

INSIGHTS

Department of English and Modern Languages
SCHOOL of EDUCATION, SOCIAL SCIENCES, AND THE ARTS
DIVISION of ACADEMIC AFFAIRS


U M E S
March 2021
Volume 37 Issue 2

THANK YOU, MR. JONES!

English Graduate Continues to Support His Alma Mater

An UMES English graduate was one of the very first donors to the University's new endowed scholarship fund, the [Dr. Richard H. Warren, Jr. Top Educator Scholarship Fund](#), which will assist students who seek a career as a classroom teacher.

It isn't the first time Horatio "Bill" Jones III has contributed to his alma mater. He and his wife Willetta established an endowment fund for the English department back in 2004.

"I am blessed to be able to give back, to help those Hawks who come after me," he said at the time.

For Mr. Jones, UMES was a second home. Both of his parents worked on the

campus—his father as an instructor, his mother as a cooperative extension agent—and he earned his UMES English degree in 1978.

Though he lives in North Carolina and has retired from a long career at [CBS News](#), he is still fondly remembered in the community as one of the first full-time African American news anchors on a local television station.

Armajeanne Harmon, the UMES development officer who formally thanked Mr. Jones for his most recent donation last month, credits

that local milestone as the inspiration for her earlier career in journalism.



Mr. Jones with President Anderson at her 2019 inauguration ceremony

Photo by Bill Robinson

Ms. Harmon said it was particularly appropriate to acknowledge Mr. Jones's continued generosity during Black History Month.

"As we celebrate a long history of excellence and sacrifice within the black community this month, your alma mater recognizes and appreciates your service to the community," she said. "You are a trailblazer in the industry and certainly one of my role models growing up!"

"TALK OF THE SHORE" IS BACK

Podcast Focused on Hawks Athletics Resumes Production

Episodes of "[Talk of the Shore](#)" have begun production after a lengthy COVID related hiatus.

The program, a video podcast, is recorded in the English department's television studio and hosted by members of [the university's athletics department](#).

Langston Frazier, a student assistant in athletics enrolled in the [UMES PGA golf management program](#), is joined on the weekly programs by



(L to R) Basketball player Amanda Carney, Mr. Wardlaw and Mr. Frazier in a socially distanced interview in the department's television studio.

Photos provided by Bill Brophy

Ralan Wardlaw, the assistant director of media relations for Maryland Eastern Shore Hawks.

Their efforts have been complicated by the pandemic, which not only forced the cancellation of all campus athletic events, but also required certain health related accommodations in the studio.

While Mr. Frazier is officially a golf major, the English department's digital



Mr. Frazier

media program claims him as a member of its extended family.

Mr. Frazier plans to cover the golf industry as a sports reporter. He will be well prepared; he has interned at both [Golf Digest](#) and the [Golf Channel](#) in addition to a variety of other media experiences.

Following his graduation in May, Mr. Frazier will begin a [graduate program](#) next fall at the University of Maryland, focused on sports journalism.

SHARING GOOD NEWS

New Digital Media Degree is Publicized

Within weeks of the university's official announcement that the English department had received state approval to offer a bachelor's degree in digital media studies, news organizations took notice.

Locally, WMDT TV, an ABC affiliate in Salisbury, [ran a story](#) about the program. Reporter Jordan Kudisch interviewed faculty member Marilyn Buerkle, a former television news director who helped develop the new degree, and UMES alumna Nadja Cox.

Ms. Cox graduated magna cum laude in 2018 with an English degree and what was then a digital media minor. She told Ms. Kudisch she wished the degree had been available when she attended UMES and predicts it will help the



Ms. Cox at her commencement ceremony

Photos by Jim Glovier

university recruit more students interested in media careers.

"The English department, the professors, the knowledge they have, even the courses, are definitely helpful. But it's always overshadowed because, when you look into the university, it's English—but people don't know there's more to it," she said.

Ms. Buerkle echoed that assessment. "Students are looking for a degree credential that makes their expertise clear," she said. "Because it's a competitive industry, it seems really important that our students have credentials that leap off a resume at an employer."



Ms. Buerkle

News of the degree also reached a national audience. [An announcement of the curriculum expansion](#) was noted in *The Journal of Blacks in Higher Education*.

VIRTUAL LEARNING

Composition instructor Mari-jo Ulbricht is one of less than a hundred higher education professionals nationwide to be awarded a Lumen Circles [Certificate of Effective Teaching Practice](#) for her successful completion of an online fellowship during the fall 2020 semester.



Ms. Ulbricht

Photo by Jim Glovier

Her focus on teaching with open educational resources and open pedagogy was fine tuned in a virtual learning community that connected her with interested peers around the country, helping the group to share their expertise as student-centered teachers.

In order to earn the certificate, Ms. Ulbricht demonstrated her understanding of how to achieve student success online by making the environment both supportive and challenging.

PRESENTATION "SENIOR" STATUS SCHEDULED

TV Production Teacher Gets a Promotion

"Ancient Coins and Speaker Ethos in Madeleine de Scudéry's *Les Femmes illustres*" is the intriguing title of the presentation to be delivered by faculty member Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones this month at the 52nd annual convention of the [Northeast Modern Language Association](#).



Dr. Vlahovici-Jones

Photo by Jim Glovier

Like nearly every other academic event for the past year, the NeMLA conference will, for the first time, be a virtual event. This year's theme is "Tradition and Innovation: Changing Worlds Through the Humanities."

Dr. Vlahovici-Jones's remarks are scheduled for Friday, March 12.

Rob Wilkinson, the adjunct instructor who teaches TELC 238, TV Production & Programming, was named senior promotions producer for [Draper Media](#) in February.



Mr. Wilkinson

Photo by Mary Borger

The local company operates six television stations: WBOC, FOX21, WRDE, Telemundo Delmarva, My COZI TV and WBOC Classics; five radio stations: 102.5 WBOC FM, 106.3 Chesapeake Country, 107.1 The Duck and 1240AM CBS Sports Radio; and also maintains what Mr. Wilkinson describes as a "robust digital division."

He has served as a creative services producer for the Draper stations since

2012. His new title brings new responsibilities.

Mr. Wilkinson will conceive, create and execute both station and event promotion and also public service announcements to increase community awareness and positive perception of the Draper media properties.

Together with the company's marketing director, he will establish specific marketing and promotion goals, develop a strategic plan for the execution of those goals, and continue to produce creative ideas for image and topical promotion.

In addition to on-air messaging, Mr. Wilkinson will create, schedule and post on the Draper social media pages, compile certain FCC reports, and document contractually required network and syndicated promotion.

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CONGRATS MS. BROWN!

Tonia Brown, who earned her UMES English degree in 2014, just got a promotion at the [College Board](#) in Washington, DC, where she has worked for nearly five years. She's now the Associate Director of Strategic Initiatives and Operations.



Photo provided by Ms. Brown

She serves on the company's government relations team and lobbies for specific legislation and for advanced placement (AP) courses in high schools across the country. She also assists with the AP Alumni Network, enabling teachers and students to share their stories about how advanced placement prepared them for success, saved them time and money, and helped them secure meaningful careers.

Ms. Brown says her time on the Eastern Shore was pivotal to her current career. "I want to be an agent for change, and what better way than making sure all students have access to the same opportunities," she said.

LANGUAGE IS POWERFUL

Roger Davis, a 1991 UMES English graduate and president of the [Community College of Beaver County](#) in Pennsylvania, is a published author.



Dr. Davis

He discussed his book, "[The 30 Most Powerful Words in the English Language](#)," on February 11 at a virtual event sponsored by Rockland Community College in New York where he once served as an associate vice president.

Photo courtesy of CCBC

THEATER ONLINE

The English department intends to stage two virtual plays during the spring semester. Planning is still underway, so no specific production dates were available at the *Insights* deadline, but the specific plays to be produced have been identified.



"Soul Searching," the story of the troubled relationship between a boy and his single father, was written and will be directed by junior English major Christian Ferguson. Mr. Ferguson is a member of the UMES [Honors Program](#) and also serves as a tutor in the university's [writing center](#).

"[The Vagina Monologues](#)," which a theater critic for the New York Times once described as "the most important piece of political theater of the last decade," will be directed by faculty member Amy Hagenrater-Gooding.

"This will be the university's first virtual performance, so our actors will work with conveying all the action within the 'stage' of a tiny square on Zoom," she said. "This will call on them to use their voice, expressions, and minimal costuming and background."

WRITERS CONNECT

Amber Green, who studied English at UMES, discussed her love for digital media story telling at a virtual event sponsored by the [Eastern Shore Writers Association](#) in February.



Ms. Green, who settled in nearby Salisbury when she left the university, founded [Fenix Youth Project Inc.](#), a non-profit youth development organization focused on empowering youth to effect social change using art as a tool.

NEW YEAR, NEW JOB

Danielle Jackson, Class of 2016, has a new job.



Ms. Jackson at her graduation

Ms. Jackson is now a weekend assignment editor for [Newsy](#), a video news network owned by the [E.W. Scripps Company](#).

She plans for the network's editorial needs and helps to guide weekend news coverage, managing reporter and production crew schedules to coordinate breaking news coverage. She also distributes information to the network, writes scripts and works to adjust coverage as news breaks.

Ms. Jackson joined the company in January, but the pandemic has so far forced her to work from her Maryland home.

This is Ms. Jackson's first opportunity at a national network. She began her journalism career at [WMDT TV](#) in Salisbury and most recently was employed at [WBFF TV](#) in Baltimore.

A CHAMPION OF CHANGE

English professors read with interest "[Not the Queen's English Department](#)" in *Inside Higher Ed* recently. The article described Cornell University's rebranding of its English department as the [Department of Literatures in English](#). Several professors there suggested that traditional English departments emphasized British imperialism and colonialism. One of those professors was Carole Boyce Davies, who earned her English B.A. at UMES in 1971.



Photo provided by Dr. Boyce Davies

Insights is published monthly during the academic year. It is written and edited, except as noted, by communications instructor Marilyn Buerkle. Copy is proofread by composition instructor Sandy Johnston. Photos are by Marilyn Buerkle, except as noted. If you have information you would like to appear in this publication, contact our editor at 410-651-8349 or email her at mlbuerkle@umes.edu.