrum, Natalie Leary, MSW '17, is among the social work first responders who have been helping to guide older adults with dementia and their families through a myriad of obstacles that have come up as a result of social distancing and quarantines. Leary, who works with the Duke Dementia Family Support Program, used to spend most of her time facilitating a variety of support groups, performing home visits and connecting caregivers with needed resources, including respite services.

Over the last nine months, she and her colleagues have pivoted from these regular routines and now spend much of their days creating new programs to meet their clients' needs, managing an increasing number of support groups and consulting with family members, many of whom are struggling with how best to safely support their aging loved ones. For Leary, these conversations often focus on ensuring spouses, partners and children are aware of their options for long-term care and strategies for responding to behavioral symptoms.

"Many discussions involve thinking through various scenarios, such as creating a respite plan for the care partner," she explained. "The pandemic has forced many of these folks to hold the position of full-time activity director, personal care manager, CEO of the household, and manager of the calendar."

Leary credits her social work training for preparing her for these moments.

"I am constantly reminded of self-determination, which we talked about so much in class," she said. "When folks are calling and they are trying to make decisions, it is very freeing for me to remember what my role is in that process. I remind myself that I am an ear and a listener."

"Because I sometimes feel inclined to fix problems, my training reminds me, that's not my role. Rather, I am a support person, and I am here to provide that space for folks to process these things."

As a prevention coordinator for the N.C. Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCCADV), Rebecca Swofford, MSW '16, has also leaned heavily the last few months on her macro training, especially those lessons emphasizing the importance of community partnerships and courses in grant management. Since the outbreak of the pandemic, Swofford, who oversees a \$410,000 federal grant, has worked closely with her project partners to ensure they have the technical resources needed to continue their work.

With the spread of the virus, the coalition secured additional funding to support the 90 or so agencies and organizations across the state that they support and that work directly with survivors of domestic violence.

otherwise would have been unable to financially support themselves if they left an abusive partner," Swofford said.

The coalition is also planning to use this money to develop a prevention messaging campaign that examines the intersections of COVID-19, domestic violence prevention, and racism.

"We're trying to make it abundantly clear that all of those things are super connected, and our efforts need to be addressing all of those things in order for us to see change, particularly in this environment," she added.

Alexis Overstreet, MSW '15, has long been aware of these connections. As an African American woman and as a therapist, she works mainly with women of color who have experienced deep seated racialized trauma from systemic oppression. This work intensified over the summer as marches for Black Lives Matter sprang up in cities across the country, and Overstreet, who owns a private practice in Winston-Salem, was overwhelmed with clients.

Some were struggling to process the racial violence on top of new fears of a virus that also impacts Black and Brown communities at higher rates than others. For the first four or five months, Overstreet dug in, setting aside many of her own needs so she could focus on her clients.

In times of crisis, we know that domestic violence perpetration goes up and that it will often escalate in ways that we don't see.

— Rebecca Swofford

"A lot of what we were helping agencies think about was how to safely shelter people if they can leave. Because of the supplemental funding we received, we were able to provide direct financial assistance to survivors who

Natalie Leary

Rebecca Swofford

Because it's so hard to find therapists of color, I particularly have a hard time not accepting new patients, especially when they are referred by people I know.

— Alexis Overstreet

"I really want to take care of them, so I was really working overtime. But I had to step back and create some boundaries and remind myself that I'm a human before I'm a social worker, and I have to take care of myself, too, or risk burnout," Overstreet said.

Rico can empathize with the need for additional self-care. In June, she and her husband both came down with coronavirus. A month later, her father was diagnosed in Mexico and died shortly thereafter. He was 68.

And then there was the woman in her late 50s, maybe early 60s, that Rico had initially befriended through a diabetes

prevention class she conducts as part of her work with the medical center. The woman later joined a group of adults all enrolled in a citizenship preparation class that Rico teaches at Alamance Community College. After living in the United States for decades, she had passed her citizenship test in July and couldn't wait to share the news with Rico. She texted a photo of herself proudly clutching the American flag. Three weeks later, she, too, died from COVID-19.

Social work, especially over the last eight months, has taken its emotional toll, Rico said. But her experiences have also helped her to better understand the gravity of the challenges so many of the families in her own community have been facing.

"I am doing my best and know that at least, I'm being a part of the solution," she added. ♦

Alexis Overstreet



Social Work alumnus Yazmin Garcia Rico has worked closely with public and private partners in Alamance County to ensure that the community, especially its growing Latinx population, has access to vital health, education, and nutrition resources. Photos courtesy of Yazmin Garcia Rico.

Research news & Discoveries



than other youth and that adolescents who use substances are at greater risk for addiction, risky sexual behavior, and death. Yet, biracial youth are largely ignored in prevention science and substance use research, noted Goings, the Sandra Reeves Spears and John B. Turner Distinguished Professor of Social Work.

“We know that biracial youth typically report the highest or second highest prevalence of substance use, but we don’t understand why they are using,” she said. “Effective interventions cannot be developed in the absence of etiologic data.”

By Susan White

UNDERSTANDING SUBSTANCE USE IN BIRACIAL YOUTH AND EMERGING ADULTS

Professor Trenette Clark Goings was awarded a \$1.8 million grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for a study that will examine substance use among biracial adolescents and emerging adults. The five-year R01 grant from the NIH’s National Institute on Drug Abuse is among the most highly competitive federal awards and is generally designated for leading research scholars across the country.

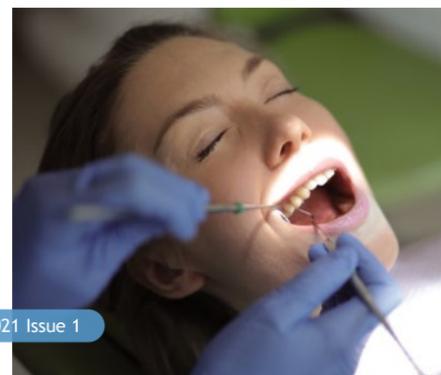
An expert in the substance use field, Goings’ research focuses broadly on reducing health disparities among racial and ethnic minorities. For this latest study, she and her team aim to better understand why biracial youth, ages 13 to 25, are more at risk for smoking cigarettes and marijuana and for using alcohol. Specifically, they will explore what Goings refers to as a “double jeopardy” of risk and protective factors that biracial youth experience that potentially increases their chances of engaging in substance use. This experience is framed around how biracial youth identify and the challenges they often face in navigating between multiple racial and ethnic worlds, she explained.

Research has shown that biracial youth use substances at higher rates

TRAINING SOCIAL WORKERS AND DENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS ABOUT SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS

Lisa Zerden received a \$200,000 federal training grant that will be used to help social work and dental health professional students learn more about substance use disorders (SUD). Zerden, the School’s senior associate dean for MSW education, is overseeing the two-year project in collaboration with the Adams School of Dentistry and with support from the UNC Office of Interprofessional Education and Practice.

Known as i-STEP (Interprofessional Substance Use Disorder Education and Training), the project aims to train 150 students in three areas of study: Master of Social Work (MSW), Doctor of Dental Studies (DDS) and Dental Hygiene (DH). The project will provide students with specialized content focused on the complexity of substance use disorders to help inform their future work as practitioners.



ENSURING OLDER RESIDENTS RECEIVE THE CARE THEY NEED AND DESERVE

The National Institute of Health recently awarded a combined total of more than \$700,000 to two new studies that could help to strengthen industry policies and procedures to ensure that older residents receive the care they need and deserve. Both studies will focus on residential long-term care in nursing homes, assisted living communities, and community-based long-term care where older adults, especially those with chronic health conditions such as heart disease and diabetes, are often most at risk for infection. University Kenan Distinguished Professor Sheryl Zimmerman is among the team of researchers directing the studies.

In the first investigation, Zimmerman and researchers from UNC, Brown University, and Portland State University will examine COVID-19 prevention, outbreaks, responses, and experiences

in 250 assisted living communities across seven states: Arkansas, Louisiana, New Jersey, New York, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, and Texas.

In the second study, Zimmerman and colleagues from the UNC Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research and the UNC School of Medicine plan to focus on North Carolina. Specifically, the team will examine and compare COVID-19 prevention, outbreaks, responses, and experiences in 36 nursing homes, assisted living communities, and community-based programs known as PACE, which provide all-inclusive care to the elderly. These programs enable older adults who qualify for nursing homes to remain at home or within their preferred communities. Funding for this project is through NC TrACS and includes community partners representing all three settings.

DECREASING PNEUMONIA RISK IN NURSING HOMES

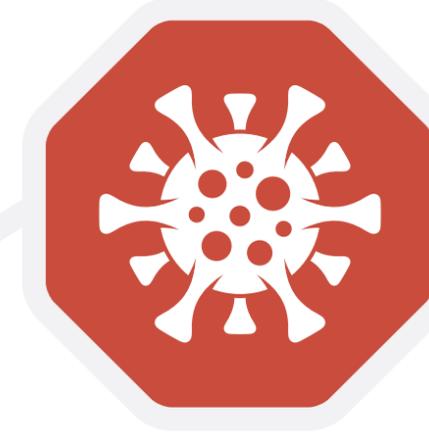
A first-of-its-kind study led by UNC faculty members Sheryl Zimmerman and Philip Sloane finds oral hygiene training can significantly reduce pneumonia in nursing homes.

The Cecil G. Sheps Center for Health Services Research published a paper in The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Network Open evaluating the effectiveness of its Mouth Care Without a Battle staff training program. After participating in the study for one year, nursing homes that implemented the care program saw a statistically significant 31% reduction of pneumonia cases compared to nursing homes that did not use the program.

Although numerous studies have demonstrated an association between mouth care and pneumonia, the UNC study is the first to examine whether a pragmatic program of mouth care (tooth brushing, flossing and gum care) provided by nursing home staff reduces pneumonia.

“We’re building a compelling case to show that mouth care is health care, that poor oral hygiene can lead to more serious health concerns, and that nursing home staff can play a key role to interrupt that cycle,” said Zimmerman, Sheps Center program co-director. “By implementing an evidence-based, compassionate approach like Mouth Care Without a Battle, nursing homes can take a meaningful step to evolve care

practices. This program has incredible potential to help individuals in a variety of supportive care settings, including those living at home or in assisted living communities.”



EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON ESSENTIAL WORKERS

Faculty members Rachel Goode, Trenette Clark Goings and Mimi Chapman are collaborating on a study to assess how low-wage frontline and essential workers, such as cashiers, bus drivers and child care providers, are coping with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The study, which focuses primarily on

the experiences of women of color, is supported by a \$100,000 grant and is among 85 research projects across 14 UNC-system schools that were funded by the Carolina-based N.C. Policy Collaboratory. All of the projects focus on treatment, community testing and prevention of COVID-19 and are intended to provide new data and information to North Carolina lawmakers and policymakers to help guide the state’s continuing pandemic response.

For their study, UNC social work researchers are collaborating with Village HeartBEAT, a division of the Mecklenburg County Department of Public Health. Part of what they hope to learn is how participants’ behaviors have changed as a result of trying to manage the physical, emotional and financial stress of the pandemic.

For example, research has shown a link between the overuse of food and alcohol as a coping mechanism for stress, Goode noted. Given that this nation will likely face other pandemics, researchers, social work practitioners, policymakers and service providers need to better understand the ways these essential workers maintain the well-being of themselves and their families and what outside supports are most useful to them, Goode added. Research associate professor Steve Dey and Ph.D.



research assistant Anjalee Sharma are also working on the study.

TACKLING THE BARRIERS TO EQUITABLE MATERNITY CARE FOR WOMEN, FAMILIES OF COLOR

UNC researchers from the Department of Maternal and Child Health at the Gillings School of Global Public Health and the School of Social Work are leading a new \$4 million COVID-focused initiative that aims to address systemic racism and health care inequities that significantly impact pregnant women of color and their families. The multi-million project is funded by the U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020.

Dorothy Cilenti, an associate professor in maternal and child health, and Sarah Verbiest, director of the School's Jordan Institute for Families, are leading the project, which will focus on supporting communities and providing evidence-based interventions, while enacting innovative approaches to address the barriers that exist around equitable maternity care.

The initiative also brings together representatives from the National Birth Equity Collaborative, the Georgia Health Policy Center, R.A.C.E. for Equity, Reaching Our Sisters Everywhere, the National Perinatal Association, the Morehouse School of Medicine and National Area Health Education Centers Organization to address these maternal health disparities, support providers and families, and boost access to telehealth and distant care services for maternal health. UNC will collaborate with these seven partner organizations to advance other federal and state-level efforts to eliminate preventable maternal deaths and reduce severe maternal morbidity.

STUDY EXPLORES PANDEMIC'S EFFECTS ON VICTIMS OF VIOLENCE

Assistant professor Cynthia Fraga Rizo and colleagues received \$25,000 from the NC TraCS COVID-19 Pilot Grant awards for a study that will explore how the global pandemic has affected access to and delivery of services for victims of intimate partner violence, sexual violence and assault, and human trafficking. Although measures such as sheltering in place and social distancing were intended to help reduce the spread of the virus, these rules have

also created unintended consequences for victims of violence, including closer contact with individuals who continue to harm them, increased economic stress, and limited access to critical health and safety resources. Rizo and the School's research team, including faculty members Tonya Van Deirse, Rebecca Macy, and Christopher Wretman, and post-doctoral scholar Jeongsuk Kim, plan to further examine these repercussions and ways to better ensure that victims of violence still have access to critical services during public health emergencies.

STRENGTHENING RESOURCES TO ALLEVIATE READING DISPARITIES AMONG CHILDREN

Research professor Kirsten Kainz is collaborating with colleagues from the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute on an innovative project designed to further mitigate early reading disparities among young children during the COVID-19 pandemic. The one year project is funded from a \$10,000 IDEA grant from the UNC-Chapel Hill Office of Research Development and aims to strengthen resources and support for children from economically disadvantaged families who may face additional reading challenges as schools continue to provide classes online and promote social distancing. The UNC project targets students up to age 8, including those who may already be one to two years behind reading on grade level.

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON PARENTAL STRESS

Ph.D. student Gerard Chung and associate professor Paul Lanier published a study that focuses on the impact of COVID-19 in Singapore,

specifically how stay-at-home orders have affected the stress levels of parents and their relationship with their children. In their study, which was informed by the Parental Stress Model, the researchers found that parents who reported a greater impact of COVID-19 also reported higher levels of parental stress. Higher parental stress was associated with an increase in harsh parenting behaviors and less

parent-child relationship closeness. Most notably, the study found that levels of parental stress mediated the impact of COVID-19 on harsh parenting and parent-child relationship closeness. Because previous studies have shown an association between harsh parenting and child abuse, the researchers expressed concern that parents who are experiencing high levels of parental stress may be more likely to engage in child abuse. Such findings suggest "an especially troubling prospect given the scope of the difficulties experienced by parents due to COVID-19," Chung and Lanier noted. The study also suggested that financial and employment assistance from the government will be important measures to help Singaporean families cope financially and that mental health, social work, and counseling services are essential services that can help to support family well-being.



STUDY SHOWS CHILDREN'S STRESS LEVELS AFFECT PARENTS

For many parents, helping their children navigate and cope with stress and anxiety can be challenging on any given day. But a new study from social work researcher Melissa Lippold suggests that parents also need to be aware of how their child's stress may impact their own health. The study, which Lippold conducted with colleagues from Pennsylvania State University, the University of South Florida, and Oregon State University, found that the transmission of stress in families appears

to flow from children to their parents and not the other way around.

"We certainly know from the developmental literature that how kids are behaving influences the behaviors of their parents," said Lippold, an associate professor. "But what we were really interested in trying to understand is stress as a family process. We wanted to see if there are physiological effects between parents and their children, meaning how their stress response effects are related to each other."

Lippold is among a growing number of researchers who study cortisol, also known as the "stress hormone," which individuals produce every day. The study's findings have health implications, given that other research has shown that levels of cortisol are associated with, among other functions, blood sugar, blood pressure, and sleep. Overall health also becomes a greater concern when individuals experience chronic stress and their cortisol levels remain high over prolonged periods of time. As stress response systems become overworked, people are at an increased risk for immune problems, mental health issues such as depression, and diseases, such as cancer and diabetes, Lippold said. ♦



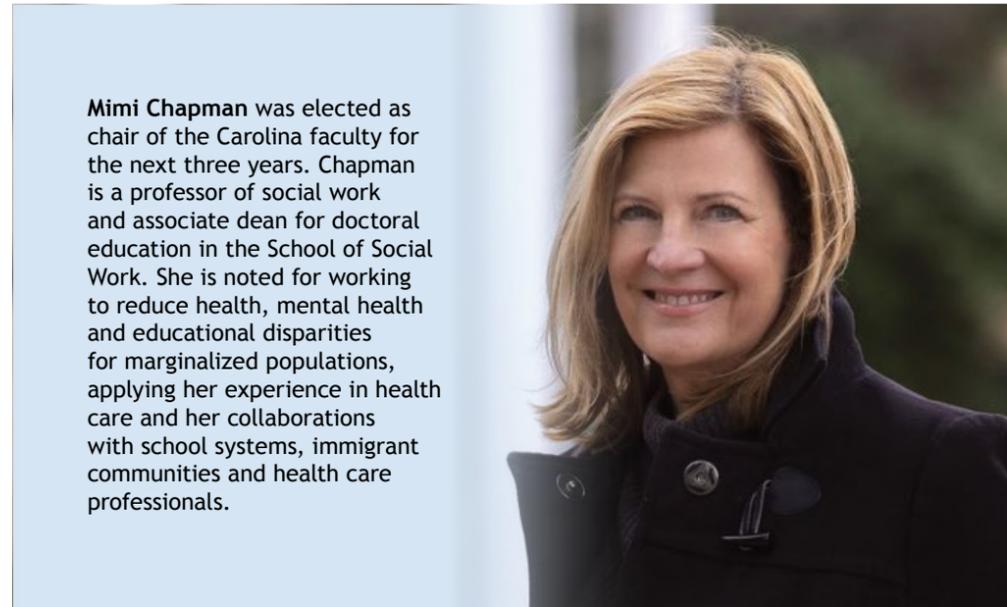
Travis Albritton, the School's associate dean of diversity, equity and inclusion, was selected by the Harvard Graduate School of Education as a member of the Management Development Program (MDP) Class of 2021. A flagship two-week training program within the Harvard Institutes for Higher Education, the MDP was created to provide higher education managers with the tools and insight to think more strategically, balance competing demands, and engage in more forward-thinking leadership. In addition to his leadership role as an assistant dean, Albritton also serves as the director of the School's 3-Year MSW Program – Chapel Hill and as a clinical associate professor.

David Ansong was promoted to associate professor with tenure. Ansong joined the School in 2013 and is a member of the Global Social Development Innovations' research team. Ansong's areas of expertise include economic and educational disparities, youth asset development, and international social development. He has been particularly involved in international research on asset development for low-income households and youth. His current research examines the impacts of youth savings accounts on in-school behavior and academic performance. He was also named as a Wallace Kuralt Early Career Distinguished Scholar.

Associate professor **Betsy Bledsoe** was among a team from UNC and a partnership of residents in Robeson County who were selected for the Office of the Provost Public Service Award for Engaged Scholarship. The Carolina Center for Public Service presents the awards annually to honor individuals and organizations for outstanding contributions to the campus and broader communities. The collaborative project, known as MI-PHOTOS: Mothers Informing Pregnancy and Postpartum Health Outcomes Through Story Sharing, focuses on documenting the health care experiences of mothers during pregnancy and postpartum through pictures, discussions and storytelling, which adds qualitative information to quantitative data on health barriers and infant mortality. Bledsoe also received a Carolina Women's Center 2020 Faculty Scholar Grant, which will also support the team's work in Robeson County.

Tara Bohley was promoted to clinical associate professor. Bohley joined the School in 2013 and serves as director of

Behavioral Health Springboard, which links current research to initiatives in mental health and substance use prevention and treatment. A licensed marriage and family therapist, Bohley's expertise includes work with families of adolescents who are involved with the social services, juvenile justice, and/or mental health systems.



Mimi Chapman was elected as chair of the Carolina faculty for the next three years. Chapman is a professor of social work and associate dean for doctoral education in the School of Social Work. She is noted for working to reduce health, mental health and educational disparities for marginalized populations, applying her experience in health care and her collaborations with school systems, immigrant communities and health care professionals.

Gina Chowa was promoted to full professor. She was also appointed as the Johnson-Howard-Adair Distinguished Professor of Social Work. Chowa, who joined the School in 2008, serves as associate dean for global engagement and is the founding director of Global Social Development Innovations, a research center that works with university, state, national and international partners to improve the lives of marginalized people around the world. Chowa's expertise is in youth development, focusing on employment, economic security, asset development, education and health in low-resourced countries.

Gary Cuddeback was appointed as the Berg-Beach Distinguished Professor of Community Social Work. His research focuses on evidence-based interventions for persons with severe and persistent mental illness, especially those involved with the criminal justice system. A professor in both the School and in UNC's psychiatry department, Cuddeback serves as director of the Community Outcomes Research and Evaluation Center within UNC Center for Excellence in Community Mental Health

and as a research fellow with the Sheps Center for Health Services Research.

Denise Dews was promoted to clinical associate professor. Dews, who serves as assistant director of Field Education, joined the School's faculty in 2007 as a clinical instructor, working primarily as a field faculty member in the areas of healthcare and aging. Prior to working

at UNC, she served as director of Field Education at Appalachian State University. Dews started her social work career in public child welfare before transitioning to healthcare where she specialized in critical care and end-of-life decision making across the life span.

Melissa Godwin was promoted to clinical associate professor. Godwin has worked with the School's Behavioral Health Springboard since 2007. She coordinates the statewide federally funded WorkFirst/Child Protective Services Substance Abuse Initiative, an Initiative of North Carolina Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services. Since 2004, she has also worked with the state to provide women's gender responsive substance abuse services, technical assistance and training.

Trenette Clark Goings was promoted to full professor. She was also appointed as the Sandra Reeves Spears and John B. Turner Distinguished Professor of Social Work. Goings joined the School in 2010 and over the past 12 years, has gained national recognition for her achievements as a scholar in

the substance use field. Her work, which has been largely funded by the National Institutes of Health and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, focuses broadly on reducing health disparities among racial and ethnic minorities. Her research targets groups disproportionately affected by substance misuse and HIV but for whom few evidence-based programs are available

Assistant professor **Rachel W. Goode** was selected to receive a University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Junior Faculty Development Award for 2020. The prestigious award will help fund Goode's research into obesity affecting persons who do not have consistent access to adequate and appropriate food to maintain good health and energy. Goode's research will examine how recipients of SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits, which are designed to supplement the food budget of needy families, can be affected both by food insecurity and by binge eating. She plans to work with Triangle-area social workers who interact with SNAP recipients to identify the vulnerabilities that these recipients have – a first step in developing interventions that can help prevent obesity. The Junior Faculty Development Award is sponsored by the UNC Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost. IBM and RJ Reynolds Industries financially support the \$10,000 award.

Doctoral candidate **LB Klein** was selected to lead UNC-Chapel Hill's new Gender-Based Violence Prevention Advisory Group. The announcement was made by Jonathan Sauls, interim vice chancellor for student affairs at the University, who noted that the advisory group is part of a larger framework around violence prevention at the University. Klein was also named the School's Outstanding Doctoral Student for 2020.

Melissa Lippold, associate professor and Prudence and Peter Meehan Early Career Distinguished Scholar, was selected to serve as a national co-leader for the Grand Challenge for Social Work addressing "Ensure Healthy Development for All Youth." Lippold is also serving as a member of the steering committee for the Coalition for the Promotion of Behavioral Health, an interdisciplinary group of researchers, practitioners and policymakers who are committed to reducing behavioral health problems in

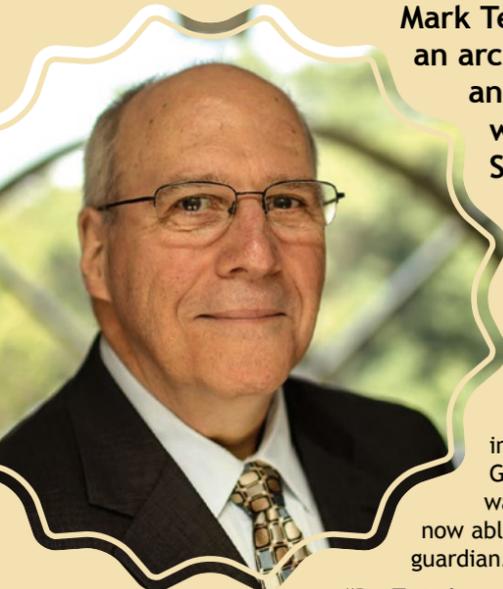
young people. The coalition is part of the Grand Challenge and has established a goal of reducing the prevalence and incidence of behavioral health problems in young people, including the embedded racial and socioeconomic disparities in such problems. The Grand Challenges for Social Work is an initiative comprising 12 separate areas that represent the toughest social problems in the United States.

Theresa Palmer was promoted to clinical associate professor. Palmer is the coordinator of Field Education for the School's 3-Year MSW Program – Winston-Salem. She joined the School's faculty as an adjunct instructor in 2007 and transitioned as a full-time faculty member in 2010. Palmer also works with the UNC-PrimeCare program and recruits new field placement sites, coordinates student matches with integrated care sites, and serves as advising field faculty for students accepted into the PrimeCare program in Western North Carolina.



Sharon Holmes Thomas was selected by the National Deans and Directors of Social Work Admissions (NDDSWA) to receive its national Mentor of the Year Award for 2020. Thomas is the School's assistant dean for recruitment, financial aid and admissions. The NDDSWA Mentor of the Year Award honors exceptional performance in recruiting and cultivating the next generation of leaders in social work.

Associate professor **Amy Blank Wilson** was appointed as the Prudence F. and Peter J. Meehan Early Career Distinguished Scholar. Wilson joins associate professor Melissa Lippold in holding this distinguished title. The professorship is designed to support the research and scholarly interests of tenure-track or fixed-term faculty members at the rank of assistant or associate professor. These term junior professorships recognize outstanding potential and performance and are available for five years or until the faculty member is promoted to full professor. Wilson joined the School in 2014 and is considered an expert in criminal justice and mental health. She has spent most of her career focused on issues around mental health, serious mental illness and dual diagnosis, service accessibility, jail reentry, and interventions for people with serious mental illness involved in the justice system. Her research also examines criminal thinking and criminogenic risk in people with serious mental illness.



Mark Testa, Spears-Turner Distinguished Professor of Social Work and an architect of innovative reforms in the field of child welfare at state and federal levels retired in July. Testa served more than 40 years within the field of social sciences and 10 years with the UNC School of Social Work.

Testa joined the UNC School of Social Work in 2010 as an influential scholar for his groundbreaking research in subsidized guardianship. He had begun this work years earlier in Illinois, where he held faculty appointments at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and the University of Chicago. While in Illinois, he developed and led the Illinois Subsidized Guardianship Demonstration program, an initiative that for the first time provided funding for families who became legal guardians to relative children.

Testa's leadership on these reforms resulted in a decrease in the number of children in foster care in that state and ultimately prompted Congress to create the Kinship Guardianship Assistance Program (KinGap) as part of the "Fostering Connections" Act that was signed into federal law in 2008. As a result of Testa's research, numerous youth are now able to move out of the foster care system successfully and into a permanent home of a legal guardian.

"Dr. Testa's groundbreaking work using low-cost randomized controlled trials in child welfare influenced national policy," said Selena Childs, a former clinical associate professor and a close collaborator of Testa's for eight years. "His practice-based intervention research helped create data informed road-maps providing direction to child welfare policymakers and practitioners alike."

At UNC, Testa intensified his efforts to reform and influence child welfare policies. In 2011, he established a partnership with the Children's Home Society of America to promote collaboration among universities, child welfare agencies, government, foundations, and private investors to develop and evaluate promising solutions to the intractable problems that child welfare agencies are confronting across the country. With his thought leadership, the partnership launched a series of "Wicked Problems Institutes," to focus on the advancement of rigorous demonstrations of child welfare interventions that show promise for improving child safety, permanence, and well-being.

Over the years, Testa received numerous honors and awards, including from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute and the Society for Social Work and Research. Earlier this year, the national Child Welfare League of America selected Testa as a member of the organization's "100 Champions for Children." The award recognized numerous individual and group efforts to promote child well-being and advance the field of child welfare. ♦

After more than 30 years of service, Linda Pridgen-Braswell retired from the School of Social Work at the end of March.

Pridgen-Braswell was first hired as an office manager within the School's Field Education Program in 1989, where she initially worked for seven years. During her tenure, she also served as an assistant to former associate dean Jan Schopler and then as a business and contract manager with the N.C. Child Welfare Education Collaborative. She returned to the Field Education Program nearly 10 years ago, where she remained as an office manager.

Over the years, Pridgen-Braswell was vital to the office's daily operations, said Tauchiana Williams, director of the School's 12-Month Advanced Standing MSW Program and a Field Education advisor.

"Linda is absolutely amazing, and there are so many detailed tasks that she handled effortlessly over the years that made our student placements, field documents, orientations, workshops, trainings and conferences flow smoothly," Williams said. "She demonstrated dedication and selflessness in every activity that she managed."

"We are sad to see her leave, but she gave 30 years of service to UNC-Chapel Hill, and we are definitely better because of her work."

For three decades, Pridgen-Braswell also welcomed countless numbers of new MSW students to the School during annual orientation activities, served as their supporter and advocate, and cheered their successes following graduation. Those relationships are the ones she said she would miss the most.

"Some of the most important connections I've made throughout the years have been with students," Pridgen-Braswell said. "I've been blessed to have so many thoughtful conversations with social work students about troublesome and distressing issues of the day. Honestly, nothing is more fantastic than being recognized and getting a hug from a former student." ♦



Iris Carlton-LaNey receives NASW's Lifetime Achievement Award

By Susan White

Professor Iris Carlton-LaNey was selected this year as the recipient of the National Association of Social Workers' (NASW) Lifetime Achievement Award. Carlton-LaNey was honored for her decades of work in training social workers to identify and fight discrimination and institutionalized oppression.

"Dr. Carlton-LaNey has helped prepare generations of social workers on how to address deeply complicated social problems once viewed as intractable," said NASW chief executive officer Angelo McClain. "Thanks to her pioneering research, insightful publications and inspiring classroom lessons, more and more social workers are equipped to resolve the troubling social problems that strain our society."

The annual award, which was presented to Carlton-LaNey in a virtual ceremony on Oct. 29, recognizes the best social work values and accomplishments demonstrated in the social worker's lifetime career. Carlton-LaNey was considered especially deserving of the honor because of her legacy of work to educate students and others on issues of racial equity and social justice, the NASW officials announced. During her 25+ years of teaching at the UNC School of Social Work, Carlton-LaNey helped develop one of the School's primary courses, "Confronting Oppression and Institutionalized Discrimination."

Receiving recognition for her role as a social worker and for the effect her efforts have had on the profession is a tremendous honor, said Carlton-LaNey.

"My commitment to the values of the profession have pushed me to be an advocate for justice and equity and to speak up and speak out even when it's not a popular thing to do," she said. "I haven't regretted my professional actions and continue to encourage my colleagues in practice and in the academy to be the voices for those whose voices are suppressed or ignored. I really appreciate NASW for, in effect, acknowledging that I've had a positive impact on my profession."

Carlton-LaNey has served on UNC's faculty since 1994. For the last four years, she served as the Berg-Beach Distinguished Professor for Community Social Work. Prior to joining UNC-Chapel

Carlton-LaNey is credited with helping students recognize not only their own biases but also how oppression, racism, institutionalized racism, microaggressions and privilege marginalize large swathes of our society.

— National Association of Social Workers

Hill, Carlton-LaNey taught at UNC-Chapel Hill and at North Carolina A&T State University. A nationally-renowned scholar with an interest in aging issues and African American social welfare history, Carlton-LaNey has authored four books, as well as numerous articles in research journals.

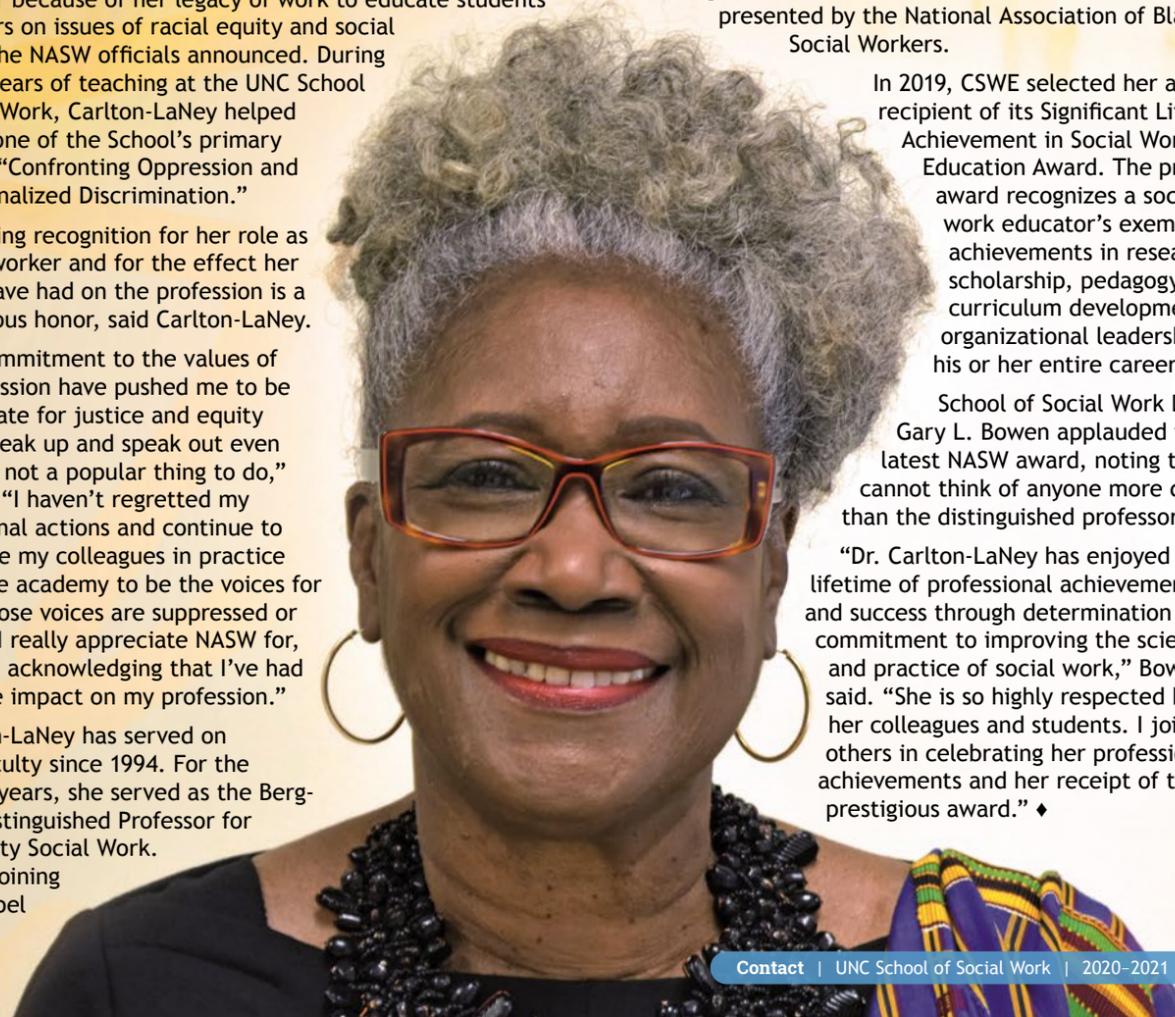
She has also served on eight social work editorial boards, including the NASW Press Book Committee and the Press Publications Committee and more than 20 service boards. Most recently, North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper appointed her to the N.C. Social Services Commission. Over the course of her career, Carlton-LaNey has earned national recognition and numerous awards, including Social Worker of the Year by the North Carolina Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers, the Distinguished Recent Contributions in

Social Work Education Award from the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the NASW's Social Work Pioneer Award, and the Distinguished Achievement in Social Work Education Award presented by the National Association of Black Social Workers.

In 2019, CSWE selected her as the recipient of its Significant Lifetime Achievement in Social Work Education Award. The prestigious award recognizes a social work educator's exemplary achievements in research and scholarship, pedagogy and curriculum development, and organizational leadership over his or her entire career.

School of Social Work Dean Gary L. Bowen applauded the latest NASW award, noting that he cannot think of anyone more deserving than the distinguished professor.

"Dr. Carlton-LaNey has enjoyed a lifetime of professional achievement and success through determination and commitment to improving the science and practice of social work," Bowen said. "She is so highly respected by both her colleagues and students. I join with others in celebrating her professional achievements and her receipt of this highly prestigious award." ♦



Meet Emily Putnam-Hornstein, new Tate Distinguished Professor

Emily Putnam-Hornstein, Ph.D., joined the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Social Work in July 2020 as John A. Tate Distinguished Professor for Children in Need. She is well known for her interdisciplinary research in child abuse and neglect, children's health disparities, public policy and predictive risk modeling.

"Dr. Emily Putnam-Hornstein is one of the most respected and influential child welfare scholars in the world," noted Gary Bowen, dean of the UNC School of Social Work. "I am excited about bringing in a scholar with such a high level of data science expertise. Dr. Putnam-Hornstein's capability in data management and predictive risk modeling in child welfare is particularly timely and attractive."

"[Her] commitment to promoting policies that advance the safety and well-being of families and children makes her the perfect appointment as the John A. Tate Distinguished Professor for Children in Need," he added.

Putnam-Hornstein has served on the faculty of the Suzanne Dworak-Peck School of Social Work, University of Southern California, since 2011. While at USC, Putnam-Hornstein and her colleague Jacquelyn McCroskey launched the Children's Data Network, a collaborative data network focused on the health, safety and well-being of children.

Putnam-Hornstein and McCroskey will continue to serve as co-directors of the network, which is the largest single source of integrated administrative records concerning children in the United States, with Putnam-Hornstein holding a voluntary faculty appointment as a USC Distinguished Scholar.

She will undertake an extension of that project at UNC-Chapel Hill, Bowen said: "With associate professor Paul Lanier, [Putnam-Hornstein] has already initiated efforts with the State of North Carolina to establish the North Carolina Children's Data Network (NC-CDN), which is modeled on her work in California."

While at USC, Putnam-Hornstein served as principal investigator for research projects receiving \$7.5 million in funding and has given more than 100 invited and peer-reviewed presentations.

She is a recipient of the Commissioner's Award by the Administration for Children, Youth and Families and the Forsythe Award for Child Welfare Leadership from the National Association of Public Child Welfare Administrators.

Putnam-Hornstein earned her Ph.D. from the University of California Berkeley School of Social Welfare, Master of Science in Social Work from Columbia University and bachelor's degree in psychology from Yale University.

The Tate Distinguished Professorship was endowed by John A. "Jack" Tate Jr. and friends in memory of Tate's father, who attended UNC-Chapel Hill in the late 1890s. Jack Tate was a retired businessman, a former member and chairman of the UNC-Chapel Hill Board of Trustees, and a former chairman of the UNC School of Social Work Board of Advisors. He was a leader in efforts to transform child and family services to improve developmental outcomes for children. ♦



Meet Joy Noel Baumgartner, new Kuralt Early Career Distinguished Scholar

Joy Noel Baumgartner, Ph.D., is joining the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Social Work faculty in January 2021. She will be a tenure-track associate professor and will hold an administrative appointment as director of global mental health initiatives for the School.

Baumgartner has also been named a Wallace Kuralt Early Career Distinguished Scholar in recognition of her outstanding record of professional achievements to date, Dean Gary Bowen said in announcing Baumgartner's appointment.

"Dr. Baumgartner possesses a unique set of attributes that combine academic rigor, methodological precision and a highly collaborative style," Bowen noted. "Her scholarly areas of expertise, skills and career trajectory fit well with the needs of our School."

"She will be a valuable addition to our faculty, especially in supporting our expanding global program," he added.

Baumgartner described social work and public health as her core academic disciplines.

"I think some of the most exciting work that social workers are doing is ensuring that both health and social needs are addressed via multi-sector collaborations," Baumgartner said.

"Social workers are leaders, connectors and change agents — here and around the globe," she added. "Our field [is] well poised to contribute to co-designing, implementing and evaluating complex health and social policies and programs."

"My mental health projects are all based in low- and middle-income countries, but many of the intervention strategies and implementation challenges are global in nature."

Baumgartner currently serves as associate research professor of global health and director of the Duke Global Health Institute Evidence Lab at Duke University. In this capacity, she directs a global research program on maternal and child health, adolescent health, reproductive health and mental health, largely in sub-Saharan Africa. She currently serves as Principal Investigator on studies in Tanzania, Uganda, Kenya, Ghana and Cameroon and is PI or Co-PI for nearly \$3.5 million in funded research projects.

She also serves as an adjunct associate professor at UNC Gillings School of Global Public Health, where she earned her Ph.D. in 2004. She completed her Master of Social Work degree at the University of Wisconsin at Madison and served as a post-doctoral researcher in psychiatric epidemiology at the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. ♦





School to launch new 20-Month Advanced Standing Program

By Susan White

Starting in January, classes will begin for the first cohort of students to enroll in the School of Social Work's new 20-Month Advanced Standing MSW Program. This program is designed for graduates from an accredited BSW program, including students who are eager to continue working as they complete their MSW degree.

The 20-month program joins the School's current lineup of academic programs, including a 12-Month Advanced Standing MSW Program for those with a BSW, three-year program options in Chapel Hill and Winston-Salem, and a two-year full-time program.

The School began accepting applications for the 20-month program in September and enrolled a total of nine students for the first year. The new program reflects the School's commitment to ensuring that an MSW education is accessible to more potential students, said Laurie Selz-Campbell, program coordinator and a clinical associate professor.

"We know that the 12-month program – requiring one year of intensive, full-time attendance – may not be an option for those with ongoing employment, family, or other obligations and life circumstances," she said. "The 20-month program allows students to engage in MSW study for an extended period of time so that they can continue to attend to these obligations while completing their degree."

The 20-month program is open to any applicant who meets the criteria and who has an interest in direct practice or community management and policy practice. The program may be particularly attractive to working professionals who are employed with agencies and in positions that could be considered as a field experience, said Sharon Holmes Thomas, assistant dean of recruitment, admissions and financial aid.

"We are a program that's been wanting to grow, but we haven't wanted to do so exponentially," she said. "Our goal has been to be thoughtful about the process and still provide students with a quality learning environment in terms of class size and a quality field experience." ♦

To learn more about admission to the 20-month program, contact [mswadmissions@unc.edu](mailto:mwadmissions@unc.edu).

Ph.D. student awarded Robert Wood Johnson Foundation scholarship

By Susan White

Ph.D. student Hayden Dawes was selected as a 2020 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) Health Policy Research Scholar. Dawes joins a group of second-year doctoral students from across the country tapped for the prestigious national leadership development program.

Led by John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, with support from the RWJF, the Health Policy Research Scholars program targets students who have demonstrated that their research has the potential to impact health and well-being. Selected scholars are awarded an annual stipend of \$30,000 for up to four years of study and are given access to professional coaching, mentoring and networking.

Dawes is the second Ph.D. student from the UNC School of Social Work to be named a RWJF Health Policy Research Scholar. Fellow doctoral student Annie Francis was the first social work graduate to receive the honor in 2017.

For Dawes, the selection is both humbling and affirming.

"I think being in academia and being acculturated to this system, you can have a lot of doubts," he said. "So, it feels validating and it feels like other people are supporting my work, both financially and through their energies and resources and efforts as well. It makes me feel less alone."

I also know that I'm joining a community of people who are committed to the same things that I am.

– Hayden Dawes

The scholarship program intentionally supports students from underrepresented populations and disadvantaged backgrounds, especially those whose ethnicity, socioeconomic status, ability and other factors enable them to bring unique and diverse perspectives to their research. The goal is to train doctoral students to use their discipline-based research training to "build a culture of health" that ensures that all individuals are afforded the opportunity to live longer, healthier lives.

Dawes' research focuses on improving the mental health and social well-

being of people of color and LGBTQIA+ individuals by strengthening mental health services, systems, and policies. Research has shown that LGBTQIA+ people of color, in particular, face interlocking systems of oppression related to their race or ethnicity, sexual orientation, and gender - all of which can contribute to various mental health disparities.

Dawes' research aims to address these issues by developing and testing innovative approaches to educate mental health professionals on implicit and explicit biases, while also advancing equity for multiply marginalized client and patient populations in health, mental health, and social service organizations.

"Hayden is a great match for the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation program because he thinks about his work in complex ways and on multiple levels," praised Associate Dean for Doctoral Education Mimi Chapman. "He is a seasoned clinician who sees the links between clinical practice and the policy environment. He is going to be a game-changer in LGBTQ mental health, and I am so glad RWJF has chosen him for this opportunity." ♦



Social Work

NOW MORE THAN EVER

New \$100K gift to reward students for innovative initiatives

By Susan White

For Vera Tayeh, MSW '87, the question posed to her more than 35 years ago was a gift: What do you want to do and who do you want to serve? Then a college intern at a community center in the country of Lebanon, Tayeh was eager to work with teenagers and embraced the opportunity to develop after school activities and programs to meet their needs.

"I really wanted to create a community of support for the teens – to give them some place to go and something to do," Tayeh recalled. "So, I developed activities for them three days a week, giving them the chance to learn new art skills, to connect with people who would listen to them, and to build their social skills."

A long-time supporter of the School of Social Work, Tayeh now plans to inspire MSW students to develop their own innovative ideas for serving communities. The alumnus and member of the School's Board of Advisors recently donated \$100,000 as an incentive for student innovation. The money will be used to create the Vera Tayeh Innovations and Impact Award Expendable Fund and will provide \$10,000 awards to student projects that have the potential to improve the lives of individuals, families, and communities.



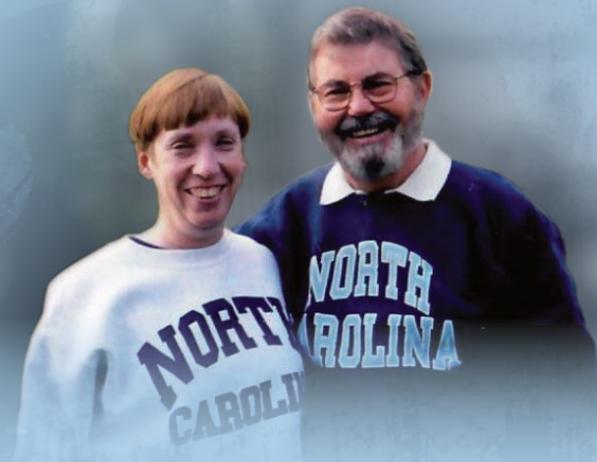
"The Vera Tayeh Innovations and Impact Award provides an opportunity for our students to think 'outside the box' in designing, implementing and evaluating direct and indirect interventions that are consistent with our mission to advance equity, transform systems, and improve lives," praised Dean Gary Bowen. "Furthermore, this fund directly supports the School's focus on innovation and social entrepreneurship as a diagonal in our community engagement work."

"I am so thankful for Vera's visionary leadership and for her confidence in our students to tackle some of society's most challenging problems."

As proposed, students will work with faculty, field supervisors, clients and community stakeholders to help design interventions using the best available science in a particular area of focus. Students can begin applying for the award next spring. A committee will select the projects and announce winners in the fall and following spring.

Tayeh, who has been employed in child welfare with Wake County Human Services for more than 20 years, is eager to see student entrepreneurial spirit in action. As someone who regularly works with families facing trauma, she understands the barriers that social workers often face to fully support those in need. She is certain Carolina's social workers in training have bright ideas to create change.

"We all know the saying, 'If not you, then who? If not now, then when?' Now is the perfect time for social workers to step up and say, 'What's the need?'" Tayeh said. "The bottom line is to make a difference and to make an impact on the community. We each are capable in some capacity to make a difference." ♦



Henry and Sandra Hobbs family commits \$1.7 million planned gift for new MSW endowed scholarship

By Susan White

For more than 65 years, Henry H. Hobbs dedicated his life to the ministry of others. His passion for service, particularly to people with mental illness, guided among other efforts his many gifts, including to the UNC School of Social Work. With a degree in English from Carolina, Hobbs loved UNC, and he and his wife Sandy generously supported the University and especially the education of social workers for the last 20 years.

Since Henry's death nearly three years ago, Sandy has considered the various ways her family might continue to support the work of the School and honor her husband's legacy. The Henry and Sandra Hobbs Endowed Scholarship Fund aims to do just that. The fund, created from a planned gift of \$1.7 million, will be used to support the tuition and fees of MSW students, especially those scholars who strengthen the social, economic, and cultural diversity of the school's student body.

Dean Gary Bowen praised the generous gift, which he said will strengthen the School's ability to recruit and provide more financial support to MSW students of color. Moreover, the funding will enable the School to educate practitioners to work with and advocate for communities that are disenfranchised, marginalized and underserved.

For Henry Hobbs, the desire to serve communities in need heavily influenced his decision to become an ordained minister, his wife said. His journey began shortly after WWII when Hobbs, a veteran with the Air Force's 104th Bomber Squadron, enrolled in Carolina

to pursue his dreams of becoming a writer.

He graduated in 1950 and, with aspirations of writing the great American novel, packed his bags for New York. However, he quickly found a higher calling after befriending members of a local clergy who were working to assist those with mental illness. At the time, New York, like many other states across the country, was closing its public mental hospitals and patients were being released without any formal plan for rehousing.

With Sandy's latest kind and generous support, the School will be in an even stronger position to educate social workers to uplift and support individuals and families through culturally sensitive, socially just, racially equitable, and anti-oppressive advocacy and practice.

– Dean Gary Bowen

"That really aroused his passion to do something about that," recalled Sandy Hobbs, who lives in Port Chester, N.Y. "Henry's heart always leaned toward doing things for others and making other people's lives better."

After graduating from Union Theological Seminary, Hobbs was

appointed an ordained United Methodist minister in the Bronx, where he and his congregation helped build a day care center that continues to serve more than 200 children today. By the late 1970s, Hobbs had moved to Port Chester, N.Y., to serve as a pastor and continue his activism, including efforts to increase affordable and equitable housing opportunities for many Black and Latino families in the community where he lived.

This work would eventually expand with Hobbs co-founding a nonprofit group that provided housing and supportive services for individuals with mental illness and the homeless. The agency continues to thrive today, serving thousands of clients in Westchester County, N.Y.

Over the years, Sandy worked closely with her husband to serve and strengthen the communities around them. They shared a love for the Tar Heels and always enjoyed visiting the Chapel Hill campus. Although neither had any direct ties to the School of Social Work, the couple followed the School's progress as a nationally recognized institution and admired its mission to graduate practitioners and researchers prepared to address intransigent social problems, Sandy said.

The family's planned gift is a way to ensure this work continues, she added.

"Henry always felt a connection to this School because the students were doing the work he was most interested in," she said. "So, we wanted to make sure that we continued to support that work for years to come." ♦

Essential workers in action

A letter from the SSW Alumni Council president

Greetings to all UNC School of Social Work alumni!

This has been an exceptionally challenging year for everyone, and social workers are fulfilling our “essential worker” status on a level that many of us may not have imagined would be possible.

More and more social workers are involved in integrated care, working within a medical or other healthcare setting. That’s true for me, too – I am the social work team lead for Duke Palliative Care. I’d like to share some of my personal experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, and hopefully some of this will resonate with you, too.

Along with others in the healthcare field, we are using telehealth and models for “virtual rounds” to connect with patients, families and colleagues. We’ve had to discover new ways to innovate our care practices. It’s definitely a challenge to create a sense of connection when technology is our means for communication, but we’re working to meet that challenge.

Our Palliative Care team is honoring the role that grief is playing in the lives of our patients, our staff and everyone in the world. (Working with grief has always been an important part of my own social work practice.) Recently, we hosted a half-day symposium on grief for clinicians. We’ve also been running professional grief conversation forums. Some of our patients and their families are struggling in this area, and it’s harder when people cannot be together as they normally would. We are providing connections to bereavement support services as one way to provide support.

Like UNC-Chapel Hill, Duke Health is increasing its focus on the well-being of its staff, whether that requires flexible staffing and scheduling plans, access to counseling and peer support groups or other needs.

We’re also taking a collective stand against systemic racism and injustice – Duke’s “Moments to Movement” initiative is a great example of this! Within our Palliative Care group, I’ve partnered with a colleague to lead weekly education and discussion groups to assess the impact of systemic racism and implicit bias on our team and on the care we provide to patients.

It’s a source of tremendous personal satisfaction to work in a profession where we can do so much to improve the lives of individuals and communities. No one in our MSW classrooms told us that this would be an easy job – in fact, every one of my professors underscored the fact that I would be challenged in new ways every day. But I developed a strong foundation of knowledge, skills and values at UNC School of Social Work that have been an asset throughout my career.

On behalf of everyone on our Alumni Council, thank you for all that you do as an essential worker. I’m looking forward to seeing you at School events in the future!

Best wishes,

Kristen Register Lakis, President
UNC School of Social Work Alumni Council



One year ago, the new Tiny Homes Village (THV) held a groundbreaking ceremony with its partners: UNC School of Social Work, Cross Disability Services and UNC Center for Excellence in Community Mental Health.

THV is a community that will provide affordable housing and services for persons with mental illness and other health conditions living on a fixed income. The community will be based at the Farm at Penny Lane, a therapeutic farm in Chatham County, and will include 15 “tiny homes” (400 square feet each) in addition to a shared community building.

We are asking for your help to connect THV to Chatham County’s

public water system. This will ensure the community’s access to clean, sustainable water supplies. The total cost is \$400,000, which will fund 3,820 linear feet of piping and materials.

Each \$105 in donations will bring Tiny Homes Village one foot closer to its goal!

To date, donors have contributed \$117,300 to help bring water to THV. This will build 1,117 linear feet – a great start, but the project still must cover the full distance before THV can connect to public water. (If donors raise more than the amount required for this project, any additional funds will be used to construct the 15 homes in the THV community.) ♦

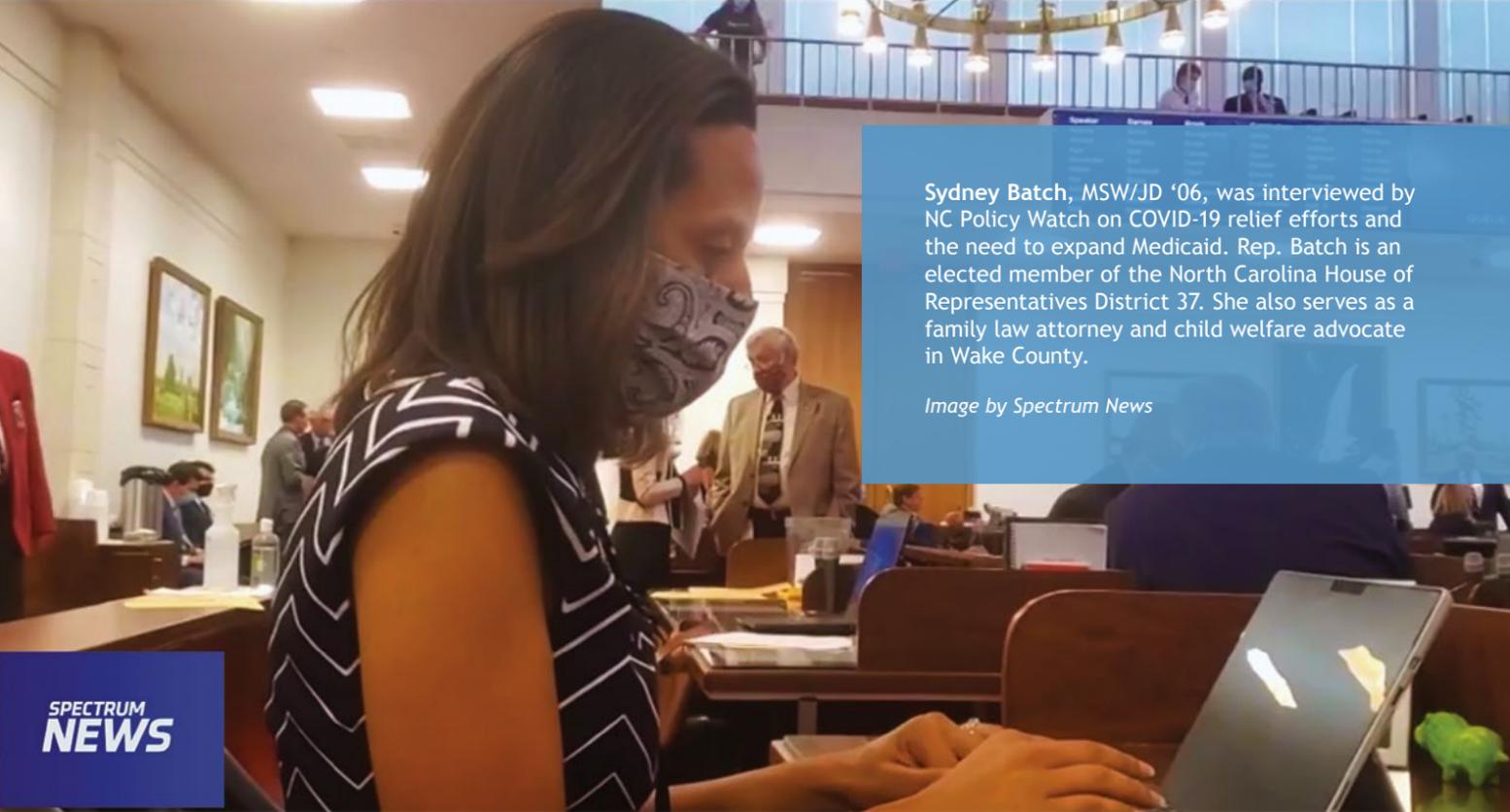
**Are you able to make a contribution?
You may donate directly online here:**

go.unc.edu/giveSSW

Please look for the “Gift Information” section on the right side of the form. You’ll see a pull-down menu for “Top Funds” – choose “Tiny Homes Water System” from that pull-down menu to be sure that your gift goes to this important project.

If you have questions about how you can help Tiny Homes Village with a gift, please contact Mary Beth Hernandez, associate dean for advancement, at marybeth@unc.edu.

Learn more about Tiny Homes Village here: <http://tinyhomes.web.unc.edu>



Sydney Batch, MSW/JD '06, was interviewed by NC Policy Watch on COVID-19 relief efforts and the need to expand Medicaid. Rep. Batch is an elected member of the North Carolina House of Representatives District 37. She also serves as a family law attorney and child welfare advocate in Wake County.

Image by Spectrum News

SPECTRUM NEWS

1960s

Robert Gribble Jr., MSW '68, a former director of Caswell County DSS with 40 years of experience in social services, died on June 7, 2020.

1970s

MaryAnne Black, MSW '70, died March 26, 2020. Black, a former Durham County commissioner, had served as a state representative of the 29th District of Durham County since 2017. She was also associate vice president of community relations for the Duke University Health System.

Dana Courtney, MSW '74, was featured in a NC-NASW online campaign celebrating Social Work Month. Courtney is a 2017 winner of the School of Social Work's Distinguished Alumni Award and a current member of the Board of Advisors.

Ruby Butler DeMesme, MSW '79, died on April 20, 2020, in Myrtle Beach, S.C. She served on the School of Social Work's Board of Advisors and was a 1997 recipient of our Distinguished Alumni Award. Last year, she was featured in UNC's "225 Years of Tar Heels" series.

1980s

Janet Ross Danforth, MSW '86, is employed with Carol Woods Retirement Community as a social worker and chaplain.

Owen Gilmore, MSW '85, of New York, died on Feb. 17, 2020. Gilmore worked as a counselor for years before joining his family's furniture business.

Stephen Guthrie, MSW '80, of Richmond, Va., died on May 28, 2020.

Barry Lewis Phillips, MSW '81, of Chapel Hill died on March 15, 2020. Phillips was a

clinical social worker for the State of North Carolina for 30 years.

Mick J. Rogers, MSW '80, defended his dissertation on "Best Practices in Teaching Advanced Micro, Mezzo and Macro Advocacy Skills to MSW IIs" and earned his Ph.D. from Smith College School for Social Work.

1990s

Matt Sullivan, MSW '97, was featured in the Chapelboro.com article, "Chapel Hill Town Council Celebrates Retiring Fire Chief Matt Sullivan." Sullivan retired from the Chapel Hill Fire Department earlier this year.

Sharon Holmes Thomas, MSW '98, was featured late last year as the "Member of the Week" for the North Carolina Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. Thomas is the assistant dean of recruitment, admissions and financial aid at the UNC School of Social Work.



Mae McLendon, MSW '76, was selected as a recipient of the 30th Annual Pauli Murray Awards. The awards, given by the Orange County Human Relations Commission, recognize those who have served the community with distinction in the pursuit of equality, justice, and human rights for all residents. McLendon currently serves as coordinator of the Chapel Hill Carrboro CROP Hunger Walk.

2000s

Erin Mullins Barger, MSW '09 was selected to serve as project manager for the Public Private Partnership, Envision Athens, the community and economic development plan for Athens-Clarke County, Georgia. Barger convenes partners from multiple industries and disciplines, including a focus on citizen participation and input, to move the community forward with the stated values of unity, equity, prosperity, and compassion.

Adriane Casalotti, MSW/MPH '09, is chief of government and public affairs for the National Association of Counties. In this role, she has spoken about counties' response to the novel coronavirus in numerous media interviews, including with the New York Times, LA Times, Wall Street Journal, C-SPAN's Washington Journal and NPR Sacramento.

Johanna Greeson, Ph.D. '09, published, "Caring Adults 'R' Everywhere (C.A.R.E.)," a research-informed, social justice-oriented intervention for older youth in foster care that uses the power of connection to caring adults. The book was published by I Am My Life publishing co., which was started by Rachel Foster Stuart, Ph.D. '09.

Mia Ives-Rublee, MSW '09, was named to She The People's "20 for 2020" list (20 Women of Color in Politics to Watch in 2020). Ives-Rublee served as the North Carolina regional organizing director for Sen. Elizabeth Warren's presidential campaign and currently works as the field director for the organization Down Home NC, which is

working to strengthen democracy in small towns and communities in North Carolina.

Tim Schwantes, MSW '07, was selected as a 2020–2022 William C. Friday Fellow. The William C. Friday Fellowship for Human Relations is a competitive statewide program of the Wildacres Leadership Initiative. The fellowship honors the legacy of longtime UNC system president Bill Friday, who charged the first class of fellows in 1995 with embracing personal growth and learning in the service of all North Carolinians. A resident of Chapel Hill, Schwantes works for Healthy Places by Design, a nonprofit consulting firm that focuses on increasing access to health through the built environment.

2010s

Brittany Allen-Albright, MSW '17, published a children's book, "The Sweetest Devotion," a collection of poems from a mother to a son. Allen-Albright is a clinical social worker in Durham.

Lindsey Atkins, MSW '10, created a coloring book in English and Spanish for children who are learning to cope with coronavirus-restricted life. Atkins, who works for UNC Hospitals, was featured in the WTVD news report, "UNC social worker creates coloring book to help kids cope during COVID-19 pandemic."

Laurie Graham, Ph.D. '19, received an honorable mention for the 2020 Society for Social Work and Research (SSWR) Outstanding Social



Donald McDonald, MSW '16, was elected as a representative for Region V of the NASW National Committee on Nominations and Leadership Identification.

Work Doctoral Dissertation Award. Graham's dissertation, "What is the national burden of intimate partner violence related deaths, and how might we begin to explain their occurrence?" was selected, in part, for its contribution to knowledge in social work and social welfare.

Melinda Manning, MSW '15, published the editorial in the Raleigh News & Observer, "NC must do more to aid victims of domestic and sexual violence."

Lacy Rardin, MSW '19, was featured in a staff spotlight for the Department of Neurology at Duke University's School of Medicine. Rardin is a licensed clinical social worker associate for the movement and memory disorder teams at the Morreene Road Clinic.

Mary Shannon Thomas, MSW '10, was featured in the Lowell Massachusetts Sun newspaper article, "Lowell streamlining homeless services." Thomas, a licensed

clinical social worker, was hired as the city's director of Homeless Initiatives late last year.

Charity Watkins, Ph.D. '19, was selected as a 2020–2021 scholar for the University of Michigan's Integrative Well-Being and Inequality Training Program. The state-of-the-art, interdisciplinary methods training program prepares participating scholars to investigate the intersection of mental and physical health, with an emphasis on how this intersection relates to health disparities. The highly selective program is funded by the National Institutes of Health through the Office of Behavioral and Social Science Research and the National Center for Complementary and Integrative Health. Watkins is a tenure-track assistant professor in the Department of Social Work at North Carolina Central University.



Hortense McClinton (left) with students in the UNC School of Social Work ca. 1984. UNC School of Social Work catalog, 1984-1985.

100 YEARS of SOCIAL WORK Ready for Next

UNC School of Social Work is celebrating its centennial – 100 years since UNC-Chapel Hill offered the first courses in its new School of Public Welfare in September 1920.

“It’s important that we celebrate as an academic community – students, alumni, current and former faculty and staff, donors and friends,” said Gary Bowen, dean of the School. “This is a major milestone, not just in our School history but in our state’s history.

“We are the top-ranked school of social work in our state, the first school of social work in North Carolina and the first school to offer a doctoral degree in social work in our state,” he noted.

“The first Black faculty member at UNC and the first Black dean of a professional school at the University were both from our School.

“We have more than 5,000 alumni, and the story of social work in North Carolina has its beginnings right

here,” Bowen added. “Our School has a tremendous record of service and accomplishment. Our centennial celebration will highlight our history and look forward to our future with a ‘Ready for Next’ theme.”

A CELEBRATION SPANNING TWO YEARS

With COVID-19 restrictions still in place on campus, the School is spanning its centennial celebration over two years, September 2020–May 2022.

“We were planning centennial events throughout this academic year, but due to COVID-19, we can’t bring everyone together for an in-person celebration right now,” explained Mary Beth Hernandez, associate dean for advancement.

During the 2020-2021 academic year, all centennial celebration events will be online. In-person celebrations are planned for the 2021-2022 academic year.

During fall semester 2020, the School celebrated its legacy of service to North Carolina with a voter awareness campaign, C-SWAV (Carolina Social Workers Action for Voting), which included voter registration drives and other activities. The School also launched its new Centennial Speaker Series. Both of these initiatives are described more fully in separate articles within this issue of Contact.

As COVID-19 restrictions permit, the centennial celebration will include opportunities for School alumni to network at special continuing education events, the publication of a School history and other activities. Information on these centennial celebration events and activities will be shared on the School’s website and in social media. ♦



Florence Soltys teaching a course ca. 1989

SCHOOL LAUNCHES CENTENNIAL Speaker Series

UNC School of Social Work has introduced a new lecture series to commemorate the School’s centennial and to strengthen its focus on anti-racism.

The Centennial Speaker Series connects the School and its broader community with some of the nation’s most inspirational leaders in social justice and anti-racism. Each lecture is presented via a live Zoom broadcast, with an opportunity for questions and answers following the lecture. Students and faculty members have joined the speakers for online panel discussions and other dialogues that enhance the lecture format.

Funding for the Centennial Speaker Series has been provided by gifts from generous donors to the School. Events in this series are free and open to the public (registration is required for access).



Rev. William J. Barber II speaking with the School during a Zoom presentation on Sept. 24, 2020.

MEET OUR SPEAKERS

Three speakers have been confirmed for the series, and additional speakers will be added during spring semester 2021. Please visit the School’s website to learn more about upcoming Centennial Speaker Series events.

Rev. William J. Barber II
Sept. 24, 2020



Rev. William J. Barber II, a North Carolina native, is the inaugural speaker for the Centennial Speaker Series. As the architect of the Forward Together Moral Movement, he has led numerous Moral Monday protests. Barber is a pastor of Greenleaf Christian Church, a visiting professor at Union Theological Seminary, an author of four books and a recipient of the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship, among other awards.

Ibram X. Kendi
Oct. 28, 2020



Ibram X. Kendi is the Andrew W. Melton Professor in the Humanities at Boston University and the founding director of the BU Center for Antiracist Research. A contributing writer at The Atlantic and a CBS news correspondent, Kendi is the author of three #1 New York Times bestsellers: “How to Be an Antiracist,” “Antiracist Baby” and “Stamped: Racism, Antiracism and You.”

Eddie Glaude Jr.
Jan. 20, 2021



Eddie Glaude Jr. is the James S. McDonnell Distinguished University Professor of African American Studies at Princeton University, an author of seven books, a columnist for Time Magazine and a regular commentator for radio and TV news programs.

Dean Bowen announces transition School begins search for new dean

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Social Work is seeking a new dean after current Dean Gary L. Bowen announced his plans to return to his faculty position full time at the end of his five-year appointment in July 2021. Bowen, a Kenan Distinguished Professor, has served on the School's faculty since 1985.

UNC School of Nursing Dean Nena Peragallo Montano will chair the search. Members of the search committee represent administration and faculty across UNC-Chapel Hill, as well as the School's students and alumni:

- Travis Albritton, School of Social Work
- Lora Cohen-Vogel, School of Education
- Kimon Divaris, Adams School of Dentistry
- Elizabeth Engelhardt, College of Arts & Sciences
- Trenette Clark Goings, School of Social Work
- Charrise Hart, School of Social Work
- Mary Beth Hernandez, School of Social Work
- Adam Jacks, School of Medicine
- Kiva Jordan, School of Social Work
- Phil Kaufman, School of Social Work
- Paul Lanier, School of Social Work
- Alexandra Lightfoot, Gillings School of Global Public Health
- Melissa Villodas, School of Social Work

The position will be posted in early 2021. Bowen will continue to serve until a new dean is appointed.

Bowen has led UNC School of Social Work since 2016. Under his leadership, the School advanced from #7 to #3 in the US News & World Report national ranking of schools of social work, its highest ranking ever. In 2017, the School was ranked as the fourth most influential school of social work in the world by the Center for World University Rankings, reflecting the quality of research articles authored by its faculty and published by top-tier academic journals.

As dean, Bowen led development of a major comprehensive strategic plan for the School and helped foster new initiatives in anti-racism and social justice. He enhanced opportunities for research and innovation within the School, including the creation of the Social Innovation & Entrepreneurship Lab, the Global Social Development Innovations research center and the revitalization of the Jordan Institute for Families. He guided plans for the School's Centennial Celebration.

Throughout his term, Bowen led the School to increase its federal contracts and research funding, recruit the most diverse student body in its history and hire and retain a world-class and diverse faculty. In 2019, Bowen was named among the nation's top 50 "Most Influential Contemporary Social Work Faculty" by the Journal of Social Service Review.

"Gary has served this University for more than 35 years, and I am grateful for his energy, commitment and dedication to the School of Social Work and to Carolina," wrote Executive Vice Chancellor and Provost Robert A. Blouin in an announcement to the UNC-Chapel Hill campus community on Dec. 17, 2020. ♦

