

# Contact

School of Social Work

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

2020—2021 Issue 2



**MACRO  
PRACTICE**

New Opportunities for Impact

# Macro social work provides new career opportunities

Dear Friends,

Although clinical social work will always be a foundation for our Master of Social Work degree programs, we see more and more students choosing our Community, Management, and Policy Practice (CMPP) concentration — what we call macro social work.

These students are creating innovative career paths in nonprofit administration, government, social entrepreneurship, implementation practice, and many other fields. Through macro social work, they are exploring new frontiers in our profession and developing new, research-based solutions to address some of our most challenging problems.

I am inspired by the leadership and work of our macro graduates and by their dedication to fostering the students who follow in their footsteps. Every year, our Macro Networking Night draws many alumni to share their wisdom with our current students. Our macro graduates also serve as field instructors, providing unique workplace experiences for our students.

In this issue of Contact magazine, you'll learn more about our CMPP concentration, meet a few of our graduates in this concentration, and see how macro social work is providing new career opportunities in our profession.

On a more personal note, I want to thank our faculty, our staff, and our students for their hard work and dedication during the past year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we completed the 2020–2021 academic year almost entirely in a remote environment. This required an incredible level of effort, creativity, and patience (among other necessary traits) on the part of every person.

I am so proud of everyone's commitment. It has been a challenging year for all, but we have demonstrated our ability to adapt and innovate. Our faculty and staff will be returning to Tate-Turner-Kuralt Building on July 19, 2021, after almost 16 months of working from home, and our students will return to campus in August to begin the 2021–2022 academic year. I look forward to seeing all of you!

With warm wishes,



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



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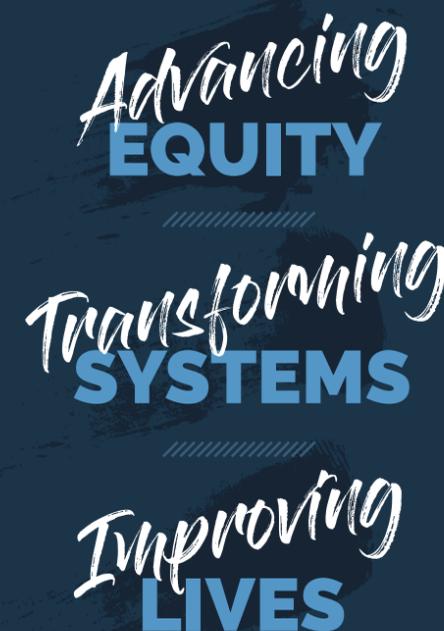


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# The macro approach

By Susan White

**O**n a muggy morning in late May, Nora Spencer (MSW '17) hovered a few feet from a miter saw as a crew of eager trainees, a few sporting overalls, heavy boots and toolbelts, waited for further instructions. Their goal: to build two massive raised garden beds for a client in Chapel Hill.

"Remember, you want to square the blade at a 90-degree angle. You want it to be level up and down," Spencer reminded the group of women, all new students enrolled in a trades training program hosted by Hope Renovations, the state's first nonprofit that equips women with the resources and skills to work in the construction industry.

Spencer launched the program in June 2020, more than two decades after leaving behind a dream job in broadcast journalism and three years after initially conceiving of the idea while earning her Master of Social Work

degree at UNC School of Social Work.

"I had become really closely acquainted with the lack of living-wage jobs for women and the fact that women are the primary low-wage earners in North Carolina," Spencer explained. "The trades are a great place for women — they pay living wages and offer an opportunity to get out of this low-wage cycle, especially for women who face so many barriers to employment.

"Historically, this industry has also been more forgiving of workers with criminal backgrounds or those in recovery," she added. "I just saw so many opportunities there that don't exist in other industries."

As a macro social worker, Spencer is trained to think about societal problems, such as poverty, from a broader systems level. Her vision — to crack a predominantly male-oriented field to create a space for women to build a career and financial stability — exemplifies the beating heart of macro practice, a discipline often misunderstood or overlooked despite the enormous opportunities to create change that benefits entire communities.

Visit any social work program across the country, and you will find classrooms filled with students interested in clinical practice and helping to address the immediate needs of children and families. This area of social work is more familiar to the public, since these students go on to careers serving in departments of social services, in schools and hospitals, and in private practice as

therapists and counselors.

Those choosing the macro path are equally interested in solving individual and family problems but from a bigger-picture perspective. Such a focus can be challenging to explain, say macro social workers who often face two primary questions: What is macro social work and what does a macro social worker do?

## DEFINING A PROFESSION

Academically, macro social work emphasizes service and action to advance core values, such as social and economic justice, human dignity, equality, and community empowerment. Through coursework, field education, and other programs, students learn theory and develop skills that prepare them for careers in community organizing, human services administration, coalition building, advocacy work, and planning and program development, among other professions.

For example, trained macro social workers play a critical role in understanding how government policies may hamper someone struggling with substance use or a mental health disorder from accessing appropriate services due to a lack of transportation, insurance, or other issues. These practitioners also explore how these same issues impact diverse communities differently, especially in social, health, and mental health outcomes. Such information can inform interventions to prevent or alleviate social problems.

In other words, macro social workers look for the barriers that keep people and communities in harm's way and work to eliminate those obstacles, explained JP Przewoznik, a UNC School of Social Work clinical assistant professor with 20 years of experience in macro social work, including community organizing, direct practice, and systems advocacy. Macro social

# to changing lives



workers are well suited for these roles because they study the relationship between individuals and their environment, Przewoznik added.

"We are one of the only domains of study that acknowledges that no person is an island unto themselves and that we are all impacted by multiple spheres of influence simultaneously," said Przewoznik, who, along with clinical associate professor Tonya Van Deirse, are among the instructors who teach macro courses in the School's Community, Management, and Policy Practice (CMPP) concentration.

Ultimately, macro social work is shorthand for examining the impact and power that systems, policies, and institutions have on people, Przewoznik and Van Deirse agreed.

"We know that we cannot venture to understand a person's lived experience without understanding all the spheres of influence that impact their behaviors, knowledge, attitudes, and beliefs," Przewoznik said. "Because we are introduced to this model really early on in our education, it informs all of the conversations that we have in social work education, so we are more than prepared to understand in the real world the relationship that, for example, rhetoric has on behavior or the relationship that policies have on mental health issues. That is why we are so well positioned to do macro work."

## A GROWING NEED TO ATTRACT STUDENTS

For a discipline focused on improving well-being for all, macro social work practice has struggled to attract the same level of attention as clinical social work. In fact, in recent years, social work scholars from Maryland to California have lamented the shortage of macro social workers. Nationally, less than 10% of MSW students are enrolled in a macro practice concentration.

Although a special commission of the Council on Social Work Education was formed several years ago and has proposed steps to raise enrollments to at least 20%, reports have shown an ongoing lack of understanding about the critical need for macro social workers. For students, there is also an uncertainty about how to leverage their macro skills in the job market.

At the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Van Deirse, Przewoznik, and other social work faculty and staff on the CMPP committee have been working to change these perceptions and increase interest in the practice by strengthening the School's macro curriculum. These improvements followed a 2018 independent assessment that found, among other concerns, that students were eager for more rigorous policy courses, Van Deirse said.

"Students also wanted additional

research and evaluation skills-based courses added, such as data analytics," said Van Deirse, a mental health researcher with experience in public policy, management, and community practice. "They wanted more community organizing classes and more content around community practice social work. The sense was,

Nora Spencer

we were heavily focused on the administration and management parts of macro social work, and we needed to balance that more with classes in community practice, policy, and research.”

Students entering the MSW program in fall 2021 will find several new or reinvented courses in the CMPP concentration, including a new community organizing class, a facilitation course, and a class on group work with a focus on task group orientation and facilitating across disciplinary meetings and coalitions.

In addition, an advanced policy practice class will focus more heavily on policy analysis and theory. The School also plans to pilot a data analytical course next year, Van Deirse added.

“Going forward, our biggest challenge is just making sure we have enough students in the program in order to offer the needed courses,” she said.

### HOPE FOR A NEW CAREER

Over the years, the School has hosted macro social work networking nights to connect students with alumni, who share their experiences and tips for finding careers in the macro field. For some, including Spencer, the path to macro was far from straight.

For as long as she could remember, Spencer had always been handy with tools and fixing things around the house; she’d even remodeled a few homes. Yet, she had never considered a career in the trades, choosing instead to earn a degree in journalism, then leaving that profession behind to work more than 20 years in corporate recruiting and human resources for Lowe’s Home Improvement, IBM, and other companies. Along the way, she discovered a new purpose in helping people explore their own career paths. Then an epiphany struck: What if she combined her workforce recruiting skills with her side passion for construction? That question would eventually lead her to UNC-Chapel Hill and the macro social work program.

“I just remember thinking how so many of the men who were contractors that I met always thought it was such an enigma that there was a woman who was doing this kind of stuff, and it would bug the hell out of me,” she said.

“All I could think was this is a good job; you’re making good money. Clearly it’s a great career path, so why aren’t more women doing this?”

After enrolling in the School’s MSW program, Spencer continued to focus on her entrepreneurial idea for a trades program to empower women who were underemployed. During her last semester and in a course that focused on the aging community, she hit on the final piece of the puzzle. She would create a nonprofit that trained women for construction, coupled with a program offering small and mid-sized home repairs to seniors, helping to ensure they could age safely in place. Hope Renovations was born.

Since June 2020, the nonprofit has hired seven additional members for its training and operations teams and construction crew. Four of the 11 total employees are social workers, and Spencer is now a licensed general contractor.

To date, 25 women have completed the organization’s 10-week trades training, which teaches core skills in construction math, carpentry, electrical, plumbing, HVAC, painting and finishing, tiling, and drywall. Participants are also connected to resources and support to help them overcome barriers to employment, including career coaching and development, resume building skills, and job placement assistance.

Through the organization’s work with home repairs for seniors and other construction jobs, students receive significant on-the-job training.

“The goal is for each graduate to land a job or apprenticeship in the trades, so they can earn living wages and better support themselves and their families,” Spencer said, noting that construction jobs in the Triangle area start at around \$17 an hour. “It’s not just about gaining job skills. It’s about addressing social, financial, and health challenges, so women can keep those great jobs once they get there.”

Moreover, the program provides an affordable and needed service for seniors, especially for those living alone and with limited access to resources. Often, social workers on the crew help to identify other potential problems in the home and work to connect residents with support. In one case, the crew was hired to repair the house of a

resident, only to find huge holes in her floor and a severe plumbing leak. The resident lived with her brother, who had mental health issues.

“We built trust with her, talked to her about what supports she currently had, asked her what she needed, and made some referrals for her, because she didn’t have anybody in her life to help her figure these things out,” Spencer said.

“And that’s what you get when you have social worker construction workers. It’s not just about fixing a floor or a plumbing leak. It’s about helping them solve other problems in their lives.”

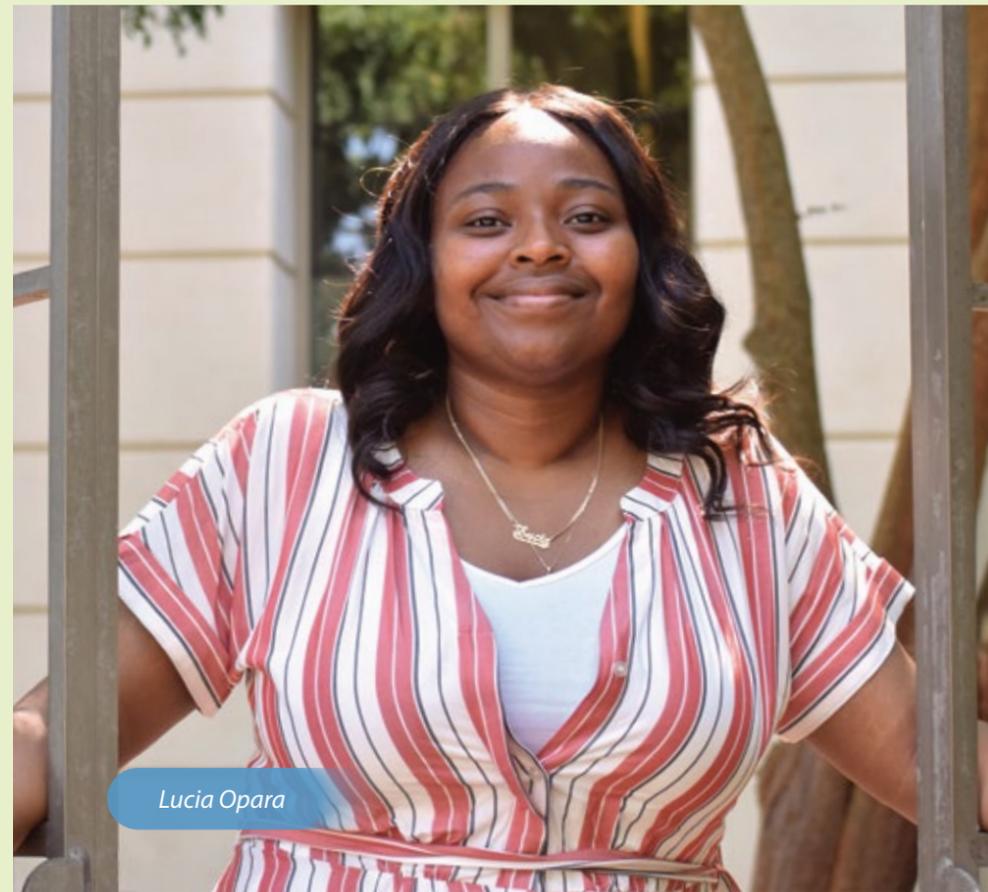
### STUDENTS PURSUE HIGH IMPACT CAREERS

That kind of big-picture thinking is what attracted Lucia Opara, Blaise Drew-Davi, and Nina Tracy, all recent MSW graduates, to the School’s macro social work program. As students, each had ambitions — respectively, for creating a better life for immigrants and refugees, for improving labor rights or removing barriers for the LGBTQ+ community, and for further supporting and uplifting children and families to prevent child abuse and neglect.

“Being an immigrant from Nigeria and seeing what that was like transitioning into the United States really shaped my interest,” said Opara, who dreams of working for USAID, which provides foreign aid and development assistance to countries all over the world.

During her first year in the MSW program, Opara interned with the Refugee Mental Health and Wellness Initiative, a School program that promotes equitable access to mental health services for refugees resettled in North Carolina. Through her work, Opara quickly identified disparities in opportunities and services that were provided for clients who were refugees versus clients who were considered immigrants.

“It was eye-opening for me to see what’s available and what isn’t available, especially in other countries, and what’s taken into consideration and what isn’t,” Opara continued. “I was also struck by this belief regarding the resiliency of refugees and treating that as a protective factor. Yes, I know



Lucia Opara



Blaise Drew-Davi



Nina Tracy

they can figure their new lives out, but wouldn’t it be nice if there was one less hurdle for them? I would love to bring about some change around resettlement policies and accessibility to programs and initiatives to help these populations acclimate more easily.”

Drew-Davi’s personal experiences, especially as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, also influenced their decision to pursue a macro career. Over the years, Drew-Davi has worked closely with those impacted by the HIV epidemic, people struggling with substance use, and most recently with workers fighting for fairer labor opportunities, through an internship with the AFL-CIO.

“Ultimately, my interests are very broad because I see how all of these issues intersect and impact people and communities,” Drew-Davi explained. “Economic justice, health justice and racial and gender justice all intersect.

“Part of the reason why I chose macro social work is because it forced me to look at structural problems and see how they can be addressed by changing laws, policies, hearts, and minds,” they continued. “Macro social work helps me to see that big change is possible.”

Macro social workers are also critical for ensuring that policies that affect low wealth communities are not decided in a vacuum, Tracy said: “We’re the ones asking the questions about who needs to be at the table. We want to know what do we need to do to bring in more folks whose voices need to be heard.”

Most recently, Tracy trained her macro lens on several projects while interning with the nonprofit Prevent Child Abuse North Carolina (PCANC). The organization, which has been especially interested in strengthening the state’s maltreatment prevention focus, has been exploring paid leave and how public and employer support for such a benefit could potentially decrease child maltreatment rates. After all, parents should not have to worry about losing a job or a paycheck if they need to take time off to care for a sick child, she explained.

“What I’m talking about are policies that can lead to more equitable lives for families,” said Tracy, who was recently hired as a policy analyst for PCANC.

“It’s about no longer being complacent with a child welfare system that has a very long history of treating Black and indigenous families poorly.

“But that means reimagining the system and what does it look like to help families thrive by offering preventative programs and services, such as paid family leave. I’m talking about giving families what they need, instead of coming in later in a punitive way.”

#### MAKING LIFE BETTER FOR OTHERS

Many of the systemic issues that macro social workers are eager to tackle today, such as the prevention of homelessness and increasing affordable housing, are the same problems social workers have been fighting to address for years, said Daniel Brezenoff (MSW ’00).

In addition to serving in private practice as a psychiatric and clinical social worker in Long Beach, Calif., Brezenoff has worked for years with Robert Garcia, a former city council member and current Long Beach mayor, advocating for better programs and services to address mental health, housing, and environmental issues.

Brezenoff is particularly proud of the work the city, county, and state have done to turn motels and hotels, which have long served as de facto shelters for the homeless, into supportive transitional housing. The new housing model offers residents access to health and mental health services, meals, security, and case management, along with other supportive services.

“That took about 10 years to get from idea to implementation,” Brezenoff said. “That’s why social workers going into macro practice have to understand patience — because some issues are really complicated, and it will take some time to get these things done in the real world and not get burned out along the way.”

Building direct relationships with communities impacted by the problems macro social workers want to solve is also key, said Mia Ives-Rublee (MSW ’09). A long-time civil rights activist, Ives-Rublee has spent years helping people with disabilities find work and independence within their communities and in helping to dismantle the systems that continue to

impede their lives.

The founder and former coordinator of the national Women’s March Disability Caucus, Ives-Rublee currently serves as director of the Disability Justice Initiative for the Washington, D.C.-based Center for American Progress, an independent nonpartisan policy institute. The initiative promotes and

advocates for policies that support and empower people with disabilities, helping them to lift themselves out of poverty.

“The initiative works with politicians on [Capitol Hill] and organizations across the political and civil rights movement landscape and pushes them to talk about disability differently,” said Ives-Rublee, who recently met with Vice President Kamala Harris to discuss issues related to race, disabilities, and the LGBTQ community.

“We want to shift disability policy from the caring model, as in, ‘We have to take care of you,’ to a more justice model, as in, ‘We, as disabled people, want to have the self-determination and resources to build more inclusive and interdependent communities that ensure justice and equity for all.’”

As someone with multiple identities — she is Korean American and a

transracial adoptee who was born with osteogenesis imperfecta, commonly known as brittle bone disease — Ives-Rublee often shares her personal experiences with discrimination to connect with communities around big policy ideas. As a macro social worker, she also understands the value of listening and learning from people outside of her network.

**“Particularly if you are going into a community you do not belong to, it’s important to take your feelings, your emotions, and your ego, and throw it all out the window.”**

— *Mia Ives-Rublee*



Mia Ives-Rublee



Daniel Brezenoff (left)

“One of the best things I learned in school was how to be an active listener and how to remove some of my own biases and emotions from some of my work so that I can better understand where the issues are and how to advocate and uplift the voices that need to be heard.”

Given the rise of major movements over the past five to 10 years, including Black Lives Matter and immigrant justice organizations, there is hope that more social work students will gravitate to macro practice.

Spencer certainly hopes so, and Hope

Renovations may help in that effort. In just one year, her nonprofit has grabbed national headlines, including feature coverage on the CBS This Morning show. The Hope Renovations crew is already booked through the fall with projects, giving trainees more opportunities to discover rewarding careers with family-sustaining wages.

“This is what macro social workers bring to the table,” Spencer said. “We help people navigate systems and remove multiple barriers and help them figure out what’s needed to make their lives better.

“I’m proud of the work we’re doing because it is changing lives.” ■

## Macro Night: A School Tradition

Each spring, macro social work professionals (including many School alumni) join current macro students for Macro Night — an event designed to help students in the Community, Management, and Policy Practice (CMPP) concentration learn about career paths, build connections in the field, and engage with alumni. (A similar event is available for students in the Direct Practice concentration.)

Macro Night is usually held at a local agency or venue with macro connections, beginning with a social hour and continuing with presentations and break-out discussions. Following pandemic restrictions, Macro Night was hosted on Zoom this year, with about 50 participants.



Area macro social work professionals discussed job opportunities within the field, from policy development to organizational leadership.

Monica Kearney, executive director of Franklin County’s Safe Space program, described macro social work as “sharing a light on issues ... social problems, social ills ... that most people don’t see.” She leads efforts to reduce relationship violence and sexual assault, with Safe Space offering a home for women and a thrift shop to raise funds for the organization’s expenses.

“I remember when I was in your shoes, thinking, ‘What’s next?’ and ‘Where are my gifts best suited?’” Mitzzy González told students in a break-out group. A 2015 MSW graduate, González is a program manager for the Association of Public & Land-Grant Universities, working with urban-serving universities.

Macro social workers may need to be creative in their career paths, added Nora Spencer (MSW ’17), founder of

Hope Renovations: “I couldn’t find the job I wanted, so I decided to make it.”

Students shared their experiences, too. Chase Ijams, who enrolled in the School’s MSW program after completing a two-year Peace Corps assignment in Vanuatu, helped lead a youth camp and improve a school library. “[Communities served] aren’t necessarily going to be expecting a social worker,” Ijams said.

Although some parts of Macro Night are structured, there’s plenty of time for informal networking, too.

“Even those of us who have graduated and are here to support students can find awesome connections,” observed LaKeshia Jones Foushee (MSW ’12), who is managing director of operations for the education nonprofit City Year.

Macro Night is coordinated by the School’s CMPP committee in collaboration with the School’s Social Work Student Organization (SoWoSO) macro caucus.

### CURIOUS ABOUT MACRO NIGHT?

You can watch a video from Macro Night 2020 on our School’s Facebook channel: [go.unc.edu/Macro-Night-2020](https://go.unc.edu/Macro-Night-2020)



# Faculty, staff, and student updates and awards

**Travis Albritton**, associate dean for diversity, equity, and inclusion, was invited to become a faculty affiliate to the UNC College of Arts & Sciences Program on Public Discourse.

**Din Chen**, professor, authored a new textbook, *Statistical Regression Modeling with R – Longitudinal and Multilevel Modeling*, which was published by Springer.

**Trenette Clark Goings**, Sandra Reeves Spears and John B. Turner Distinguished Professor, co-authored a new book, *"African American Families: Research, Theory, and Practice,"* which captures the historical and contemporary experiences of African American people in the United States and how those experiences continue to shape contemporary African American families.

**The Jordan Institute for Families** and the School's **Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion** received the 2021 UNC Diversity Award for Intergroup Collaboration.

**LB Klein** was selected as the graduate and professional student recipient of the 2021 LGBTQI+ Advocacy Award. The award, presented by UNC's LGBT Center, recognizes contributions to or advocacy on behalf of LGBTQIA+ communities at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Klein graduated this spring from the School of Social Work's Ph.D. program.

**Lisa Lackmann**, clinical associate professor, retired from state service in February. Lackmann worked with Behavioral Health Springboard (BHS) for eight years, serving as a child mental health consultant to the N.C. Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services.

**Barbara Leach**, family support specialist and special projects coordinator with the School's Family Support Program, received the Dr. Francis Sumner Community Pillar Award from Cardinal Innovations Healthcare. Leach was recognized for her work to reduce stigma and to promote mental health for families with children who have mental health and intellectual and developmental disabilities.

**Brooke Lombardi** was named Employee of the Year by the Gender and LGBTQIA Center at Elon University, where she is an adjunct instructor in the human service studies department. Lombardi is a fourth-year Ph.D. student.

**Paul Lanier**, Wallace Kurlalt Early Career Distinguished Associate Professor, was appointed as associate director for child and family well-being with the Jordan Institute for Families (JIF). Lanier will work closely with Sarah Verbiest, JIF director and a clinical professor, to develop and lead a vision for promoting the well-being of North Carolina children and families through evidence-based practice and policy. In the new role, Lanier will also create opportunities for School faculty and students to engage with and inform the North Carolina Early Childhood Action Plan.

**Allison De Marco**, advanced research scientist with Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute and adjunct faculty at UNC School of Social Work, was chosen to serve

as faculty scholar and mentor for the Moore Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program, which is designed to help achieve diversity in academia. De Marco was also selected as a teaching fellow for the Fall 2021 Institute of African American Research's initiative for Student Learning to Advance Truth and Equity (IAAR-SLATE) and was invited to serve as a faculty affiliate to the UNC College of Arts & Sciences Program on Public Discourse.

**Amy Ramirez**, training coordinator with the Family and Children's Resource Program (FCRP), retired in January after serving adults, children, and families across North Carolina for 30 years. Ramirez began her career at Carolina in 1990 and joined FCRP several years later.

**Tina Souders**, director of the 3-Year MSW Winston-Salem program, was named UNC School of Social Work's first director of digital learning and instruction in January. In this new role, Souders will oversee the School's remote learning activities. She played a key role in helping faculty pivot to remote learning in March 2020, when the University shifted students off campus due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Sharon Holmes Thomas, Mimi Chapman, Joe Diconcilio, Wanda Reives, and Laurie Selz Campbell** were recently inducted into the "Carolina 20-Year Society" for achieving 20 years of service to the State of North Carolina.

**Sarah Verbiest**, John A. Tate Early Career Scholar for Children in Need, was promoted to clinical professor. She serves as director of the Jordan Institute for Families and as executive director of the Center for Maternal & Infant Health in UNC School of Medicine.

**Lisa de Saxe Zerden**, senior associate dean for MSW education, was awarded tenure. An associate professor, she serves as the School's director of interprofessional education and practice and is a founding member of the Office of Interprofessional Education and Practice at UNC-Chapel Hill.

## Vanessa Mitchell wins Massey Award

By Susan White

Vanessa Mitchell has been chosen to receive one of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's most prestigious awards — the C. Knox Massey Distinguished Service Award, presented to eight UNC-Chapel Hill employees this year.

Mitchell is a computer support analyst for UNC School of Social Work, where she has worked for 34 years. She has consistently been integral to the successful functioning of the School, noted Dean Gary L. Bowen.

"I cannot think of a more deserving employee for this award," Bowen said. "Vanessa is highly responsive in her support to faculty, staff and students. She is extremely proficient in her job and meets any task or request with a 'can do' attitude and a smile. She is a team player in every respect, and she contributes greatly to the sense of community in our School."

**"I have the utmost respect and appreciation for Vanessa, and I am thrilled that she is one of the recipients of this distinguished service award."**

— *Dean Gary L. Bowen*

The award was established by UNC-Chapel Hill alumnus C. Knox Massey to recognize "unusual, meritorious, or superior contributions" by University employees. The winners are selected through a campuswide nomination process. Each receives a \$10,000 stipend and an award citation.

For Mitchell, the recognition is humbling.

"Words can't explain just how appreciative and grateful I am," she said. "I give all praises to God. Having God in my life has gotten me through some of the worst times, and I am thankful for His favor for all the rewards, both great and small."

Mitchell launched her career at UNC-Chapel Hill in the early 1980s, first as a support staff member with UNC Ophthalmology before joining the anesthesiology department. A few years later, she was hired as a support staff member with UNC School of Social Work's National Child Welfare Leadership Center, a grant-funded initiative that provided training to improve child welfare programs across the country and to strengthen services for children and families.

Over the next few years, Mitchell served in various roles within the School, including as an assistant for the dean's administrative team and to faculty members, including former associate professor Audrey Johnson. For several years, Mitchell helped Johnson prepare for the "Black Experience Workshops," annual conferences hosted by the School that attracted hundreds of academic, state, and national leaders who participated in critical conversations about racism in America.

By 1993, Mitchell was juggling multiple responsibilities, serving as an assistant in student services as well as the administrative assistant for the School's newly created doctoral program. It may have been fate that she eventually joined the School's information technology team. After all, she loved tinkering with broken computers, getting the machines humming again for students and staff.

Driven by a passion for self-learning, Mitchell quickly became the troubleshooting point-person, ready to assist with any technology issue in Tate-Turner-Kuralt Building. To this day, she is often first on the scene for student-led and other School-sponsored events, ensuring microphones are working, PowerPoint presentations have been cued up, and video cameras are rolling. Over the last year, as the School shifted to remote learning and working during the pandemic, Mitchell continued to help students, faculty, and staff sort through networking and computer glitches.

Often, she anticipates needs before receiving a request for assistance, said



Vanessa Mitchell  
Photo by Jon Gardiner/UNC-Chapel Hill

Phil Kaufman, Mitchell's supervisor and director of the School's Computing and Information Technology Unit.

"That's because she works hard to develop relationships with people," he said. "She is really hands-on and will walk you through an issue and show you how to do something and make sure everything is working right."

"You don't get that level of attention everywhere, and it's something that I highly value," Kaufman added. "I also completely depend on her because she knows all the history of this building and the people in it. That knowledge is indispensable."

For students, Mitchell is "Miss Vanessa," and one of their biggest supporters. Students have found Mitchell to be a confidante, someone to whom they can voice frustrations, especially when they encounter micro aggressions and just need a quiet place to process. They often view Mitchell as a role model and as a nurturer of success. She exceeds expectations every day because she relishes in the success of others, explained Ph.D. student Annie Francis.

"Miss Vanessa is a gemstone," Francis said. "She goes above and beyond her job responsibilities to provide support and encouragement to whomever is in need. She doesn't discriminate with whom she serves. It doesn't matter if you're a first-year student or you've been here 11 years."

"You're going to get Miss Vanessa's best every day because that's just who Miss Vanessa is." ■

## Wyman named as Schweitzer Fellow

By Susan White

Kacey Wyman has been chosen as a 2021 Albert Schweitzer Fellow for North Carolina. She is a second-year student in the 3-Year MSW—Chapel Hill program at UNC School of Social Work and is one of 25 graduate students statewide to be selected for this honor.

The Schweitzer Fellowship is a one-year mentored fellowship program that

focuses on health-related community service and leadership development. Fellows are challenged to address social and environmental determinants of health, build capacity for improving the health and well-being of individuals and communities, contribute to social change, and practice culturally sensitive and compassionate care, while developing leadership skills in real-life situations.

Each fellow (or team of fellows) is required to design and carry out a health-related direct service project of 200 hours or more; prepare reports, an electronic poster, and an opinion article about the project; attend educational retreats; and complete other requirements. The fellowship also includes an intensive leadership component, with fellows working closely with community and academic mentors.

Wyman will partner with another Schweitzer Fellow, Serene Ahmad of UNC School of Medicine, in designing a project to improve the quality of life for patients with autoimmune blistering disease. This disease is characterized as a group of disorders that cause the body's immune system to attack the skin and mucous membranes, resulting in blistering lesions. Over the past

year, UNC providers saw 250 patients from across the state with this disease.

Wyman and Ahmad will develop and host a series of educational webinars to help patients better understand the disease, including potential physical changes, expectations, and treatments, as well as effects on mental health. They will develop a survey to collect feedback from patients and establish monthly peer support group meetings, where patients can connect with each other and access resources.

"Being diagnosed with a physical chronic disease can be very stressful," Wyman said. "It's something patients deal with every day, and there can be a lot of treatment fatigue and even depression and anxiety."

Wyman understands some of the challenges these patients often endure. Her mother faced similar problems after a diagnosis of Lupus, an inflammatory disease in which the immune system attacks its own tissues.

**"This issue is personal for me because of the struggles and barriers my own mom experienced. Although a team of doctors were fully dedicated to her well-being, a mental health professional wasn't always included with this team."**

— *Kacey Wyman*

"In our project, we hope to encourage an integrative approach where physical health and mental health are both addressed ... we want to focus on the big picture."

Wyman and Ahmad plan to enroll at least 50 individuals from UNC Autoimmune Specialty Clinics and will begin recruiting participants later this year. ■



# SSW faculty receive \$6.52 million in awards

By Susan White

UNC School of Social Work faculty have secured millions of dollars in federal grant funding to improve the health and mental health of children and families. This funding includes three recently announced projects totaling \$6.52 million.

## ADOLESCENT HEALTH IN AFRICA

Joy Noel Baumgartner, a Wallace Kuralt Early Career Distinguished Scholar working with research collaborators from Muhimbili

University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS) in Tanzania, was awarded a \$3.1 million R01 grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The team will conduct a five-year study encouraging long-term better health for adolescents in sub-Saharan Africa. Researchers will work closely with schools to bring every young adolescent (around age 13, enrolled in the final year of primary school) into health clinics. This will allow health care professionals to assess each child's overall health and to provide

information on reproductive health and HIV testing.

"Very few [adolescents] will probably even need the services now, but the hope is that they will have had a positive experience in the clinic and come back in the next couple of years when they may actually need services," Baumgartner said.

## PRIMECARE4YOUTH

Lisa de Saxe Zerden, associate dean for MSW education, and colleagues at UNC School

of Education and UNC School of Medicine's allied health services department were awarded a \$1.92 million federal grant to expand support and resources to address behavioral healthcare needs of youth and their families.

The four-year grant, awarded from the U.S. Health Services and Resources Administration, will fund UNC-PrimeCare4Youth, an initiative that builds off Zerden's successful work with UNC-PrimeCare, which has already trained 245 students over the past seven years. The new initiative will train 116 master's-level students in social work, school counseling, and professional counseling programs to work in integrated health care settings. The students will also complete field placements and receive \$10,000 stipends.

"Given our previous success with PrimeCare in traditional health and substance use focused agencies, we are delighted to expand this work and integrated services into new organizations, such as those that support families, child welfare, schools, and so many others," said Zerden. "Addressing our state's behavioral health care needs requires interventions that span professional boundaries."

## EMOTIONAL HEALTH FOR LGBTQ+ YOUTH

Will Hall leads a team of researchers that has received a \$1.5 million RO1 NIH grant to study the emotional experiences that sexual minority youth encounter during the development of their sexual identities. More than half of LGBTQ youth struggle with depression; 40% or more have suicidal thoughts. The researchers want to learn more about the strategies that sexual minority youth may use to cope. Their work could lead to new resources and interventions to assist mental health professionals who work with LGBTQ youth.

"I want practitioners to be able to recommend resources that are helpful and that have shown with evidence to make a positive difference," Hall said. "I want them to be able to identify the kinds of situations or events that are often red flags for mental health distress so that we can intervene earlier." ■



# School launches "Research Review"

UNC School of Social Work launched a new publication in spring 2021 to highlight research and scholarly activities by its faculty.

"Research Review: Publications and Grants" includes a comprehensive list of journal articles, reports, books, and externally-funded research projects from the School's faculty, spanning the two-year period from January 2019 through December 2020. The review will continue as an annual publication.

## YOU CAN EXPLORE "RESEARCH REVIEW" ON THE SCHOOL'S WEBSITE:

[go.unc.edu/SSW-Research-Review-2019-2020](https://go.unc.edu/SSW-Research-Review-2019-2020)

Rebecca Macy, associate dean for research and faculty development and L. Richardson Preyer Distinguished Chair for Strengthening Families, worked closely with academic editor Jordan Wingate and the School's communications team to develop the new publication. Graphic designer Rich Stewart created the format, which includes an index of contributing faculty as well as clickable links to journal articles.

"[The Research Review] showcases the expertise and cutting-edge research of our faculty," noted Dean Gary Bowen, adding that the publication highlighted individual and collective scholarly work that advanced the School's mission, vision, and values.

"It's exciting to see the many unique and interconnected research agendas that coexist together in our School," added Macy, who serves as editor in chief of the review.

The School's Office of Strategic Research Priorities (OSRP) compiled information for the new publication, which includes introductory letters from Bowen and Macy.

OSRP is developing an email list for social work professionals, educators, funders, and others who want to receive research updates from the School.

## YOU CAN SUBSCRIBE TO THESE UPDATES HERE:

[go.unc.edu/SSW-research-subscription](https://go.unc.edu/SSW-research-subscription)

# Metz to join SSW faculty, establish new implementation science program

Allison Metz, Ph.D., has joined the UNC School of Social Work faculty as Professor of Practice. She will also serve as director of implementation practice, a new position at the School.

“Implementation science is front and center in the translation of knowledge into action, and Dr. Allison Metz is one of the leading experts in the world on implementation science,” noted Dean Gary Bowen.

“Dr. Metz will work to establish UNC School of Social Work as a nationally recognized hub on implementation practice and equity,” he added. “[She] is a logical and natural selection for the position.”

As part of her work, Metz will create an online certificate program in implementation practice and equity at the School, the first such certificate offered by any school of social work in the United States. She will also direct a new implementation practice group within UNC School of Social Work, develop graduate coursework, and serve as a mentor for early career investigators and Ph.D. students.

Previously, Metz served as a senior research scientist at the Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG), where she led the implementation division and directed the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN). She will remain at FPG as a faculty fellow and maintain her affiliation with NIRN.

Metz has also taught in the internationally accredited Master of Science and certificate programs in implementation science at Trinity College Dublin (Republic of Ireland) School of Medicine.

## COMMITMENT TO IMPLEMENTATION SCIENCE

Implementation science helps to ensure that research discoveries are applied to real-world situations. However, because few social work practitioners have been trained to translate and implement the research

findings published in professional journals, these practitioners may not be able to optimize the use of evidence to improve outcomes for individuals, families, and communities.

Metz’s appointment represents a commitment by UNC School of Social Work to provide social workers with the competencies needed to implement research findings and scale innovative methodologies in their profession. This supports the School’s mission to advance equity, transform systems, and improve lives, Bowen emphasized.

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**“Implementation scientists must work with all communities and embrace the diverse experiences that both drive and shape implementation efforts. This requires an explicit commitment to equity ... [including attention to] the culture, history, values, needs, and assets of the community.”**

— *Dean Gary Bowen*

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“Dr. Metz is partnered with the Annie E. Casey Foundation, William T. Grant Foundation, and leading implementation researchers to develop a call to action for using implementation science to advance equity,” Bowen explained.

## RESEARCH IN THE FIELD

Metz will maintain an active program of scholarship and funded research.

She currently serves as the lead project investigator on four research projects, and her work was recently highlighted by the Centers for Disease Control and the National Institutes of Health in workshops for practitioners.

Between 2009 and 2020, Metz was

awarded more than \$14 million in external funding for research projects at UNC-Chapel Hill.

## COLLABORATIONS AT THE UNIVERSITY

Metz has collaborated with UNC School of Social Work faculty on implementation science projects since 2018. She developed and co-chaired UNC-Chapel Hill’s Summer Institute on Implementation Science in partnership with the School’s Jordan Institute for Families. The institute is now in its fourth year, moving to a virtual format in 2020 to accommodate COVID-19 restrictions.

She has also provided implementation support for community-based projects. Currently, she is working with social work faculty Kirsten Kainz and Todd Jensen on “Ready for School, Ready for Life,” a project in Guilford County.

Metz has participated in the Wicked Problems in Child Welfare Institute, led by the School’s Child Welfare Learning Lab, and served on a School committee to explore offering a Doctorate in Social Work (DSW) degree.

“I have been impressed by how well Dr. Metz’s talents and commitments align with the School’s strategic mission,” Bowen said. “Her career began with supporting child welfare systems, [implementing] evidence-informed programs and practices to improve child well-being.

“Over the last decade, she has expanded her efforts to integrate methods and approaches from implementation science, co-creation and co-production, developmental evaluation, and coaching and group dynamics.” ■



Allison Metz, Ph.D.



## Learn about implementation science

The UNC Institute on Implementation Science is a collaborative initiative of the National Implementation Research Network (NIRN), Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute (FPG), and UNC School of Social Work’s Jordan Institute for Families (JIF).

The Institute offers plenary and breakout sessions designed to help social workers, health professionals, and implementation practitioners identify strategies for implementing practices and innovations based on and informed by evidence. Advancing equity is a focus of discussion in these sessions.

Founded in 2018 as a two-day summer event, the Institute expanded in 2019 with a third day of workshops. Although there was no on-site event during the 2020–2021 academic year due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Institute evolved with a series of virtual events, including a one-day summer session followed by webinars in November, December, January, and April.

## RECORDINGS AND OTHER RESOURCES

Assets from these events are available on the JIF website, [jordaninstituteforfamilies.org](http://jordaninstituteforfamilies.org) — hover on the “Learn & Act” heading to find a pull-down menu with access to Institute materials.

# Carl and Susan Baumann commit \$1.6 million for new student scholarship

By Susan White



Carl and Susan Baumann have long believed in steering their philanthropic efforts toward people who are working to strengthen communities and advance social justice. With their latest gift to UNC School of Social Work, the Baumanns hope to generate more opportunities for social work students eager to pursue the same mission.

The couple recently committed \$1.6 million to create the Carl A. and Susan H. Baumann Macro Student Opportunity Scholarship Fund — one of the largest scholarship gifts the School has ever received. When fully endowed, the combination cash and planned gift will provide an estimated \$80,000 annually to support social work students pursuing careers in community, management, and policy practice.

Carl Baumann, who serves on the School's Board of Advisors, said the donation is the couple's way of improving access to higher education, particular to students who are passionate about changing policies and systems that broadly affect people who are marginalized.

"For several years now, we've been working on ways to give back," Baumann said. "Our focus has been on education, because we feel and believe that education is the key to everything, including growth opportunities for people and personal well-being, and raising people out of poverty, all of which leads to a stronger democracy.

"This is just one of the ways we can move social justice forward," he added.

Through his role as a volunteer with SCORE, a nonprofit that provides mentors for small businesses, Baumann

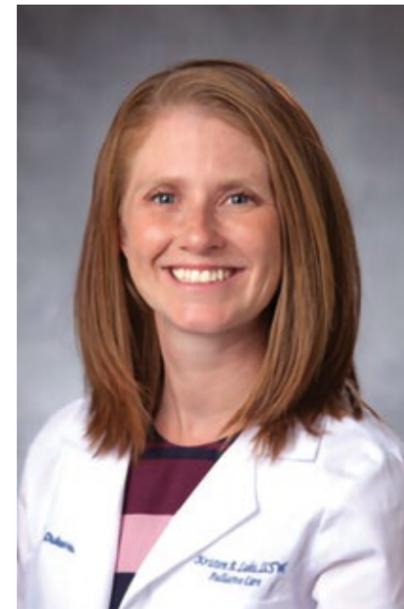
has also advised UNC students interested in starting nonprofits and social enterprises.

**"We both feel so strongly about what these social work students are doing. By helping the macro students, we're also helping the communities and families they're trying to raise up through policy and organizational change."**

— *Carl Baumann*

"That's really important to us, and this is our way of giving back and supporting these students." ■

## Letter from the alumni president



Greetings to our SSW alumni family!

It's my hope that you and your loved ones have emerged from the worst days of the pandemic in good health and good spirits. As social workers, we know that there have been many repercussions from COVID-19, including acute and "long-haul" symptoms, isolation, learning challenges, loss of earnings, and loss of life.

Our knowledge and skills are valuable to our communities as we enter this recovery period. I hope that you are able to take advantage of our School's continuing education programs as you serve your community. Although you may not be able to return to Chapel Hill right now, you may want to explore the School's self-paced webinars for continuing education. Find them online: [cls.unc.edu/webinars](https://cls.unc.edu/webinars).

Of course, COVID-19 is not the only challenge we are facing in our society. This is truly a time of reckoning for social justice in America — a core value for us as social workers.

Our School has taken a close look at our own practices and recognized that there are many times in our history when we have fallen short. Our administration, faculty, staff, and students are working together to bring social justice — particularly racial equity — to the forefront of our conversations, our behaviors and our commitments. As an alumnus of UNC School of Social Work, I invite you to join these efforts and put social justice at the forefront of your work.

In so many different ways, we are rebuilding our world right now. This is where social workers excel, and we do this through collaborative work. I encourage you to become active in our Alumni Association to keep our collaborations strong!

Best wishes,

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

## Alumni, do you have news to share?

Email updates to [unc.ssw.communications@unc.edu](mailto:unc.ssw.communications@unc.edu) for use in Contact or the School's monthly newsletter.

### 1950s

**Alice Albert Nelson** (MSW '59) of Roanoke, Va., died on Jan. 21. Nelson served as a case worker with the Children's Home Society, as an associate professor at Hollins College, and as a foundation director before her retirement.

### 1960s

**Martha Summers Satterwhite** (MSW '67) died last summer. Satterwhite worked in psychiatric and family social work and was living in Houston, Tex., at the time of her death.

**Don Watson** (MSW '66) of Tarboro, N.C., died on Dec 16, 2020. Before retiring, Watson worked for the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, where he advocated for underserved women and children.

**Janice Gross Wells** (MSW '69) died on Dec. 30, 2020. Wells served as director of the MSW program at North Carolina State University.

**Edith Mayfield Wiggins** (MSW '64) died on April 4, 2021. Wiggins was the first Black vice chancellor at UNC-Chapel Hill, where she also served as dean of student affairs and as director of Campus Y.

### 1970s

**Rufus Agnew** (MSW '70) died on Sept. 26, 2020. Agnew pursued a career in nonprofit administration with United Way and Community Chest organizations in New York before retiring to Florida.

The work of the late **MaryAnn Black** (MSW '70) was featured in a documentary produced by WRAL-TV. Black, who died on March 26, 2020, served in the N.C. House of Representatives and as a social worker.

**William "Bill" Crawford** (MSW '77) published his fourth book, "Crawdaddy Chases The Money Shot," a collection of photography that celebrates the quirky and sometimes unnoticed things that you might see on a road trip. Crawford has been capturing notable images since his days as a combat photojournalist in Vietnam.

**Suzanne Gray** (MSW '77) was tapped for a second time to serve as interim director of Greene County Department of Social Services.

**Artie McKesson Logan** (MSW '74) was featured in the article "Social worker, psychotherapist helps underserved populations" in the Morganton News Herald. Logan is the first and only female African American elected to the Burke County Board of Education. She has also served on nearly a dozen community boards helping to address concerns including alcoholism, safe schools, and economic development.

**Karen McCoy** (MSW '77) died on Dec. 29, 2020. McCoy's career included nearly 20 years serving Native American veterans through her work with the Veterans Administration.

**Karen Smith** (MSW '76) died on July 14, 2020. Smith served as director of the Davie County Department of Social Services and retired after a 38-year career in social work.

**Carolyn Welborn Staton** (MSW '74) died on Dec. 7, 2020, after a long illness. She spent most of her career as a clinical social worker serving veterans and their families.

**Harry Lee Wicker, Sr.** (MSW '70) of Sanford died on Oct. 19, 2020. Wicker served as a DSS director in both Harnett and Lee counties and also as a regional director for the State Commission for the Blind.

### 1980s

**Gary B. Bailey** (MSW '84) completed his Ph.D. dissertation in leadership studies at North Carolina A&T University in December 2020.

**Josephine Baker** (MSW '81) was honored by the Town of Edenton, which designated May 22, 2020, as "Josephine Baker Day." Baker was recognized for her years of work on local race relations. She founded and led a large group of Black and white citizens through her church, Edenton United Methodist. Baker recently moved to Raleigh to be closer to her family.

**Linda Sharon Stephens Collins** (MSW '80) died on Oct. 7, 2020. Collins, who spent her entire adult life as a counselor, was one of the first five LCSWs in North Carolina.

**Chris Weedy** (MSW '86) died on March 10, 2021. Weedy served many different people during her life, including migrant farm workers, persons (especially children) who were HIV+ or who had AIDS, college students, incarcerated

persons on death row, and the LGBTQ+ community.

### 1990s

**Charles E. Carter Jr.** (MSW '90) was appointed to the board of trustees for the Boston-area Foundation for MetroWest. After earning his MSW, Carter completed his Ph.D. at Boston College, served as chief strategy officer for Harvard University's Center on the Developing Child and now serves as senior evidence director for Project Evident.

**Dara Garner-Edwards** (MSW '94) co-authored the article "Predictors of engagement in a pediatric weight management clinic after referral" in the journal *Childhood Obesity*. Garner-Edwards is associate director and family counselor with Brenner FIT at Wake Forest Baptist Health.

**John Carmichael Healy** (MSW '96) disappeared on July 3, 2019, while swimming near Oregon Inlet on North Carolina's Outer Banks. His family announced his obituary after an extensive search by rescue organizations.

**Scott Janssen** (MSW '93), who works as a hospice social worker, published an essay for *The Washington Post* on death and the love that connects us.

**Michelle McEntire** (MSW '98) was appointed by Gov. Roy Cooper as district court judge for N.C. Judicial District 29A, representing McDowell and Rutherford counties. McEntire fills the vacancy left by the retirement of former Judge Randy Pool. She has been a sole practitioner at McEntire Law, PLLC, since 2018 and previously worked in the District Attorney's Office for District 29A and as a clinical social worker.

**Tamika Williams** (MSW '97) joined the board of trustees for the Dave Thomas Foundation for Adoption, a national nonprofit public charity. Williams is associate director for child and family well-being at The Duke Endowment.

### 2000s

**Rochelle Bostic** (MSW '04) retired from Montgomery County Schools after more than 37 years of service with the school system.

**Tanya Smith Brice** (Ph.D. '03) has accepted a new role as vice president of education for the Council on Social Work Education.

**Leah C. Brown** (MSW '01) of Winston-Salem, N.C., died on March 23, 2021. Brown served the social work field for more than 20 years, including as a transitional supportive care navigator in population health with Wake Forest Baptist Health.

**Kathy Colville** (MSW/MSPH '05) was named CEO of the N.C. Institute of Medicine. Colville will lead the agency's work to advise state policymakers, publish state health policy research, and help to identify solutions to public health challenges.

**Chris Estes** (MSW '00) has joined the Aspen Institute as associate director of the Community Strategies Group. The organization focuses on peer-to-peer learning and rural community development efforts that address inequality, access, and racism and discrimination.

**Ebon Freeman-James** (MSW '02) was appointed by Gov. Roy Cooper to the N.C. Social Work Certification and Licensure Board. Freeman-James is a retired clinical social worker for Capital Caring who serves as a member of the UNC School



**Ryan Estes** (MSW '09) was appointed by Gov. Roy Cooper to the N.C. Commission on Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Abuse Services. The commission works to promote excellence in prevention, treatment, and rehabilitation programs for persons with mental illness, developmental disabilities, and substance use disorders. Estes is the treatment operations director for Coastal Horizons Center in Wilmington, where he focuses on program development, fiscal and policy oversight, and clinical and administrative consultation. He is also an adjunct faculty member at UNC-Wilmington in the MSW program.



**Mia Ives-Rublee** (MSW '08) was named director of the Disability Justice Initiative at the Center for American Progress in Washington, D.C. Ives-Rublee is a long-time activist for disability justice and was named one of *Glamour* magazine's "Women of the Year" in 2017 for her accomplishments.

of Social Work advisory board and the Camp Corral board of directors and as a volunteer with the Girl Scouts and Air Force Reserve.

**Bridget Mahoney** (MSW '07) recently accepted a new role as a social worker for the VA Outreach Clinic in Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands.

**Nan-Sook Park** (MSW '02, Ph.D. '04), associate professor of social work at the University of South Florida, was highlighted in the story "Meet Six Asian-American Leaders You Should Know in the Tampa Bay Area."

**Rina Vaishnav Rhyne** (MSW '06) was named

executive director of The Student Support Network in Baltimore County, Md. The network provides food, clothing, educational supplies, and other items to school children in need. Rhyne previously served as the Title IX deputy coordinator for Goucher College.

**Julie Tatko** (MSW '03) was selected as interim CEO of Family Health Care in Baldwin, Mich. Tatko is the former chief operations officer at Cherry Health in Grand Rapids. Her duties there included the administrative and operational oversight of the organization with

an emphasis on medical and behavioral health programming. Before joining Cherry Health, she was director of operations and enabling services at Michigan Primary Care Association.

## 2010s

**Allison Allen** (MSW '10) was selected Outstanding Social Worker of the Year at Duke Health.

**Kelsey Crowe** (MSW '13) was appointed by Governor Roy Cooper to serve as a 5th Congressional District representative on the N.C. Social Services Commission. Crowe works as a clinician

and clinical supervisor for Pavillon International in Mill Spring. She has also served as the chair of Pavillon's Cultural Diversity Committee, producing significant shifts in agency, culture, policy, and overall staff morale.

**Mitzy Gonzalez** (MSW '15) was named program manager for the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities and Coalition of Urban-Serving Universities. Previously, Gonzalez served as an assistant director in the Center for Higher Education Innovation and University Innovation Alliance Fellow at the University of Central Florida. Gonzalez was also

featured in an article in *Diverse Education* about her new program manager position.

**Laurie Graham** (Ph.D. '19) was awarded the 2020 New Investigator Award from the National Violent Death Reporting System. She is an assistant professor at the University of Maryland School of Social Work.

**Courtney Hereford** (MSW/ MPH '16) was named as executive director of the Center for Rural and Community Health at the West Virginia School for Osteopathic Medicine. She has been a researcher at the center since 2017.

**Brittany Hunt** (MSW '14) was a featured speaker for Muhlenberg College's fall series "From the Ashes of Relentless Racial Crises amid COVID-19: Creating a New United States of America." Hunt's presentation focused on Indigenous and Native American communities.

**Scott Kixmiller** (MSW '10) is a licensed clinical social worker, licensed clinical addictions specialist, and certified clinical supervisor at Saved Health in High Point, N.C. For the last seven years, Kixmiller has been involved in a hepatitis C patient engagement group (HCV-PEG) with the UNC hepatology department. He recently co-authored an article with colleagues on "Experiences of an HCV patient engagement group: A seven-year journey" in the journal *Research Involvement and Engagement*.

**Donald McDonald** (MSW '16) was elected to the National Committee on Nominations and Leadership Identification for Region V of the National Association of Social Workers.

**Karen Oelschlaeger** (MSW '14) of Montpelier, Vt., died on April 19, 2021. Oelschlaeger worked as a deputy state's attorney prosecuting sex crimes.

**April Parker** (MSW '11), social worker and program coordinator with the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services' Central Regional Hospital, is the recipient of the 2021 John R. Larkins Award. The award recognizes commitment to justice and equality in the workplace and in the community.

**Sharon Parker** (Ph.D. '12), an associate professor and health disparities researcher at N.C. A&T University, is working with other researchers at A&T and UNC-Chapel Hill on The Healthy SISTA Project (Social Impacts on Sexual Truths And Health), studying the perspectives of Black women on health care and its relationship to sexual health. She recently appeared on the Counter-Narrative Show with colleagues to discuss the project. Parker was also interviewed by Black Doctors TV, where she provided insight and advice on managing self-care and maintaining a healthy mental state while supporting others and dealing with the challenges of racism and COVID-19 in the Black community.

**Morgan Forrester Ray** (MSW '15) was selected as one of 16 early childhood leaders for the premier Zero to Three 2020–22 Fellowship, which focuses on leadership development to advance equitable and positive changes in programs, systems, and policies affecting the health and well-being of babies, young children, and families.

**Yazmin Garcia Rico** (MSW '18) was appointed by Gov. Roy Cooper to North Carolina's Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental, and Health Equity Task Force. Rico was also named as director of Latinx/Hispanic Policy and Strategy for the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services. Previously, she served as the healthy communities program manager for Alamance Community Medical Center.

**Nora Spencer** (MSW '17) received the Triangle Business Journal's 2021 Women in Business Award. Spencer is the founder of Hope Renovations, a nonprofit that trains underemployed women for a career in the skilled trades. Spencer was also featured on CBS This Morning and in the Raleigh News and Observer article "Skilled trades are in high demand: A new Orange County program trains women for them."

**Jessica Lambert Ward** (MSW '12) is the director of the Carolina Collaborative for Resilience with the UNC Diversity & Inclusion Office.

**Charity Watkins** (Ph.D. '19) was highlighted on the University of Michigan's National Center for Institutional Diversity website and in social media for her research on academic achievement and educational equity for Black children from low-resourced African American families. She was also invited to speak at the Anti-Racism Virtual Summit, hosted by Social Work Helper. Watkins is a member of the Diversity Scholars Network, a scholarly community committed to advancing understandings of historical and contemporary social issues related to identity, difference, culture, representation, power, oppression, and

inequality as they occur and affect individuals, groups, communities, and institutions. She is a tenure-track assistant professor of social work at North Carolina Central University, where she is studying cardiovascular conditions in Black women following childbirth and their effects on parenting during early childhood.

**LaVoya Woods-Dionne** (MSW '19) was featured in a campus profile article published in the Carolina Alumni Review.

**Shiyu Wu** (Ph.D. '17), an assistant professor at the Arizona State University School of Social Work, co-authored "Welfare participation and depression symptoms among youth in China," which was published in *Global Social Welfare*. Wu co-authored the article with retired UNC School of Social Work professor Mark Fraser and professor Mimi Chapman.

## 2020s

**Courtney Cooper-Lewter** (MSW '20), a management analyst with the Chatham County Manager's Office, was appointed a commissioner for the State Human Resources Commission. Cooper-Lewter was nominated by the N.C. Association of County Commissioners and is one of nine members on the Commission.

**Quinny Sanchez Lopez** (MSW '20) joins Yazmin Garcia Rico as an appointee to North Carolina's Andrea Harris Social, Economic, Environmental, and Health Equity Task Force. The goal of the task force is to address the social, environmental, economic, and health disparities in communities of color that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.



**Dolores Chandler** (MSW '14) is featured in the documentary "My Name Is Pauli Murray," which recently premiered at the Sundance Film Festival. Chandler is the former coordinator of the Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice, a social worker, and an equity facilitator and trainer in Durham.

# GiveUNC contributions to support doctoral education and research

By Susan White

**U**NC School of Social Work received a historic \$92,407 in gifts from nearly 150 donors in this year's GiveUNC campaign. This financial support will be distributed to students through the Maeda and David Galinsky Scholarship Fund, which supports doctoral students at the School in their studies and research.

The fund was created in memory of Maeda Galinsky, who served on the School's faculty for more than 50 years, and her husband David, who served UNC-Chapel Hill as a psychology professor. Maeda Galinsky inspired generations of social

workers nationally as a pioneering researcher on work with groups and in intervention research. She was a huge presence in the lives of her students and her colleagues until her death on Sept. 9, 2019.

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**"The doctoral program was particularly important to Maeda ... she was instrumental in encouraging students to do their best work."**

— *Dean Gary L. Bowen*

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Dean Gary Bowen added that the fund would create the School's first fully-endowed scholarship in the doctoral program.

The fund's donors have included the Galinsky family and members of the School's Board of Advisors, who have contributed a combined \$75,000 to support doctoral education and research. UNC School of Social Work thanks each donor for supporting our students through GiveUNC! ■

