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2019 UNLV ANNUAL ALUMNI AWARDS

FOR 45 YEARS, WE HAVE BEEN CELEBRATING and acknowledging the unique ways that our alumni contribute to the success of the university through their time and talents. The UNLV Alumni Association is the driving force behind a strong relationship between UNLV and its alumni and friends through outreach, engagement, and philanthropy for the benefit of UNLV.

Since 1974, the UNLV Alumni Association has highlighted the impact our alumni make to UNLV and their community. These individuals are recognized for their ideals of higher education and Rebel pride. Through the awards program, the Alumni Association recognizes alumni and community leaders for their outstanding achievements and leadership at the university as well as throughout the community. These recipients truly serve as inspiration for the generations of alumni who will follow.

Our vision as an Association is to be an influential partner across the university and the link to lifetime engagement of future and current alumni. The annual awards is one way we live out our vision by highlighting the commitment from our greatest asset, our alumni.

To date, the Association has contributed more than $7 million to the university in student scholarships, endowments, and major capital improvements such as the Alumni Amphitheater, Alumni Grove, Alumni Park, and the $2.7 million Richard Tam Alumni Center. With the launch of the inclusive membership program in July, Rebels Forever, we anticipate the financial impact of our alumni will be even greater. With the elimination of membership dues, Rebels Forever promotes philanthropy by encouraging support to the hundreds of designations on campus. Giving by alumni is an important metric used by U.S. News & World Report to rank UNLV among its peers. Simply put, your philanthropy, of any size, is a vote of confidence in your alma mater.

The stories you will hear tonight will generate nostalgia and create inspiration for the ways that alumni, our Rebels Forever, are making a difference in their local communities and for UNLV. Thank you for joining us to celebrate these extraordinary Rebels!

With Rebel Pride,

Chad Warren
Senior Associate Vice President
Executive Director, UNLV Alumni Association

Mark Wiley ’01
President, UNLV Alumni Association
**DR. ANJALA S. KRISHEN**

*UNLV Professor of Marketing & International Business*
*Special Advisor to the Dean of the UNLV Lee Business School*

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Dr. Anjala S. Krishen arrived at UNLV just four months after completing her marketing doctorate at Virginia Tech University. In the dozen years since, the UNLV marketing & International business professor has taught courses in marketing research, consumer behavior, and internet marketing to both undergraduate and graduate students. But more than just someone who educates students on the finer points of marketing, the 2019 UNLV Alumni Association’s Outstanding Faculty Award winner is fully invested in her students’ successes — both in and out of the classroom. Ask many of Krishen’s former students, and they will gladly tell you about the immense impact she’s had on their lives, most notably as a mentor who is quick to offer career advice and support long after graduation.

After receiving her bachelor’s in electrical engineering from Rice University in 1990, she embarked on a 13-year career in management positions in consulting and electrical engineering. She earned an MBA from Virginia Tech in 1996 and a master’s degree in marketing in 2004.

Krishen’s research interests at UNLV have revolved around such topics as decision-making in rich environments; heuristics and choice-set design; e-marketing and social networking; and database marketing. A prolific author, she has published more than 55 peer-reviewed papers that have appeared in the Journal of Business Research, International Journal of Advertising, and the Journal of Marketing Education, among many others. She also penned the 2008 book *The Dichotomy of Heuristic in Choice – How Contrast Makes Decisions Easier*. And this year saw the release of *Marketing & Humanity: Discourses in the Real World*, a book Krishen co-edited that encourages readers to question their notions of reality and explores critical consumer-related topics from a holistic, intersectional, and interdisciplinary perspective.

Krishen earned the 2015 UNLV Foundation Distinguished Teaching Award, the 2016 Barrick Scholar Award, and the 2014 and 2016 Faculty Opportunity Awards. Also, in July 2018, she was named special advisor to the dean of UNLV’s Lee Business School.

When not teaching, writing, speaking, and mentoring, Krishen can be found in her running sneakers pounding the pavement, as she’s completed an astounding 55 marathons, seven ultramarathons, and four 100-mile runs. No, she’s not running from trouble — since she’s also a black belt in Taekwondo, she doesn’t need to.

“I learned during my first 100-mile ultramarathon that even in moments when I feel all alone in the wilderness — cold, tired, and hopeless — I’m always part of a team.”
WHAT LESSONS HAVE YOU LEARNED AS A LONG-DISTANCE RUNNER THAT YOU IMPART TO STUDENTS?

Goals are wonderful and they help us see the bigger picture, but sometimes they can be daunting. So focus on taking one step at a time, which is exactly what I remind myself to do during every marathon or ultramarathon I run. It’s a skill set that helps me feel all alone in the wilderness — cold, tired, and hopeless — I’m always part of a team. My family, friends, colleagues, mentors, co-authors, and students are always there for me, just as I’m there for them. Those thoughts get me through every struggle and give me the grit and determination to always give my best in everything I do.

I tell my students that I grade myself every time I grade them — and I enact what I expect. I do the same thing in my research, never just settling for “good enough,” always working toward “my best.” I convey this valuable message to students in every class I teach: Don’t waste your time discounting people or disliking the things they consume; instead, focus on improving yourself or creating your own content. In short, take the harder road, one step at a time, and in the long run, you’ll not only learn more and give more back to the world, but you’ll learn to respect yourself enough to only surround yourself with those who support you. Which is why I always say the people you surround yourself with are as important as the things you do.
Kevin T. Orrock

Lee Business School Alumnus of the Year
’76 Master of Business Administration

By the time he arrived in Las Vegas in the mid-1970s, Kevin Orrock had already done something rather improbable: He went from being born in the tiny Nevada mining town of Pioche to landing a job in the accounting department of an historic hotel-casino on the Las Vegas Strip. He enrolled in UNLV’s business school, earned his MBA, and began a steady climb up the corporate ladder of one of Nevada’s most successful and respected companies. In a way, you could say he went from accomplishing something improbable to something seemingly impossible.

For certain, Kevin’s journey to becoming president of Summerlin and vice president of Master Planned Communities for its parent company, The Howard Hughes Corporation, began quite humbly. Early-life family moves took him from Pioche to Northern California to Pittsburgh to Springfield, Ohio, where he attended Wittenberg University. After earning his undergraduate degree, Kevin’s life came full circle when he returned to his home state of Nevada and took an accounting job at the Desert Inn, which was then owned by Hughes’ Summa Corp. Realizing the best way to further his finance career was to continue his education, Kevin enrolled in UNLV’s MBA program, graduating in 1976.

He continued earning positions with increasing responsibilities before assuming his current role as head of one of the fastest-growing master-planned communities in the entire country. Thanks in part to Kevin’s expertise in financial operations and land development, Summerlin has won numerous awards and established community standards that have been mimicked by developers all over the West. One of his most ambitious projects was overseeing the creation of Downtown Summerlin, the integrated outdoor shopping district that has flourished since opening in fall 2014.

Throughout a career that has spanned more than four decades, Kevin has remained connected to UNLV in many ways. He has been a member of the Lee Business School’s Executive Advisory Board since 2004, the UNLV Foundation’s Advisory Board since 2011, and the Benefactor Society since 2017. He also participates in the UNLV Foundation’s Annual Fund Suite Deal, donating a private box for a UNLV basketball game, and he gives to his alma mater through The Howard Hughes Corporation’s corporate philanthropy initiatives.

Beyond UNLV, Kevin’s extensive community involvement includes serving on the boards of the Sunrise Children’s Foundation, Nevada Taxpayers Association, the Las Vegas Global Economic Alliance, Habitat for Humanity, and the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce, for which he served as president in 2012.

And when it comes time to escape the rigors of work life, Kevin indulges in his two hobbies: playing golf and exploring America on his Harley-Davidson motorcycle.

How did your experience pursuing your master’s degree at UNLV help shape the person and professional you are today?

Like many students who choose to continue their education after finishing undergrad, I was forced to juggle a full-time job with my MBA studies. So after putting in my eight hours at the Desert Inn during the day, I would head to UNLV and take classes at night. That left very little free time and forced me to focus and prioritize my daily activities. It certainly was a challenging time in my life, but looking back, I’m glad I went through it. Because not only did I prove to myself that I could accomplish any task if I was fully committed and worked hard, but that experience established the foundation for the strong work principles that I still abide by to this day.
IT’S NOT EVERY DAY THAT A GUY PLAYS COLLEGE FOOTBALL, earns a degree in zoology, then goes on to become an accomplished triple board-certified cosmetic and maxillofacial surgeon. But that’s been the life path of Dr. Dayne Jensen. Born and raised in Utah, Dayne attended Weber State University in Ogden, where he simultaneously pursued that zoology degree while playing outside linebacker on the Wildcats football team.

After graduating Weber State as a scholar athlete, Dayne enrolled at UNLV’s School of Dental Medicine to begin working toward his graduate degree. Not long after he arrived on campus, the honors began rolling in: Dayne won the Student Excellence Award, the Top Clinical Production Award, and the prestigious William S. Kramer Award, which recognizes junior dental students who demonstrate scholarship, character, and the potential promise for advancement of dentistry and service.

More honors would come at the end of his UNLV journey, as Dayne was awarded the Outstanding Graduate Award while graduating summa cum laude. But prior to that, he served as the university’s student-body president, was vice president of the Oral Surgery Literature Review Club, and held multiple leadership roles for the campus chapter of the American Dental Education Association, including serving as president from 2007 to 2009.

Upon earning his doctorate, Dayne headed to the University of Nebraska Medical Center, which is home to one of the world’s leading residencies in facial surgery. During his five-year residency, Dayne received his medical degree and was awarded the Resident Physician Award by the University of Nebraska Health System. In his final year he became the chief resident of the oral and maxillofacial surgery division. Following his residency, he continued his training as a fellow in full-body cosmetic surgery in Oklahoma City, eventually opening his own practice. Now back in his home state of Utah, Dayne operates Jensen Cosmetic & Reconstructive Surgery.

Throughout his career journeys, Dayne has remained connected to UNLV, including serving a two-year term on the School of Dental Medicine’s Alumni Board from 2014 to 2016. He also has been committed to philanthropic work, including currently serving as the surgical director for Ghana Make a Difference, an organization with which Dayne’s wife, Brooke, and their children Molly, Mack, and Mykel are actively involved.

WHO HAD THE MOST PROFOUND EFFECT ON YOU DURING YOUR TIME AT UNLV?
Oh, there was more than just one. In fact, I distinctly remember being completely overwhelmed during my first week in class. Overcome with that sense of dread that I had — pardon the dental pun — bitten off more than I could chew, I was certain after that first week that I’d never make it to the finish line. That’s when I went and spoke with my advisor, Dr. Marshall Brownstein, who sat me down and reassured me that if I dedicated myself to the process, the university wouldn’t leave me behind and that there were others like him who would make sure that I made it through.

And he was right. I dedicated myself to working hard, and several faculty members walked side by side with me the entire way. Without their dedication and support, I never would’ve accomplished my goals and definitely wouldn’t be where I am today.
TO TRULY MAKE A DIFFERENCE in the lives of others — a difference that’s substantial and widespread — requires a concerted commitment to jump into the trenches and do the difficult work. And when it comes to improving education, nobody personifies that commitment more than Dr. Tiffany G. Tyler-Garner.

Since moving to Las Vegas in 2005, Tiffany has devoted her career to transforming the educational landscape for all of Nevada’s children through her positions. At Nevada Partners, Inc., a community-based nonprofit in North Las Vegas, she rose to the position of COO before transitioning to COO and CEO of another nonprofit, Communities in Schools of Nevada, whose mission is to lower school dropout rates. The results that stemmed from her and her staff’s hard work didn’t go unnoticed, as Communities in Schools of Nevada was among 30 national organizations recognized by the White House as a model workforce development program.

This year, Tiffany began a new career chapter when Gov. Steve Sisolak appointed her as director of the Nevada Department of Employment, Training, and Rehabilitation (DETR), where she continues her critical work in workforce development, job training and placement, and vocational rehabilitation.

About the only thing as impressive as Tiffany’s career accomplishments are her own educational triumphs. After completing her undergraduate studies in psychology and sociology at the University of Southern California in 2000, she headed to Cal-State Northridge, where she earned a master’s in counseling in 2004. She obtained her doctorate in educational psychology from UNLV in 2011. One year later, she joined the faculty at UNLV’s College of Education, where she continues to teach courses that focus on counseling and human services. Tiffany is also a renowned grant writer, having raised more than $30 million in grants.

Tiffany’s philanthropic work is extensive. She is an advisory board member for Communities in Schools and Downtown Achieves. She also leads the efforts of the Las Vegas chapters of Promise Neighborhood and My Brother’s Keeper. Tiffany was presented with the Humanitarian of the Year Angel Award by Vegas, Inc. in 2018.

WHAT MOMENT OR EXPERIENCE AT UNLV HAD A PROFOUND EFFECT ON YOUR LIFE AND CAREER?
While there have been many impactful experiences, I’m reminded of my first year in the doctoral program, which taught me there are always opportunities to teach and learn from others. The rich diversity of our urban campus afforded me many of these opportunities, and as a result, my sense of self deepened and my appreciation for humanity broadened.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A REBEL?
It means making a commitment to pay it forward! With the exemplary education I received at UNLV, I consider it a personal responsibility to give back to the community that so richly afforded me with an important academic experience and a deeply satisfying professional career. Whether it be my UNLV family or the community at large, my journey as a Rebel has underscored the importance of investing in others.

WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE TO CURRENT AND FUTURE REBELS?
I hope our Rebel community will bring its collective talents to bear as we grapple with the pressing social issues impacting our community. I firmly believe UNLV alumni are capable of providing the answers to complex social issues like homelessness, housing affordability, economic development, and health disparities. All it takes is a willingness to step up together and commit to doing the difficult — yet extremely rewarding — work.
THE FACT JUSTIN VEILLEUX HAS RISEN TO PRINCIPAL at Henderson-based FEA Consulting Engineers — one of the Top 10 hotel engineering firms in the United States — is an impressive feat in and of itself. The fact he did so by the age of 37 speaks volumes about his talent and work ethic.

Justin joined FEA shortly after earning his BS in computer engineering from UNLV in 2004. Today, as one of the youngest engineering firm principals in Southern Nevada, he manages FEA’s electrical, lighting, and low-voltage departments, while also running the company’s operations and developing client relationships.

Having recently added his professional engineer (PE) certification in mechanical engineering to his existing one in electrical engineering, Justin is one of only a handful of Nevada engineers with dual PE certifications. His professional development has even circled back to his alma mater, where Justin is currently pursuing his MBA from the Lee Business School, and he expects to complete that degree in 2020.

As dedicated as he’s been to advancing his career, Justin is just as committed to giving back to the Southern Nevada community. He has volunteered to judge the Fred & Harriett Cox Senior Design Competition at UNLV, where more than 110 engineering students developed product prototypes that showcase innovation and entrepreneurship. Justin also has helped the College of Engineering develop workshops and programs that educate students about current technology in the plumbing, mechanical, and electrical fields of engineering.

Taking the lead for FEA in its charitable endeavors, Justin is involved with the Boys & Girls Clubs of Southern Nevada as a Birthday Club sponsor and participant in the annual Boys Day and Girls Day. He also manages the firm’s participation with Special Olympics Nevada’s Bowl for the Gold event, and he represents FEA on the Magnet Advisory Committee for the i3 Learn Academy at Mike O’Callaghan Middle School, helping in the strategic planning of STEM programs.

WHAT EXPERIENCE AT UNLV HAD THE MOST PROFOUNDF EFFECT ON YOUR LIFE AND CAREER?

Like most engineering students, the first three years of my education were spent taking technical classes that taught me foundational concepts and critical reasoning in engineering areas. But it wasn’t until my senior design project that I put the pieces together and really began to understand engineering by applying critical thinking to every step and process along the way.

That project helped make me the man I am today, as it developed my work ethic, taught me patience and the importance of being committed to quality, and showed me how to analyze every aspect of every project. I’ve taken those core principles and applied them in everything I’ve done in my career.

HOW CAN THE NEXT GENERATION OF REBELS MAKE THEIR MARKS IN THE VARIOUS FIELDS OF ENGINEERING?

As for the next generation of Rebels, the great thing is they get to advance through an engineering department that has grown immensely in the 15 years since I graduated — just look at such groundbreaking innovations as the Blockchain course and the Entertainment Engineering and Design program. So Rebels have a front-row seat to an exciting new wave of engineering innovation, and I look forward to seeing them spearhead the world’s next technological and engineering breakthroughs.
IT MIGHT BE A STRETCH TO SAY GIOVANNA SARDELLI’S career in the arts was preordained. But as a Las Vegas native and daughter of well-known Strip entertainer Nelson Sardelli, she certainly was predisposed to the industry. And since departing UNLV with her undergraduate degree in theatre arts in 1987, Giovanna has built quite a name for herself in acting and directing circles on both coasts.

Although she’s directed plays in regional theaters across the country, Giovanna has spent the majority of her career working extensively in New York City and California. Her impressive résumé includes being named director of New Works at TheatreWorks in Silicon Valley, which recently won the 2019 Tony Award for Best Regional Theater. Her honors also include a pair of prestigious awards for her directing skills. In 2008, she won the Joe A. Callaway Award for her direction of the play Animals Out of Paper with the Second Stage Theater in New York; and in 2016, she and her team won LA Stage Alliance Ovation Award for Best Production of a Play for the Geffen Playhouse production of Guards at the Taj.

After UNLV, Giovanna obtained her MFA from the prestigious Graduate Acting Program at New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts. A decade later, after an acting career that included a stint as Nurse Claire on the soap opera Another World, she returned to Tisch, graduating from its Directors Lab. That was followed by more than a decade spent as a guest artist faculty member at Tisch in the dance department and in the Graduate Acting Program.

With a reputation as a powerhouse director in what has traditionally been a male-dominated field, Giovanna frequently selects works to showcase our world’s diversity. She often produces and directs world premieres of new works that push the theater industry’s proverbial envelope. She’s also a proud member of the League of Professional Theatre Women.

What was also extraordinary about that program is that early in my junior year, I was having a very difficult time in school — so much so that I almost quit going to class. Well, to get selected as a Student Ambassador, applicants had to list their goals, both for college and beyond. My goals included pursuing a career in theater outside of Las Vegas, because at that time, there weren’t any realistic professional theater opportunities in Las Vegas.

So when Dr. Maxson learned I was having academic issues, he called me into his office, sat me down, read my goals back to me, and said, “Whatever is happening right now is not more important than your dreams and your goals. So let’s talk about what’s happening, let’s talk about how I can help you, and then let’s get you back on track.”

To have anyone do that would be remarkable, but to have the president of a university notice you enough and care enough to do what he did, it was astounding and life-altering. Because I realized he was right: My dreams were bigger than this moment, and this moment would not undo me. That’s when I got highly motivated academically, made up all the work I’d missed, and became aware that I probably would need to extend my education beyond UNLV if I wanted to achieve my career objectives. And that’s what led me to NYU.

Without Dr. Maxson’s intervention during that lovely half-hour meeting — without him basically telling me to get my act together — I wonder if I would’ve become the first college graduate in my family. I also wonder how different my life would look today.
RAISED BY A FAMILY THAT INSTILLED IN HER the values of community service and giving back, there really never was much doubt that Dr. Constance Brooks would opt for a career serving the greater good. The only real question was which fork in the public-affairs road would she choose: the public or private sector? Answer: Both.

Besides a six-year stint as a legislative liaison for Clark County, she was vice chancellor of the Nevada System of Higher Education from 2012-18, working as a senior government and community relations official. Then in January, she decided to take her talents to private business, accepting a position as vice president of regional government affairs for MGM Resorts International, providing oversight and management across the eight states.

As an adjunct professor for the School of Social Work, she’s helping to educate and inspire the next generation of public-affairs professionals. Her relationship with UNLV began after she earned her undergraduate degree in social work from Southern Illinois University. She received her master’s in Social Work in 2004, with a concentration in administrative practice and planning. She earned her a doctorate after completing research work that focused on the nexus between public policy and identity in politics.

Constance’s fierce dedication to improving the lives of others can be seen in her community advocacy work. She’s been involved with such organizations as Catholic Charities, the Clark County Citizens Advisory Committee, the Clark County Juvenile Justice Sister to Sister mentoring program, Nevada Humanities, the UNLV School of Social Work Advisory Board, and the UNLV College of Urban Affairs Alumni Board. Constance also served as a trustee for the Las Vegas-Clark County Library Board, and in 2018, Governor Brian Sandoval appointed her to serve on the Nevada Commission for Women.

Not surprisingly, Constance’s commitment to community has garnered numerous awards, including the 2005 UNLV Thomas Wilson Academic and Community Service Award and the 2008 Clark County New Generational Leadership Award. She is also a graduate of Emerge Nevada, the Clark County Leadership Forum, and Leadership Las Vegas.

WHAT SINGLE MOMENT OR EXPERIENCE AT UNLV HAD THE MOST PROFOND EFFECT ON YOU? While pursuing my master’s in social work, many of my classmates enjoyed practicum placements throughout the Las Vegas community. Much to my great fortune, my practicum placement occurred on campus at the UNLV Center for Urban Partnerships (CUP). Under the leadership of Dr. Ramona Denby Brinson, I learned more about the value of research as an essential advocacy tool for families, communities, organizations, and policy development. CUP provided applied research, program design and evaluation, and a host of other opportunities to unite the expertise of UNLV’s faculty with community leaders to help solve some of Nevada’s persistent urban issues.

Getting a first-hand look at community engagement and experiencing the enthusiasm around research proved to be quite pivotal in the trajectory of my career. Really, everything about my UNLV experience — from the education to my professors to my mentors — was instrumental in me becoming the public policy advocate that I am today.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A REBEL? UNLV’s history is steeped in bold and courageous moves that have shaped it into a unique and transformative academic center of excellence, one that’s responsive to the community and committed to fostering creativity and innovation within its students. A Rebel is someone who embodies the university’s ethos — someone who isn’t afraid to be bold or exhibit courage. To display Rebel Pride means to meet all of life’s challenges with audacity, utilizing the special platform of scholarship and service that a UNLV education provides.
IT’S TEMPTING TO LOOK AT THE RÉSUMÉ OF DR. NOELLE LEFFORGE and crack a joke about her being so infatuated with UNLV that she can’t stop coming back to campus. Except she’s never really left. Noelle arrived in the late 1990s to work toward her pre-med degree. In the span of eight years, after changing her major, Noelle received a trio of UNLV degrees, all in the field of psychology. After completing her undergraduate studies in 2002, she earned a master’s in psychology in 2007 and a doctorate in clinical psychology in 2010.

The following year, she officially joined the faculty of the UNLV clinical psychology doctoral program, where she trains graduate students to become highly competent health-service psychologists. Her responsibilities include developing and teaching clinical courses and providing clinical supervision. Noelle elected to play the role of student one more time when she began pursuing a second master’s degree, this one in health care administration. She completed that program in 2016 to become a rare four-time UNLV alumna.

As an instructor, she imparts her wisdom on such topics as principles and practice of psychotherapy, diversity issues in professional practice, group psychotherapy, and health professional skills. Beyond students, Noelle has provided guidance to fellow faculty members on how to approach student issues that pertain to mental health.

In 2014, Noelle became assistant director of a UNLV community mental health clinic known as The Partnership for Research, Assessment, Counseling, Therapy and Innovative Clinical Education — or The PRACTICE. She also serves as the diversity committee chair for UNLV’s psychology department; is part of the Mental and Behavioral Health Coalition; and is an active member of the Nevada Psychological Association, including serving as its legislative committee chair.

A Rebel through and through, Noelle remains involved with the Honors College and is an avid UNLV football fan.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A REBEL? When I think of UNLV, I think about possibility. We are “Rebels” in the sense that we aren’t just going to do something a particular way because that’s the way it’s always been done. Instead, we’re going to step back and do it the best way possible, even if it means taking a risk. Being a Rebel is also about having heart. I see so many people across our campus making a difference in the world, and they’re doing it in pursuit of real results, not for personal recognition.

UNLV is not about just being someone, but doing something. I’m always mindful of the many “Rebel” mentors in my life who molded me to respond to the directive, “You can’t” with “Oh yeah? Watch me!”

WHAT SINGLE MOMENT OR EXPERIENCE AT UNLV HAD THE MOST PROFOUN D EFFECT ON YOU? It would be impossible for me to narrow that down to a single moment. The first class I took was Dr. Chris Heavey’s version of Psychology 101 for the Honors College. About five years later, I ended up in Dr. Heavey’s office after I had mistakenly unenrolled in my doctoral program.... That began my journey into an entirely different life trajectory. Working with [Dr. Heavey and Dr. Russell Hurlburt], I gained an appreciation for knowing (with a capital “K”) about the human experience.

Another profound moment occurred on September 11, 2001. I was on my way to campus that day — driving the same exact route I take to this day — when I heard on the radio that the World Trade Center towers had been hit. It wasn’t until the end of my Cell Bio class that we heard that the towers had fallen. In that moment, I realized how important it was for me to remain on campus that day. I attended the vigil that evening and immediately said, “I have to get to campus to work.” The PRACTICE had services in place by noon that day.
COLLEEN WALTERS BIRCH

WILLIAM F. HARRAH COLLEGE OF HOSPITALITY ALUMNA OF THE YEAR

'99 BS Hotel Administration

COLLEEN WALTERS BIRCH WAS A SOPHOMORE AT WASHINGTON STATE when she decided to take some time off from school and find her life’s path. After a one-year stop in New York where she worked as a nanny, that path eventually led Colleen all the way back across the country to southwestern Alaska, where in 1992 she went to work as a bartender in a remote fishing village in Bristol Bay.

Four summers later, Colleen realized it was time to resume her education — just not back at Washington State. Rather, the Seattle native packed up her things, headed south, and enrolled in what is now UNLV’s Harrah College of Hospitality. That move altered the course of her life. While pursuing her bachelor’s degree in hotel administration, Colleen worked full time at Caesars Palace as a front-desk agent. After graduating, she earned her first management position in housekeeping, and from there, she rapidly rose through the ranks at several gaming and hospitality companies, eventually landing at The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas. Colleen helped open the property in 2010 and remains there a decade later, currently in the role of senior vice president for revenue optimization.

Colleen also has a secondary, albeit unofficial, role: that of dedicated mentor. Whether it’s junior members of the Cosmopolitan’s staff or students in UNLV’s Hospitality Hall, Colleen shares her insights and expertise about the industry she adores. And, clearly, it’s an industry that adores her right back, given the lengthy list of hospitality honors she’s received. In 2010, Colleen received the Rising Star Award from Global Gaming Women; in 2015, she was named one of the Great Women of Gaming and was recognized as a Revenue Management Professional of the Year by Hospitality Sales and Marketing Association International; in 2016, the same organization named her one of their Top 25 Extraordinary Minds in Hospitality Sales, Marketing, and Revue Optimization; and in 2018, Vegas Inc. named her a “Woman to Watch.”

Back at her alma mater, Colleen received the College of Hospitality’s John Yaskin Mentor Award for Excellence in 2017. Colleen lends a charitable hand to such local organizations as the Junior Achievement of Southern Nevada and the Las Vegas Rescue Mission. She also supports Leadership Las Vegas, a program from which she graduated in 2017.

WHAT CLASS MADE YOU REALIZE YOU HAD CHOSEN THE RIGHT PATH?
I vividly remember walking into Beam Hall on the first day of school and entering the classroom of Dean Jerry Vallen. Not only was he the dean of the Hotel College, he was a world-renowned professor. So there I was, learning Lodging Operations from the man who literally wrote the book on the subject (a fact he often reminded us about in his own delightful way). The knowledge I gained in Dr. Vallen’s class helped me connect the dots between the theory behind service operations and the practical experience I was getting as a front-desk agent at Caesars Palace. It absolutely was the pivotal experience.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A REBEL?
Rebels are go-getters — focused, determined, proud of where they came from, and fiercely independent in the way they accomplish their goals. These qualities are prominent in me and my fellow alumni, and I see these same qualities in today’s students when I visit campus. They’re already learning that hard work and dedication, along with a Rebel spirit, can bring endless opportunities.

WHAT’S YOUR MESSAGE TO THE UNLV ALUMNI OF TOMORROW?
The most successful people are those who go out and make things happen. They don’t wait for others to give them the green light, and they don’t expect others to do the hard work for them. They’re determined and laser-focused on their personal success, as well as the success of the team around them.
DR. ANNE R. LINDSAY

SCHOOL OF INTEGRATED HEALTH SCIENCES ALUMNA OF THE YEAR

'88 MS Health Education/Exercise Physiology

'15 PhD Public Health

DR. ANNE LINDSAY’S COMMITMENT TO IMPROVING PUBLIC HEALTH AND WELLNESS stretches back more than three decades. After receiving her first bachelor’s degree in ergonomics and physical education from the University of California—Santa Barbara in 1982, Anne made the trek to the desert and enrolled at UNLV and became a research assistant and later an adjunct faculty member from 1986 to 1994.

She worked for several YMCA locations in Southern California for 11 years and was the health promotion director at the Nevada National Security Site from 1990 to 1997. From there, she started HealthWorks, a health-and-wellness business whose clients included both the Florence McClure Women’s Correctional Center and Choices Group.

In 2006, she re-entered the world of academia as an associate professor of public health & exercise physiology at the southern campus of UNR’s Nevada Cooperative Extension. She continues in that role today, conducting research and promoting health-and-wellness programs focused on childhood obesity, particularly health, nutrition, and physical literacy in preschool children, and gender-responsive education for women and girls in correctional settings who suffer from eating pathologies, body-image issues, obesity, substance-use disorders, and addiction. Currently, she’s involved with WestCare Women and Children, the Nevada Department of Corrections, Judges Specialty Courts such as the Youth Offender Court, and Women in Need Court, among other institutions.

Several years into her work with Nevada Cooperative Extension, Anne returned to UNLV and earned her Ph.D. in public health. Over the years she’s received numerous awards for her work and has served on several national committees related to preschool health and adult energy-balance issues, including the Nevada State Early Childhood Obesity Task Force, the Nevada State Dietary Advisory Group, the National Extension Opioid Crisis Response Team, and the National Institute of Food & Agriculture.

Besides being a dogged public health advocate, Anne plays acoustic and electric guitar and sings for ChickBand, an all-female Christian rock band that performs and ministers to various groups in Las Vegas, nationally, and abroad. She continues to support the university by working to raise money for the Dr. Larry Golding Endowment Fund.

HOW DID YOUR TIME AT UNLV POSITIVELY IMPACT YOUR CAREER?

Las Vegas was relatively small when I arrived from California, and what impressed me then — and now — were the strong ties between education and community outreach. The opportunities UNLV provided me through advancing research in a community setting really paved the next couple decades of my life. Dr. Larry Golding, was instrumental in my growth, as he not only offered me numerous opportunities to collaborate and conduct research on community and nationally based projects, but he launched the first translational journal in the field of sports medicine and exercise — in other words, bridging the gap between science and practice. These experiences would forever change how I viewed the role of science and academics.

WHAT’S YOUR MESSAGE TO REBELS?

At the heart of “Rebel Pride” is collaboration, cooperation, and building alliances. Change doesn’t happen in a vacuum, and we don’t solve problems by taking sides and yelling louder. We need to listen to each other and come up with creative solutions. Opportunity and success come from learning from the past, recognizing strengths, identifying gaps, and engaging stakeholders and successful partners in what you bring to the table for the good of the whole community. As a UNLV graduate and current UNR faculty, I’m passionate about collaboration and teamwork. I believe no person, organization, or institution is at its best when it stands alone.
LEAD WITH INTEGRITY, SERVE WITH COMPASSION. John, ‘05 BA Criminal Justice, ‘10 JD, served as a combat medic in the Army for four years, getting promoted to sergeant in his final year, during which he was a squad leader for nine other combat medics. After returning to civilian life, John decided to continue his education, first at the College of Southern Nevada, then at UNLV, where he majored in criminal justice. During his first year on campus in 2002, he also continued his military service as a member of the Nevada National Guard.

Two years after earning his undergraduate degree, John returned to campus in pursuit of his law degree at the William S. Boyd School of Law. In 2010, he was selected as the graduate school speaker for UNLV’s commencement.

Upon passing the Nevada State Bar, John began his legal career in 2011 as an associate attorney with the Urban Law Firm. Seven months later, he joined the Clark County public defender’s office, where for more than seven years he has championed mental-health reform within the criminal justice system.

John’s legal work has been recognized by Legal Elite, a Nevada business magazine that named him a Top Attorney in the state both in 2016 and 2018. And his commitment to service even stretches into politics, as he ran for the Nevada Assembly in 2016 and currently works as a lobbyist during legislative sessions in Carson City.

Throughout his busy career, John has remained tightly connected to UNLV. He has undertaken multiple leadership roles with the Boyd School of Law’s alumni chapter, including serving as president in 2015-16. During those two years, he worked to launch the law school’s annual golf tournament, which is now one of the chapter’s primary sources for revenue and alumni engagement.

John also does philanthropic work with the Big Brothers/Big Sisters program, the Boys & Girls Club, and Aly’s Prom Closet. And he isn’t the only one in his household who bleeds Rebel red. His wife, Leslie, ‘06 BA Political Science, ‘09 JD, currently works for the United States District Court in Nevada.

WHAT MOMENT AT UNLV HAD THE MOST PROFOUND EFFECT ON YOU?
During my first year at UNLV I struggled a bit to assimilate. While my classes and instructors were great, I just didn’t feel like I was fitting in. That all changed when I walked up to the recruiting table for the Delta Chi fraternity. I became a Student Ambassador, a Student Senator for the College of Urban Affairs, and most importantly, I finally felt a genuine connection to the pulse of the campus.

Of course, college is about learning a course of study. But it’s also about enriching your soul, and about becoming a better, more mature person through relationships and experiences that are difficult to replicate outside of the campus context. Joining Delta Chi not only positively impacted my educational experience, it changed my life. The sense of brotherhood and the relationships that were forged created friendships that have continued.

WHAT’S YOUR MESSAGE TO CURRENT AND FUTURE STUDENTS?
My hope is they approach the world’s problems with mercy, compassion, a sense of justice, and a willingness to get proximate to the people and the problems in our community. I want Rebels to fight fear and hate with love, and to be willing to do what’s right even when it’s unpopular. And I want them to remember this quote from Bryan Stevenson, a legal professor, social-justice activist, and the founder of the Equal Justice Initiative: “Hopelessness is the enemy of justice. Injustice prevails where hopelessness persists.”

This is why the world needs Rebels who are willing to stand with the poor, the powerless, and the voiceless to make those voices heard — Rebels who will provide hope and fight against injustice and intolerance whenever it rears its ugly head.
ARMED WITH THE HIGH HONORS ENGLISH degree he earned from UNLV in 1985, Greg Morris could’ve taken his career in a dozen different directions: communications professional, literary scholar, public-relations specialist, writer, editor. But more than anything, he felt the pull of the law, so shortly after graduation, Greg bolted for the University of Texas School of Law. Three years later, with his juris doctorate in hand, the Reno native returned to his home state, where he took and passed the Nevada State Bar exam.

Quarter-century later, Morris remains Managing Partner of Morris Estate Planning Attorneys, which today specializes in estate planning, probate law, trust administration, asset protection planning, gift planning, and business succession planning. Greg also has been a lecturer and presenter for the State Bar of Nevada on business succession planning, advanced estate planning, and wills, trusts, and estate planning. He also put his English degree to good use, and co-authored Wills, Trusts, and Estate Planning, which was published by the Nevada State Bar.

Although it’s been nearly 35 years since Greg walked the UNLV campus as a student, his commitment to his alma mater has never wavered. In addition to serving on the UNLV Foundation Advisory Board since 2011, Greg is a member of the university’s Planned Giving Professional Advisors Council, a post he’s held since 2002. He’s also a Dean’s Associates member for the College of Liberal Arts; a former Silver President’s Association member; and he recently volunteered to speak about estate planning and planned giving at the Emeritus Faculty luncheon.

Among Greg’s honors, he was named the UNLV Foundation’s 1998 Charitable Planner of the Year, and the following year he won the Foundation’s Chairman’s Award. Greg’s love for UNLV has even filtered down to his family, as he and his wife, Julie, have five children, including two sons who graduated from the UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law. Both now practice probate law at their father’s firm.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A REBEL AND HAVE “REBEL PRIDE”? I raised my children in Las Vegas and spent many an evening with them attending UNLV basketball and football games. But I really had no idea the amount of Rebel pride these outings instilled in my kids until they graduated high school and left the state to pursue their undergraduate degrees. On several occasions, UNLV’s basketball or football teams played against their university, and they would send me pictures of themselves decked out not in their school’s colors but rather Rebel red. Instead of rooting for their own school to win, they were cheering for UNLV!

Later, two of my sons returned to Las Vegas and decided to follow in their old man’s footsteps into law. To what law school did they apply, get accepted and eventually graduate from? UNLV’s Boyd School of Law. So it goes without saying that this university has been an integral part of my and my family’s lives, which is why we continue to support it in any way we can.

Speaking of that support, your commitment to UNLV includes several generous gifts. Why has it been important for you to give back to your alma mater?

It’s pretty simple: I want to see UNLV continue to grow and develop as a university, because I know the positive influence an outstanding university can have on an entire community. And as a proud alum, it’s important for me to be at the forefront of that growth and development. I want to use my abilities as a professional in this community to generate support and interest for UNLV, through gifts and endowments that will allow future students the opportunity to attend this great university and obtain an education that will open doors for their future employment.
**A DISTINGUISHED CAREER IN NURSING** has taken Robin Dail around the globe. Currently the associate dean for Faculty Affairs and a professor at the University of South Carolina College of Nursing, Robin’s research helped revolutionize the field of neonatal care. And it all started at UNLV.

Her research on thermal care for preterm infants has helped improve the health of newborns all over the world. Robin’s research has revolutionized neonatal care, and she’s presented that research both nationally and as far away as Ireland, France, Australia, and Rwanda. Her work has been incorporated into the American Academy of Pediatrics’ best practices, and it has been recognized by the Council of Advancement of Nursing Science (CANS).

After earning her associates of nursing degree from UNLV in 1981, Robin quickly became one of the country’s leading research nurses. She received a master’s degree in nursing from East Carolina University and a doctorate from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She went on to serve as a registered nurse before taking up the mantel of educator, teaching at Chapel Hill and later Duke University.

Robin has earned numerous awards and accolades throughout her remarkable career. She was named a Galaxo Scholar in 2003; a Robert Wood Johnson Nurse Faculty Scholar from 2010 to 2013, an Amy V. Cockcroft Leadership Fellow from 2016 to 2017, and an American Academy of Nursing Fellow in 2014. She also earned a March of Dimes graduate nursing scholarship in 2004, and last year was awarded a staggering $2.8 million research grant from the National Institutes of Health and the National Institute of Nursing Research.

While her work as a researcher and educator occupies much of her time, Robin remains committed to paying it forward, most notably as the current councilor-at-large for the Council of Advancement of Nursing Science. Robin is a member of numerous organizations, including the Southern Nursing Research Society, Sigma Theta Tau International Nursing Honor Society, the National Association of Neonatal Nurses, and the National League of Nurses.

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**WHAT EXPERIENCE DURING YOUR TIME AT UNLV HAD THE MOST PROFOND IMPACT ON YOUR LIFE AND CAREER?**

As a young nursing student, I spent a day observing infants in the neonatal intensive care unit at Sunrise Hospital. It was a day that forever changed my life. Watching nurses, nurse practitioners, and physicians working together as a team to care for Las Vegas’ most fragile citizens — premature infants struggling to live — that was the moment I knew I would pursue a career in neonatal nursing. And I have done just that, devoting my entire working life to this extremely important field.

But that’s not all that defines me, as I’m not your typical mom, grandma, or academic. For instance, I’ve climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, circumvented Iceland on a motorcycle, hiked the Alps, and SCUBA-dived off the Cayman Islands more than 50 times. I’ve also flown in helicopters to transport premature babies, been a National Institute of Health researcher and an associate dean of faculty. Like a true Rebel, I’m a diverse human being who loves and appreciates diversity in others. And my hope is to someday live in a world where everyone understands, values, and respects the differences in others.
WORKING IN PUBLIC HEALTH was always Tracy Donnelly’s path, but it was as a college administrator where she truly found her calling. As Dean of Workforce Training and Continuing Education at Northern Lights College in Dawson Creek, British Columbia, Canada, Tracy is an international advocate for public health.

At Northern Lights, she has created systems to support access for members of indigenous communities to go to college; created a licensed practical nurse program; developed unique training opportunities for those 55 and older; managed 10 credentialed health science programs; and created and managed multiple education initiatives.

Having started her journey at Southern Oregon University, Tracy earned a bachelor’s in athletic training and health education before receiving a certificate of teacher education from the University of Idaho in 1993. In 1995, she relocated to Las Vegas and took a job with the Clark County School District as a health educator and department chair, working with at-risk groups while also developing and implementing health-and-wellness programs for diverse students.

Shortly after relocating to Las Vegas, Tracy enrolled at UNLV and began pursuing her master’s in public health at the School of Community Health Sciences. During her time at UNLV, she studied the lead levels of imported candies, and when certain candies were determined to have toxic levels, she worked to get them removed from local grocery stores to protect the community. Tracy also organized a health-and-wellness seminar for Native American community college students to show them the higher-education options available to them in the fields of science and public health.

After earning her master’s of public health from UNLV in 2007, Tracy was invited to share her research results and work as a volunteer in the FDA laboratory in 2008, then in 2011, she received the Community Lead Poisoning Prevention Award. An accomplished grant writer, Tracy is part of the National Institutes of Health grant-writing team and has authored grants to support health-care education, community-health engagement, and students seeking Ph.D.-level research positions.

Tracy says that working toward her master’s at UNLV profoundly changed her view on the power of education, and she’s consistently advocated that message throughout her career. “I hold precious the ideals of public health as a lifelong calling to create better outcomes, both in our individual communities and across the global landscape,” she says. “And I know for a fact that education changes lives.”

WHAT MOMENT OR EXPERIENCE DURING YOUR TIME AT UNLV HAD THE MOST PROFOUND IMPACT ON YOUR LIFE AND CAREER?

I was sitting in a lab, surrounded by piles of candy, and while that may sound like every 8-year-old’s Halloween dream, it was serious business. I had the privilege of working with Drs. Shawn Gerstenberger and Chad Cross, trying to find ways to screen large batches of imported candy for lead contamination. Knowing that if we found a solution it could stop a child from eating tainted candy, it was life-changing for me. I became, and remain, convinced that our actions large and small really do impact lives. Even when we don’t have the answers, we have a responsibility to try our best, no matter the obstacles — like a true Rebel. In fact, as Rebels, we should be looking to challenge the status quo by rising up, creating meaningful change and making a difference. Now, more than ever, the world needs the heart of a Rebel.
**IF YOU EVER HAPPEN TO FIND YOURSELF** in the same room as Dr. Travis Huxman when a life sciences trivia game breaks out, you would be wise to do one of two things: Get him on your team immediately or run out of the room. Indeed, it would seem virtually impossible to stump Travis with any question related to biology — unless that question was: “Which do you prefer: Studying life sciences or teaching the subject to others?” Because he’s done both, with equal accomplishment.

Currently a professor in the department of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of California, Irvine, Travis began laying the groundwork for a career as a physiological ecologist at Cal State University, San Bernardino, where he earned undergraduate and graduate degrees in 1993 and 1996, respectively. Shortly after finishing his master’s degree, Travis traded one arid climate for another, enrolling at UNLV to pursue his doctorate in biological science. During his time at UNLV, he served as both a graduate assistant and research associate.

After completing his Ph.D. in 2000, Travis headed for the University of Colorado on a post-doctorate fellowship before returning to the desert at the University of Arizona, where he dove head-first into his career. In addition to working as a professor, Travis served as the director of Biosphere 2, a renowned, large-scale earth science facility that also plays a key role in science education for the public. While at Arizona, he also was the co-director of the Arizona Center for STEM teachers, helping to oversee a significant increase in the number of students — particularly under-represented students — entering the STEM fields.

Among his numerous accomplishments, Travis has authored more than 150 peer-reviewed publications and been awarded nearly 30 grants totaling more than $7 million. He’s also been elected fellow of the Ecological Society of America and served as chairman of the Scientific Advisory Committee of the National Ecological Observatory Network, a prominent observatory with the National Science Foundation. Furthermore, he’s been honored by UC Irvine for Outstanding University Service; Cal State San Bernardino as a Distinguished Alumnus; UNLV for Dissertation Research Excellence; and the Ecological Society of America, which bestowed upon him the Forrest Shreve Award for Desert Research.

Perhaps most significantly, Travis has been a dedicated mentor his entire career, offering support to more than 100 undergraduate and dozens of post-graduate and post-doctoral life science researchers.

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**WHAT’S YOUR MESSAGE TO CURRENT AND FUTURE REBELS AS IT RELATES TO YOUR CHOSEN FIELD?**

I would like to see Rebel students, the university, and all of Southern Nevada front and center in the effort to find forward-thinking, sustainable, inclusive, and equitable solutions for the environmental challenges facing our planet. Students who are finding their passions and honing their skills in a place like Las Vegas, at an institution like UNLV, have the opportunity to ask important questions about the future: How will we live with less water? How can we support a tourism industry when transportation will change? How can we be inclusive and avoid entrenching inequalities during a transition to a new way of living? By helping to answer these questions, students today and tomorrow can play a big part in shaping the direction society takes.
Every gift to UNLV makes a difference in the lives of our students and faculty. These giving societies were established to acknowledge and thank our loyal donors.

**BECOME SCARLET LOYAL**
Alumni hold a special place in our hearts. Financial support from alumni help fund programs for students and alumni. To become a Scarlet Loyal donor, contribute $100 or more cumulatively each fiscal year to the fund or funds of your choice at UNLV.

To learn more, visit unlv.edu/scarletloyal

**SCARLET STREAK**
Scarlet Streak, signifies that you, one of our loyal donors is “on a streak” – after giving any amount to UNLV for two consecutive calendar years or more to any fund or funds across the campus. Each calendar year we will recognize your continued generosity.

To learn more, visit unlv.edu/scarletstreak

**1957 SOCIETY**
Drawing inspiration from the year UNLV was founded in 1957, we honor leadership level donors with this society name. Leadership gifts are critical to UNLV’s success, now and in the future. UNLV established the 1957 Society to recognize donors contributing a total of $1,000 or more annually to any UNLV fund or funds.

To learn more, visit unlv.edu/1957Society

**REBEL ATHLETIC FUND**
Drive for 5 is the comprehensive philanthropic campaign to double the number of Rebel Athletic Fund (RAF) members to more than 5,000 and embark and advance the Athletic Department’s mission to support student-athletes, graduate leaders, win championships and excel in all things.

To learn more, visit rebelathleticfund.com
A LITTLE MORE THAN A DECADE INTO HER PUBLIC RELATIONS CAREER, Sarah Thornton made a bold life decision — some might even call it a gamble: She stopped working for others and began working for herself. A dozen years later, it’s clear that her gamble paid off.

Since opening her own eponymous boutique PR firm in 2007, Sarah and her team have delivered millions of dollars of earned news placements for an ever-growing list of local and national clients. Skilled in media relations across many industries, Sarah’s firm specializes in professional services, health care, and real estate. It’s in the latter industry where Sarah has truly made her mark, having represented Southern Nevada’s largest construction equipment dealership (Cashman Equipment Co.) and largest master-planned developer (Del Webb Corp.). Her firm represents clients in Southern California, Phoenix, and Denver, including Berkshire Hathaway HomeServices Properties (for Arizona, California, and Nevada), Century Communities, FEA Consulting Engineers, Naqvi Injury Law, and Lake Las Vegas.

While running her own firm is more than a full-time job, Sarah has always found time to give back, to both her community and her alma mater. For instance, she consulted on the UNLVIP membership program and website rewrite project in 2012; she frequently returns to campus to talk PR with current students; she assists the campus chapter of the Public Relations Society of America; and since 2016, she’s been the Regional Network Coordinator for the Denver chapter of the UNLV Alumni Association.

Beyond UNLV, Sarah supports Big Brothers Big Sisters of Southern Nevada, HELP of Southern Nevada, Opportunity Village and the Southern Nevada Chapter of the National Association of Women’s Business Owners. She also serves on the advisory board for the Cure 4 The Kids Foundation and recently concluded a two-year stint on the board of directors for Kenzi’s Causes, a children’s-based charity in Denver. Among her many honors and awards, Sarah was named 2018 Volunteer of the Year by the Clark County Bar Association and Public Relations Principal of the year at the 2011 Electronic Media Awards.

WHAT EXPERIENCE AT UNLV HAD A PROFOUND EFFECT ON YOUR CAREER?

There certainly were many, but if I had to pinpoint just one, it would be my Ethics in Media class, taught by the wonderful Mary Hausch. Thankfully, Mary’s passion for ethics extends into every area of communications. Early in my career, I quickly came to realize just how vital Mary’s teachings were, as my profession is one in which ethical lines are sometimes blurred. I was also lucky enough to get to know Mary on a personal level, which allowed me to see that she’s as zealous an advocate for her students as she is for journalism. I hope I’m a better communicator and student advocate because of her.

HOW SO YOU DEFINE “REBEL PRIDE”?

To me, Rebel Pride extends far beyond UNLV’s campus — something I didn’t realize until I moved to Denver in 2012. While there, I met other UNLV alums and came to understand just how much passion people have for this tremendous university. Of course, that pride was always there for me, but it wasn’t something that I thought existed much outside of my hometown.

Eventually, I became the representative for the UNLV alumni chapter in Denver, and through that group we attended games, got together to socialize, and even visited the School of Engineering’s entry in the global Solar Decathlon competition. More than anything, I was able to experience Rebel Pride in a way I had never experienced before.
JUST HOW VAST AND SIGNIFICANT WERE DR. CAROL C. HARTER’S ACCOMPLISHMENTS as UNLV's seventh president? The fact she made history as the university's longest-serving and first female president is more or less a footnote.

After serving as president of State University of New York at Geneseo, Carol officially arrived on Maryland Parkway in July 1995. One of the most ambitious items near the top of her initial to-do list: create the first accredited law school in Nevada history. It took many long hours of hard work and lobbying, but eventually she gained the support of both the state Legislature and several key community players, and in 1998, UNLV’s William S. Boyd School of Law welcomed its charter class.

Along with the law school, Carol was at the helm for the creation of the School of Dental Medicine, the Greenspun College of Urban Affairs, the Women's Research Institute of Nevada, the School of Architecture and the Lied Library. Under Carol’s watch, UNLV launched 100 new degree programs, including 60 graduate programs.

Among other impressive achievements, Carol oversaw UNLV’s transformation into a student-centered university with a renewed commitment to serving the needs of all students in an urban atmosphere; she advocated for top-quality research and education for students; she helped enhance UNLV’s reputation as a trusted community partner; she launched three new women’s sports programs; and she spearheaded the “Invent the Future” campaign, the university’s comprehensive 50th anniversary initiative that launched in 2002 and continued through 2008.

During Carol’s 11-year leadership run, UNLV’s student body nearly doubled, including significant increases in women and minority enrollments. She also emphasized the recruitment and hiring of highly qualified faculty and witnessed the construction or renovation of more than 20 buildings. Most significantly, she led the charge to increase UNLV’s academic profile so that it would one day qualify as a Top Tier research institution. Just last December, that goal was achieved when the Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education designated UNLV as R1, a “very high research activity” institution.

Carol stepped down as president in 2006 and went on to serve as the founder and first executive director of UNLV’s newly created Black Mountain Institute, a literary center that took her back to her roots as an English professor. The BMI eventually was renamed the Beverly Rogers, Carol C. Harter Black Mountain Institute. Her name is also on the Carol C. Harter Classroom Building Complex, where most of UNLV’s general education courses are taught.

During her decades in academia, Carol shattered many a glass ceiling. In fact, she was the first female in each of the six administrative positions she held at three universities, including serving as president at two of them.

Now living in San Diego with her husband, Michael, Carol remains connected to UNLV through philanthropic efforts. The couple also supports several Nevada-based entities, including BMI, UNLV athletics, Touro University’s Autism Center, and the Guinn Center for Policy Priorities.

“When it comes to career options, there are no boundaries for UNLV graduates. And that really stems from the culture of the West, which is so much more egalitarian in lots of ways.”
OF ALL YOUR MANY ACCOMPLISHMENTS AS UNLV PRESIDENT, WHICH ONE STANDS OUT AS THE SUBSTANTIAL?

It’s hard to press just one button. Certainly, getting approval for the law school, which took so long and was so difficult for so many different and competing reasons, was a major moment. But so was the creation of the dental school and the architecture school, as well as all the buildings for which we were able to secure construction funding. All those things were important.

But as I look back right now, what might have been the most important moment was actually existential in a way: In 1995-96, my first year, we created a planning council consisting of faculty, staff, and student representatives. Our mission was to establish goals that were few, but persuasive, and we came up with 10 major ones. The first had to do with improving undergraduate education, but the second was to steadily increase the university’s profile so that it would be recognized as a top-level research institution — first at the Tier 2 level and eventually getting to Tier 1 by 2010.

At the time, 15 years didn’t seem like too short or too long of a time period to accomplish it. Now it took us until 2018 to finally do it, but that was a goal that started to be articulated by our planning council as far back in 1995 — they knew how important that was to a university’s reputation. And to finally achieve it, even if we didn’t hit our initial target date, was a major milestone. So in a longitudinal way, it wasn’t a particular moment in time. Rather, it was part of an important planning process by representatives of the entire university who were looking toward the future and knowing that UNLV should be a major, major institution. And achieving Tier 1 status, becoming a high-level research institution, was a big part of that.

So in the long-term, that was probably the most important thing. But in the short-term, those exciting moments when you create a college and the Regents and state Legislature approve it, and when you raise the first major donor gifts, each of those was fun and significant, too.

What’s the one thing you did as UNLV president that kind of went under the radar, yet brought you great pride?

We added three women’s sports programs, which most people either don’t remember or don’t acknowledge — I don’t know which. But that was a delight, because when I got to UNLV, athletics was really out of balance — the university really needed more women’s sports. Of course, it meant coming up with more budget and rearranging some of the budget in men’s sports to make it happen, but really, to meet the provisions of Title IX, it was something that had to be done. I didn’t only do it for that reason, but it clearly was incumbent upon us to change from the culture we had previously to bolster women’s sports.

AFTER SERVING AS PRESIDENT, YOU CO-CREATED THE BLACK MOUNTAIN INSTITUTE. WHAT’S IT LIKE TO SEE IT THRIVING MORE THAN A DECADE LATER?

Thanks to the incredible philanthropy of Richard Wiley, Gerry Bomotti, Chris Hudgins, and Glenn Schaeffer, we created a literary center in the middle of what some people called a cultural desert, although it never was that. When it was approved by the Regents, I was overjoyed and began the first of nine years building something that has become very special to UNLV and Las Vegas. When the late Jim Rogers first pledged $10 million to the center, then bequeathed another $20 million when he died, I knew the Institute would thrive into the future, which it certainly has done with the incredible support of Beverly Rogers, a literary person and philanthropist in her own right. Serving as the Institute’s first Executive Director allowed me to return to my own academic roots and was a most satisfying way to spend the last years of an incredibly rewarding career.
KENNETH W. BAHL

’96 BS Health Care Administration

IF YOU’VE ATTENDED A UNLV ALUMNI FUNCTION IN THE PAST DECADE, odds are Ken Bahl’s fingerprints have been on it in some way. Since graduating with his degree in Health Care Administration in 1996, Ken has remain closely connected to his alma mater, including volunteering on the board of the Alumni Association beginning in 2008.

In addition to serving on numerous committees — including events, membership, marketing, and board development — Ken did a stint as Alumni Association board president from February 2014 to January 2016. Not only does the lifetime member of the Alumni Association continue to attend many alumni events, but he’s always quick to lend a hand to support staff in charge of running the events.

When he’s not giving back to his alma mater, Ken focuses on what has been a very successful career in the health-care industry. Currently, he’s the executive vice president of Custom Benefit Consultants, a firm that supports consumers, corporations, providers, and other stakeholders across the broad health-insurance spectrum. A man of many hats, Ken is also the president of Las Vegas-based management solutions company Control Source, Inc.

Proving his never-ending devotion to UNLV’s alumni, Ken offers this bit of practical advice for recent graduates preparing to join the workforce in their chosen field: Do exhaustive research on your industry, and learn all you can about potential employers before walking into an interview. In other words, your homework doesn’t end on Graduation Day. In fact, it’s only just beginning.

“... if forced to pick one favorite memory, it would have to be watching the Rebels defeat UNR at Sam Boyd Stadium my junior year.”
**WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE MEMORY FROM YOUR YEARS AS A UNLV STUDENT?**

It's extremely difficult to pick just one. Speaking broadly, I can tell you that being an undergrad was a wonderful time in my life, a time of tremendous growth and discovery, and I'm forever grateful to have gone through that process at UNLV. I always felt a tremendous sense of optimism on campus and the potential to chart a path, and my time at the university set me on a trajectory that shaped my career. The access to resources, mentoring opportunities, and practicum experience I gained at UNLV armed me with the confidence to move forward into my career field. All that said, if forced to pick one favorite memory, it would have to be watching the Rebels defeat UNR at Sam Boyd Stadium my junior year.

**WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO SEE CURRENT AND FUTURE REBELS ACHIEVE?**

I've witnessed a major trajectory of growth over the past 25 years in Southern Nevada, and many UNLV alumni have contributed greatly to that growth. So I sincerely hope that future alumni continue along the same path and commit to making a difference in this community. Considering the university's impressive evolution in recent years with the additions of a law school, dental school, and medical school — not to mention becoming a top-tier research university — the next generation of Rebels will have boundless opportunities to make a name for themselves both here and around the world. And, of course, I want to see future Rebels continue to outpace and outshine that school up north!
THE ROGERS NAME HAS BEEN SYNONYMOUS WITH SOUTHERN NEVADA for decades, particularly as it relates to philanthropy and education. And right there at the forefront has been Beverly Rogers. Along with her late husband James “Jim” Rogers, Beverly established The Rogers Foundation in 2014 to channel the family’s charitable efforts into public education, literacy, and the arts.

After receiving her undergraduate degree from UNLV while working full time, Beverly embarked on a career in radio and television communications. She married Jim in 1997 and continued her career with Intermountain West Communications. Later, she returned for her 2006 master’s degree in English.

A self-proclaimed bibliophile and recognized expert in Victorian publishing practices, Beverly has helped fund numerous literary and arts projects throughout the community. Perhaps her greatest contribution is to be found in her collaboration with former UNLV President Carol Harter and ongoing support of the now-named Beverly Rogers, Carol C. Harter Black Mountain Institute (BMI).

BMI opened in 2006 with the goal of expanding poetry and fiction curricula. With the Rogers Foundation support, UNLV has been able to expand its number of graduate assistants, offer a generous fellowship program for emerging professional writers, and bring internationally recognized intellectuals to Las Vegas for public events and residencies.

Rogers’ legacy can be felt all across her alma mater. UNLV’s first library, named in her honor after its remodeling, now houses the Honors College, English department, and BMI. She has established several scholarships to support postgraduate education in honor of her brother, Donald Barlow, ’07 BA Interdisciplinary Studies.

In September, UNLV announced her latest gift: A $5 million endowment to enhance the rare books collection in UNLV University Libraries and to fund a curator position. In addition, Beverly will donate her personal book collection, valued at more than $1 million. The Rogers collection contains four sub-genres: Victorian First Editions; Joseph Conrad Firsts & Association copies; John Steinbeck Firsts & Association copies; and “Books About Books.” [Read “On the Hunt: Finding the Connections Behind the Collection”]

Of course, UNLV is not alone in benefiting from the generosity of Jim and Beverly Rogers. Their philanthropic efforts touch individuals near and far, from the University of Arizona to Kentucky Wesleyan University as well as the Smith Center for the Performing Arts.

NEARLY THREE DECADES AFTER EARNING YOUR BACHELOR’S DEGREE, YOU RETURNED IN 2006 TO GET YOUR MASTER’S IN ENGLISH. HOW DID THAT EXPERIENCE IMPACT YOU?

To return to campus at age 52 was a prospect that brought with it both excitement and more than a little anxiety. My internal conversations included many questions with unknown answers: Could I retain information? Would I be viewed as an outcast by classmates? Would I sound foolish participating in a discussion? Much to my delight, I quickly discovered that I could indeed retain information, and I did feel like I belonged. That’s because the program was populated with students of all ages, including many working outside academia, some already teaching, and a few who were there for the same reason as I: the exquisite pleasure of learning.

“My relationship with UNLV is not transactional; it is relational. I am engaged and connected for the rest of my life.”
I not only remember the first time I joined in on a discussion, but I remember every subsequent time I did so. These are the profound memories that stay with me today because they’re the moments my self-consciousness and insecurities slipped away. When the professor prodded me to go deeper, when a classmate respectfully argued a point, or when another took my thought another step — that’s when I saw the genuine spirit of a cadre of individuals each other. No one judges. It was a support system unlike few others I’ve encountered. The bonds and friendships forged through my UNLV master’s experience continue to influence the thoughts and actions in many of my endeavors today. So much so that, were it possible, I’d time-travel to the seminar room on the sixth floor of Flora Dungan Humanities Building and shout out a big ‘thank you’ to every lover of literature who taught me what it means to be openminded.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A REBEL?
As a lifelong student of the humanities, I am a rebel in a rather unconventional sense. Most importantly, I rebel against the stereotypical notion of Las Vegas as it’s often perceived from the outside — that is, as a city that thrives on debauchery, with little or no cultural and educational infrastructures to spawn future generations of leaders, entrepreneurs, builders, and thinkers. That’s why I’ve made it my life’s goal to help raise the cultural barometer of our community through philanthropic endeavors that stimulate long-term change and generate exponential benefit.

Many of the undertakings of change are channeled through The Rogers Foundation, where we offer scholarships to high school seniors, grants to K-12 public schools, sponsor an awards program for Clark County’s public-school teachers, and support CORE, a nonprofit model that transforms the lives of under-resourced youth.

In addition, my work toward generating long-term change ranges from sponsoring local documentary filmmakers, to supporting various empowerment programs for writers and speakers, to championing leaders in the realms of arts, culture, and education.

I am proud to be a UNLV graduate and grateful to have the opportunity to express that Rebel Pride in each of my daily thoughts and actions. My relationship with UNLV is not transactional; it is relational. I am engaged and connected for the rest of my life.

WHAT’S YOUR MESSAGE TO CURRENT AND FUTURE REBELS?
More than anything, it’s that the value of your degree in the future directly correlates to what you do today. All of your achievements — as a student, as a citizen, in your occupation, in your avocation — become part of the notion that “rising tide that lifts all boats,” an adage that bears as much meaning now as when first proclaimed in 1963.

Your education will provide you with the wherewithal to think independently and to take advantage of available resources, as well as offer you the ability to analyze, research, stretch, and communicate. Your college experience also will open your eyes to the benefit of imagination. Don’t be afraid to use it. Engage with one person, your neighborhood, or beyond. See opportunity when challenged, seize opportunity to build on your dreams, and provide opportunity to those who need a lift.

Finally, never forget that a Rebel acts. So act intentionally, forthrightly, and honestly. If you align your passion with all of your endeavors, you can’t help but make the world better.
RebelAdventures
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