PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION
OF DR. KIRK E. PETERSON
President Peterson and family joined by the Presidential Ambassadors following his inauguration as 23rd President of Chowan University.
cover story & theme

PRESIDENTIAL INAUGURATION
It was a grand celebration as Dr. Kirk E. Peterson took the mantle as Chowan University’s 23rd President at his inauguration.

resilience
noun

1) the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness; 2) the ability of a substance or object to spring back into shape; elasticity. “the often remarkable resilience of the human spirit”

special features

AN EXTRAORDINARY WOMAN
The legacy of one ground-breaking woman continues to pay dividends.

WELL TOLD
Hobson Prize recipient Wiley Cash shares the secrets of a good story.

THE CHOWAN SPIRIT
Randy Harrell retires after a long and faithful career in service to the University.

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF JOY
Jennifer Zak Place radiates a contagious contentment across campus.
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This is our fifth issue of the *Chowanoka* magazine, and the eighth issue since I took over as editor and designer of your alumni magazine. I've been waiting all this time, and now it's finally my turn to write to you. One of the first things anyone learns about me is that I'm a big reader. This comes right after learning 1) I was born and raised in Texas, 2) I graduated from Baylor University, and 3) that I love Chowan University. I spend most of my free time with a book in my hand, and if I'm not reading books I'm probably talking about them. I reference and recommend them in almost every conversation and can't help prescribing books like medication for any and every need. It's helpful if I go ahead and disclose that up front.

Over the last several years, I've been captivated by the works of Brené Brown and am steadily making my way through everything she's written. She's a research professor at the University of Houston Graduate College of Social Work, a fellow Texan, and has devoted much of her career to the study of a concept she calls wholeheartedness. She describes it as "engaging in our lives from a place of worthiness and cultivating courage, compassion, and connection in our lives." Couldn't we all use a little more of that?

Brown studied wholehearted people to discover what they have in common. One of the key shared attributes she identified is resilience—the ability to overcome adversity and cope with stress and challenges in a way that allows us to move forward. She says resilience allows us to move through an experience without sacrificing our values, and to come out the other side with more courage, compassion, and connection than we had going into it. Based on that standard, I'd say Chowan University and her people are one of the best examples of resilience I've ever known.

Chowan has weathered some incredible challenges over her 170+ years, and yet she always manages to come out the other side more true to herself and her mission. From the day Chowan was founded with the (at the time) audacious notion of educating young women there have been many transitions. We've been an all-female institute and a coed institution. We've granted four-year degrees and been a junior college. We've been Chowan College and Chowan University. We've been braves and hawks. We survived the Civil War and reopened our doors after closing them only briefly during World War II. We experienced financial struggles and then went on to see years of unprecedented growth and renewal. Some might call these mere adaptations, but anyone paying attention can see that where Chowan truly excels is transformation. It is our resilience that makes these transformations possible, and it is our faith that undergirds that resilience.

On an individual level, we foster that same resilience and faith in our students. They arrive on campus young
“Resilience allows us to move through an experience without sacrificing our values, and to come out the other side with more courage, compassion, and connection than we had going into it.”

and inexperienced. Even those who believe they are fully prepared for college can have no idea of all that lies ahead. They will face challenges and triumphs, traumas and tremendous joys—both in and out of the classroom. It is our job to educate them, yes. But it is also our job to help prepare them for everything else life has to offer, and to instill in them a sense of worthiness that will allow them to live wholeheartedly. For more than 170 years, we have transformed ordinary students into extraordinary graduates, and we do it well!

We can trace the threads of resilience through the stories in this issue. Sean Timmons began his Chowan journey with a question and departed to pursue the next chapter with confirmation and a clear calling. Julian Mills pursued his calling through an extensive dual career as a minister and in public affairs for the Air Force. His trust and obedience took him across the world and back home again, and he continues to follow the call to this day. Akevia Wilson was determined not to become another statistic and, with the resilience instilled in her by a great cloud of witnesses, broke the cycle of poverty to pursue her dream. Jennifer Zak Place demonstrates the steady pulse of contagious joy as it radiates from her own life and heart to instill resilience in the lives of others and Randy Harrell is the Chowan spirit of resilience personified. Even author Wiley Cash, who joined us for a single day in April, reminded us that change, uncertainty, even conflict, are the building blocks of stories. It is our resilience that gives those stories happy endings.

We all experience challenge and change, adversity and uncertainty, both as individuals and as a community. In the midst of it we may struggle, doubt, or even lose our way for a time. This is when we need our resilience the most. We remind ourselves that we know and trust the God who authors our story and ordains our steps. We remember God’s faithfulness to guide us, individually and together, with tenderness and with great grace.

Carl Frederick Buechner is another of my perennial favorite authors; an American writer, novelist, poet, autobiographer, essayist, preacher, and theologian. Buechner describes the grace of God in this way: "Here is the world. Beautiful and terrible things will happen. Don't be afraid. I am with you."

We may not know what will happen next. We can't always see where the next chapter of our story will take us. But we can know this: the God of the universe—the almighty maker of heaven and earth—knows us, and loves us, and has promised to be with us. No matter what beautiful or terrible things life brings our way, we need not be afraid. With faith and resilience we will continue to be transformed in God's image, becoming ever more what we were created to be.

Onward together,
ON THE BOARD

Meet the Newest Additions to the Board of Trustees

The following six individuals joined the Board of Trustees in December:

James “Jimmy” Eason was a long-standing member of the Board of Visitors, with more than 20 years of service, including the executive committee. He is retired from the Murfreesboro Office of Southern Bank as Senior Vice President and City Executive.

Michael “Mike” Vance Hendley ('66), previously on the Board of Visitors, was inducted into the Jim Garrison Athletic Hall of Fame. He is a golf club professional member of the Professional Golfers’ Association (PGA) of America, and enjoyed a distinguished career with New York Life.

Reverend Billy R. Howell ('61) has served on the Chowan University Board of Visitors and the Board of Ministerial Associates. He served 34 years as a pastor in Virginia, Illinois, and North Carolina, and had a 26-year career as a substance abuse counselor.

Captain Milton “Mick” Allen Outten ('71) previously served on the Chowan University Board of Visitors, and earned the honor of Chowan Distinguished Alumnus. Retiring from the United States Navy, he joined the Integrated Defense Systems division of Raytheon Corporation as a systems engineer in 2006.

Walter “Walt” Fletcher Pierce served on the Chowan University Board of Visitors and transitions from his role of Vice Chair. A licensed North Carolina Real Estate Broker, he is owner and agent at Boyette & Robertson Insurance Agency and holds NC Insurance and Contractors licenses.

Murfreesboro native Lisa Liverman Turner served previously on the Chowan University Board of Visitors. She is the president of Turner Consulting, LLC, and specializes in the management of full discovery/development programs in the pharmaceutical industry.

AID INCREASED

$1M Increase Projected for Student Financial Aid

Chowan University announced a projected $1 million increase in Chowan-funded financial aid beginning fall 2019. This is on top of the over $17 million Chowan University awards annually, in addition to state and federal funds.

“Chowan University cares about helping students finance their education,” said Danny Davis, Vice President for Business and Finance. “We are committed to working closely with students and their families through the financial aid process and beyond to ensure their success.”

WETHINGTON WINS

McDowell Columns Prize

Dr. Amy Wethington, Associate Professor of Biology, is the 2018 recipient of the Chowan University McDowell Columns Scholar Prize.
Sponsored by the Office of the Provost, the McDowell Columns Scholar Prize is presented to a faculty member for his or her scholarly and/or creative activities during the previous academic year. Wethington’s research primarily focused on freshwater mollusks during the 2017-2018 academic year.

**FACULTY COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARDS**

On March 19, Chowan University recognized John Davis, Distinguished Professor of English, and Timothy Hayes, Assistant Professor of English with the 2018-19 Faculty Excellence in Community Service Award. This is an annual award presented to faculty who are involved with charitable, nonprofit, church, public service, or similar organizations in his or her community; dedicated to strengthening the spirit of civic engagement; committed toward furthering the practice of service learning; participate in the life of the university that transcends professional responsibility; and/or contribute professional experience in service to the wider community.

**DILUSTRO TAPPED for National Leadership Program**

Chowan University Associate Provost and Professor of Biology Dr. John Dilustro was one of forty-five mid-level administrators nationwide chosen to participate in the year-long Senior Leadership Academy (SLA) cosponsored by the Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) and the American Academic Leadership Institute (AALI).

The SLA prepares leaders who show promise of developing the talents and skills needed to succeed in a senior leadership position on campus. Participants acquire considerable knowledge, skills, and experiences that are appropriate to the portfolio of responsibilities and activities central to the work of a college or university vice president or cabinet officer.

Dilustro said, “I’m honored to have been selected, and I’m enjoying interacting and learning with such a distinguished group of participants. Through participation in the program and networking, I’ve already begun to focus on areas of improvement and grown in my role at Chowan.”

**2019 ROUSON LECTURE AND AWARDS**

Dr. Arwin D. Smallwood (top left) came “home” to Chowan University as the guest speaker of the Reverend George T. and Luvenia B. Rouson Memorial Lecture. Smallwood is a graduate of Chowan University’s Upward Bound program, which targets first generation high school students and helps prepare them for success in higher education. Gertrude Revelle (bottom right) received the Futrell/Ruffin Community Service Award for her work with the Historical Association and preserving the history of the Town of Murfreesboro, as well as starting a family-care home for individuals needing extra care in their senior years. Dr. Benjamin F. Speller (bottom left) was awarded the Minnie Wood Perkins Humanitarian Award for his vital role in the preservation of African American history and culture in North Carolina. He was instrumental in the creation of the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission and established the African American Resources Program in the School of Library and Information Sciences in partnership with the North Carolina Center for the Study of Black History.
NEW VICE PRESIDENTS NAMED

Bailey Promoted to VP for Enrollment Management

A two-time Chowan graduate, Kim Sherman Bailey is the first woman to hold the title of VP in almost two decades. “I am honored to serve in this role and to be able to continue giving back to a University that has given so much to me, our community, faculty, staff, alumni, and current students. Chowan is a special place. She allows students to grow academically and spiritually. I am blessed to be able to be a part of her story, in both receiving and serving and am honored to continue the tradition of faith in your future,” says Bailey.

Streeter Appointed VP for Student Affairs

Originally from Greenville, NC, Dr. Montrose Streeter is thrilled to be returning to his roots. “I feel privileged to be able to work alongside Dr. Peterson and to advocate ‘faith in your future’ as we enter this new era of the university’s history. It is my hope that we will be able to positively affect change in the lives of our students. This is a great opportunity to be at a Christian institution and to share my experiences as a man of faith who is committed to higher education.”

MADDEN’S BOOK PUBLISHED

An early fascination with Tolkien’s Lord of the Rings, Beowulf, and Chaucer eventually led Dr. Mollie Madden, Academic Advising Coordinator, to pursue graduate studies in medieval history. Later, a recommendation from her thesis advisor sparked her interest in military logistics, while Shakespeare’s Henry V introduced her to the Black Prince, and from there began the journey to pen her new book.

Madden’s book, The Black Prince and the Grande Chevauchée of 1355, examines the efficient and effective logistics that drove military success. It also depicts the powerful connection between tactics and strategy on one hand, and geography, human topography, and basic needs (water, food, shelter, and rest) on the other.

CU TALENT TAPPED to Lead Community Foundation

The board of advisors of the Bertie-Hertford Affiliate of the NC Community Foundation announced John M. Tayloe as president and Penny Rose as vice president, according to Natalie Jenkins Peel, NCCF regional director.

Tayloe is the Vice President for Development at Chowan University. He is a deacon at Connaritsa Baptist Church and a member of the Murfreesboro Rotary Club.

Rose is a native of Elkin and graduate of Guilford College. She is an active community volunteer who enjoys...
creative pursuits and opportunities to improve the quality of life for eastern North Carolina.

The Bertie-Hertford Community Foundation is a growing family of philanthropic funds, source of grants for local causes, and partner for donors.

NEW TRANSFER AGREEMENTS SIGNED

On February 28, Brenda Tinkham, Chowan University Associate Provost for External Relations, signed articulation agreements in conjunction with the North Carolina Community College System and the North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities that will allow community college students of fine arts or music to transfer those credits to Chowan in pursuit of a bachelor’s degree for these disciplines. The additional articulation agreements ensure that classes taken in these community college tracks will have equivalent course credits at the university level. The agreements also provide degree plans that include general education and prerequisite requirements to further smooth the transition from community college to university-level study.

SCHOLARSHIP LUNCHEON

Honors Donors

There are over 350 named scholarships at Chowan, nearly 300 of which have reached endowment level. Students are matched with scholarships based on their intellectual pursuits, extracurricular achievements, hometowns, and plans for the future, among other factors. Donors establish scholarships to give back for aid they received as students, in memory of family members or friends, in honor of their class year, because they are thankful for the education they received, and a number of other personal reasons. This type of aid allows Chowan to admit students based on their ability to contribute in the classroom, on campus, in the community, and to society.

LITSPHERE SELECTED as New Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP)

As part of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) accreditation process, Chowan University will launch a new Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) titled Lit Sphere (Literature Spheres).

LitSphere is designed to create a culture of reading by increasing students’ pleasure and enjoyment in reading, leading to an increase in the overall quantity of material read. The concept was developed through a comprehensive and methodical process over a two-and-a-half-year period. After thorough investigation, the QEP Committee and senior leadership eventually identified reading as the area most important to improving student success at Chowan.
The mission of the Lit Sphere QEP is to encourage students to become intrinsically motivated readers by fostering a culture of reading for pleasure. Reading for enjoyment will result in students reading more, thus becoming more intellectually curious, more engaged as citizens, and more likely to become lifelong learners.

**SENIORFEST PACKS THE HOUSE**

CU hosted a record-breaking turnout of 400 for the annual SeniorFEST event. Tom Key, a faith-based performance artist, was the keynote speaker and the Keepers of Faith gospel ensemble were the musical guests.

Breakout sessions are sponsored in cooperation with Vidant Roanoke-Chowan Hospital, the North Carolina Baptist Foundation, the Geriatric Workforce Enhancement Program (ECU—College of Nursing), the UNC Center for Aging and Health: Carolina Geriatric Education Center, and the Hertford Health Maintenance Alliance: Taskforce on Aging.

**ROTARACT PROMOTES LEADERSHIP**

The Rotaract Club at Chowan University took advantage of canceled classes for Advising Day to hold a Leadership Day for students. The event included breakout sessions on communication, public speaking, interviewing, and the many responsibilities that come with leadership positions.

Workshops were conducted in a presentation format, much like normal class periods. The event also included tracks, which centered topic discussion around a hands-on activity. By using a mix of workshops and tracks, the club engaged multiple learning styles and reached out to attendees in a way more suited to their personal needs.

**MISS TRUDY’S BOOK**

Trudy Gibson, who was Administrative Assistant for the Department of Graphic Communications for almost 30 years and also joined the order of Lux et Veritas in 2008, is now the author of a children’s book. Her book, *Adventures of Miss Patty’s Goose*, is based on a real goose—a fashionable cement one that is the focal point of Gibson’s yard. The book chronicles the many outfits of Miss Patty’s goose and introduces readers to a few other feathered friends who often

**AROUND CAMPUS**

Three-Way Tie for Top Student Honors

On Wednesday, April 24th, students, faculty, and staff joined together to celebrate the accomplishments of another academic year. For the first time in the school’s history, the coveted Best All-Around Student Award resulted in a three-way tie between graduating seniors Amber Cunningham of Concord, NC (right), Amber Smaltz of Norfolk, VA (center), and Sean Timmons of Poquoson, VA (left). The three seniors excelled equally in academics and in service to Chowan and the surrounding community.
visit. Gibson is also the author of another book: *Heart and Soul—Short Stories, Poems, Songs and Plays*.

Gibson resides in Murfreesboro, NC and is an active member of Ashley’s Grove Baptist Church. She and her late husband were married fifty-five years and together raised three sons. She continues to write scripts, lyrics, poetry, and short stories.

**HONORS COLLEGE**

Supports Relay for Life

The Chowan University Honors College Student Association spent the week leading up to the Hertford-Gates Relay for Life celebration collecting pledges for the Brown Lady Academic Bowl All-Star Game held on April 12. Faculty, staff, and entire departments caught the competitive spirit of the games and together pledged $23.75 per correct answer. The trivia contest saw 104 questions answered correctly and—with the addition of a last-minute donation—raised $2500 towards Relay for Life.

**CCSA MILESTONE ACHIEVED**

Over $2M Raised for Scholarships and Missions

In late April the Chowan Christian Service Association Endowment reached its latest goal of $2 million. The CCSA Endowment is the largest of its kind, funding the greatest number of formal scholarships for the university.

The Chowan Christian Service Association (CCSA) creates opportunities for students to learn and serve in the name of Jesus. CCSA does this by providing tuition scholarships to students who are preparing for a life in ministry. The CCSA Missions Endowment also assists in this calling by providing mission trip fellowships to engage students in a hands-on application of their faith.

Vice President of Development John M. Tayloe announced that the Association’s next goal is to increase the Missions Endowment to $1 million so that CCSA may better serve the increasing number of students who feel called to serve on missions. The Missions Endowment currently stands at $658,777.

**FEEL LIKE YOU’RE MISSING OUT? STAY UP TO DATE ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS IN REAL TIME WITH OUR WEEKLY NEWS EMAIL, THE CHOWANIAN. TO MAKE SURE YOU’RE ON THE LIST VISIT CHOWAN.EDU/SUBSCRIBE.**
Ronald Lee Bellamy played for Coach Burke, helping the 1985-1986 team to a 21-10 overall record. After graduation from UNC-Charlotte in 1989, Ron played basketball in Germany, Finland, and New Zealand, earning MVP of the Pacific Island Championship. He later became a professional boxer and was featured in three World Titles.

Over her career at Chowan, Meryah Creekmore Breeden was a four-year starter and played in 151 games at first base where she tallied 154 hits, 111 RBIs, 41 doubles, and 16 home runs, which is still a career program record. She was named to the USA All Conference Team two times and was an integral part of the team’s 2003 USA South Conference Championship.

Joi Hazel remains the program’s All-Time leading scorer, amassing 1,445 points in her career. She played in 108 games, grabbing 390 rebounds, 145 assists, and 145 steals. She averaged 13.4 points a game and holds the program record for made field goals with 528. Joi received many awards over her career, including NCCAA All Region, NCCAA All-America, and D3Hoops All South Region honors.

Bryan Hill helped the 1989-90 Braves to a NJCAA Region X Championship appearance. They finished the season with a 25-7 overall record, an Eastern Region Championship, a runner-up finish in the Region X Championship game, and climbed as high as 13th in the NJCAA National Rankings. Bryan averaged 10 points and 7 assists a game in his one season with the team.

Lorenzo Kenan helped then-Braves finish 8-2 in 1974 and was ranked 15th in the NJCAA National Rankings. He posted incredible numbers as a defensive end, grabbing 75 solo tackles and 42 assisted tackles. Lorenzo earned All-Coastal Conference, NJCAA All-American honors, and was invited to play in the coveted North-South All-Star Football game.

Delbert Melton helped the team to two successful seasons. His most memorable play came on 4th and goal from Chowan’s one-yard line. Delbert met the Harford College fullback head on, stopping him shy of the end zone and preserving a 17-0 shutout win. Delbert’s play in his sophomore season earned him All-Coastal Conference, All-Region X, and NCJAA All-American Second Team honors.

Since M. Christopher & Linda Fleming White joined the Chowan community in 2003, the athletic program has been revolutionized: changing the mascot from Braves to Hawks, moving from NCAA DIII to NCAA DII, funding athletic scholarships for student-athletes, and renovating athletic facilities. One of Dr. White’s prized possessions is a case which holds sixteen championship rings and Linda is arguably one of the Hawks’ most ardent fans.
ONE extraordinary WOMAN

One hundred and thirteen years ago a young widow took over her husband’s business interests, going on to become one of the first female directors of any major American corporation. Today her legacy continues to empower young women to do extraordinary things.

IN HER FOOTSTEPS: Lettie Pate Whithead scholars (pictured with Senior Program Officer Carrie Conway) are empowered to follow in Lettie Pate’s footsteps thanks to the Foundation’s financial support.
The partnership between Chowan University and the Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation dates back as far as the early 1970s. For more than 45 years the foundation has contributed in excess of $2.7 million to Chowan University students through the Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation Scholarship, impacting the academic experience of almost 500 students in the past twenty years. Fifty-three students progressed through the program in good academic standing last year, 16 of whom earned their degrees and graduated in May.

The Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation is a public charity that provides support for the education of female students and for the care of elderly women in nine Southeastern states.

The Foundation devotes most of its resources to the Lettie Pate Whitehead scholarship program, which provides scholarship grants for deserving female students with financial need at more than 200 colleges, universities and schools. The foundation has been active since 1945 and grants scholarships to accredited institutions among nine states. The Foundation also supports select elderly care facilities in Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia.

The Foundation's grantmaking is inspired by the life of Lettie Pate Whitehead Evans, an extraordinary philanthropist and businesswoman. She was the wife of Joseph B. Whitehead, one of the original bottlers of Coca-Cola. When Mr. Whitehead died at an early age, Lettie Pate took over her husband’s bottling business and real estate interests, guiding both to great success. She became one of the first female directors of any major American corporation when she was appointed to the board of The Coca-Cola Company in 1934.

Mrs. Whitehead gave generously to educational institutions throughout her life, and she had a special empathy for elderly women in need. At her death The Coca-Cola Company honored her thus: “Endowed with material things, she had a conviction that she held them as trustee for the poor, the meek and the unfortunate.”

The Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation was created by Conkey Pate Whitehead, Mrs. Whitehead’s youngest son, in honor of his mother. It was chartered in 1946 for the “aid and benefit of poor and deserving Christian girls and women” in nine states: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Virginia. The Foundation has awarded more than $718 million in grants since inception.

Last year Carrie Conway, Senior Program Officer at the Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation, visited Chowan University for the first time in the 45-year history of the partnership. During her visit to campus she had lunch with current scholarship recipients and University representatives. Scholarship recipient and 2019 graduate Amber Smaltz stated, “The Lettie Pate Whitehead scholarship has given me the opportunity to pursue higher education without the stress of financial obligation. Without it, I would not have discovered my passion for biology, more specifically neuroscience, nor would I have found a home and a second family at Chowan University.”

“Chowan clearly has a passionate and committed leadership team, and I was very impressed with the students. They are wonderful ambassadors for the University,” Conway said. “The Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation knows Chowan plays a vital role in the region and we are pleased to support this important work.”

University administration is grateful to the Foundation, both for the longterm support of Chowan University students, as well as the role they play in fostering Christian education across the South. “Support from the Lettie Pate Whitehead Foundation has been one of the pillars leading to our success in recent years,” stated Vice President for Development at Chowan University, John Tayloe. “Over the course of the relationship, grants have increased substantially annually over the past several years, allowing Chowan to expand its scholarship opportunities and serve more deserving Christian young women year after year.”
“CHOWAN CLEARLY HAS A PASSIONATE AND COMMITTED LEADERSHIP TEAM. THE LETTIE PATE WHITEHEAD FOUNDATION KNOWS CHOWAN PLAYS A VITAL ROLE IN THE REGION AND WE ARE PLEASED TO SUPPORT THIS IMPORTANT WORK.”

TELLING HER STORY: Conway took time to tell Chowan students about the extraordinary life and vision of Lettie Pate Whitehead (inset at right).
A TALE OF THREE INTERNS

The Chowan University Relations team received an infusion of fresh talent last year thanks to our first-ever intern partnerships. Far more than just student-workers, these three talented seniors essentially worked as part-time employees, gaining valuable on-the-job experience and shoring up their resumes in the process.

David Cross, an interdisciplinary studies major from Richmond, VA, served the full academic year as a digital media specialist intern, responsible for photography, videography, and social media content. His counterparts, Melany Garcia Lopez and Olivia Borer, from Clemmons, NC and Melbourne Beach, FL, respectively, both graphic design majors, served semester-long internships in graphic design, creating ads, magazine layouts, social media artwork, and digital animations. Samples of their work are peppered throughout this issue, and these next pages display some of our favorites.
OUT OF AFRICA: David Cross, digital media specialist intern and 2019 graduate, captured this landscape on the Campus Ministry mission trip to Door of Hope in Johannesburg, South Africa, in May.
CURRENTLY, THE COST OF Higher Education is just that. Higher than it’s ever been in history and higher than many students and families can reasonably afford. And yet, there’s no overstating the value of a four-year degree, which continues to rise.

Hawk Flight Book Program

Increasingly, students across the country are choosing to further their education and opting to forge ahead with online editions or without textbooks at all. But, both affordable and convenient, the Hawk Flight Book Program harnesses the purchasing power of the University student body.

First- and Second-Year Experience Programs

Chowans University Vice President for Business and Finance, Frankie Davis says the response so far has been overwhelming. “The program has been so successful,” Davis says. “The program demonstrates the potential of a University to make a difference in the lives of our students.”

Alumni Giving Challenge

The Alumni Giving Challenge encourages alumni to give back to Chowan University. The challenge runs from November 1st to December 31st, with gifts matched up to $20,000.

Christmas at Chowan University

Christmas at Chowan University will take place on Sunday, December 8th at 3:30 pm in Turner Auditorium. More information about Chowan University can be found at www.chowan.edu or call 1-888-4-CHOWAN.
From the beginning, it was clear to the Chowan community that Sean Timmons was exceptional. "Sean arrived at Chowan with a single-minded purpose: to open his world to ideas that many spend their lives avoiding. With knowledge as his guide and God as his compass, he sailed through his four years at Chowan, engaging and empowering fellow students along the way," says Dr. Danny Moore, Provost.

Sean excelled academically, first being chosen as a member of the Honors College and then being inducted into numerous honor societies. During his freshman year, Sean took home awards for Best Humanities Paper in the annual Undergraduate Research Conference and Best English Student. More recently, he took home the Senior Scholastic Award, which is presented to graduates with a 4.0 GPA, and the Best All-Around Student Award, which is given to seniors who make themselves known through achievements both in the classroom and on campus. "Sean Timmons is one of the most remarkable students I have ever taught. He is smart as a whip, extremely hardworking, and has a great sense of humor. He is compassionate towards others and cares about helping the community. He was well deserving of all the accolades heaped on him in his senior year. His acceptance at Duke Divinity, one of the top five divinity schools in the country, was not so much a surprise as it was a fitting recognition of Sean's talent and hard work," says Dr. Keith Reich, Chair of the Religion Department.

Sean was not only a consistent and positive presence in the classroom, but on campus as well. Between academic organizations and extracurricular activities, his face became easily recognizable in a crowd. As part of the Honors College Student Association, religion club, and E3 campus worship group, Sean was constantly involved in meetings, activities, and fundraisers. Sean was also a CCSA Scholar. These scholarships are awarded by...
the Chowan Christian Service Association to students pursuing a life in ministry. CCSA Scholars are often involved with Campus Ministry, mission trips, and retreats that focus on examining their faith and their relationship with God.

Murfreesboro Baptist Church would become the point at which his academic, social, and spiritual talents intersected. As a sophomore, Sean was hired by MBC to serve as their youth ministry intern—a role he took to with ease. The students at MBC quickly became like little brothers and sisters to Sean. It was here that he solidified and practiced his calling. “Sean is a caring and considerate young man who is very clearly called to and gifted for vocational ministry,” says Lane Bass, Pastor at MBC. “His dedication to study is equally matched by his compassion for the physical and spiritual needs of those around him and his ministry is one that strives to let all people know that they have been invited to the table of God’s Kingdom. I have no doubt Sean will bear fruit wherever he is planted.”

If you spoke with Sean today, you would never know that he once held doubts about his calling. As a CCSA Scholar, president of the E3 campus worship group, and youth ministry intern at Murfreesboro Baptist Church, he appears to have always known and trusted in his future. But Sean will be the first to tell you that isn’t so. “When I first arrived on Chowan’s campus, it was a result of pure faith. I still had serious doubts about whether or not I was called to serve the church in ministry.” While Sean may have had his doubts, the world did not share in his opinions—and his journey to graduate school proves it.

Sean was accepted to multiple institutions but knew that attendance at his top choice, Duke Divinity School, would hinge on financial aid. While Duke offered some aid to help mitigate tuition costs, he would still need the support of outside scholarships. Sean was encouraged to

“I am more confident than ever before and I have God and Chowan to thank for that.”

sean timmons, class of 2019
apply for the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina’s Randall and Lou Lolley Scholarship. Surprising no one that knows him, Sean was chosen as the scholarship recipient. But, even with the addition of the CBFNC scholarship, he would still be short of making tuition. Just as Sean was preparing to accept enrollment at his second choice, something unexpected happened. Seeing his need and recognizing his potential as a minister, the scholarship committee voted to extend Sean’s aid to cover the remaining tuition balance. Sean would now be able to follow his call and further prepare for his future in ministry at Duke Divinity School.

“I have graduated with a degree in religion [with minors in both English and Missions] and I have been accepted to the Master of Divinity program at Duke—both of which were things I thought were impossible for me. I am more confident than ever before and I have God and Chowan to thank for that. In the 21st chapter of the Gospel of John, we read of how Jesus appears to the disciples and makes them breakfast. The disciples have to come to terms with the impossible: Jesus—who, less than a week prior, was hanging dead on a cross—was now alive and serving them breakfast, of all things. It’s a very ordinary moment, but it is surrounded by such extraordinary circumstances. As I look back on my time at Chowan, I can’t help but notice this same phenomenon. There are people whose offices I have sat in countless times and received support and assistance. There are my professors who have always challenged me academically to do better than I had the day before. There are pastors who have encouraged me and aided me through difficult times. There are countless people who have enthusiastically asked me how I’m doing and inquired about my future plans. Collectively, this is a community that has never ceased to encourage.”

Sean’s post-secondary education began in a place of uncertainty. Many of us have experienced those same doubts, but not everyone can say they’ve received confirmation that they were on the right path. We believe Sean will agree when we say that it is difficult to ignore the divine touches in his journey.
Sean’s Awards and Accolades

- Senior Scholastic Award
- Order of the Silver Feather
- Best All-Around Student
- Department of Religion Honor Award
- Ethics in Action Award
- Alpha Lambda Delta Maria Leonard Senior Book Award
- Senior Ambassador Award
- Best Humanities Paper
- Best English Student
- Service Projects Award
- Outstanding Student
- Outstanding Junior
- Outstanding Sophomore
- Outstanding Freshman
- President’s List
- Presidential Scholar
- Leadership Scholar
- CCSA Scholar
- Harris Scholar
- Presidential Ambassador
- Honors College
- Alpha Chi
- Alpha Lambda Delta
- Theta Alpha Kappa
- Sigma Tau Delta
- Ethics Bowl Debate Team
- Religion Club
- E3 Campus Ministry

President Peterson presents one of Sean’s many awards.
The inauguration of Chowan University’s twenty-third President, Dr. Kirk Edward Peterson, celebrated a rich tradition and heritage, while also turning an eye toward the bright future ahead. From the notable leaders and scholars on the stage to the auditorium overflowing with trustees, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and other friends of the University, it was a banner occasion for the 170-year-old institution and a promise of good things to come.

The processional of delegates from institutions of higher education and learned societies, university faculty, and presidential platform participants was led by the Chief Faculty Marshal and Mace Bearer Dr. Jennifer Zak Place, Chair, Department of Psychology. Chair of the Board of Trustees W. Frank Rose, Jr. offered the welcome and Cecil S. Hollomon, Jr., trustee and chair of the presidential search committee delivered the Call to Purpose. After the call to purpose, the Invocation was given by Mari E. Wiles, Minister to the University; attendees were led in the national anthem by Dr. Benjamin Thorburn, Associate Professor of Music; Dr. Cynthia Nicholson, Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences, led audience members in the Litany of Commitment; Dr. Keith Reich, Chair, Department of Religion read Psalm 1 from the Old Testament; and Thomas E. Forbes read the New Testament Gospel of John 3:16-18.

Greetings for the Occasion were brought by A. Hope Williams, President, North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities from the higher education community; Larry Hovis, Executive Coordinator, Cooperative Baptist Fellowship of North Carolina from the Christian community; Hal R. Thomas, Mayor, City of Murfreesboro, NC from the local community; Shakendra Peay, President, Student Government Association from the Chowan students; Danny B. Moore, Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs from the faculty and staff; and Elaine E. Myers, Alumna, Trustee, Former Trustee Board Chair from the Board of Trustees.

After the Greetings, M. Christopher White, Chancellor, Chowan University, presented the Challenge from the Chancellor, “Faith in Your Future.” The Challenge was followed with a performance of “Festival Sanctus” by the
“It is my job to make certain that we are united in our passion to ensure that our students lead meaningful lives of lifelong learning, service to one another, and leadership with their heads, hands, and hearts.”

President Peterson on his purpose and vision for Chowan University
Chowan Singers, led by Dr. Thorburn and the Presentation of the Presidential Medallion by Board Chair Frank Rose.

President Peterson’s Inaugural Address was full of excitement for Chowan’s future as he accepted the mantle of the presidency. He looks forward to continuing the university’s faith-based legacy in the world of higher education and providing students with the support they need to grow into the futures that God has planned for them.

“It is my job to make certain that we are united in our passion to ensure that our students lead meaningful lives of lifelong learning, service to one another, and leadership with their heads, hands, and hearts.” He considers keeping Chowan’s focus on the students to be the best way to honor those who built the university and the ones who continue to support it.

“I know that Chowan is family—and family is everything,” President Peterson concluded. “It is good to be home.”

Attendees were led by Dr. Thorburn in the Alma Mater and the ceremony was closed by Dr. Richard L. Pein, Professor Emeritus of Exercise and Sport Science, University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse, who gave the Closing Prayer.

Peterson was named the twenty-third president of Chowan University by the Board of Trustees on February 15, 2018 and assumed the office on June 1, 2018. No stranger to Chowan, he first served the University in 2004 as chair of what is now the Sport Science and Physical Education department. Throughout his tenure, he also served as Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs and as Assistant Provost. Based on the needs of the institution’s service area, President Peterson helped found Chowan University’s first master’s program and served as founding Dean of the University’s Graduate School, which offered the only Christian University Master’s Degree program east of North Carolina’s I-95 and the only Elementary Education Master’s Degree within a 60 mile radius.

Prior to returning to Chowan University, President Peterson served as Interim President and President of Urbana University in Urbana, Ohio. While president, Dr. Peterson
successfully negotiated the merger of Urbana University with Franklin University, retaining the university’s discipline-specific and regional accreditation. President Peterson then became superintendent of two private schools in Ohio. His breadth of experience as both faculty and administrator in higher, secondary, and elementary education uniquely prepares him to lead Chowan University.

President Peterson believes in educating and nurturing students in a student-centered environment by placing great instructors and staff members in front of students and providing opportunities through thorough and demanding curricula that celebrate the exceptionality of all students. President Peterson feels that education should promote safe, yet challenging, environments for students to grow academically, personally, socially, intellectually, emotionally, physically, and spiritually. Part of President Peterson’s vision for Chowan is to continue the effort to recruit and retain students as well as growing and improving the physical plant. He has a desire to work with the faculty to bring in innovative academic programs and work closely with the students to gauge their feelings and listen to their needs.

Previously a member of the River of Life Christian Center, President Peterson is now a member of Murfreesboro Baptist Church. He and his wife, Rachel, met as neighbors in Prattville, Alabama and have since been married for 23 years. Dr. and Mrs. Peterson have three sons: Caleb (19), Cody (16), and Justin (13). The Petersons enjoy traveling together as a family and spending time out at the ballfield with their sons.
The Presidential Mace and Chain of Office

The Chowan University mace and chain of office were wrought by George Cloyed of Colonial Williamsburg and endowed by former trustee and Chowan staff member R. Clayton Lewis in honor of his wife, Mary Alice Lewis.

The Presidential Chain of Office is sterling silver. The Old World continuous knot design is reminiscent of early Christian art in Ireland. Each link represents a part of the institution. At the center is the hand-engraved seal of the University with the Latin words *Lux et Veritas* and symbols depicting the school’s mission and its religious affiliation. It is mounted on a base of wood salvaged from a McDowell Columns Hall renovation, and its triangular shape suggests the Trinity.

The Mace is made of walnut, ornamented with gold and silver. The staff’s fluted column represents historic McDowell Columns Hall and the pillars of Chowan University support: North Carolina Baptists, students, parents, faculty, staff, alumni, friends, trustees and visitors. On the column’s capital are the seal and Greek symbols for Christian: chi and rho, alpha and omega. The Latin words trivium and quadrivium appear on the remaining sides, suggesting the liberal arts as well as the two divisions of education in Roman schools. The sphere symbolizes Chowan’s universal concerns, representative student body, and holistic approach to education. The finial is comprised of a band and flame, portraying the Chowan experience as a source of intelligent and spiritual illumination.

FOLLOWING THE INAUGURAL CONVOCATION, PRESIDENT PETERSON PAUSED FOR PHOTOS WITH FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND OTHER WELL-WISHERS ON THE FRONT STEPS OF MCDOWELL COLUMNS HALL (Clockwise from Top): President and Mrs. Peterson with sons Caleb, Justin, and Cody; President and Mrs. Peterson joined by extended family and friends; President Peterson flanked proudly by the two most important women in his life—wife, Rachel, and mother, Marsha.
Chairman Rose, Chowan University Board of Trustees, Board of Visitors, Chancellor White, Dr. Stanley Lott (Chowan’s 21st President), Chowan University family, family and friends visiting from Illinois, Ohio, Connecticut, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Alabama. My family and I are honored to be a part of this historical and amazing institution and this welcoming community. Thank you for being here today to celebrate Chowan University.

I want to recognize some exceptionally special attendees today.

My wife and amazing partner, Rachel, whose love and support have helped to make this day possible. While my mother may disagree, I have been told that I married well above myself. I stand here today because of her love and encouragement… married to a woman that I do not deserve.

My three sons: Caleb, Cody, and Justin. I love you more than words can describe. Thank you for being wonderfully talented, loving, and playfully ornery sons. I am also proud that Caleb will transfer to Chowan this fall to continue his education and play baseball for Coach Furlough.

My Mother, from Rock Island, Illinois, who has endured great loss, but has always been a rock for our family. Thank you for the unconditional love, support, and encouragement.

My brother, Drew, from Trussville, Alabama, who is the Parks and Recreation Superintendent for the City of Trussville. Drew has always been my hero in the way he approaches life, including hardship and triumph.

My sister, Elise, and my brother-in-law, Brian Montanari. They are more than family; they are friends and even better people. Elise is the Vice President for Personal Insurance Analytics at Traveler’s Insurance and Brian is the President and CEO of Habco Industries in Glastonbury, Connecticut.

Dr. Rich Pein from La Crosse, Wisconsin. Rich’s mentoring and coaching while I attended the University of Wisconsin- La Crosse are deeply cherished.

Dr. Patricia Beitel and Charlene Bandurski from Charleston, Illinois. Dr. Beitel served as my major professor at The University of Tennessee, where she encouraged and mentored my professional aspirations. Dr. Beitel, I want you to know how important you are in my life: professionally and personally.

Lastly, my family and friends who have traveled great distances to attend. Thank you, Aunt Nancy, Aunt Linda, Vicki Gray, Jacob Peterson, Kim and Ron Ross, Mom Labbous, Stephanie, Kalie and Austin Clements, Scott and Jennifer Warren, Jason and Lisa Oliver, Pastor Tony Pena, Robin Miller and Tony Joy, Cherie Moore, and Terry and Julie Markin.

As many of you know, I served Chowan University in numerous capacities, including Associate Professor of Sports Studies and Physical Education; Department Chair of the SSPE; Founding Dean, School of Education and Graduate Studies; and as Associate Provost from 2004-2010. Back then, I arrived on campus with my beautiful wife, Rachel, and two very little boys, looking to begin my career with the dream of assisting Dr. Moore in advancing the academics of Chowan University.

I had the privilege of having amazing mentors who encouraged me to challenge myself personally and professionally, take the knowledge and confidence that each ingrained in me, and see what the future had in store as I dreamed of advancing my career. Dr. White and Dr. Moore, for your inspiration and for taking my many calls over the years, I am most grateful!

I left here in 2010 a young man, with high hopes, and, perhaps, unrealistic dreams. Frankly, I was leaving my comfort zone, my university family, to gain the knowledge and experience I needed, away from the people I trusted most.

We settled in a small university town in Ohio and I accepted the position of Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs at Urbana University. My sons grew up in Urbana. I grew up in Urbana. We embraced the campus community, our church, the schools, Urbana University students and faculty.

I was eventually named President of Urbana University and tasked with saving a 160 + year old university. While at Urbana, I worked closely with our students, strategic partners, the Board of Trustees, the faculty and staff of a financially compromised university. We made some incredible advancements and survived seemingly impossible challenges. We faced uncertain times and a certain closure.

However, I am proud that Urbana University stands tall today due to the efforts, and prayers, of many wonderful people, some of whom are in attendance today.

In my personal life, I watched as many basketball, baseball, soccer games, and choral performances as I possibly could. I attempted to find balance between Dad and President, and with the help of Rachel, family and friends, we pulled it off!

However, the most life-changing experience was losing my father at
Thanksgiving of 2017. That summer of 2017, he and I played lots of golf, talked about John Deere lawn tractors, and watched my boys play many games. I quickly learned how precious life is.

I miss him, but I do believe he is with me today. Mom, I think Dad would be very pleased.

Today, I stand in front of you with a little gray hair, high hopes, realistic and audacious dreams.

I am humbled; I am energetic; I know that Chowan is family – and family is everything. We have the heart to embrace the past and the courage to look into the future. I have faith in our staff, faculty, and administrators; and we all have Faith in the Future of our students!

I am thankful that the Board of Trustees has chosen me to lead Chowan University into the future. I accept the honorable position of President of this great University.

IT IS GOOD TO BE HOME!

Chowan is first, and foremost, a Christian University and will continue to remain true to this bedrock principle. The Christian character is interwoven throughout the history of Chowan, from the inception in 1848 as Chowan Baptist Female Institute to today as we proudly proclaim that we have Faith in the Future in our students and our University.

All students, faculty, and staff members bring a diverse background of faith and experiences. To this end, each person who attends, supports, or instructs is given a multitude of opportunities to celebrate one’s faith walk, which we pray ends in the embracing the gift of Jesus Christ. As Reverend Mari Wiles says, “we are intentional in our approach to make God Famous!”

A scripture that guides my life is Matthew 25:40. This passage speaks to the heart of service to others and states, “Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

Being a servant leader is as Matthew 20:28 states, “just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve.”

Moreover, Philippians 2:3-4 states, “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”

I pray that I will lead by serving our students, faculty, staff, administration, and Board of Trustees. I pray that I will serve as an example of leading through service to others. In no place of the Good Book does it imply self before others!

My vision includes a strong partnership of transparency, integrity, and fairness; and I will continue to listen to the concerns and suggestions of the Board of Trustees and Visitors, alumni, administration, faculty, staff, and our greatest constituent, our students.

It is my job to be the strategic thinker, discerning listener, and active servant. I must lead those that teach, advise, and coach to nurture and maintain a positive attitude. It is my job to make certain that all stakeholders are united in our passion to ensure our students lead meaningful lives of lifelong learning, service to one another, and leadership with their heads, hands, and hearts.

I represent the University at all times and I am excited about the opportunities, whether planned or spontaneous, to tell the unique story of Chowan University and highlight the Mission, Vision, and Values of this historic institution.

As a Board member, administrator, faculty, or staff, we must always be eager to listen, learn, and improve. I am always looking for opportunities to tell the story of how well we teach, engage, advise, and mentor our students. Ultimately, we are here to transform lives.

These are the practices of our faculty and staff, and even after my 8-year absence, I am extremely happy that this is as true today as it was in 2010… 2003… and I assume in 1848.

Dr. White often used the term audacity leading up to and beyond his inauguration. I would like to play off this word and his philosophy of being bold in our goals for Chowan University.

We must continue to have the audacity to dream as the founding members, the “Chowan Saviors”, and visionary leaders, including Goodwin Cotton Moore, Archibald McDowell, Dr. Bruce Whitaker, and Chancellor White, have in times of prosperity and trial. These legendary leaders demonstrated a Faith in the Future of Chowan and her students. We will be no different!

They did not operate in fear, but instead led with determination, perseverance, tenacity, and audacity! They were resolved to transform lives and I am honored to follow these remarkable people.

I believe the greatest complement we can pay to past visionary leaders is to remain focused on our students, audacious in our goals, and demand new, innovative, and creative programs of excellence that are built on a Christian foundation. And our foundation is rock solid!
Today, 80% of our faculty are terminally degreed from colleges and universities such as Alabama, Old Dominion, Syracuse, Arizona State, Virginia Tech, Tennessee, Emory, East Carolina, Yale, and Julliard.

Our faculty members are a transformative force, committed to providing a transformative education.

The faculty and staff are some of the best and most caring you will find. They know their students by first name; they know if something has changed in a student’s life; and they are prepared to challenge, teach, and push their students to new limits. They are committed to teaching and they pray for student success. Failing is not an option.

In short, we are excellent in our profession and committed to Chowan and her students!

Our students are responsible for balancing the classroom, athletics, arts and club participation, for the classroom nourishes our minds, competition nourishes our bodies and the arts nourish our souls.

Chowan students, we expect you to get involved; it is your responsibility to be a good student, a committed student-athlete, a good neighbor, roommate and citizen. It is also your job to find happiness; to become champions in body, mind, and soul; and to create a balanced schedule.

Life is short; make some memories along the way. We pray that all of you are transformed by your time at Chowan. In addition, the memories, the people, the lessons learned, and the professional preparation leads to a lifetime of success and commitment to service to others. And, upon graduation, you will seek an active role in supporting the Alumni Association to ensure an opportunity at Chowan for the “students of promise.”

We will look to our alumni for prayer, investing in our students through scholarship and assisting with the sustainment of the endowment. Alumni are naturally our best recruitment officers, telling the story of their experiences, singing the praises of the institution. Chowan University alumni are family. Here, our family has a voice and your voice will be heard. Please share your many accomplishments with us and come “Home” often.

My vision for Chowan will remain true to the Strategic Plan, Mission, Vision, and Values of the University. The Board of Trustees, Senior Team, faculty, and staff will work to achieve the goals and objectives of the Strategic Plan with the expectation of the University’s sustainable growth.

Therefore, we recommit to these ideals and we are resolved to advancing the calling of our students through teaching, learning, engaging, and serving, defined by the opportunities we create, by the lives we transform, and by the futures we shape.

We recommit to ensuring the University fosters its mission by ensuring its Christian character marks all its endeavors; equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and ethical values necessary to flourish in a diverse society; meeting the students’ social and spiritual needs through personal attention in a caring community; maintaining stewardship of its physical, financial, and human resources; and offering intercollegiate athletic programs that enhance the academic and personal development of all student-athletes while promoting individual and team success.

We recommit to our Values of Faith, Inclusion, Imagination, and Engagement. We believe that Faith in Your Future underscores all that we do. We value individuals with diverse backgrounds and points of view. We encourage a culture of lifelong learning. We believe that a spirit of service is central to our faith and learning traditions.

Sustainable growth will be very challenging given the expected market constraints in the foreseeable future. However, I am confident we have the people, tools, determination, and vision to turn our dreams into reality. How else could you explain the remarkable achievements of Chowan?

As Luke 12:48 states, “From everyone to whom much has been given, much will be required; and from the one to whom much has been entrusted, even more will be demanded”. One does not achieve great things when great things are not expected!

Students, Faculty, Staff, Board of Trustees, Board of Visitors, and Friends: This is our time and I will treasure the work, the challenges, and the many wonderful opportunities ahead.

As Dr. Martin Luther King said, “Faith is taking the first step even when you don’t see the whole staircase.” Together, I have Faith in Chowan University’s Future!

Thank you and may God continue to bless Chowan University!
Author Wiley Cash understands a thing or two about North Carolina. “North Carolina is a good place to be from if you’re a writer. In North Carolina, we don’t really know what we are. We don’t know, given the election year, which way we’re going to go. We don’t know what kind of barbecue we like. We don’t know the best place to vacation—the beach or the mountains? Who’s the better basketball team? Cheerwine or Sundrop? I don’t know. We have these deep, long-seated political tensions, we have these regional tensions, we have these long-held racial tensions and class tensions. It’s a great place to be a writer because story comes from tension.”

We at Chowan acknowledge this as true because we have toggled between two-year and four-year degree programs, between college and university status. We have competed as D-II and D-III athletic programs. We have even shifted from an institution for women to a co-ed campus. These tensions in our identity are what makes us who we are as a Chowan family. They make our story rich. Powerful.

The same qualities apply to the novels of best-selling author Wiley Cash, a college professor, cofounder of an artists residency, and—most recently—the 25th recipient of the Mary Frances Hobson Prize at Chowan University.

In April, Cash was invited to the campus as the 2019 recipient of the Hobson Prize, which recognizes the distinguished achievement of a person in the field of arts and letters. He is most recognized for his three novels: A Land More Kind Than Home, This Dark Road to Mercy, and The Last Ballad.
Cash spoke to the students and the wider Chowan community about his journey as a writer and how writing has become his roadmap to truth.

“Cash will tell you that his novels are influenced by writers such as Thomas Wolfe, Ernest Gaines, and many others. But I also see the influence of William Wordsworth, who wrote the following: “Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart.” Wordsworth meant that good writing comes from within, both the talent for composing words and the passion for the subject. To read a novel by Wiley Cash is to know he writes from his heart, that he writes with so much love and respect for history and language and people and place,” said Provost Dr. Danny Moore in his introduction of Cash.

Cash grew up in rural Gastonia, NC, and was an avid reader as a child. “When you open a book to begin reading it, the author looks you in the eye and says, “Do you want to go? Do you want to do this with me?” It’s this unspoken contract. And reading, for me—physically, emotionally, metaphysically—takes me out of the space I am in. That is magic.” His history as a bookworm greatly influences the way he writes. Knowing how something will read for an audience helps Cash choose which voices will carry the story and when. As an author, he considers voice to be the cornerstone of his stories and devotes much of his time to finding the right one. He also focuses most of his energy on setting, often exploring places on his own to gain intimate knowledge of buildings and towns. His travels make the places he writes about feel real and lived-in. Cash rebuilds towns in a way that connects them to the reality that came before, in a way that makes a reader want to crawl inside his novels and stay there.

Considering which author he cites as the most influential to his career, it’s no wonder these are the building blocks with which he chooses to recreate the past. “When I read Ernest Gaines, this guy who wrote about land, who wrote about rural life, who wrote about the voices of old people, who wrote about the stories that old people told when he was growing up, it felt to me like the stories that I heard growing up and I heard the same voices of old people in my life. And so, when I read Ernest Gaines’ writing, I thought “I want to do that.” And do that he did, though he admits to a few hiccups along the way.

“I was so impressed by the literature [of Ernest Gaines] that I began writing stories about black people on plantations whose ancestors were slaves and sharecroppers. I didn’t know about that. But I read about it and it made a huge impression on me and so I wanted to do it. I tried to do the things I was reading,” Cash told students of his early writing.

“What I was overlooking was that my life has value. My experience has value. The place that I’m from has value. Just because no one has written about it before doesn’t mean it doesn’t have value.”

It wasn’t an overnight realization, but it was one that he would use to his advantage—and successfully. Once Cash rediscovered what he considered valuable about his life, the novels came to him. “The stories that I’ve written have always been outside of me. They somehow find their way to me or I find my way to them. And, from there, I really just kind of listen to the story that’s trying to be told to me.

Writing is much more than placing one word after another. For Cash, it is also an act of faith—an act of faith that can even be shared among others. “You are giving yourself over to something for however long you are willing to sit there and have the experience with it. And if you all read the same book, you’ve all stepped out on that same act of faith. Writing allows me to look at my own life in ways that, when I go to church, I’m asked to look at my life—through some larger thing that I don’t understand.” Much like church, writing gives Cash a way to examine his life, his values, his truth, through the lens of his characters. From child to mother, authority to subordinate, there is no limit to the experiences that he can draw from through his novels to understand himself better.

Just as Cash finds more of himself and his values through each successive novel, so too do we find the truth of our story in times of change. No matter if it’s fried chicken Tuesdays or quesadilla Thursdays, Conference Carolinas or CIAA, Braves or Hawks, one thing is certain: we’re always Chowan.
During thirty-two years as a university president at two schools, I have had an amazing variety of experiences. However, the opportunity to preside over the inauguration and offer a challenge to my successor here at Chowan University—Dr. Kirk Peterson—was a new experience. How to distill whatever wisdom the years produced into a short message? How to be realistic, but hopeful? How to encourage? How to inspire? How to note that strength is a product of humility? How to emphasize the necessity of a vision for the University’s future?

The above are only a few of the questions that begged for a response. Printed on the following pages is the Challenge I gave. It represents the best I could do. My prayer is that it will be helpful as Dr. Peterson seeks God’s will for his work.

DR. M. CHRISTOPHER WHITE
Chancellor, Chowan University

Congratulations to the Peterson family. This is an important occasion, the memories of which will be part of family lore for generations. Congratulations to each one present here today. You bring honor to Chowan University.

Today reminds me of two special days in my career—my inauguration at Gardner-Webb University thirty-two years ago and my second inauguration here in Turner Auditorium fifteen years ago. As I reflect back on those two experiences, I realize that there was nothing magic to the occasions. I did not suddenly become transformed into a smarter person, a more effective leader. There was no Cinderella experience. They were simply ceremonies with the appropriate formalities. My point this morning is simply this—keep everything in perspective. The challenges you face at Chowan University will greet you tomorrow unchanged by today’s events.

The Lord blessed Chowan University during my fifteen years as president far beyond expectations. An almost miraculous transformation took place—with the University, and with Linda and me. We came to be here one year and now we are permanent residents.

Over the years, I have pondered what brought about this transformation in Chowan. I believe the answer is simple—yet profound. We have sought to discern the Lord’s will and then follow it to the best of our understanding. Without question, the Lord has chosen to bless Chowan University.

From our search for guidance, we were led to make two pillars the foundation for all decisions: the first pillar deals with Chowan’s religious heritage and the second pillar deals with Chowan’s mission.

First, a word about religious heritage. We chose to place our
Christian faith in the center of the University’s life. We talk about our faith. We try to be as different from secular institutions as we can. We express our faith in actions, on printed materials, on social media. From this has come the slogan which serves Chowan well: Faith in Your Future. This is our mantra.

Second, a word about Chowan’s mission. Without apology, we seek to serve the average student—the student with ability, but whose background has not been the best. We take these unrefined, struggling children of God and give them hope for a better future, assistance for a better life, and love them unconditionally. We have even given most of our students a name: Students of Promise.

Many of our students have the ability to attend whatever school they wish, although many others need help. We embrace where we are in northeastern North Carolina. We embrace our neighbors. Together, we work for a better tomorrow for the coming generations.

If you want to understand Chowan University, this is it: we are unashamedly Christian, accepting all as God’s children worthy of love, respect, and help.

I now have the opportunity to challenge our new president.

First, remember how we got here. With God’s blessings, the work of trustees, faculty and staff, and hundreds of others have made Chowan a strong institution.

Second, embrace the two major pillars: faith and mission. Failure in this will invite disaster. It is far easier to slide down the hill rather than climb up.

Third, realize that any success of the University under your leadership will be due to the Lord’s will. You are simply the instrument through which the Lord will work at this time. The position of President brings with it power, but this is a very dangerous position. Can you control this or will power control you? Remember the famous words of one of America’s greatest leaders, Abraham Lincoln: “Nearly all men can stand adversity; but if you want to test a man’s character, give him power.”

As a minister, I feel compelled to end with words of scripture chosen from the Old Testament book of Micah: “What does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.”

Amen.

THE CHOWAN PROMENADE

One of Dr. White’s current projects is the Chowan Promenade, the newly named center walkway that connects the Chowan University campus with the rest of the community.

The promenade’s central feature is an iconic arch generously donated by Ray and Judy Felton of Metal Tech in Murfreesboro. The new arch is a modern version of the original arch which stood in the same location in Chowan’s early days. The trees lining the promenade were donated in honor and/or memory of beloved members of the Chowan community, and represent the long history and rich tradition of the University.

The next addition to the promenade will be a series of donated benches, also given in honor or memory of the Chowan faithful, which will provide additional places for students, faculty, staff, and visitors to gather in fellowship on campus.
THE CHOWAN SPIRIT

a tribute to RANDY HARRELL, our number one fan

BIGGEST FAN

THE CHOWANOKA | Fall 2019
In March Randy Harrell retired after a 19-year career as Vice President for Student Affairs. He saw Chowan through some of her darkest days and was a firsthand witness to her time of greatest growth and prosperity. Although he has left the position to spend more time with family, he will always be our number one hawk.

It’s one of the first sounds a generation of Chowan University students learned to recognize and respond to—a rallying cry, an incantation, and a love letter all rolled into one: the call and response of one voice booming out, "C-U," and all those within earshot responding, "HAWKS," at the top of their voice. That one booming voice was Randy Harrell's.

Nineteen years seems a relatively short time when compared to Randy's deep and abiding impact on the lives of the Chowan University students, faculty, and staff. "Randy has been a calming force possessing a great passion for Chowan's students, for Chowan's mission, and for the spirit of Chowan," says Danny Moore, Provost and Vice President for Academics. "He is the heart of Chowan and he embodies all that is good at Chowan."

Randy came to Chowan in 2000 as Vice President for Student Affairs. As a college student himself, Randy attend a school he describes as very much like Chowan (Azusa Pacific). "They took a gamble on a kid without a great track record," he says. This experience drew him to a career in student life on college campuses and, ultimately, to Chowan University. He was particularly drawn to Chowan's willingness to take risks on students who would be passed over by other schools. "Chowan was founded on risk-taking," he says. Randy sees, in this willingness to risk, a model for the grace of God.

Randy's love for students has led him to occupy the role he refers to as "Cheerleader in Chief," not just of our athletics teams, but of each individual student. "Randy believes in all students—and they know it," Dr. Moore adds. "Whether he opens his arms to grieve with them, lights up his eyes when he learns of their accomplishments, or hears them out when they falter, they are always extremely grateful for his kindness, wisdom, and love."

"Our students have allowed me to have a career far greater than I ever imagined possible," Randy says. "Every day I have spent with the students of Chowan has enriched me through their individual stories."

Randy is effusive in his praise for the faculty and staff he leaves behind. "I know that our students are in wonderfully caring hands, because I know our people," he says. "Their work here..."
is crucial. I know this from the alums that keep in contact with me. I know this even more personally because of the way they touched and influenced the lives of my son and daughter-in-law."

Randy is universally beloved and also universally recognized for his love of Chowan. Before his retirement in March he was named Honorary Professor by the Chowan University faculty and granted emeritus status by the Board of Trustees. In 2014 he earned the Spirit of Chowan Award, which honors extraordinary individuals who so embody the heart and soul of the university that they warrant recognition by the university community. It is one of Chowan’s highest honors.

Randy sees God’s provision in the people at

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**FAR GREATER**

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Chowan. In April, he gave the address at Awards Day Convocation. Speaking to the community he so loves, Randy said, "God brought us to a little town in the middle of nowhere, NC to become a community of learners and life-adventurers. To discover together the meaning of love, the meaning of overcoming adversity, the meaning of comforting each other in times of heartbreak, the meaning of rejoicing together in times of great triumph."

Though Randy is no longer in position, he remains part of the Chowan and Murfreesboro community. He shares these words of hope and promise: "I am supremely confident that the best part of Chowan's story is to be written in the very near future, and each of you are co-authors in that unfolding story. Likewise, I know for a fact that each of you have futures that have been authored by God himself. Hold fast to this time at Chowan, it will be completed far too quickly, and then you will be off to even greater adventures for a lifetime."
CU ATHLETICS HITS HOME RUN IN CLASSROOM

The Chowan University athletic department celebrates a successful 2018-19 academic year and athletic season. Chowan student-athletes excelled in the classroom as five student-athletes received major awards.

SheAyre Bowles, senior women’s swimming member, earned the Order of the Silver Feather. The Order of the Silver Feather is given to those students who have been especially outstanding in their service to the campus community and whose loyalty to Chowan University has been extremely noteworthy.

Alyssa Born earned the Order of the Silver Feather and the Estelle Thigpen Superior...
Citizenship Award, which recognizes a student who has been an outstanding citizen within the university community throughout the year and is given for their contribution of time, effort, and energy for the benefit of the student body.

Jacob Hunter, a junior football player, was awarded the Faith in Your Future Award, which is presented to the student who best exemplifies the university’s mission and vision by consistently demonstrating the ability to achieve their greatest potential in learning and service.

The Merit Award was presented to Treielle Pearson and Joanne Williams. Pearson, a senior member of the football team, and Williams, senior women’s basketball player, were judged to have achieved at a high academic level in spite of obstacles which would have deterred or defeated a less determined or devoted individual.

**CHOWAN ADDS ACROBATICS & TUMBLING**

Chowan University is excited to announce the addition of Acrobatics & Tumbling as the 20th varsity sport and 11th women’s varsity sport in the athletic department. Acrobatics and Tumbling is the evolution of different forms of gymnastics. The sport involves tumbling, tosses, acrobatic lifts, and pyramids. Teams compete in six events including compulsories, acro, pyramid, toss, tumbling, and a team event. Competitors in this sport demonstrate significant strength, power, flexibility, and balance in their skill set.

Chowan will become the 28th member of the National Collegiate Acrobatics & Tumbling Association (NCATA). The Hawks will join five schools in the Conference Carolinas: Belmont
Abbey, Converse, Erskine, King, and Limestone that sponsor Acrobatics & Tumbling. With Chowan’s addition, Conference Carolinas will become one of the few athletic conferences in the nation eligible to have a conference championship in the sport. Member institutions have a team roster size of 24-40 athletes who compete in 6-8 meets each year. The season begins in February and continues through the end of April with the NCATA National Championships.

Hayley Nejman has joined the Athletics Department as the first-ever head coach of Acrobatics & Tumbling at Chowan. Hayley comes to Chowan following a season at Urbana University as an assistant Acrobatics & Tumbling coach in the program’s first season. Nejman helped Sarah Calk to a third-place finish at the Inaugural Mountain East Conference Championship.

While in the Urbana, Ohio area, Nejman was an assistant gymnastics coach at Beavercreek High in Dayton, Ohio.

Prior to coaching, Nejman was a four-year member of the Gannon University Acrobatics & Tumbling program from 2014-2018. While competing as a student-athlete, Hayley helped at the Lakettes and Lakers Gymnastics Academy and Long’s School of Dance.

Nejman earned Gannon’s first National Collegiate Acrobatics & Tumbling Associations (NCATA) All-American in 2017. That same season, Hayley garnered ECAC All-Conference honors, ECAC Athlete of the week, and placed third in Tumbling Trio Heat at NCATA Nationals. Hayley helped secure a NCATA National Championship in the Inversion Pyramid event in 2018. She would also be named ECAC All-Conference Honorable Mention.
Hayley earned a bachelor’s degree in Sports and Exercise Science from Gannon University in 2018.

**BEMBRY INDUCTED TO HAMPSHIRE HONOR SOCIETY**

The National Football Foundation & College Hall of Fame (NFF) announced the members of the 2019 NFF Hampshire Honor Society, which is comprised of college football players from all divisions of play who each maintained a cumulative 3.2 GPA or better throughout their college careers.

Senior defensive lineman Tyler Bembry, a May 2019 graduate, was selected to the NFF Hampshire Honor Society as the first Chowan Football player to achieve this honor.

**BAHAMIAN ATHLETES COMPETE FOR OPPORTUNITY AND HOME COUNTRY**

Six Bahamian students have made their way across oceans, land, and cultures to find a home at Chowan University. L’Leah Laing, Megan Reid, Keitra Lloyd, Inecia Rolle, Jasmine Gibson, and Jeleah Delaney hail from either the capital city of Nassau or from the second largest city in the Bahamas, Freeport, and are spread between the women’s golf and swimming teams.

While these student-athletes excel in their respective sports, they also stand out in the classroom. All six student-athletes are members of various honor societies on campus, the president’s and dean’s lists, and are leaders in campus clubs and activities.
Reid and Lloyd were recently inducted into Chi Alpha Sigma, the National Student-Athlete Honor Society, which requires a 3.4 cumulative grade point average for membership. Rolle and Laing are also members of Chi Alpha Sigma, and newcomers Gibson and Jeleah Delancy are on pace to become members in their junior years. Gibson and Delancy are also members of the Honors College.

Not only do these student-athletes make their home country proud, they make Chowan proud.

**OUR BAHAMIAN ATHLETES:** L’Leah Laing- May 2019 graduate, Women’s Golf, Sport Science and Exercise Science Major (Freeport, Bahamas); Megan Reid- Senior, Women’s Swimming, Sport Science and Exercise Science Major (Freeport, Bahamas); Keitra Lloyd- Senior, Women’s Swimming, Business Major (Nassau, Bahamas); Inecia Rolle- Senior, Women’s Golf, Psychology Major, Counseling Concentration (Nassau, Bahamas); Jasmine Gibson- Junior, Women’s Swimming, Education Major (Freeport, Bahamas); Jeleah Delancy- Sophomore, Women’s Swimming, Business Major (Freeport, Bahamas)

**LATNEY’S BALANCED ATTACK**

Since arriving on campus in the fall of 2015 Jasmine has made a name for herself not only on the lacrosse field, but also in the classroom and in the community.
The Sport Science major entered her freshman year as a Chowan University Leadership Scholar and member of the Honors College. She excelled academically and also thrived on the lacrosse team, playing in 14 matches and netting four goals and nine ground balls as a midfielder.

But just like any other college student, Jasmine has had her fair share of setbacks, the biggest of which came during her sophomore year: anxiety. Instead of letting it take over her life, Jasmine relied on her athletic instincts to push through the tough times. Jasmine used this energy to battle back from behind, managing to play in 15 matches for the Hawks and score seven goals that year. Since 2017, Jasmine’s balanced attack on tackling the everyday pressures of college has worked in her favor. She is a member of five honor societies, is active in four campus clubs, is a mathematics tutor, and is active in community service and engagement programs through athletics and the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. She has used the skills she learned on the lacrosse field to help manage each area of her life.

Jasmine’s hope is to put these same skills to use in the medical field. In fact, she has already stacked her resume with two medical internships that she hopes will put favor in her corner. Jasmine, who graduated in May, plans to complete some course requirements for medical school while working towards becoming an EMT.

TO KEEP UP WITH ALL THE ATHLETICS NEWS AND HIGHLIGHTS IN REAL TIME VISIT: GOCUHAWKS.COM.
Dr. Jennifer Zak Place always wanted to be a teacher, though when she first set out on the path that led her to Chowan University she didn’t actually intend to become one. Now, a decade after her arrival, she takes on a new role as Dean of the School of Arts & Sciences. Her story is one of happiness along the journey, and finding joy in all circumstances.

"To be perfectly honest, I initially wanted to be a teacher," says Jennifer Place, Associate Professor of Psychology and Dean of the School of Arts & Sciences. "But my mom advised that I pursue school counseling instead."

"The funny thing was," she continues, "my mom would still sometimes encourage me to teach at the college level. For some reason, it didn’t resonate with me right away."

Jen always loved psychology. In seventh grade, she asked for a subscription to Psychology Today for her birthday. Her own high school guidance counselor advised against a major in psychology, but this was advice she did not heed. Instead, she remained single-minded. "I declared it, I was a psychology major," she says. "I never strayed, I always loved it."

Her path to Chowan, and to higher education, however, was less certain, and less direct. The Buffalo, NY native studied psychology at Saint Mary’s College of Notre Dame in Indiana, then completed a dual master’s program in school counseling and counseling psychology at the State University of New York (SUNY) in Albany. It was
“I tell my students this is a luxury, to be able to read and talk about ideas.”
“It was definitely one of those places that was meant to be. It’s been a perfect fit.”

there that she met and fell in love with Tim Place (now Head Football Coach at Chowan). After a year working as an employment counselor, Jen went back for her PhD in Counseling Psychology, also at SUNYA.

She practiced as a university counselor for a number of years until her first child was born, and then was a stay-at-home mom for seven years. Throughout that entire time she had been teaching part-time, first as a graduate assistant and then as an adjunct. Then, an opportunity presented itself.

"Out of nowhere, Tim got a call from one of his friends about a job in North Carolina," she says. When she joined him on a visit to Chowan she met the late Romey Peavler, who was Chair of the Psychology Department at the time. Romey was a highly respected certified substance abuse counselor who led the department for a number of years. Following her retirement she was named Professor Emeritus. Jen and Romey immediately had a connection. "I thought, 'This is it,'" she says. "It was definitely one of those places that was meant to be. It's been a perfect fit."

Coach Place began his first season in 2008 and Jen started as an adjunct right away. The second year, she was able to teach part-time while also working part-time as a university counselor. In 2010, she became an Assistant Professor and by 2013 she was chair of the department, which has grown from around 30 majors to over 170 during her tenure. "It's been unbelievable," she says. "And we've maintained it."

She credits the entire psychology department for that transformation, saying, "We have the best of everything. We have Julie [Parker] who focuses on positive psychology, which is very up-and-coming. Now we have Shirley [Alt] really focusing on cognitive—and it just helps our teaching. She's very generous about explaining how a certain teaching strategy might be better than another and how one will affect comprehension. And Ashley [Doane], now the chair, has been known as the researcher, which brings the big university emphasis to our small college and gives students the research experience. She's an amazing teacher also. We have a really strong faculty."

Growing up, both of Jen's parents modeled the importance of education and hard work. "In my little suburban area, my mom was the only working mom," she says. "She worked as an elementary school teacher in the inner city of Buffalo. She was just a go-getter. So I always knew I wanted to work, but I also knew I wanted to stay home with my kids when they were little. I'm glad I was able to do both."

Jen's father, on the other hand, grew up fatherless in the projects with no higher education. "He pulled himself up by his bootstraps and he 100% focused on education for my brother and me," she says. The fact that her brother is a lawyer and she has a doctorate is not a coincidence. As a result, she recognizes the value of a college education. "I tell my students that this is a luxury, the ability to read and talk about ideas. I don't see it as drudgery, something you have to do. I love it. I love that it's my life, and I feel blessed to provide that luxury to others."

She's found many others at Chowan who feel the same way. "I feel like everyone is here for the right reason," she says. "It's an incredibly kind and nurturing environment; a really nice place for these young people to transition. People here truly want to help students."

If there's one thing that really makes Jen love her role, it's her profound care for her students. "They have no idea how much it means to all of us when graduates e-mail or
when they come and visit. There’s nothing like it. No matter what’s going on, I’m on cloud nine when I get contacted by a former student. Especially when I look down the hall and see that one of them is here visiting. It’s unbelievable.”

Jen regularly sees the lives of students transformed upon graduation. “The employment opportunities alone,” she says, “and, moving up in that socioeconomic status—that is absolutely life-changing. They are going to change a generation. Their children are going to grow up differently—with more opportunities, with more resources, with more knowledge. Their futures are really changed by their opportunities here.”

For Jen, the Chowan philosophy goes hand-in-hand with her own life philosophy. “I really, do believe in ‘faith in your future.’ I’ve worked at many other schools and I tend to be happy wherever I am, but Chowan has been my absolute favorite.”
“Joy is not a requirement of Christian discipleship, it is a consequence. It is not what we have to acquire to experience life in Christ; it is what comes to us when we are walking in the way of faith and obedience.”

-Eugene Peterson, A Long Obedience in the Same Direction
In his ninth decade of life, Julian Randolph Mills, Sr. ’59, has more going on than most people half (or even a quarter) his age. It’s almost impossible to write a single paragraph describing him without furiously repeating words like “and,” “also,” or “in addition,” because the former bi-vocational pastor and public affairs professional has never done fewer than two things at once, and he doesn’t seem likely to slow down anytime soon. The other thing Julian never does is refuse to follow where God may be leading him.

A native of Roanoke Rapids, Julian came to Chowan as a ministerial student. “I had felt the Lord’s call to ministry when I was in high school,” he says. “That’s why I came to Chowan. That was Dr. Bruce Whitaker’s first year here.” He made the decision in late summer, just before enrolling. “I met with my pastor [at First Baptist Church in Roanoke Rapids] and he said, ‘Why don’t you go to Chowan?’ I said, ‘Well, I don’t know. How do I do that?’ He picked up the phone and called Dr. Whitaker who told him to tell me to come on down and sign up, that it was all taken care of.”

As a student, he was also president of the Ministerial Alliance. “I believe we had about fifteen ministerial students at that time,” he says. His fondest memories of that time are of the Baptist Student Union and “all the things we did.” One can only imagine how many and varied were his ministerial endeavors as a young man in college. But the years following his graduation from Chowan were less carefree.

“I was right on the top of the draft boards and I did not want to be drafted to the army,” he says. He chose to join the U.S. Air Force instead. He wasn’t thrilled when he was sent to a radio intercept analyst school in San Angelo, Texas, so he made a plea to the board that was granted. “I didn’t want to go to Italy when I got out; I had just gotten married. They honored my request and they gave me three choices: education, public affairs, or surveying. So I took public affairs.”

He had studied English at Chowan and (briefly) at East Carolina University, making public affairs a natural fit. “It was a great career,” he says. The schedule was also one reason he was able to preach and plant churches. He only missed one Wednesday night service in all the churches he pastored while on active duty. “That was when President Nixon came back from China. He was the first president to ever fly to China—on that diplomatic mission. When he came back and landed at Andrews Air Force Base, I had to be there in the press box. I was always in the press box when the president came back.”

In the end, Julian spent more than 20 years in the Air Force, retiring in 1981. During this time, he and his wife Mary either planted or worked with several mission churches in Ohio, Illinois, Washington, DC, and Maryland. Each time he was relocated, God provided another opportunity to pastor and plant churches. He baptized over 150 converts at the

"Chowan has experienced a revival. Over the last few years, it’s just come alive."
Maryland church alone. All this while also developing in his career in the Air Force.

He spent one year as a combat news correspondent in Vietnam and also wrote an 18-month history of the air war over North Vietnam. In addition, he spent six years in the White House’s special mission unit that flies Air Force One where he served as spokesman for the Presidential Pilot. He then spent four years serving in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defence for Public Affairs. Julian didn’t just keep busy, he excelled—and was recognized for it. For his service in the Air Force he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Air Medal, Presidential Outstanding Unit Medal, Meritorious Service Medal, Air Force Commendation Medal, and Defense Department Service Badge, along with others.

He also did a stint as editor of Command Magazine for the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs at the Pentagon. In addition, during a break in military service from 1964-66 Julian was an editor with the Columbus Dispatch newspaper in Columbus, Ohio.

Julian put his public affairs skills to work in service to his ministerial call, as well, writing articles about the churches he served for local papers and brainstorming creative ways to get young people involved and interested. “It was just natural after being in public affairs for twenty-one years,” he says. “One of the first things I did when I went to Warrenton was to meet the editor of the paper. He was an old, hard-shelled democrat but he and I became good friends. Everything I’d send them, they printed.” Julian received his call to Gospel ministry and was ordained in 1965 by Fairwood Baptist Church in Columbus, Ohio and has never looked back. In addition to his missions leadership and church planting while in the Air Force, Julian has also served as pastor of six churches in North Carolina. Though he attempted retirement in 2001 from Park Baptist Church in Roanoke Rapids, NC,
the call to continue his ministry and service resulted in serving as interim director of Missions for North Roanoke Baptist Association, as well as working with eight more churches as interim pastor. He retired (again) as pastor of First Baptist Church in Gaston, NC in November 2018.

Very active in the Baptist denomination, Julian served two terms as chairperson of the Committee on Nominations for the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, which eventually led to a new relationship with Chowan University, this time on the Board of Trustees. "Chowan has experienced a revival," he says. "Over the last few years, it's just come alive. I think that's a great story. From the 2000s until now, it's just been go, go, go. It has been really going."

Julian is also a founding member of the Chowan Christian Service Association (CCSA) and formerly served as its board president. He is a champion and tireless advocate for the organization. Julian and Mary were among the first to create endowed CCSA scholarships for students. These scholarships provide funding for deserving students who are called into ministry, regardless of profession. Julian's passion for CCSA comes from his sincere desire to help students and to keep his beloved alma mater connected to Christian roots. He and Mary are still in contact with several of the CCSA students that have been supported by their scholarships.

In 2012, as CCSA President, he assisted the board in expanding its impact when he spearheaded the addition of the Missions Endowment to provide mission trip scholarships for Campus Ministry. Due to the faithfulness of Julian and other association members, the CCSA scholarship and Missions Endowment continues to grow and impact many students. Julian and Mary have established three endowed scholarships with the Chowan Christian Service Association, two CCSA Missions Endowments, and one music scholarship, all in honor or memory of their family and close friends.

In so-called "retirement," Julian is still being recognized and decorated for his service. In 2017, he was presented the North Carolina Baptist Heritage Award. The award recognizes individuals who represent exemplary giving and service to organizations associated with the Baptist State Convention of NC. In 2009, Julian was honored with the "Distinguished Alumnus" award for his support of and service to the University, as well as the great gospel call. Of all the causes, ministries, and careers he has undertaken, Julian considers his work with Chowan as his most cherished.

"Seeing the growth of Chowan has been the greatest thing for me—and having a part in it over almost twenty years," he says. "And, for a brief span, seeing my son here as a student. Chowan gave me, and has continued to give me, a sense of belonging, of returning home."

Looking back over their long life and work and marriage, it’s easy to trace a clear pattern for Julian and Mary. God called, and they answered. God was faithful, they were faithful. The joy and peace that comes from a life lived in obedience to that calling is evident in them now. "We see how wonderfully God worked in every step of our lives," Mary says. "How ignorant we were to life and God just stepped in and worked it all out. Sometimes it’s more than we can comprehend, how God has worked in our lives."

To that, Julian, Chowan, and all God’s people say, "Amen!"
God’s Hands & Feet

Imagine this: It’s 3am. There is a potential crisis situation on Chowan’s campus. Perhaps there was a fight. Maybe someone has been acting strange for several days and those nearby got worried and reported something. Who would you expect to arrive? Police? University officials? How about another student? What if that student was there to support and care for those in need? What if they were there to be the hands and feet of God?

In 2010, Chowan University’s adage of “Faith in Your Future,” would be brought to life in a new way: the creation of ministry chaplains. The University is known and exemplified for its religious heritage and willingness to share its faith with its students. Campus Ministry was and still is an active group on campus, but there was a noticeable hole in the system: how is Chowan reaching students on a one-on-one level? “There was a need for peer-to-peer ministry, and this was the answer,” says Mari Wiles, Minister to the University.

Working in the residence halls, ministry chaplains were to be students openly available to talk with other students about faith and other topics as they arose. “I love being responsible for creating a safe space for my peers to come in and unload whatever they carry and work through it with them,” says Amber Cunningham, who served as a ministry chaplain in her senior year. Another chaplain, Adrianna Harris, says that she loves building relationships with other students.
The ministry chaplains have several different roles within the residence halls and across campus, ranging from helping Resident Assistants (RAs) during crisis situations to simply spending time with their peers. Inevitably, this has led to many different experiences for chaplains, experiences that they would have otherwise missed out on. Some moments are more humorous, such as when chaplains walk in unannounced and obscenities being screamed at TV basketball games immediately evaporate. Other moments are far more serious, such as working with students who have survived unspeakable trauma and hardship. Regardless of the scenario, however, the chaplains are always serving those around them, even if it’s in simple ways.

“My ministry chaplain was Ammaris,” says Shakira Harris. “She would send out emails on Thursdays and slip notes under our doors. She checked up on us.” Ammaris was a ministry chaplain in 2015 and 2016, and it’s evident that her support had a lasting effect on her students. Shakira, now a chaplain herself, continued “When I became a ministry chaplain, I realized they were always working behind the scenes. I never saw them respond to crises. I never saw people knocking on their doors early in the morning. I never saw them go and handle situations. All I know is how they interacted with me.”

In a world of social media, studying, and stress for innumerable reasons, this interaction is crucial on campus. The ministry chaplains go out each day with the intention of getting to know their peers even better than they did the day before, because they care for fellow students and wish to see the kingdom of God advanced. The roles chaplains play gives students access to someone they can talk to at virtually any time within reason, something that staff alone cannot do. The university ministers don’t live on campus—they can’t. Having designated individuals who are in position, building relationships and responding to students, is crucial. Campus administrators say that it appears to benefit the chaplains as well.

They aren’t alone in thinking that; the chaplains agree. With all the talk about students being ministry chaplains, sometimes the reality of the situation is lost. The ministry chaplains are still students! Just like everyone else, they have schoolwork, clubs, organizations, and other commitments to attend to as well as serving as chaplains. Understandably, the plate can feel rather full at times. Yet along with caring about and serving their residents, they make sure to take care of each other. Jacob Hunter says “This is like a family. These people check on me and care about me.” It isn’t uncommon for several chaplains to take on a situation together, whether that situation be another person’s crisis, or just getting a late night snack. As time has passed, they have become not just friends, but family connected by the same mission of serving God on Chowan’s campus.

With more and more students dropping out of college nationwide, it is crucial to understand students and their stories. According to research, “Whether a person stays in college can depend on how well [he or she] socially integrates into the college community.” Over the years, ministry chaplains have demonstrated themselves to be spiritual leaders and friends capable of bridging gaps that many universities simply don’t. Perhaps Tyler Webb says it best: “Chowan wants to make sure that every student is cared for; that’s the reason we’re here.”

For more information on how to support the program, please contact Mari Wiles, Minister to the University, at wilesm@chowan.edu or (252) 398-6268.

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

-Matthew 18:19-20
The classroom is warm and welcoming, full of bright colors and oozing personality, just like the confident young woman standing in its center. With her easy charm and open demeanor, it’s easy to see why Akevia Wilson ’18 is equally adored by students, parents, colleagues, and the administration at Bearfield Primary School in Ahoskie, NC. It is hard to imagine is that this powerhouse of a teacher almost didn’t become one. In fact, she once believed it was impossible.

Akevia grew up in a single-parent home. She was considered at-risk due to the impact of poverty: more likely to drop out of school and more likely to experience teen pregnancy. Despite her best efforts, she found herself with no choice but to drop out of high school and abandon her dream, though she continued to work hard at jobs leading nowhere throughout her twenties. She ultimately suffered the significant loss of a loved one, leading to a debilitating depression. On top of it all, she was pregnant.

“I was left homeless, hopeless, and pregnant,” she said. “But, the Lord led me to Britton Ministries in Ahoskie, NC.”

An extension of Baptist Children’s Home, Britton Ministries provides transitional housing for single mothers. Through Britton Ministries, Akevia met Pat Byrd, Director of Christian Women’s Job Corps, who assisted her with entry in the Roanoke Chowan Christian Women’s Job Corp (a branch of WMU) where Akevia received encouragement, school assistance, clothes, bible study, and more. Following the birth of her son, their support led Akevia to the local community college where she began her journey to become a licensed teacher.

Akevia completed every course available to her at community college and then began to research where and how she could continue her education and reach her goal of earning her teaching degree. With the help of Pat, Akevia explored surrounding colleges: Elizabeth City State University, East Carolina University (ECU), and Chowan University.

After visiting the state universities in the area, Akevia visited Chowan. When she saw the campus and met with staff and students, Akevia told her mentor that she couldn’t even hope to attend Chowan, it seemed out of reach. Pat reminded her that CWJC was in the “hope business” and pledged to walk through the process with her. Pat called upon her community connections, contacting Director of Church and Community Relations Lou Ann Gilliam who reached out to Scott Parker in Admissions to see what magic they could work. With financial assistance (need-based and academic) and Akevia’s dedication to work during semesters and over breaks, Akevia graduated from Chowan in May 2018 with a 4.0 grade point average, Summa Cum Laude status, and a manageable amount of student loans.

Akevia was the President of Kappa Delta Pi, a member of Alpha Chi Honor Society, Pi Gamma Mu, and the Student North Carolina Association of Educators (SNCAE). She was also awarded The Senior Scholastic Award for graduating in the top of her class. Akevia’s son was able to witness all of his mom’s accomplishments by attending award ceremonies and events for the societies and organizations in which she participated. They also enjoyed attending events the International Student Club hosted.

“I thought it was impossible, but with God all things are possible. I worked part-time, in the summer, and did whatever it took,” Akevia said. After the first year, there were some roadblocks. Akevia searched for scholarships, loans, and grants to finish school. “Again, God had an answer,” she said. Akevia received several scholarships, financial support for books, and help with transportation. “God used my journey to
strengthen my faith. Because of these organizations and the wonderful Christian people who have helped and encouraged us, my son, Mark Jeremiah, and I will have a better life. He will not have to experience food insecurity or homelessness. He will not have to worry about where his next meal will come from or if the light bill was paid on time,” stated Akevia in thanks to her supporters.

Following graduation Akevia won the national Sybil Bentley Dove Award from Christian Women’s Job Corps (CWJC). The Dove Endowment provides a grant each year to the Dove Award recipient, helping a current or former CWJC student become independent and enhance her ability to nurture the development of her children.

“I thought it was impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

Her testimony touched everyone's hearts as they listened to how God had worked in her life.

Akevia qualified for her teaching license and is now a 3rd grade teacher at Bearfield Primary School in Ahoskie, NC. Akevia will pay it forward with her participation in the Miss Kendra Program, which focuses on helping children cope with traumatic experiences and teaches them that they have the strength to be resilient. “I love all my children and my co-workers. I have the best principal and school staff. I am truly living my dream,” she said.

Akevia’s determination coupled with the support of three Baptist organizations: Roanoke Chowan Christian Women’s Job Corps, Britton Ministry, and Chowan University allowed Akevia to achieve her goal of not only becoming a teacher but ending the cycle of poverty and providing a better life for her son. God placed the right people in Akevia’s life, at the right time, and for the right reasons.
At chowan.edu/classacts you can submit an update, share a photo, and be part of the story at Chowan University - especially if it’s your reunion year. For Brave Hawks who have joined the Chowanian society - that’s 50+ years since graduation - every year is a reunion year!

1950s

Correction: A previous issue stated that Edith Farris ’53 graduated with an English degree. She actually received a Business Certificate.

Don Wilson Deaton ’56 passed away peacefully at his residence, on August 19, 2018, with his family at his side.

Richard Watts Harris ’56 died Sunday, March 3, 2019, at his home.

Howard Hughes ’56 received the 2018 TPA (Travelers Protective Association) National Merit Award. The award was presented to him by Carlyle Wimbish who, by coincidence, is also a Chowan alumnus from the class of 1958.

Jo Allen Grice, Ph.D., ’57 passed away on December 11, 2018. She is survived by Lynwood Grice ’57, her devoted husband of 60 years.

EDIE FARRIS AWARDED
NC Baptist Heritage Award

Edith (Edie) Vick Farris ’53 received the 19th Annual North Carolina Baptist Heritage Award in recognition of her exemplary giving and service to organizations associated with the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina.

Edie is an enthusiastic champion of Chowan University and her mission, endowing multiple scholarships and supporting various renovations and landscaping projects. She served as a member of both the Board of Trustees and Board of Visitors at Chowan University. Most notably, she conceptualized and funded the Farris Prayer Room, a quiet space on campus for students to explore their faith and further their relationship with God. With a divine calling to create and fund the project, Edie hopes that it will become a place that quiets the noise of contemporary life so that the voice of the Spirit can be heard.
Olive "Ollie" Wendell Yates, Jr. ‘57 died March 1, 2019 at his home in Apex, NC. He was a veteran of the NC Army National Guard and served on the Apex Volunteer Fire Department for over 60 years.

Rose Jernigan Harrington Askew ‘58 passed away on June 25, 2019 after a short and courageous battle with cancer.

John Leonard Whitley, Jr. ‘59 received the J. Blaine Blayton Award for Community Service from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) at their 40th annual NAACP Life Membership Banquet in May.

1960s

Dwight Erskin Compton, Sr. ‘60 was called home on November 1, 2018. Most widely known as Santa Claus, he has been a helper of St. Nicholas for 52 years, gathering wish lists and spreading holiday cheer all year long.

Rice Day ‘60 passed on February 26, 2019. He was passionate about his service to others through his memberships in the Franklin Masonic Lodge #151 A.F. & A.M, the Shriners, the Franklin Jaycees, the Kiwanis Club, the Moose Lodge, and the Ruritan Club.


Robert Wainwright ‘63, passed away on June 14, 2019.

Billie Graham Flahive ‘66 and her husband, Terry Lee Flahive (1965), were recent visitors to the University campus. Interestingly, the couple did not meet until after they graduated Chowan.

Rebecca Ann Vanderslice ‘67 went to be the Lord on October 6, 2018.

1970s

Sandra Laverne Goodman Whitney ’71 passed away in March.

Joseph Forbes ’72 received a Tony Award for Excellence in the Theatre for his lifetime work in

Howard Hughes ’56 (left) & Carlyle Wimbish ‘58 (right)

John Leonard Whitley, Jr. ’59 (right)

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set design, scenic creation, and technical lighting for more than 300 top Broadway shows over the past three-plus decades on June 9, 2019.

Carrie DiAnne Bowen ’73 passed away on February 17, 2019 after a long battle with breast cancer. She was formerly a co-host of Carolina Today on WNCT-TV. She also worked in the North Carolina Film industry where she had roles in “Blue Velvet,” “Shag, the Movie,” and “Justice in a Small Town.”

Dennis Ray Henegar ’73 went to be with the Lord on Saturday, June 1, 2019.

Judy Bullock ’74 passed away on March 24, 2019.

1980s

Alan Sewell ’81 was inducted into the National Wrestling Hall of Fame during a ceremony in Chapel Hill, NC. He competed for two years at Chowan Junior College before going on to UNC-Wilmington. While competing at Chowan he served as backup to an eventual national championship winner and was part of a top-10 team in the country.

Paige Myers ’88 has been a professional costumer for over 25 years and is the current Textile Conservator at the NC Museum of History in Raleigh. She does contract work for the Smithsonian Institution and the National Museum of American History and has completed internships at American Textile History Museum in Lowell, MA; the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC; and the Biltmore Estate in Asheville, NC. She is the daughter of alumni Elaine Early Myers (1960) and the late Lawrence W. Myers (1954).

1990s

Dennis J. Conner ’98 is cultivating the plant of Advent Church for South Loop in Chicago, IL. He asks for prayers of wisdom as they continue to seek out and seize gospel opportunities.

Joshua Sophia ’98 has been named head football coach at Camden County High School for the 2019-2020 school year.
2000s

K. Paige Dickens Brown ’02 has been selected as the new Assistant Dean of Interprofessional Education (IPE) at Campbell University. In this role, she will work to equip our students to function effectively as members of interprofessional rural healthcare teams.

Matthew Nelson Anzivino ’03, fondly known as “AZ” to friends and family, passed away on January 22, 2019, following a brief illness.

2010s

Tera M. Tyson ’10 was named Teacher of the Year by Chesapeake Public Schools.

Travis Albea ’11 has joined The Forrest Firm as an attorney. The firm is a North Carolina-based business law firm and certified B Corporation that provides legal services to businesses, non-profits, entrepreneurs, and individuals. He has won numerous awards for his work and serves on many committees in his community.

Antenette Stokes ’11 partnered with a ministry to counsel first-responders of human-trafficking victims on crisis care, trauma care, self-care, and the neurobiology of trauma in Goa, India.

Kim Hicks ’12 was sworn in as a practicing attorney in Winton, NC during the month of November. She is married to Chowan alum Zach Hicks (2012).
Three former outstanding men’s basketball players were recognized at the November 28, 2018 game. The three players were: Lando Morrison ’10, Jaleel Nelson ’11, and Mark Brown ’12.

Pamela Woodard ’12 successfully defended her doctoral dissertation, to be conferred in August. She was also promoted to Chair of Chowan University’s Criminal Justice department in January.

Black Leebrick ’14 will be graduating from Eastern Virginia Medical School.

Cheryl Amey ’15 obtained her Master’s in Human Services with Counseling from Regent University on May 11, 2019.

Jennifer Humphrey ’15 was promoted to Registrar at Chowan University on June 1, 2019. She also adjuncts with the Criminal Justice department teaching CJ 101.

Stephanie Peede ’15 received her Masters of Fine Arts (MFA) in Writing from Lindenwood University this June. Stephanie currently serves Chowan as Administrative Assistant to the Chancellor.

Daniel Early ’16, English Lab Coordinator, successfully defended his M.A. in History thesis at East Carolina University in November.

Suraya Chase ’17 was highlighted alongside her sisters (Sonja and Siobhan) and mother (Judith) in Newsday’s January 30th article. The article details their musical journey from forming the band Eko and the
debut of their song "Keep Calm" at Carnival 2019 to performing in the finals of the IShine competition.

**Zack Cooper ’17** is finishing law school at Ole Miss (University of Mississippi) this year.

**Elonga Adida Manseka ’17**, now an Officer from the Division of Capitol Police, received the Director’s Award for Excellence at the Crater Criminal Justice Training Academy’s 92nd Basic Law Enforcement Academy graduation in Richmond, VA in March.

**Lauren D. Rice ’17** earned her master’s degree in Forensic Psychology from Liberty University.

**La’Quan S. Nixon ’18** worked with North Carolina State University this summer as a cabin counselor for the Betsy-Jeff Penn 4-H Educational Center in Reidsville, NC.

**Haley Cooper ’19** was announced as the 54th pick in the American Softball Association’s (ASBA) draft by the Performance Lab team. Cooper was a four-year standout for the Hawks’ Softball program. The catcher-turned-infielder helped the program to four straight CIAA Northern Division Titles, back-to-back CIAA Softball Championships (2017 and 2018), and back-to-back NCAA Atlantic Regional appearances (2017 and 2018).

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**DONNIE CLARY RECEIVES HONORARY DOCTORATE**

Donnie Odell Clary was conferred an honorary doctorate of business administration for his exemplary service to the institution.

Clary, now Vice Chancellor for Business Affairs, has been with the university since 2005. Under his leadership as Vice President for Business and Finance, Chowan University garnered a reputation for operating “in the black” every fiscal year. In recent years, Mr. Clary has served as a consultant and mentor for younger university CFOs.

“A man of humility with a near-genius ability with numbers, a man of unquestioned integrity and loyalty, a man of passion and generosity, he is most deserving of this high honor,” says University Chancellor Dr. Chris White of the man who has long been considered as his “MVP.”

The White-Clary partnership began prior to Chowan at Gardner-Webb University when Dr. White made his first personnel hire as then-president. The records achieved by the White-Clary team at both Gardner-Webb and Chowan are remarkably similar. They include unprecedented enrollment growth, a tripling of endowments, achieving university status, and expanding the campus significantly in both acreage and building construction.

“Donnie has never been an employee--he is a colleague and a partner,” says Dr. White.
On Saturday, May 11, 2019, a record-breaking 268 graduates crossed the stage at the Chowan University Commencement Ceremony, making this the largest graduating class in the institution’s history. It was also the first commencement under new president, Dr. Kirk E. Peterson. The ceremony included speeches by a number of graduates, musical performances, the recognition of several awards, the conferral of bachelor’s and master’s degrees, as well as the conferral of two honorary doctorate degrees.
01 | EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AWARD
The 2019 Faculty Excellence in Teaching Award was presented to Assistant Professor of Graphic Communications and Chowan graduate Jennifer Groves Newton.

02 | HONORARY DOCTORATES
President Peterson with honorary doctorates Sang-Kyun Lee and Donnie Odell Clary, Chancellor White, and Board Chair Frank Rose.

03 | HATS OFF
A successful student petition resulted in another first for the Class of 2019, decorated grad caps.

04 | BIG HEART
Teacher Ed graduate Kayla Smith wears her heart on her hat, proclaiming her post-graduation plans.

05 | FINALLY
A number of decorated grad caps proclaimed a similar sentiment—after years of hard work and dedication, it’s finally time to fly.

06 | THE BLUE CORD
Seventy-three graduating seniors invested in Chowan’s future by making their first gift to the Chowan Fund. In turn, each of them received the Blue Cord to wear at commencement.
JOIN US FOR THE BLUE & WHITE CELEBRATION | CHOWAN.EDU/HOMECOMING

CHOWAN UNIVERSITY

Homecoming

OCTOBER 25-26 2019

HAWKS HOME FOOTBALL SCHEDULE:

9/14 vs ALDERSON BROADDUS
9/21 vs SHAW UNIVERSITY
10/26 vs ELIZABETH CITY STATE HOMECOMING
11/2 vs VIRGINIA STATE