USC Upstate alumna Angie Omer ’07 takes a walk around the quad with Chancellor Brendan Kelly.
# Table of Contents

Letter From the Chancellor ............................................. 4

**INSTITUTIONAL NEWS** ........................................... 6-7

- Meet First Lady Tressa Kelly ........................................ 8

**SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY** ........................................ 12-19

- Feature: Josh Ruppel: Redefining the Teacher Scholar .............. 12
- Jack Turner: A Spring of Knowledge .................................. 18

**NURSING** .......................................................... 20-23

- A Caring Touch: Dean Katharine Gibb’s Legacy of Accomplishment ........................................ 20

**ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT** ............................................ 24-27

- Feature: Dr. Omar Figueroa Puts a Smile on Patients’ Faces ........ 24

**BUSINESS & ECONOMICS** ...................................... 28-31

- The George: Creating Leaders for S.C. Manufacturing .............. 28
- GreenHouse Fosters Startup Growth .................................... 30

**ARTS & HUMANITIES** ........................................... 32-35

- Fulbright Takes Professor to Sri Lanka ................................ 34

**EDUCATION** ..................................................... 38-41

- Renamed College Takes Holistic Approach to Teacher Education ........................................ 38
- USC Upstate Launches Call Me Mister Program ..................... 40

**LIBRARY** .......................................................... 42-43

- Dean Frieda Davison Receives National Honor for Book ............ 42

**ATHLETICS** ....................................................... 44-51

- Athletics Director Talks Success On and Off the Court .............. 44
- Feature: Coach Dave Dickerson: A “We, Not Me” Approach .......... 46

**ADVANCEMENT** ................................................ 52-61

- Stacey Mills: A Record of Service in the Community ................ 54
much we have accomplished. We are fulfilling the promise to provide transformative opportunities to the citizens of the Upstate – delivering on our strategic goals to be of service to this region by developing the talent employers need, enhancing the quality of life in Upstate South Carolina and ensuring that USC Upstate is the university of choice for our faculty, staff, students and the greater community.

In this inaugural issue of UP Magazine, you’ll read the stories of some of the people on our campus who are doing incredible work. From cancer research, to new degree programs, to athletic victories, we are making a difference. Associate Professor Josh Ruppel is doing groundbreaking work through a grant by the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Perhaps just as importantly, he is mentoring students in his lab. These students are enjoying an extraordinary college experience, learning to conduct research alongside someone whose findings may very well inform future cancer therapies.

Optimism is a choice. That’s what UP tries to capture. At USC Upstate we often say, “Up is where we live,” and we say that because this university is in a time of becoming.

As we wrap up this academic year, I am amazed and energized by how
In this issue, you’ll meet all of our very talented and dedicated deans. Earlier this year, those roles changed significantly as we announced the creation of two new colleges from one. The College of Arts and Sciences became the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, and the College of Science and Technology. Our School of Education became the School of Education, Human Performance, and Health, launching a new name and an M.Ed. program that will allow teachers in the Upstate to earn their graduate degree online. Similarly, the George Dean Johnson, Jr. College of Business and Economics launched a new master’s degree in Business Analytics in direct response to industry need. The Mary Black School of Nursing continues to deliver top-notch training and, next year, will do so under new leadership. Be sure to read the article about Dean Katharine Gibb’s inspiring career. She steps down as dean this summer having served for more than 11 years.

We’re fortunate to have many strong leaders at USC Upstate. Our Athletics Director Daniel Feig and Head Basketball Coach Dave Dickerson share what it’s like to lead our more than 250 student-athletes. Their leadership helps ensure victories in the classroom as well as against new opponents in the Big South Conference.

USC Upstate is driven by optimism. I’m excited about the future of this university and what it is evolving into for this region. Up is where we live, and I invite you to be a part of the experience as a student, employee, alum or friend of this great institution.

Best wishes,

Brendan B. Kelly, Ph.D.
Chancellor
USC Upstate is ranked No. 2 among Southern Regional Public Colleges, according to the 2019 rankings by U.S. News & World Report. Additionally, in its list of Best Regional Colleges, Upstate again landed at No. 10 among all Southern Regional Colleges, which includes private institutions as well.

“As the largest public, regional comprehensive university in Upstate South Carolina, USC Upstate plays a critical role in providing career-relevant education to the citizens of this state,” said Chancellor Brendan Kelly. “These rankings are significant recognition of our impact.”

USC Upstate is the best baccalaureate college in the Palmetto State, according to Washington Monthly magazine. USC Upstate was ranked No. 12 (out of 249) on the magazine’s list of the nation’s top undergraduate institutions. Additionally, the university was listed at No. 24 (out of 280) among colleges in the Best Bang for the Buck Southeast category.

“USC Upstate has to tell its story in as laser-focused a fashion, with as much continuity, as possible,” Kelly told an audience of students, faculty and staff. “We are in service to this region. This university is one of the great public assets of this region. Our new series of marks expresses more clearly our purpose, our place, and our culture.”

For USC Upstate, the way it tells its story has been a bit complex. As members of the University of South Carolina System, USC Upstate has an opportunity to build on the pride that people associate with the system, and in USC Upstate’s case, ensure accessibility and affordability to citizens of the region in particular.

Kelly says he’s optimistic about where the university is headed. “We have an opportunity to tell the story of this university in a new way.”

The new marks were designed by the nationally recognized firm Ologie as the foundation of the university’s visual identity system. The clean sans serif typeface is intended to be modern yet timeless, with tall, slender letterforms that feel as if they are reaching upward.

USC Upstate's new social media icon leverages “Up” marketing messaging — which is intended to reflect aspiration and the university’s collective sense of optimism.

Economic Impact

The economic impact of USC Upstate on the state of South Carolina exceeds half a billion dollars annually.
Admiral James Stavridis Promotes Importance of Diplomacy

Retired four-star U.S. Navy Admiral and author James Stavridis was the featured speaker at USC Upstate’s sixth annual Dr. John B. Edmunds, Jr. Distinguished Lecture Series this spring.

Stavridis, who was formerly the 16th supreme allied commander at NATO, spoke to his audience about challenges and solutions to global security across a variety of issues, including the rise of China, relations with Russia, the Middle East, and drug trafficking.

He said college students should pay attention to cybersecurity, think seriously about serving their country, and be resilient.

“What defines America in my view in the end is a spirit of optimism,” Stavridis said. “We have too often in our history taken counsel of our fears. But our greatest moments as Americans are when we hope, when we believe, and when we improve.”

Following his military career, Stavridis spent five years as the dean of The Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, where he also earned his Ph.D.

Hallmarks of education excellence today are as much about what students are learning outside the classroom as in it. At USC Upstate, University College works to ensure that students have opportunities to engage in many forms of experiential learning.

“Students who participate in undergraduate research, internships, or study abroad programs have more opportunity to master soft skills like critical thinking, time management and interpersonal communication,” says Dr. Kim Purdy, dean of University College, pictured right. “We’re here to help students transition in and out of college, and to get as much as possible out of their journey such that they are well prepared for their chosen careers.”

Purdy works closely with faculty and students, providing support through the Student Success Center and the Center for International Studies, among others. She recently implemented a new technology framework for tracking student success.
Meet First Lady Tressa Kelly

As USC Upstate’s first lady, Dr. Tressa Kelly has been instrumental in shaping the role. She heads up a number of initiatives on campus, hosting the university’s annual Scholars Brunch — which recognizes and honors academically talented students — athletics receptions, and a Halloween party that draws hundreds of children from the community to the Kelly home. She is involved in programs to support the beautification of campus, including Arbor Day activities, which are especially meaningful given the university’s status as a Tree Campus USA. Kelly says she particularly enjoys supporting USC Upstate athletics, as well as the university’s Commercial Music, Art and Theater programs.

“Watching students perform is thrilling,” says Kelly. “They are putting themselves out into the world and representing the university in the process. Brendan and I want to celebrate and support their work as much as possible.”

Kelly has a vested interest in community health initiatives. One that is particularly near and dear to her heart is The Period Project, through which feminine products are distributed to women and girls in need. Working closely with the university’s Office of Service Learning and Community Engagement, Kelly brought together more than 200 students for a “packing party.”

A trained doula, she is a graduate of the Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System’s Regional Fellows Leadership Program and has completed community emergency response training (CERT).

Kelly met Chancellor Brendan Kelly while competing for Eastern Michigan University in speech and debate. Much like an athletic team, they competed against universities all across the country.

Kelly teaches public speaking and English composition at Wofford College, as well as a series of online communication courses for the University of West Florida, where she has been on the faculty for 15 years.

“In all of my classes, there is an emphasis on advocacy, civic responsibility and civic engagement,” Kelly says. “Communication is the primary vehicle for getting things done.”

What do you like most about being first lady?

It is a great honor to be able to serve as USC Upstate’s first lady. This year, I have been able to fully step into the role. I love interacting with students and learning about their journey. I have the privilege of being able to help showcase their talents and skills. I also love inviting guests to campus, whether it is to celebrate Arbor Day, to participate in a community service event, to experience art and culture, or to engage in intellectual discussions with our distinguished faculty. Whatever the event, I remind people that they are always welcome.

Dr. Tressa Kelly earned a Ph.D. in communication from Wayne State University. She earned a master’s degree in communication and a bachelor’s degree in communication and theatre arts from Eastern Michigan University.
on campus. Finally, I would have to say that I love that, as first lady, I get to tell our university’s story.

Do you have a favorite student story?

I have encountered hundreds of amazing students, each of whom has their own unique story. I want to meet students where they are — to navigate with them — and help them land where they seek to go in their lives. Whether they are a high school valedictorian who has already aced the internship, a parent coming back to finish up a degree, a student-athlete who is balancing competition and education, or those who simply find college challenging in and of itself, for whatever reason, I want to give them the tools to move forward.

What do you enjoy most about living in the Upstate?

Our family is so happy to be living in the Upstate. I love the small-town feel of Spartanburg with its strong sense of becoming. Come to think about it … that is what I love about USC Upstate. Spartanburg is also a university town. When you live in a university town, there is so much more exposure to art, culture, political discussion and top-rate athletics. Additionally, I love how Spartanburg focuses heavily on community wellness. That almost always happens when a community has not only a university but excellent health services, and we have that with Spartanburg Regional Health System.

What else do you want people to know about you?

We have a Great Dane named Lucy. We walk her on campus, and I want everyone to know they shouldn’t be afraid of her and to come over and pet her. You’ll know it’s her because she wears a very large USC Upstate collar!

The Kellys have three children: Bree, Liam, and Kieran … four, if you count Lucy.

First Lady Hosts Popular Author Michel Stone

Earlier this year, First Lady Tressa Kelly and Associate Professor Araceli Hernandez-Laroche hosted an “Author Spotlight” event with award-winning author Michel Stone. A native of South Carolina and a longtime Spartanburg resident, Stone is a writer, speaker, educator, and community volunteer. In 2018 she was awarded the Patricia Winn Award for Southern Literature. Her critically-acclaimed novels, “Border Child” (Nan A. Talese/ Doubleday, 2017) and “The Iguana Tree” (Hub City Press, 2012), have been compared to the writings of John Steinbeck. Both books have been optioned for film.

“I am fortunate to have had an opportunity to get to know Michel,” said Kelly. “Her latest novel, ‘Border Child,’ is particularly relevant given today’s spotlight on immigration. Dr. Hernandez-Laroche and I wanted to bring a thoughtful discussion to campus, and Michel’s ability to humanize the stories now so familiar to us on the news provides students and community members with a unique opportunity to participate in this critical conversation.”

Kelly and Hernandez-Laroche, a recognized force on campus for cultural diversity, inclusion and equity, led a discussion with Stone about “Border Child” and the realities of the American immigration experience. The event was well attended by students, faculty and community members.

From left: Michel Stone, Tressa Kelly, Araceli Hernandez-Laroche
USC Upstate is committed to providing our students, many of whom are the first in their family to go to university, many of whom have never been out of South Carolina, much less the country, with a well-rounded education that includes international experiences and global engagement. We have a responsibility to prepare them to be productive citizens by offering academic programs that are rigorous, accessible, and career-relevant — which in the modern world must also incorporate international experiences.

- Dr. Clif Flynn, Provost
To look at the office of Dr. Josh Ruppel, associate professor of chemistry at USC Upstate, you wouldn’t guess that an award-winning cancer researcher works there. Stacks of organic chemistry books vie for space with piles of student research papers and exams, all but concealing the lofty awards on the desk beneath. The one-window room is often crowded with inquisitive students. And a curious toy shark with a laser pointer attached to its body prompts a laugh and serves as an icebreaker.

Josh – as most call him – wouldn’t have it any other way. A coordinator of the pre-health programs at USC Upstate, Ruppel is clear about his focus – it’s all about the students. It’s what drew him to Upstate in the first place.

“I knew that I wanted a balance of teaching and research at the undergraduate level. Most places seemed to offer a lot of opportunities for one area but lacked in the support of the other,” says Ruppel. “USC Upstate had the resources, facilities, and support that I was looking for to build my research program and was also focused on having a strong chemistry curriculum.”
Ruppel says he sees himself in the university’s students, many of whom are the first in their family to attend college. Others have transferred here to pursue particular areas of study that support community partnerships and feed a pipeline for post-graduation jobs. They are often eager to dive into cutting-edge research as part of their undergraduate experience. They “mimic my own background and that was something I was looking for as well,” he says.

Ruppel grew up in Indiana. His love for science was encouraged by his seventh-grade science teacher, whose support would lead to a life-changing experience. “Mrs. Seminick helped get me into a summer program that was sponsored by Eli Lilly, a pharmaceutical company headquartered in Indianapolis, and that is where I decided that I wanted to become a chemist,” Ruppel explains.

The hands-on mentoring and research opportunities Ruppel received at the program sparked his passion for teaching. He went on to pursue his own research as an undergraduate at the University of Central Florida, and received his doctorate in 2008 from the University of South Florida. After two years of teaching at Hamilton College, he joined the USC Upstate faculty.

It’s here where Ruppel began his research on the interaction of a class of new compounds with a protein associated with certain types of cancer. The research itself has tremendous potential to foster future cancer therapies, and new methods for diagnosing the disease.

Together with his collaborator, Dr. Nicole Snyder of Davidson College, Ruppel has been bringing undergraduate students into his lab to assist with the research, providing them with hands-on experience that can lead to other opportunities. Over the past five years, Ruppel has mentored 18 undergraduate students, nearly all of whom have won student research grants, including eight who received highly competitive Magellan Scholarships.

Jessica Cuadra, a senior biology major who works with Ruppel, credits her experience in Ruppel’s lab with shaping her view of science and showing her how she can make an impact. “Research is behind many things we see in daily life. I have learned that there are many choices and opportunities to help me achieve my goals and that it is not an easy path,” says Cuadra. “I knew working in Professor Ruppel’s lab was going to be challenging, but at the same time very rewarding. It was going to take a lot of hard work and perseverance. Ruppel also helped her understand failure isn’t something to be ashamed of, but part of the learning process.

“I love watching my students learn, grow, become more confident in their abilities, and following their outcomes after graduation.”

Jessica Cuadra, a senior biology major, consults with Josh Ruppel in the lab. Cuadra says Ruppel has taught her the value of persistence and to understand that failure is a natural part of the learning process.
“Professor Ruppel has taught me that if you want to achieve your goals in life, you must try hard, understand failure happens, fail, stand up again, and try again,” says Cuadra.

Ruppel’s success extends beyond the classroom, too. The National Institutes of Health has awarded him a three-year research grant totaling $400,000. His research was also instrumental in helping USC Upstate secure a grant from South Carolina INBRE — the IDeA Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence. The $500,000 award will allow the College of Science and Technology to offer a summer research program for students in 2020-2025.

Ruppel’s colleagues praise his contributions to research and teaching at the university.

“Josh exceeds expectations in all areas by which we determine success in academia — teaching excellence, productive scholarship, and meaningful service. He is the consummate ‘teacher scholar,’” says Dr. Jeannie Chapman, interim dean of the College of Science and Technology.

While Ruppel is appreciative of the professional recognition his work has received, he is perhaps most gratified by seeing his students succeed. In true scientific fashion, he keeps a running “undergraduate research table” to track former students after graduation. The list, which dates back almost a decade, is an impressive collection of chemists, pharmacists and doctors.

“My best moments are always when my students get accepted into graduate or professional school. Being a part of something that is such a defining moment in their lives is really special,” says Ruppel. “I love watching my students learn, grow, become more confident in their abilities, and following their outcomes after graduation, like getting that first job. Those moments make it worth the effort.”
As interim dean of the newly created College of Science and Technology, Dr. Jeannie Chapman has spent the past year guiding the school through its transition and preparing it for the next phase of its growth.

The college was created in July 2018 after the College of Arts and Sciences was restructured to create two separate entities. Science and Technology now houses disciplines focused on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Also part of the new college is the Department of Informatics and Engineering systems; the Division of Mathematics and Computer Science; and the Division of Natural Sciences and Engineering. All units in the college offer undergraduate research, internship and service opportunities.

The change has been a positive one, Chapman says, and will allow for more collaboration. “This provides increased visibility for the strong programming already underway in the academic units, and it provides opportunities for growth with the development of innovative cross-disciplinary initiatives.”

Those initiatives, for example, might include programs that would meld skills acquired in informatics courses with those learned in biological studies. “We see a lot of opportunity for applying data methodologies to research,” says Chapman. “We’re considering a number of ways we can work together to create cutting-edge curricula.”

Chapman, who was chair of the Division of Natural Sciences and Engineering from 2013 to 2018, says the realignment will benefit not just the 800 current STEM students, but also prospective students, faculty and community partners.

“I see this as an exciting opportunity to increase the visibility and bolster the reputations of our current programs. I see this as an exciting opportunity to increase the visibility and bolster the reputations of our current programs, to explore new and innovative programs that build on the synchronicity of the units in this college, and to establish new relationships with community and industry partners,” says Chapman.

Chapman earned her Ph.D. in cell and molecular biology from the Medical University of South Carolina. Her research centers on characterizing the molecular interactions and processes of members of the SLC26 family of anion transporters, specifically SLC26A3, which is involved in colorectal cancer.
Alumni Profile
Trey Arrington

Trey Arrington ’07 knew he wanted to work in technology when he was a student at USC Upstate. Discovering the informatics program helped him get on the right career path.

“The informatics program and the concentration in business courses really prepared me to be a CIO (chief information officer) and for what I do each day in terms of working with the president and other senior leadership, board members and community leaders,” said Arrington, vice president of operations at Spartanburg Methodist College.

In his job, Arrington handles the overall planning, organizing, and execution of all IT and systems functions on campus. That includes everything from overseeing the data center and card access system for the residence halls to campus security cameras and the interface between the food service system and student IDs.

As a member of the president’s cabinet, Arrington often meets with senior administrators to discuss technology and operations issues on campus. The Union, South Carolina, native credits his classes, particularly senior seminar, for giving him the tools to present information tailored to different audiences.

“I’m not just the IT or operations guy who talks technical lingo,” he says. “My education at USC Upstate helped me learn how my audiences think and to gear my information toward how they think.”

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

USC Upstate Earns Grant, Recognition for Research

A new $500,000 grant from the South Carolina IDEa Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence (SC INBRE) will enable USC Upstate to launch a summer program for students who wish to pursue a career in science research. Students will conduct research in the laboratory with a faculty mentor over the course of eight weeks, and attend a number of related activities, including lab meetings about ongoing research and graduate school information sessions.

“USC Upstate has a vibrant biomedical research program, spearheaded by five research-active faculty,” says Dr. Jeannie Chapman, interim dean of the College of Science and Technology. “Over the past five years, their combined research efforts have resulted in 20 peer-reviewed publications (which have included multiple undergraduate co-authors), 46 scholarly presentations, and $652,000 of internal and external funding.”

SC INBRE is funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) with the goal of increasing South Carolina’s NIH research capacity.

USC Upstate is the newest of INBRE’s Predominantly Undergraduate Institutions.
Jack Turner: A Spring of Knowledge

Dr. Jack Turner rolls his shoulders back and places his thumbs beneath the straps of his suspenders.

The director of USC Upstate’s Watershed Ecology Center (WEC) pauses for a moment. He then recalls a time in the region’s not-so-distant past when environmental education was still on the periphery.

“It just wasn’t something that was being taught,” says Turner, a native of Milner, Colorado, who moved to Spartanburg in 1974 to teach in the university’s sciences department. “I definitely saw a need for it and I wanted to do something to make the resources available, particularly for kids growing up in this area.”

By 1999, Turner had begun to formulate a plan. Two years later, he wrote a grant proposal to a state agency for funding that would allow him to move forward with programming aimed at giving younger generations a greater appreciation for the environment.

“We started in 2001 with $5,000 and one educator,” Turner says. “We contacted 3,800 students that year. In 2018, we reached 23,500 students with 56 different programs.”

According to Turner, the Watershed Ecology Center now has seven people on staff, including himself, two full-time employees, and four individuals dedicated solely to programming, as well as a budget of more than $100,000.

USC Upstate has stepped up its funding for the center throughout the years. The rest is provided by South Carolina-based utilities and some federal funds.

WEC is located in about a 300-square-foot space on the bottom floor of the Horace C. Smith Science Building. Turner remembers how the center started in a 100-square-foot unused faculty office.

Its current space is filled to the brim with a collection of educational materials, artifacts, and an assemblage of tanks and terrariums — homes for a variety of creatures, including turtles, lizards, a hermit crab, and frogs, that make regular visits to local classrooms.

While the center is nearly out of physical space, Turner says it isn’t slowing down in terms of creating new education programs at a rate of about five per year.

WEC educators conduct classroom visits throughout the school year and give about an hour-long presentation to students in first through sixth grades. WEC also offers summer camps that enable children to learn about watersheds and wildlife.

“We’re only contacting about 75 percent of the students in Spartanburg County,” Turner says. “There is tremendous room for growth.”

Turner earned his undergraduate degree in soil science from Colorado State University, a master’s in soil microbiology from South Dakota State, and a Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma.

In January, he secured approval from the U.S. Board on Geographic Names to apply the name Persimmon Creek to the previously unnamed stream that runs through the Susan Jacobs Arboretum.

The name is inspired by the persimmon tree, a native fruit-bearing species that grows along the banks of the 1.9-mile creek.

A few years ago, Turner was responsible for naming Butterfly Creek, a small spring-fed stream that flows through the city of Spartanburg’s Northside neighborhood.
Academic Outreach Camp Attracts High School Talent

USC Upstate will give 30 rising high school seniors an opportunity to apply science and math to real-world manufacturing and health care situations.

USC Upstate, in partnership with Spartanburg-based BMW Manufacturing Co., Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System, and American Credit Acceptance, will host its annual Academic Outreach Camp June 17-28 at the George Dean Johnson, Jr. College of Business and Economics in downtown Spartanburg.

Participating students will receive an introduction to a variety of manufacturing concepts used by world-class companies, such as Lean Manufacturing and Six Sigma principles, statistical process control, value stream mapping, process capability, hypothesis testing, and analysis of variance.

“We are thrilled to host the ninth annual USC Upstate Academic Outreach Camp,” says Timothy Ellis, a senior instructor and director of Engineering Technology Management and Advanced Manufacturing Management at USC Upstate. “This is an incredible opportunity for high school seniors to interact with local business experts and meet like-minded peers.”

Using catapults, toy cars, and paper helicopters, students will test various theories and learn to improve function, processes and results. Daily camp activities will include computerized challenges, physical simulations, case studies, and teaching games. Instructors will emphasize refining and improving teamwork and leadership skills. Science career day discussions will enable students to meet with professionals who use these tools and skills as part of their careers.

For information about the 2020 camp, please call 864-552-4235.
A Caring Touch:
Dean Katharine Gibb Leaves Legacy of Accomplishment at Nursing School

When she was 14 years old, Dr. Katharine Gibb walked into the hospital next to her high school and asked for a job.

She was too young, but the hospital offered to make her a volunteer. Gibb wasn’t satisfied.

“I said, I do not want to sit at the front desk and give flowers, I want to work with patients,” Gibb recalls.

Determination and persistence have been hallmarks of Gibb’s 50-year career in nursing. They led to a volunteer position as an assistant to the nursing assistant that day at the hospital, and are reflected in the many accomplishments she’s had in a profession she loves deeply.

“I just have always known I wanted to be a nurse,” she says.

As she prepares to step down as dean of the Mary Black School of Nursing, a position she’s held for the past five of her 11 years at USC Upstate, Gibb has an impressive list of achievements to look back on.

Among them: the launching of a Master of Science in Nursing degree; partnerships with local colleges to expand opportunities for student collaboration; a joint degree program with North Greenville University; new international study-travel opportunities for nursing students; and most recently a new RN to BSN online program with Bermuda College on the island of Bermuda.

“She is the type of person who, when she believes in something, nothing’s going to stop her,” says Dr. Lynette Gibson, associate dean of the nursing school’s Greenville campus.

Through her work in the community to promote the school, Gibb has also helped enhance its reputation among local health care providers. Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System is the largest employer of nursing school graduates, but former students are well-represented in other Upstate hospitals, too.

A tireless advocate for the school, Gibb has employed “kind, strong, but very wise leadership” to build positive relationships with her peers nationally and internationally, says Marianna Habisreutinger, a granddaughter of Mary Black and an advisory board member of the school.

“She kind of radiates the Mary Black School of Nursing in every pore of her body,” says Habisreutinger.

Gibb is a strong believer in collaboration, something that wasn’t always present in the medical profession when she was starting out. She recalls moving to Alabama after graduating from Boston College in 1969 and entering a
“time warp.” In Boston, she had been used to working alongside doctors. “In Alabama, the attitude was, the doctor’s in charge, you’re dumb, just do whatever I want you to do,” Gibb says.

“I didn’t fit in real well because I told them to go get their own coffee,” she says with a chuckle.

Now, Gibb says, nurses have an important voice in patient care, especially since they comprise the largest number of health care workers – 42 percent, according to a 2015 survey by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Gibb wants those voices to be diverse, too. She has actively worked to increase diversity in the student body and faculty, and to promote more underrepresented people to leadership positions at the school. For the spring semester, 33 percent of students were from underrepresented groups, and 25 percent of the faculty were people of color.

Respecting differences and caring for others are values Gibb has fostered at the school. She freely admits, “we’re very touchy feely,” but she also doesn’t tolerate any bullying or bad behavior. “I don’t play, and they know it,” she says.

But while Gibb expects professionalism from students, she also understands the challenges they can face. She is proud of the flexibility the nursing school offers students to accommodate a range of life circumstances. “We have second-career, we have single moms,” she says. “We have students that are the sole provider for the family, and they have to work.” The school tries to help all of them, she says, offering every course every semester and allowing students to go part-time if they need to.

That supportive approach extends to faculty, too, says Gibson. Gibb seeks out development opportunities for faculty and mentors them, Gibson says, but also is there for them personally. Last year, when Gibson’s father became sick and she had to miss work to fly home to care for him, Gibb immediately reassured her.

“You need to take care of your family,” Gibson says Gibb told her. “Family is first.”

Given her strong commitment to nursing, Gibb doesn’t plan to stop working just yet. “I’m not a rocking-chair, sit home and do nothing” person, she admits. She’ll spend the next year helping a new dean transition into the position, after which she’s considering doing some consulting or online teaching. She’d also like to do a little traveling with her husband, and spend more time with her grandchildren.

In the meantime, there’s still one more graduation to go through. Gibb is often good-naturedly teased about the warm hugs she gets from all her students when they walk across the stage, instead of the usual formal handshake. “Some of them have picked me up and turned me around,” says the petite dean, laughing. “But it shows I know them. And they know I care.”

When you first meet her, she’s so warm and genuine right away. It doesn’t take you long to discover her interest and passion for improving health care for all.

Cecilia Cogdell, retired faculty member and MBSON advisory board member
Alumni Profile

David Cerniski

David Cerniski ’08, MSN ’17, has dedicated his life to health care.

His interest in behavioral health has led to a wide-ranging career that’s included work in a psychiatric hospital; service in the U.S. Navy, where he was as a combat medic; nurse manager for an eating disorders program; and finally his current job in corporate health at Greenville-based Michelin North America.

“I made a deliberate choice in choosing a career where I could continue to grow and stay in health care,” says Cerniski. “I knew for me to continue with my career that I had to get my bachelor’s degree in nursing,” which he earned from USC Upstate.

After graduating in 2008, he began work at Michelin, where he is responsible for medical program consultation and oversight of all the company’s occupational health medical operations – 21,000 employees in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Cerniski said his job has allowed him to gain a whole new skill set in ergonomics, quality assurance, safety, and regulatory compliance. He also stayed connected to behavioral health by working part-time in other places.

When Cerniski learned that the Mary Black School of Nursing was offering a master’s degree in nursing with a concentration area of clinical nurse leader (CNL), he jumped at the opportunity to enhance his skills. “I’m a lifelong student, and earning my CNL was so timely before I transitioned in my position at Michelin. It was perfect timing.”

Cerniski, who is president-elect of the South Carolina State Association of Occupational Health Nurses, said CNLs are invaluable in bringing together members of a treatment team to maximize a patient’s overall health. “Facilitating communications between those entities and levels of care ensures collaboration, touch points, consistency, and overall patient health,” he says.

He also enjoys sharing what he’s learned with students. As an adjunct instructor at the Mary Black School of Nursing, he teaches courses in community health and behavioral health. “Earning the two different degrees from USC Upstate allowed me to maximize my education to be able to teach students,” he says, “and it’s a great professional opportunity, because I’m always looking at getting stronger in my teaching skills, which helps me in my job at Michelin.”

In 2018, 90.3% of graduates from the Mary Black School of Nursing passed the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX) on the first attempt, surpassing the national average of 88%.
Clinical Nurse Leader Program Expands Options for Registered Nurses

Ashley Streett ’18 was enjoying a successful nursing career at Lexington Medical Center in Columbia when she discovered that USC Upstate offers a Master of Science in nursing with a concentration area of clinical nurse leader (CNL). The Mary Black School of Nursing began offering the CNL program in 2014.

“I had worked as an ICU floor nurse and in orthopedics before taking a job in our joint and spine program,” says Streett, the outcomes coordinator for Lexington Medical Center’s total joint and spine program. She had a Bachelor of Science in Nursing from Lander University, but, she says, “I was looking for an educational opportunity that would allow me to enhance my current career.”

“Units with CNLs have been shown to have shorter length of stay and readmission rates, improvements in quality and patient safety, such as decreased fall and infection rates, and lower RN turnover,” says Dr. Katharine Gibb, dean of the Mary Black School of Nursing.
Life has come full circle for Dr. Omar Figueroa ’07.

As a pre-dental student at USC Upstate, he interned in the office of Dr. David Dedmon, learning every detail of the business. Now, Figueroa himself is running the practice – renamed Pine Street Dental – after purchasing it from Dedmon two years ago.

“Omar epitomizes what a school like USC Upstate provides, and he is the success story that all institutions hope to produce,” said Dr. Jeannie Chapman, interim dean of the College of Science and Technology at USC Upstate.

For Figueroa, a 2003 graduate of Spartanburg High School, Upstate was the perfect choice for college. His state-funded scholarships covered the full cost of tuition, and he was able to save on housing by living at home and commuting to campus.

Figueroa excelled at Upstate. He enrolled in the honors program and majored in biology, with a pre-dental focus. He also was one of 14 honors students from across the state selected for the South Carolina Washington Semester
Program, which allows college students to earn academic credit while working and taking classes in the capital.

“I benefited tremendously from my education at USC Upstate and its rigorous academic program,” says Figueroa. “Each of my experiences as an undergraduate at USC Upstate gave me a much broader perspective in how I can help people, and they prepared me to work as a dental professional, especially in terms of community education.”

Outside the classroom, he spent time helping Spartanburg’s growing Hispanic community. What initially began as summer volunteer work translating for Spanish-speaking patients in the emergency room turned into a regular weekend job at Spartanburg Regional Healthcare System.

Figueroa says working as a certified medical interpreter, first as a student, then full time after graduation, gave him a deeper understanding of a wide range of medicine, from emergency care and pediatrics to heart disease and diabetes.

“I enjoyed the whole medical field, so I figured the more exposure I had, the better,” he says.

But his commitment to dentistry never wavered. Midway through his undergraduate years, he became the first person selected for a pre-dental internship program established by Dedmon, a Spartanburg dentist who practiced for more than 30 years before his retirement.

The internship program – the first of its kind in South Carolina – allows students interested in a dentistry career to shadow area professionals and observe all facets of the job, from patient interactions and procedures, to record keeping and billing. Figueroa spent five hours a week at Dedmon’s dental practice, gaining valuable experience before he entered dental school at the Ohio State University. He graduated from there in 2015.

Figueroa stayed in touch with Dedmon after he graduated from Upstate and would drop by to say hello when he was back in Spartanburg. When Dedmon was getting ready to retire in 2017, Figueroa jumped at the chance to continue his mentor’s business.

“This unique practice was established more than 60 years ago and I am the fourth dentist to provide first-rate dental care to the patients,” he says. “It’s truly my honor and privilege.”

Chapman said Figueroa’s experience highlights the important impact career professionals can have on students. “Omar met Dr. Dedmon while he was a student and they formed a relationship that encompassed Omar working as an intern in his office,” she says. “This
ultimately led to Omar buying Dr. Dedmon’s practice. This is such a great success story.”

It also fit well with Figueroa’s personal goals. Figueroa and his wife, Andrea, a physical therapist at Spartanburg Regional, had always planned to live close to both their families in Spartanburg. The couple has been together since high school, and has two boys: Luca, who will turn 4 this year, and Myles, who will soon be 2.

“Andrea has been with me through thick and thin. She is my rock and my better half,” says Figueroa. “We could not be happier about living in Duncan Park … and exposing (our sons) to the Hispanic culture.”

Figueroa continues to give back to the community, too. He owns a second dental practice on Woodruff Road in Greenville, where many of the patients are on Medicaid.

Few dentists will take adult Medicaid patients, Figueroa explains, so the people who visit his office come from all over the state, some from as far away as North Carolina.

“We take care of many underserved patients on Woodruff Road, and I’m happy with the positive impact we are making,” he says.

Addressing people’s dental needs before they turn into serious problems and educating patients on their options is what Figueroa likes most about his job. And, he says, if he can help people make lifestyle changes that improve their dental health, that’s even better.

“I’ve had a couple situations where a patient has told me they have stopped smoking because of what I said … (and) where people stopped their soda drinking habit because of what I said,” he says. “Those are the victories that I enjoy hearing.”
Dr. Mohamed “Mo” Djerdjouri says he saw huge potential when he joined USC Upstate as dean of the George Dean Johnson, Jr. College of Business and Economics, known affectionately as “The George,” a little less than two years ago. His first priority as dean? To develop new programs to meet the Upstate’s unique demand for highly trained manufacturing professionals.

“Our new concentration in supply chain management meets the needs of the South Carolina business community, first and foremost,” says Djerdjouri. “There’s a big need, not only locally but globally, for white-collar employees in management and business analytics … We’re hopeful that this program will become one of the stars of the business program, along with business analytics.”

Djerdjouri describes the new master’s in business analytics as broader than supply chain management, because the knowledge is used by any company or corporation that works with data. And again, establishing need was relatively simple, he says.

“Unlike 10 years ago, today everyone has access to and is storing huge amounts of data on customers,” says Djerdjouri. “You can be good at collecting data in a warehouse, but if it stays there, it’s of little use. So that’s where data analytics comes in. You go inside the data, sift through it using algorithms and mathematical models, to derive information the company can use to gain a competitive advantage.”

Djerdjouri joined USC Upstate from the State University of New York at Plattsburgh, where he served as chair of the Department of Management, Information Systems and Analytics from 2007 to 2015. Previously, he was an associate professor in the School of Commerce at Laurentian University in Ontario, Canada.

Djerdjouri also worked as a senior operations research analyst for ROVER Technology Co., a leading logistics company in Philadelphia. He holds a master’s degree and a Ph.D. in operations research from Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, Ohio.

Djerdjouri will spend the next year implementing a strategic plan for the college. “Our vision,” he says, “is to become the leading business college in the region and a valued partner in the economic transformation of the Upstate. We have this opportunity to be the first in a number of areas of study … Everyone will know The George.”
Zipcar Founder Inspires Students and Upstate Business Leaders

Robin Chase, founder and former CEO of transportation ventures Zipcar, Buzzcar and GoLoco, was featured at the Johnson Innovation Speaker Series event this past fall at the George Dean Johnson, Jr. College of Business and Economics.

Chase, 60, shared the story of Zipcar, nicknamed “the Apple of car-sharing,” which was acquired in January 2013 by Avis for $500 million.

After touching on some of the highlights of Zipcar’s journey, Chase segued into a broader discussion of concepts that serve as the foundation of her 2015 nonfiction book “Peers Inc: How People and Platforms Are Inventing the Collaborative Economy and Reinventing Capitalism.”

“This really exceeded my expectations, particularly in the participation of community leaders,” said Brian Brady, an instructor and director of USC Upstate’s GreenHouse Business Incubator. “Students and key members of the community were here to hear her message and I was most impressed with the way it resonated with people across a range of industries.”

The Johnson Innovation Speaker Series aims to bring global business leaders to Spartanburg and to inspire fresh, innovative thinking among students and members of the community.
GreenHouse Fosters Startup Success

Tucked away on the top floor of the George Dean Johnson, Jr. College of Business and Economics, a small but thriving entrepreneurial community has established its roots in downtown Spartanburg.

The GreenHouse, a business incubator that gives startups space to cultivate their ideas, currently houses seven companies and The Studio, a USC Upstate student-run, in-house marketing and design agency. Two other agencies, Upstate Warrior Solution and South Carolina Community Loan Fund, have offices there, too.

The GreenHouse also provides support and mentoring, helping entrepreneurs network and connect with potential investors, and learn from faculty and business professionals during free workshops and seminars.

It’s a unique arrangement, says Brian Brady, the director of the GreenHouse, because companies can tap into the resources of the university, while students – 35 in the past three years – can gain valuable work experience.

“A lot of universities have incubators that are totally focused around students, which is great,” he explains. “Where we’re different is that we actually have outside companies that are residing here. We provide student interns to these companies.”

Fledgling companies can face a lot of challenges when they’re getting off the ground, Brady says. They need funding, networking opportunities, access to resources, and an affordable place to work. The GreenHouse helps with all those things, he says.

Brady points to events hosted by the business school, such as the Johnson Innovation Speaker Series. They are opportunities for companies to hear from and engage with prominent innovators right on site and at no cost, he notes.

Startup founders can also interact with one another, something the GreenHouse space encourages. The 20,000-square-foot area has an open floor plan to invite collaboration. While the concrete floor, steel beams and network of exposed ducts give the space an industrial look, small banners hanging above each startup’s area add a personal feel. There’s even a table with fresh-brewed coffee from Spartanburg’s Little River Roasting Co.

Outside the building, the Spartanburg community has been very supportive of startup activity, Brady says.

“We’re one of the few areas that have both an incubator and a network of university, business, and community leaders who are 100 percent engaged and supportive of the entrepreneurship ecosystem,” he says.

And that relationship goes both ways. Brady notes many of the startups in the GreenHouse are active in the community, taking part in local events and serving on boards.

With Spartanburg experiencing so much growth, Brady anticipates the GreenHouse will continue to be an attractive place for startups.

“The downtown is thriving, with new restaurants, new shops,” Brady notes. “And a lot of our entrepreneurs like to walk downtown, they like the location.”

“It’s very inviting,” he adds. “They like the energy from having students and faculty around.”

New Standard: Alta Gracia

Perhaps the incubator’s greatest success to date has been Alta Gracia, a company that sells collegiate branded apparel manufactured in the Dominican Republic. It was sold last year and now operates in Atlanta.

At the time of its acquisition, Alta Gracia had estimated revenues of $10 million and 12 full-time employees in South Carolina and 138 in the Dominican Republic, according to Donnie Hodge, the former CEO, who remains a shareholder and advisor.

During its three years in the GreenHouse, Alta Gracia had achieved more than 50 percent growth in core programs while paying its Dominican Republic workers more than triple the living wage. Hodge is now president of Kitex USA, a leading supplier of organic baby apparel to the U.S. market under the Lamaze Organic and Little Star Organic brands.
What’s Growing in the GreenHouse

- **EduTek**, educational technology management software to help simplify and integrate asset and work order management processes in secondary schools
- **Kitex USA**, a children’s wear manufacturer
- **Wellingham Financial**, offers 0 percent interest payment plans to help patients who have high out-of-pocket medical costs
- **Resiliency Technologies**, an award-winning mobile technology platform (Sharpen) that delivers resiliency educational modules to targeted audiences
- **Mental Fitness**, a national nonprofit organization that brings evidence-based resiliency programs to K-12 schools, with a focus on arts and mindfulness techniques
- **White Elephant Enterprises**, an award-winning video production company
- **Datos Technologies**, a data science consulting company and custom software development company
- **The Studio**, a USC Upstate student-run, in-house marketing and design agency

Named Lectures Highlight Expertise

In addition to its signature Johnson Innovation event, the Johnson College of Business hosts lecture series with corporate partners SunTrust and Wells Fargo. The SunTrust Financial Literacy series is designed to walk students and members of the community through a variety of topics, including financial goal-setting, budgets and retirement. The Wells Fargo Speaker series features business leaders whose areas of expertise align with curriculum taught in the classroom, or with trends and innovations occurring in the business world.

“When Yash Bhatia, president of Datos Consulting, talks about data analytics, students and community members have an opportunity to learn from someone who has built a company that specializes in integrated analytical solutions,” says Dean Mo Djerdjouri. “Textbook lessons become real.”

SunTrust provides support for the SunTrust Financial Literacy Series at the College of Business. Pictured from left are Becky Goessel, CPA, CGMA, an instructor at USC Upstate who teaches many of the topics in the series; Aly Friend, USC Upstate annual giving director; Kim Jolley, city president, SunTrust Bank, Spartanburg; Mo Djerdjouri, dean, George Dean Johnson, Jr. College of Business and Economics; and Meredith Brunen, vice chancellor, University Advancement, USC Upstate.

The undergraduate business program at The George is among just 15% worldwide to have earned accreditation by AACSB International – the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business.
College Highlights Importance of Liberal Arts Education in Society

Over the past year, Dr. Robert B. McCormick has served as interim dean of the newly created College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, helping to strengthen its core offerings and preparing it to grow in the years ahead.

The new college includes numerous academic units: Child Advocacy Studies; Fine Arts and Communication Studies; History, Political Science, Philosophy, and American Studies; Languages, Literature, and Composition; Psychology; and Sociology, Criminal Justice, and Women’s and Gender Studies.

“In all of its endeavors, the college is committed to preparing students for a range of outstanding career opportunities in the Upstate and around the world,” says McCormick. “By emphasizing creativity, global engagement and diversity, the college provides innovative degree programs and an array of experiential learning opportunities, including numerous study abroad programs, undergraduate research, and community service.”

With the two-college system, the College of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences can build on its strong foundation and dedicate itself to promoting the importance of its disciplines in today’s world, McCormick says. That includes continuing to demonstrate the important role the arts play in the cultural life of the community, from art exhibits downtown to guest speakers, live music, and theater productions on campus.

“It is well-documented that vibrant communities — those that provide a wide range of cultural, academic, and entertainment opportunities — attract and retain talented workers,” McCormick says.

McCormick, who is also a history professor, has served the university in many capacities, including as associate dean in the College of Arts and Sciences. He earned a bachelor’s degree in history from Wake Forest University and a master’s degree and Ph.D. in history from USC in Columbia. He teaches a wide range of modern continental European history courses. McCormick is the author of “Croatia Under Ante Pavelić: America, the Ustaše and Croatian Genocide” and is a contributor to “Recovering the Piedmont Past,” volumes 1 and 2.
USC Upstate History Professors Complete Second Volume of Regional History

Two USC Upstate professors have completed the second volume of an anthology exploring the untold history of the state’s Upcountry region.

Drs. Paul Grady and Andrew Myers have edited “Recovering the Piedmont Past, Volume 2: Bridging the Centuries in the South Carolina Upcountry,” published earlier this year by the University of South Carolina Press.

The 277-page book explores the social history of the region in the years following Reconstruction through the start of World War II (1877 through 1941) and includes stories from 11 contributors.

Grady co-edited the book’s first volume, “Recovering the Piedmont Past: Unexplored Moments in Nineteenth-Century Upcountry South Carolina History,” with retired Converse College professor Melissa Walker. Four USC Upstate professors also contributed to the book, which was published in 2013.

Similar to its predecessor, the second volume of “Recovering the Piedmont Past” seeks to shed light on “unexplored moments” in the history of the region during years of great social, economic and cultural change.

“This really capitalizes on our place; our mission,” says Myers, a professor of American Studies at USC Upstate. “There’s no other institution that wants to define itself the way we do — around Upstate history.”

University Aims to Inspire Region’s Creative Community

The USC Upstate’s Division of Languages, Literature, and Composition, in partnership with Spartanburg County Libraries, will host the inaugural Upstate Writing Month (UpWriMo) in June.

Created by USC Upstate instructors Brock Adams, Tasha Thomas and Beth Keefauver, UpWriMo is a month-long series that will feature readings, presentations, and workshops by a diverse group of local and regional writers.

UpWriMo events, which are free and open to the public, will be held at the university’s main campus and other locations across Spartanburg, including the Spartanburg Headquarters Library, Hatcher Garden and Woodland Preserve, Hub City Bookshop, Growler Haus and others.

Participants will have an opportunity to learn about a variety of writing types, such as songwriting, flash fiction, fantasy, screenwriting, grant writing, ecofiction, and memoir writing.

UpWriMo will kick off at noon on Saturday, June 1, with a session featuring Tessa Fontaine, author of “The Electric Woman: A Memoir in Death-Defying Acts,” which was recognized as a New York Times Editors’ Choice pick and Southern Living magazine’s Best Book of 2018.

Cinelle Barnes, author of “Monsoon Mansion: A Memoir,” will close UpWriMo on the afternoon of Saturday, June 29, with a session in the JM Smith Board Room at USC Upstate’s Health Education Complex.

A full list of events and registration is available on the university’s website, www.uscupstate.edu.
Fulbright Takes Dr. David Damrel to Sri Lanka

Teaching about Islam in a predominantly Buddhist country might seem challenging, but for David Damrel, an associate professor of religion at USC Upstate, it’s an opportunity to help students gain a deeper perspective about another religion.

Damrel, who was named a Fulbright Scholar for a second time, is spending the spring semester at the University of Peradeniya in Kandy, Sri Lanka. He is team-teaching two courses, one on Islamic law, the other on modern Muslim thinkers, and helping the humanities school create a new master’s program in comparative religion.

About 70 percent of Sri Lanka’s population is Buddhist, Damrel explains, with Hindus accounting for another 15 percent and the rest a mix of Muslims, Christians and Veddas, an aboriginal community. While Damrel’s research focuses on modern Muslim thought, his Sri Lanka proposal reflected his strong belief that a society benefits from having a basic “religious literacy” about all the communities that compose it.

“That is, you need to know something about your neighbors, your classmates, your fellow employees, your patients, your customers, and so on, just to be a good responsible citizen,” Damrel says.

That message is particularly relevant right now in Sri Lanka, which Damrel says is still healing from a nearly 30-year civil war between the Buddhist Sinhalese majority and the predominantly Hindu Tamil minority. Even now, 10 years after the war’s end, tensions remain, with a wave of anti-Muslim violence breaking out last year in the Kandy region.

Such ethnic and religious conflicts highlight the important role a university can play in helping people understand religions different from their own, Damrel says. While students here, can sometimes be resistant at first to hearing new ideas, especially if they feel like their own faith is being challenged, they generally are curious to learn about different beliefs, he observes.

“The challenge is to get students to see a religious worldview the way that the participants – the ‘insiders’ – do, and not fall back on the stereotypes that so many religions repeat about different faiths,” Damrel says.

That’s one reason he says he’s excited about helping the university there create a comparative religion program. “We simply can’t deliberately choose to be ignorant about religious ideas, even if you might not take them seriously on a personal level,” Damrel says. “Comparative religion is a way to regularize discussions about religion.”

Although this is Damrel’s first time in Sri Lanka, he has been to other south and southeast Asian countries, including Indonesia, where he taught in 2008 on his first Fulbright. Those experiences gave him a basic familiarity with the kind of climate, food, and culture he would encounter in Sri Lanka, but he’s also delighted in the differences he’s discovered.

He notes, for instance, that street dogs are allowed to roam freely in Sri Lanka, a reflection of the culture’s value of avoiding harm to others. While no one actively cares for these strays, Damrel says, people will sometimes leave scraps of food out for them and will watch out for them while driving.
He’s also been impressed by how warm and welcoming people have been. “People here exude an unforced, natural friendliness and kindness that is really overwhelming,” Damrel says.

Many Sri Lankans in fact feel a special connection to the United States, he says. Several have studied in America, and others have relatives who are U.S. citizens. During Sri Lanka’s civil war, Damrel explains, many people came to the U.S. as refugees and built new lives, achieving “hard-earned success after success in realizing the American dream.” As a result, he says, “there is great respect and affection for America here.”

“This is just another reminder of how globalized our world is and of how essential it has been – and remains – for the U.S. to continue to welcome refugees to our country,” Damrel says.

Accompanying Damrel on his appointment is his wife, Dixie, the curator of the Clemson University Herbarium and herself a former Fulbright recipient. The couple has been exploring the country on weekends, visiting many of the ancient cultural sites on the island. Among the highlights so far have been a trip to Anuradhapura, a UNESCO World Heritage site, and the Royal Botanic Gardens.

But the most rewarding part of the experience for Damrel has been the connections he’s forged with students, colleagues, and staff. While the material Fulbright scholars teach is important, he says, even more so is “the way that we model what goes on in a U.S. classroom,” which is often very different from that of the host university.

“It is a wonderful, frustrating, and exhilarating experience, often all at the same time,” he says.

**Artist Gifts Second Monumental Sculpture to USC Upstate**

A prize-winning sculpture became a permanent fixture at the University of South Carolina Upstate earlier this year.

Atlanta-based artist Scott Strader gifted his work “Tear of Illian” to the university in January. It was Strader’s second contribution to USC Upstate following his 2018 gift of the aluminum “Annulus” sculpture.

Both pieces are on display between the John C. Stockwell Administration Building and the campus library.

“I am pleased to include Scott Strader in our growing collection of outdoor monumental sculptures,” says Jane Allen Nodine, a distinguished professor emerita and director of USC Upstate’s Gallery on Main. “The clarity of his designs and refined craftsmanship in the work make it highly desirable for our permanent collection.”

Nodine says “Tear of Illian” brings the university’s collection of monumental works up to 16. She plans to double that number during the next two years.

“The outdoor sculpture collection brings the sophistication of a cosmopolitan community to the Upstate campus,” she says. “It enhances the landscape and serves as a valuable resource for students and faculty when researching or seeking source material.”
Students at USC Upstate can become involved on campus in a variety of ways — ranging from participation in one or more of our 75-plus registered student organizations, to attending programs and events meant to contribute to personal development. We know that the more students are engaged on campus, the more likely they are to be successful during their time at the university and beyond.

- Dr. Khystal Smith
  Interim Dean of Students
A Holistic Approach to Teacher Education

Dr. Laura Reynolds, dean of the School of Education, Human Performance, and Health, believes regional comprehensive universities are the engines of the country.

Because they’re accessible, reasonably priced and nimble, they can respond to needs of small businesses, agencies, school districts and first-generation families in ways many large universities can’t.

“We’re local. We’re accessible. We’re known,” says Reynolds. “Our faculty spend time with the students they work with and in the communities they serve. The mission is different.”

Citing recent statistics that indicate 9 percent of jobs in the next 10 years will require a bachelor’s degree, Reynolds asks, “If that’s so, higher education is relevant, but the question remains: How do we make it accessible and weave it into your life while you’re holding a job, raising children or as part of a career change? And how can our faculty and staff embrace you while that happens to help you grow and achieve?”

Reynolds, who joined USC Upstate in January 2018, has been working to address those questions. Last June, she received state approval for a new online master’s degree in applied learning and instruction aimed at working educators. The program’s flexibility helps professionals both expand their expertise and better meet the needs of pre-K-12 students.

Those same goals also were the impetus behind the recent renaming of the college to the School of Education, Human Performance, and Health, which Reynolds says reflects a more holistic approach to education.

“Teachers must understand poverty, individual health and the nature of the communities they live in,” says Reynolds. “Educators have to understand the importance of things like sleep, literacy and housing stability as important components of a healthy and productive life.”

Prior to joining USC Upstate, Reynolds was the associate dean of the College of Education, Health, and Human Services at the University of Michigan-Dearborn.

Reynolds, who has a Ph.D. in educational psychology from the University of South Carolina, says she’s delighted to be back in the Palmetto State.

“One of the things that’s fascinating and wonderful about Spartanburg is the level of dedication the entire community has to the well-being of the community as a whole,” she says. “That is remarkable.”
‘Game Changer’
Master’s Program Emphasizes Community Partnerships

With the university’s mission to create transformative opportunities for its students, the School of Education, Human Performance, and Health sought to expand that definition. Put simply, when you transform the opportunities of an educator, you in turn change the lives of their students. So, when USC Upstate approached Spartanburg County school districts about forming a partnership to enhance the skills of its teachers through its new online Master of Education (M.Ed.) in Applied Learning and Instruction, both groups immediately knew this would be a game changer.

“USC Upstate is Spartanburg School District 2’s first choice for offering relevant and required courses for our teachers, including add-on endorsements,” says Angela Hinton, assistant superintendent of curriculum instruction at Spartanburg School District 2. “The master’s in Applied Learning and Instruction allows our teachers to apply these courses toward their master’s degrees. USC Upstate continues to listen to and meet the needs of Spartanburg County.”

Designed specifically for the working professional, the program emphasizes the application of theory and evolving practices in the classroom. Students complete a series of core classes, and then choose a concentration in one of four areas. What’s more, the data used in these courses are resourced directly from the school districts and highlight the value of community partnership through a customized curriculum.
USC Upstate Launches Call Me MISTER Collaborative

USC Upstate, in collaboration with Spartanburg Community College and Spartanburg District 7 Schools, will launch the Call Me MISTER program in fall 2019. The highly acclaimed national recruitment and support program serves to prepare African American male students to teach in early childhood, elementary or middle school classrooms.

“We are thrilled to have the opportunity to partner in this innovative and effective program, and to work together to increase the number of African American male teachers and role models for our children” says Dr. Laura Reynolds, dean of the School of Education, Human Performance, and Health. “USC Upstate and the Spartanburg community welcome the opportunity to support these future teachers and look forward to their contributions to the campus and region.”

Call Me MISTER at USC Upstate will serve as a “pipeline” for area applicants to receive financial assistance and support in pursuit of a bachelor’s degree and teacher certification. MISTER students have the option to attend USC Upstate for four years, or to first attend Spartanburg Community College before transferring to USC Upstate to complete their baccalaureate degree. After graduation, fully certified “MISTERs” enter early childhood, elementary, and middle school classrooms as teachers, role models and mentors dedicated to quality education, as well as building critical relationships with students.

As a Call Me MISTER campus, USC Upstate is now part of a national network of universities supporting the development of minority male leaders in education, both in classrooms and at the administrative level. Developed in 2000 at Clemson University, the mission of Call Me MISTER—an acronym for Mentors Instructing Students Toward Effective Role Models—is to “increase the pool of available teachers from a broader and more diverse background, particularly among the state’s lowest performing schools.”

Individuals interested in the Call Me MISTER program should contact the School of Education, Human Performance, and Health at 864-503-5733 or visit www.uscupstate.edu/academics/school-of-education.
Diversity Conference Advances Education and Collaboration

USC Upstate’s School of Education, Human Performance, and Health (SoEHPH) hosted its 26th annual Diversity Conference this spring in the Olin B. Sansbury Campus Life Center.

About 400 educational leaders from across the Upstate came to the university for a day of learning, fellowship and collaboration.

Participants heard a keynote address by Tayuanee Dewberry, pictured far right, executive director of Right Moves For Youth; a performance by the South Carolina School for the Deaf and the Blind choir; and a panel discussion moderated by USC Upstate faculty members Dr. Walter Lee and Stacey Mills.

Panelists included Dr. Marilyn Izzard of USC Upstate and community leaders Jaime Fivecoat, Dr. George Newby, Dr. Ansel Sanders, Andre Sullivan, and Mike Young.

Following the panel discussion, participants broke into smaller groups for educational sessions aimed at addressing a variety of relevant topics and needs in the community.

“Building equitable, culturally competent classrooms is a critical piece of shaping successful outcomes for all students,” says Alphonso Atkins, USC Upstate’s chief diversity officer. “The broad appeal of the Upstate SoEHPH Diversity Conference lies in its commitment to preparing future educators to engage in meaningful professional development focused on the growing diversity of our classrooms.”

USC Upstate Chancellor Brendan Kelly, third from left, and other community leaders helped cut the ribbon for the Franklin School, an early childhood education center for children ages 6 weeks to 5 years in the city of Spartanburg’s Northside neighborhood. USC Upstate’s School of Education, Human Performance, and Health is a partner in the school, which also provides research opportunities for students and education experts.
Library Dean Adds DAR Awards to Storied Career

For nearly two decades, Frieda Davison has greeted students, faculty, staff and other USC Upstate Library visitors with a friendly smile. But in June 2020, the university’s long-serving dean of the library will retire.

Before Davison checks out, however, she will continue to guide the library through its most significant transformation since 1977, when it moved from its original digs in the John C. Stockwell Administration Building to its current home.

The project has already expanded resources and services for students, creating spaces for collaborative learning and contemplation, and a café to fuel the weary with a high-octane dose of Starbucks coffee. As she walks the library floor, Davison lights up as she points to certain areas and describes what’s to come.

“This is very exciting for me because I’ve wanted to see this happen ever since I arrived here,” Davison says. “It gives me a lot of satisfaction to know that this is happening and it will continue to have an impact long after I’m gone.”

Davison, who grew up in Honaker, Virginia, earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Clinch Valley College, now the University of Virginia at Wise, and a Master of Library Science degree from the University of Kentucky. She also did post-master’s work at New York University.

Davison and her husband, the late David Davison, moved to Spartanburg when she took the job at USC Upstate in 2000.

Before his death in 2009, David encouraged her to write “More Than a Name,” a two-volume book that documents the lives of more than 600 Upstate soldiers who died while serving during World Wars I and II. The soldiers’ names are carved into the Duncan Park Veterans’ Memorial in Spartanburg.

In March, Davison’s book received two prominent historic preservation awards, one from the South Carolina chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) and the other from its National Society.

Davison was recognized at the state level during an awards ceremony in Greenville in March. In the coming months, she will be recognized at DAR’s national meeting in Washington, D.C.

“Periodically, she would share a story or two at our meetings. It was exciting to hear about the men,” says Sheila Ingle, of the Spartanburg-based Kate Barry Chapter of DAR. “Thanks to Frieda, those names on the monument are truly remembered.”

Davison has also written “Honaker Family in America,” a book published in 1998 about the history of her hometown.
The new first-floor study space, with its convenient coffee bar, has been a hit with students since it opened earlier this semester. More changes are on the way, as renderings for the second floor show, with completion slated for 2020.
As Athletics Director Daniel Feig wraps up his first academic year at USC Upstate, he is upbeat and optimistic about the future. And if his department’s accomplishments are an indicator of what lies ahead, he has every reason to be hopeful. Since joining the Big South Conference last summer, Upstate Athletics has seen success on the court, in the field, and in the classroom.

“Fall 2018 was our highest department-wide student-athlete GPA in our history, with a cumulative 3.23,” says Feig. “What’s more, 71 percent of our student-athletes made the honor roll with a 3.0 GPA or better and 10 percent of our student-athletes made a perfect 4.0.”

At the end of the fall semester, USC Upstate was ranked fifth out of 11 member institutions in the Big South’s Conference Cup (known as the Sasser Cup), which measures athletic success across all sports. The women’s soccer team had their best year in their Division 1 history, winning 11 games and advancing to the conference semifinals. The women’s indoor track team competed well at the Big South Championship, winning the Female Field Athlete of the Meet and Freshman of the Year awards.

Feig says the Athletics Department has undoubtedly benefitted from the university’s commitment to health and wellness. USC Upstate recently hired a new director of institutional wellness, Kyle Brunen, who will share his expertise with the athletes.

“Kyle is teaming up with Sandy Sandago, our director of Sports Medicine, Sarah Gildersleeve, Life Skills director, and Jake Roy, director of Strength and Conditioning, to ensure we provide top-notch programming to all of our student-athletes in the areas of health and wellness,” says Feig. “We want to ensure that our student-athletes are prepared for the challenges they will face off the court and outside of the classroom during their college years, as well as the rigors of life when they graduate.”

Feig says he’ll spend the next few months finishing up an Athletics Strategic Plan. “We are poised for unprecedented success.”

This summer will mark one year since USC Upstate made its move to the Big South Conference, positioning the Spartans to be competitively matched with colleges in South Carolina, North Carolina and Virginia. Transitioning to the Big South created new opportunities for USC Upstate’s 250 student-athletes to thrive both on and off the field.

“The teams we compete against are located within 300 miles of each other,” said Chancellor Brendan Kelly. “Just the reduction in team travel time means 1,200 fewer classes missed by our athletes, allowing them to succeed academically, athletically and socially.

USC Upstate is the Big South’s 11th full member institution.
Dave Dickerson: We, Not Me

BY TREVOR ANDERSON

Dave Dickerson eases his slender 6-foot-6-inch frame into a leather chair in his office on the second floor of the G.B. Hodge Center.

It has been exactly one year since the former University of Maryland standout and Division I journeyman coach took the reins of a USC Upstate men’s basketball program that was, to put it mildly, in transition.

The walls and surfaces of his workspace are bare except for a commemorative Spartans basketball, a small whiteboard, and a flat-screen TV tuned to ESPN’s coverage of March Madness — all evidence that he’s had little time to focus on anything besides rebuilding his team.

Not everything has to mean something, but it’s probably the TV that speaks the most to what Dickerson hopes to accomplish during the next few years.

“I have a chance to be the first coach to take this team and put it in the Division I national tournament; I want to be the first,” says Dickerson, whose 20-year coaching career has included stints at Gardner-Webb, James Madison, Radford, Maryland, Tulane, and Ohio State.

“What we have done so far is start to build a great foundation,” Dickerson adds. “The thing that excites me is we have a chance to build this the right way with the right kids.”

When he speaks to recruits, he says, “I tell them in front of their parents ‘if you aren’t serious about getting your degree and you don’t love the game, then this probably isn’t going to be the place for you.’”

The Spartans finished the 2018-19 season, Dickerson’s first season at the helm, with an overall record of 6-26. That’s one win below their 7-25 record during the previous season.

Dickerson knows that’s not the record of a program headed in the right direction. But he remains confident because he can see something most people can’t — what lies beyond the light at the end of the tunnel.

“This is the first time in 20 years of coaching that I’ve ever been in a place where you feel important,” he says. “I can feel that I’m part of something special. I love my job, the people I work with. As a coach, you are judged by your record — wins and losses. But I believe USC Upstate is a place you can win on and off the court at a high level.”

Dickerson says he is excited about his talented crop of rising sophomores and incoming freshmen. Those players are poised to become the base of a team he believes will compete with anyone in the country.

In bold, poster-worthy terms, Dickerson says he wants his players to follow three principles:

1. All in — completely dedicated to the team.

2. Do your job — everyone doing their part to benefit the team.

3. We, not me — an understanding that the needs of the team must always come first.

“I guess you could call my approach holistic,” Dickerson says. “I want to build my players up in every aspect of the game, in every aspect of the classroom … They’re going to go to class. They’re going to be good citizens. They’re going to be great.”
On the sideline, Dickerson is animated and charismatic — cheering on his players; giving them instructions in the huddle; experiencing all the highs and lows of the game right along with them.

He knows what it means because he was once in their shoes.

Dickerson grew up in the tiny town of Olar in Bamberg County, South Carolina. He was a star player at Olar Denmark High School, and was courted by some of the nation’s most prominent collegiate basketball programs. One was the University of Maryland, where he played forward from 1986-89 and received a bachelor’s degree in government and politics in 1990.

“I wanted to play in the NBA and then go back to my hometown and serve as mayor,” he says. “When it looked like I wasn’t going to be good enough to play in the NBA, I started to lean on my degree. I still wanted to be around the game, though.”

He decided to pursue coaching. He landed his first gig in 1991 as a second assistant at Gardner-Webb, and since then has held multiple coaching positions, most recently serving as an associate head coach at Ohio State until 2016.

But in March 2017, Dickerson’s wife, Laurette, was diagnosed with stage 4 breast cancer.

He made the decision to step away from coaching in order to care for her and the couple’s son, Dave III, who they refer to as “D3.”

“My father had always told me there was going to be a moment in my life when I’d have to make a huge decision,” Dickerson says. “I could see my father’s face. I had several job offers. But I made the decision to focus on being a husband and a father.”

Dickerson took a job as a scout for the NBA’s Utah Jazz, a position that allowed him to work from home.

“That was probably the best year for our family,” he says. When he received the head coaching offer at USC Upstate in 2018, Dickerson says his family was prepared
to stay in Ohio. But after they visited Spartanburg, they fell in love, and Dave III decided to spend his senior year at Dorman High School.

Dickerson says it’s an exciting time to be at Upstate.

“You can just feel the energy of Chancellor Brendan Kelly and the energy of our campus,” he adds. “This is the first time that we, as a family, can articulate and participate in the vision of a college.”

As an added bonus, Dickerson says his mother-in-law, Linda Newsom, 76, recently moved to Spartanburg. She’s already a huge fan of the Spartans, he says, and can be spotted giving the players high-fives as they enter the court for their pre-game warmup.

“I mean, that wouldn’t be possible anywhere else,” Dickerson says. “We’re very happy here.”

USC Upstate women’s basketball player Riley Popplewell was named the 2018-19 Big South Conference Scholar Athlete of the Year.

Popplewell, of Union Mills, Indiana, is an education major with a 4.0 GPA.

The junior center led the Lady Spartans this past season with 11.2 points per game, 118 offensive rebounds, and 115 defensive rebounds. She started in all 30 of the team’s games.

In the history of the university’s women’s basketball program, Popplewell ranks No. 6 in offensive rebounds (260) and blocked shots (76).

Earlier in the season, Popplewell was named to the Google Academic All-District team voted on by College Sports Information Directors of America. She was also the 2017 ASUN Scholar Athlete of the Year.
I was instantly welcomed at USC Upstate and in this community. My teammates are awesome! We’ve built a tradition around here that we expect to win, and we always compete at the highest level.

Brittany Case, women’s softball, class of ’19

Suddeth Earns Sports Field Manager Distinction

USC Upstate’s Director of Building and Landscape Services Bruce Suddeth recently earned the distinction of Certified Sports Field Manager from the Sports Turf Managers Association.

Since he joined USC Upstate in 2002, Suddeth has used his expertise to enhance the natural aesthetic beauty on campus and create outdoor spaces that serve as a catalyst for student recruitment and public engagement.

The university’s Louis P. Howell Athletic Complex, which includes the County University Soccer Stadium, Spartanburg County Youth Soccer Fields, Cleveland S. Harley Baseball Stadium, Cyrill Softball Stadium, and Tennis Complex, has been recognized repeatedly as one of the Southeast’s top sports venues.

In 2008, USC Upstate became the first public university in South Carolina to be named a Tree Campus USA by the Arbor Day Foundation.

Suddeth has also been instrumental in shaping the vision for USC Upstate’s Susan Jacobs Arboretum and leading a team of 15 full-time employees who have earned recognition by industry publications and garnered several certifications and citations.
HELP CREATE TRANSFORMATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR USC UPSTATE STUDENT-ATHLETES!

JOIN THE U CLUB TODAY!

To learn more, call 864-503-7367, email uclub@uscupstate.edu, or visit www.upstatespartans.com/sports/uclub.

For information about tickets or group packages, call 864-503-5893, or visit www.upstatespartans.com/fanzone/tickets.
A Letter From the Vice Chancellor for University Advancement

Advancing our university begins with forging lifelong relationships that promote loyalty and foster a greater understanding of and support for USC Upstate. In our pursuit to create transformative opportunities for the nearly 6,200 students we serve, advancement plays a critical role in delivering on that promise.

For more than half a century, USC Upstate has transformed more than 30,000 lives, creating a robust alumni network that continues to strengthen the fabric of our region and our state. Celebrating the achievements of our graduates—and there are many—is one of the most effective ways we can tell the story of our university and its broad impact. We recently created a new program called Spartan Stories, a series of video interviews that highlight some of the excellent work of students, faculty and alumni, and which are featured prominently on the university’s website and social media channels.

We invite our alumni to connect and engage with us by sharing achievements, speaking to a class, or even shopping in the University Bookstore to sport the latest Upstate apparel. Promoting the university, serving as an ambassador, and building visibility and brand awareness further enhance the value of an Upstate degree.

Bolstering the mission of USC Upstate, philanthropy supports strategic priorities, accelerates growth, increases the competitiveness of our university, and enriches the student experience. A number of our stakeholders have seen the value in investing in our hometown university, and have made generous contributions that have fueled new programs and unprecedented opportunity for our students and faculty.

Thank you, alumni and friends, for joining us on this incredible journey. I look forward to the bright future ahead!

Sincerely,

Dr. Meredith N. Brunen
Vice Chancellor for University Advancement
Executive Director of the USC Upstate Foundation

More than 80% of USC Upstate alumni remain in the Upstate of South Carolina following graduation to build successful careers and lives as leaders in local communities.
Community Leaders Dedicate Time, Talent to University

The university is fortunate to have a number of volunteer-service leaders who advocate, support, and dedicate themselves to advancing the institution’s mission through four distinct service organizations: The Spartanburg County Commission for Higher Education, USC Upstate Foundation Board of Directors, Capital Development Foundation Board of Directors and the Alumni Board of Directors.

Welcome to our newest leaders:

**Spartanburg County Commission for Higher Education**

Anne Flynn  
*Community Leader*

Scott Heath  
*Senior Vice President – Branch Manager*  
*Wells Fargo Advisors*

Ben Hines  
*President and Co-Owner*  
*Spencer/Hines Properties*

Eddie Payne  
*Community Leader*

**USC Upstate Foundation Board of Directors**

Erica Brown  
*District 6 Representative*  
*Spartanburg City Council*

Todd Horne ’05  
*Vice President of Business Development*  
*Clayton Construction Company*

Phil Feisal  
*President*  
*Spartanburg Medical Center*

Avi Lawrence  
*President*  
*Contec*

**Capital Development Foundation Board of Directors**

George Moseley  
*Principal*  
*The Capital Corporation*

Allen Johnston  
*Owner*  
*The Butcher-The Baker Management Company*
Stacey D. Mills ’03: A Record of Service in the Community

USC Upstate has played a central role in the adult life of Stacey D. Mills ’03.

As a student, he was president of the Student Government Association. He met the love of his life, Jacqueline Burton, while studying in the library. And since 2016, he’s been executive director of Upstate's Greenville campus.

“My life has been completely at an institution that I probably wouldn’t have thought twice about coming to, and I did, and stayed, and I’m here now every day coming to work,” says Mills. “What USC Upstate did for our family, we are able to see that happen in other people’s families every day. That gives me great joy.”

Mills says it’s not just students who benefit from USC Upstate. “Education changes the trajectory of whole families, not just the individual that is attending school or taking classes, but what’s to come in the future and how that education is going to make a difference in that person’s life.”

A role model for many students, Mills is giving back off campus, too. For the past 20 years, he has been senior pastor at Mountain View Baptist Church in downtown Greenville, and he is active in several community groups, including the Boy Scouts of America Blue Ridge Council board of directors, Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity and the Piedmont Health Foundation board of directors.

He currently is chairman of the board of directors for the Urban League of the Upstate, which works to provide economic empowerment, educational opportunities and the guarantee of civil rights for the underserved in America. He also serves as the South region trustee on the Urban League’s national board.

Mills sees his volunteer work as a natural extension of his professional life, helping to create a community where everyone has access to a good education, jobs, health care and housing.

“The work that the Urban League does exposes us to corporations who have vested interests in the quality of life in our community,” Mills says. “We can improve in all of these key areas, but if the quality of life doesn't improve for all people, the sparkle of life for our region isn’t as bright as it could be.”

Dr. Clif Flynn, provost and senior vice chancellor for Academic Affairs at USC Upstate, taught Mills more than 15 years ago, and says his former student is the perfect ambassador for the university.

“Stacey has served this institution with distinction in a variety of roles for a number of years, and we are proud that he is a Spartan,” Flynn says. “Stacey has always conducted himself with professionalism, grace, and humility. His contributions to the community speak to his commitment to others.”

Mills himself is proud to serve both the school he loves and the community. “All of my work is related, and it is a blessing that I get to represent USC Upstate, my alma mater and my employer, in these areas,” says Mills.

Mills and his wife, Jacqueline, who have been married for 21 years, have three children – Harrison, who attends West Point; Kiersten, a student at Spelman College; and Zion, who attends Sevier Middle School in Greenville.
$1.6 Million Gift Will Fund International Study

Earlier this year USC Upstate announced a new $1.6 million gift that honors the legacy of the late Barbara Hastings, Ph.D., who served for more than 20 years as a professor in the George Dean Johnson, Jr. College of Business and Economics. Among many other contributions, she is credited with starting a foreign exchange program with Germany, which continues today. Hastings died Oct. 7, 2017, at her home in Saluda. Her contribution is the largest planned gift ever received by the USC Upstate Foundation.

“We are grateful to Dr. Hastings for her vision, commitment to the university, and incredible generosity,” says Chancellor Brendan Kelly. “Gifts like this one help ensure that USC Upstate meets its strategic goals to deliver education excellence and career-ready graduates; to attract, develop, and retain exceptional faculty and staff; and positively impact the well-being of the Upstate.”

“It is an honor and a privilege to be able to announce a gift of this magnitude from one of our own faculty members,” says Dr. Meredith Brunen, USC Upstate’s vice chancellor for University Advancement and executive director of the Foundation. “Barbara’s gift of more than $1.6 million will be added to an endowment begun by her mother, Martha McRae Hastings, to bring the total endowment to more than $1.8 million.”

Proceeds from the endowment will fund international travel and study abroad experiences for USC Upstate students, as well as support an endowed position focused on international business. The gift comes as the college works to expand its program offerings in Germany, Spain, China, Canada and France.

For more information about giving at USC Upstate, visit uscupstate.edu/give or call the Office of University Advancement, 864-503-5234.

USC Upstate to Launch New Alumni App

A new USC Upstate Alumni App is coming soon! This powerful platform will enable graduates and friends of the university to stay connected to the networks they built during their time on campus – and continue to tap into a range of services from anywhere in the world. The new app will be available later this year.
Show Your Spartan Pride – Shop specialty gear at the campus Bookstore with a special Alumni discount (University Branded Apparel 10% off – 20% during birthday month)

Participate – Engage with us on social media.

Appear – Present to a class or participate in a knowledge-sharing session for USC Upstate students.

Recruit – Become an ambassador by hiring a USC Upstate grad for internships or full-time positions.

Tell Your Story – Share your achievements, which may be featured in an Alumni spotlight in university publications.

Advocate – Promote your alma mater to future Spartans; ask us how!

Nominate – Recommend a peer for the Distinguished Alumni Award.

Unite – Rally together at USC Upstate events like Homecoming, Athletic games, Theatre productions and more!

Pay It Forward – Give back to your alma mater to build an even brighter future for our university at www.uscupstate.edu/give.

www.uscupstate.edu/alumni

SPARTAN UP!
YOUR GUIDE
— TO BEING AN —
ACTIVE ALUM

Where Has Your Degree Taken You?

Alumnus Eric Lichtenberg ’98 shared with us this snapshot from Venice, Italy. Show your Spartan pride by sending photos from your life’s journey to Alumni Relations, at alumni@uscupstate.edu.
Why Give? Your gifts will help enhance the educational experience for our students and the university capitalize on its tremendous positive momentum, forge our path ahead and achieve even greater heights.

USC Upstate has a laser focus on creating transformative opportunities by providing rigorous, career-relevant, and accessible education; enhancing the quality of life in Upstate South Carolina; and being the university of choice for faculty, staff, students and the community.

By investing in these key priorities, you will positively impact the university’s ability to contribute to our region and our state’s future economic and overall prosperity, creating brighter futures for all whom we serve.

Every gift – and every amount – makes a difference!

Pictured: USC Upstate Chancellor’s Fellows Xavier Vereen, James Parham, Sharan Ravishankar, Erin Callicott, Itzel Tello, Gracie Adams

www.uscupstate.edu/give
“Our annual Founders Day Dinner, which was held at Spartanburg’s Piedmont Club, provided an opportunity for us to pay tribute to our past while celebrating the future with friends and community leaders.”

- Dr. Meredith Brunen
Vice Chancellor for University Advancement
Over the course of the last year, University Advancement has hosted a number of activities and events that have engaged alumni, friends, and donors, including the USC Upstate Foundation’s inaugural Scholarship Luncheon, a number of check presentations from generous benefactors, Spartan of the Game recognitions at USC Upstate Athletics events, and Homecoming, where alumni gathered to celebrate their alma mater.

“Engaging our alumni, friends and donors is essential to our success as an institution,” says Benita Hopkins, associate vice chancellor for development and alumni relations. “We aim to keep our key stakeholders connected to their hometown university like never before.”
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