

La

FALL 2018

# LOUISIANE

THE MAGAZINE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE



## AGAINST ALL ODDS

David Begnaud's unlikely rise  
to the top of TV news





Each issue of *La Louisiane* seems to take on a life of its own as we're preparing its content.

The magazine is sort of a living, breathing document, right up until we send it to the printer for pre-press work. We start out with an outline of topics; content shifts and morphs as we refine what we'll write about.

Often, by the time we're wrapping up, many of the articles collectively convey a message about the University of Louisiana at Lafayette in ways that we may not have envisioned initially.

This issue is a good example. As we were finishing it, I realized that it's filled with stories about people who embody the Ragin' Cajun spirit.

Take 97-year-old James Bollich, for instance. He survived the Bataan Death March, one of the most horrific ordeals soldiers experienced in World War II. He recently was presented with the Congressional Gold Medal, one of the highest honors bestowed by the U.S. government.

Kevin Tien, a chef who's earned praise from the James Beard Foundation and Bon Appetit magazine, is also featured. You may have watched him compete on the Food Network's "Iron Chef Gauntlet." Find out who sometimes washes dishes at his restaurant.

CBS national news correspondent David Begnaud reveals publicly, for the first time, one of the challenges he had to overcome to rise to the top of his profession.

We write about the University's weightlifting teams, which won eight *national* championships from 1957 to 1971, despite having no coach and little funding.

And, the Kathleen Babineaux Blanco Public Policy Center will carry on the work of Louisiana's only female governor. It will contribute research to public policy areas that she championed, such as poverty and criminal justice reform.

All of these people succeeded because they are determined, hard-working, and resourceful. These are all elements of the Ragin' Cajun spirit that helps define UL Lafayette.

We hope you enjoy this issue of *La Louisiane*.

— Kathleen Thames



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COVER PHOTO OF DAVID BEGNAUD IN PUERTO RICO COURTESY OF CBS NEWS.

## La LOUISIANE

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## Pilot Project

New center to take collaborative approach to reduce flooding

The new Louisiana Watershed Flood Center at UL Lafayette is poised to be a linchpin of state and regional flood mitigation efforts.

It was created earlier this year as part of the Institute for Coastal and Water Research.

The center will use numerical models and data, culled from a network of electronic monitoring gauges placed in rivers, bayous and coulees, to identify flooding hot spots. That will enable local governments to better understand the dynamics of flooding and how to prepare for – and possibly prevent – it, said Dr. Emad Habib, a civil engineering professor who will direct the center.

“We look at the center as an effort to help local communities and regional agencies that will be in charge of flood mitigation. We want to provide technical expertise and solutions on how to move forward with watershed management,” he said.

Watersheds are areas of land that drain water to rivers, bayous and other tributaries.

In Louisiana, watershed management historically has been a local concern, with individual cities and parishes responsible for drainage basins within their jurisdictions. But Habib contends there has long been a problem with that division of responsibility.

“Watersheds cross political boundaries and break those boundaries. We need to prepare ourselves as a region.

“We are a university, so we are not really affiliated with a certain political boundary,” he continued. “We hope we can bring people together within an environment where they don’t feel like it’s this parish versus that parish.”

Many of the region’s waterways are connected. Habib said flood mitigation efforts should be unified as well.

Unprecedented, stunning floods in 2016 brought that lesson home. Between Aug. 11 and Aug. 13, more than 30 inches of rain fell in South Louisiana. The economic impact of the storms topped \$8.7 billion across 20 parishes. Thirteen people died statewide as a result of the deluge.

Nearly 23 inches of rain besieged Lafayette Parish alone. The Vermilion River crested 5 feet above flood stage, reversing the natural flow of bayous, coulees and other watersheds, and inundating roads, businesses and neighborhoods with water. About 2,000 homes were affected; many were destroyed.

Habib said the 2016 flood “brought everything into



A coulee directs water in Lafayette after heavy rains in 2016.

perspective,” about the need for comprehensive mitigation efforts backed by data and analysis an interdisciplinary academic entity can provide. University faculty from engineering, geosciences, architecture and design, and the humanities will be affiliated with the flood center.

Louisiana has 12 large watersheds. The U.S. Geological Survey and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers operate gauges along inland waterways.

“But if you go away from those main rivers, over the hundreds and thousands of channels that Louisiana has, there is no monitoring whatsoever. During storms, people don’t really know what’s going on at the local coulee or channel that impacts their neighborhood,” Habib said.

Lafayette’s Moncus Park is a proving ground in the effort to fill that information gap.

In partnership with the Acadiana Planning Commission and the Teche-Vermilion Freshwater District, Habib and Dr. Robert Miller, a UL Lafayette assistant civil engineering professor, have installed sensors in Coulee Mine, which bisects the park and flows into the Vermilion River.

The pilot project uses several kinds of gauges. Some are mounted on a bridge with ultrasonic sensors pointed toward the water. Others are tethered to the side of the coulee and float in the water.

The gauges measure rainfall, and the flow rate and height of water running through the coulee. The data is automatically transferred, via an on-site, solar-powered communications hub, to an online database, providing real-time monitoring that eventually will be made available to the public on the internet.

The Moncus Park pilot project will be expanded to include between 200 and 300 sensors placed in watersheds throughout the region. The \$2.4 million price tag for the monitoring network will come from \$25 million in federal aid the region received after the 2016 floods.

The data the gauges collect will enable the center to collaborate with the Acadiana Planning Commission on flood models for the



Dr. Emad Habib, left, and Dr. Robert Miller discuss water gauges by the Vermilion River.

Mermentau, Vermilion-Teche and Atchafalaya watersheds.

In May, Gov. John Bel Edwards announced creation of the Council on Watershed Management. Its aim: to adopt regional approaches to flood and drainage planning that mirror Acadiana’s efforts.

The Louisiana Watershed Flood Center has since received inquiries from planning agencies in Calcasieu, Cameron and Sabine parishes.

“They want our help,” Miller said. “This is a Louisiana problem. The more people you have looking at flooding, the more brains you put on it, the more likely it is that a solution will emerge.”

## Hydrolearn: An up-to-date textbook that can be tailored

A researcher at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette is leading a project to create a virtual platform that will enable educators and students across the globe to make contributions and share content.

The web-based platform – HydroLearn – will address flood forecasting, flood protection and drought mitigation. Real-time data, interactive maps, case-based research, links to databases, lesson plans and workbooks are a sampling of what the online hub will house.

Once complete, students and professors who log in will be able to tailor material about water-related issues in a region, state, or a specific location in a community, such as a bayou.

“You will basically produce your own version of this web-based textbook. It won’t be a static resource,” said Dr. Emad Habib, a civil engineering professor at UL Lafayette.

Habib is principal investigator for the four-year project. It is funded by a \$1.8 million National Science Foundation grant. Researchers at Brigham Young and Utah State universities will help build the system. Hydrolearn is being developed in collaboration with the National Water Center and the Consortium of Universities for the Advancement of Hydrologic Science. It builds on an earlier HydroViz project also funded by NSF.

Fellowships will be awarded to faculty members and post-doctoral students – including at other universities – who will help

develop and test the cyber infrastructure.

HydroLearn will give users the ability to create individualized content that they can share with others, Habib said.

The sharing aspect is important.

Information gleaned in Louisiana – developing technology to funnel floodwater into a depleted aquifer, for example – could benefit researchers in a region experiencing drought.

“Water considerations are critical in our world. How do we protect people from the hazards of water? How do we manage water? How can water be used sustainably for industry and irrigation?” Habib asked.

HydroLearn will be geared primarily toward engineering and geosciences students preparing for careers in water management and water infrastructure.

As an “open-source” platform accessible to anyone, however, HydroLearn will be a global resource for the study of hydrology, a branch of science that deals with water on the Earth’s surface and in its atmosphere.

Flood analysis components of HydroLearn will aid UL Lafayette engineering students who are trying to develop and design retention basins or other flood mitigation projects.

“It’s problem-based, hands-on learning,” Habib explained.



## Researchers seek new ways to tap oil reservoir

It's a wildcatter's wildest dream – an 8-million-acre subsurface rock formation estimated to hold about 7 billion barrels of light, sweet crude oil. But the Tuscaloosa Marine Shale has teased – and largely spurned – the energy industry for decades.

Enter the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

It's the new home of the Tuscaloosa Marine Shale Laboratory, a multidisciplinary consortium of geologists, petroleum engineers, geophysicists and economic development experts from UL Lafayette and four other institutions. They'll study how to best recover the substantial bounty its namesake offers and help unlock a potential black gold mine for the communities that it touches.

In addition to UL Lafayette, the consortium includes researchers from New Mexico's Los Alamos National Lab, the Missouri University of Science and Technology, the University of Oklahoma, and the University of Southern Mississippi.

A \$9.7 million grant from the U.S. Department of Energy and several energy companies funded the lab's creation. Industry sources ponied up \$5.98 million, which was combined with \$3.68 million in federal funds.

The grant, announced in January, is part of an initiative by the Energy Department's Office of Fossil Energy to examine unconventional oil and gas plays.

The energy industry considers a play – the name it gives an area where oil and gas exists – as unconventional based on its geographic size and geological makeup.

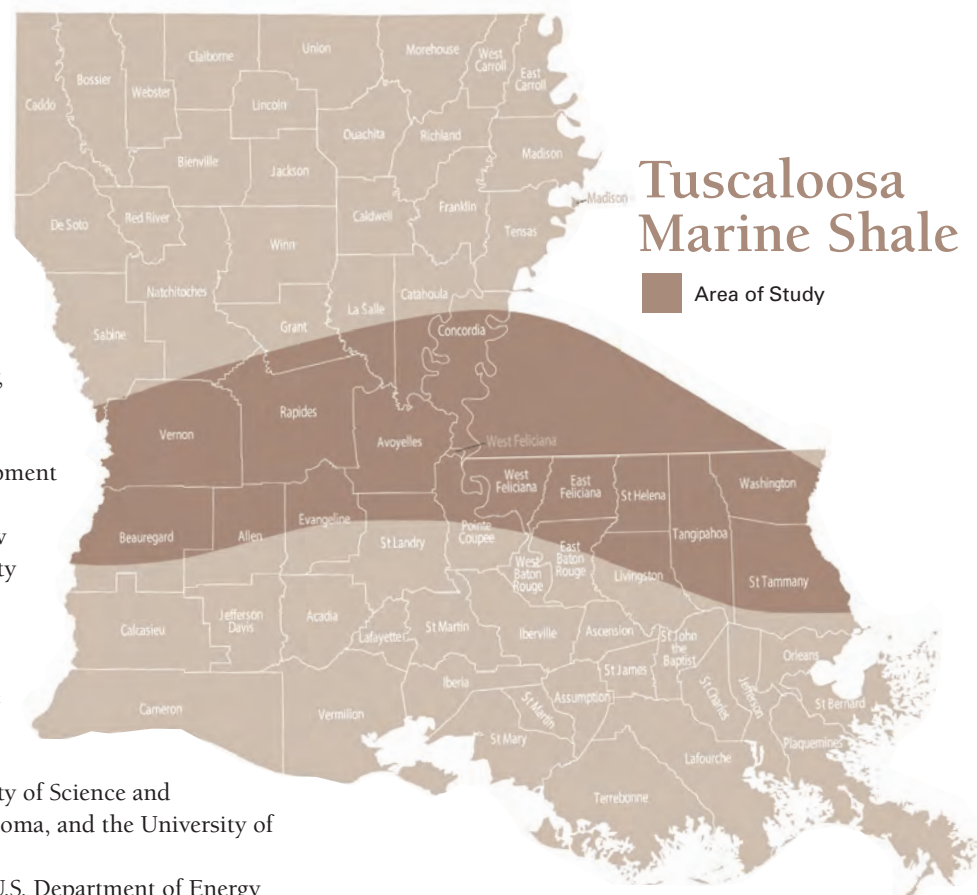
An unconventional play might encompass thousands, even millions of acres. The Tuscaloosa Marine Shale covers 28 parishes in south and central Louisiana, and several southwestern Mississippi counties. The formation varies in depth from 500 feet to 15,000 feet – 2.9 miles – below the surface.

By contrast, conventional hydrocarbon reservoirs have more limited boundaries.

Unlike conventional oil and gas reservoirs, unconventional resources are usually trapped within formations with poor permeability, such as shale. That means the liquid is suspended and retrieving it requires nontraditional methods of extraction, such as horizontal drilling and hydraulic fracturing.

The Tuscaloosa Marine Shale's size, depth, and frequently unstable geology have made the play among the most expensive places to drill in the country.

But that doesn't mean the industry has found the formation inhospitable or even unfruitful. Exploration in the past decade



held some promise but geological challenges, combined with lower oil prices, impeded expanded, large-scale production.

Energy companies have drilled conventional wells in south and central Louisiana for years and continue to do so. The geological information they've collected is a valuable resource when considering unconventional plays, and the TMS Laboratory will put that data to use, as well.

Researchers plan to conduct seismic surveys in some of the areas oil and gas companies have previously scouted. One such area is a 9.7-square-mile section in East Feliciana Parish, near the Mississippi border. There, geophysicists and other researchers will use sound waves to determine how much hydrocarbon sits below the surface and how brittle rock formations are.

Both will determine whether the field is economically viable and what extraction methods companies should use.

While they chart Louisiana's energy future, the laboratory's researchers are watching the eye-popping successes of unconventional plays in other parts of the United States.

The Eagle Ford Shale, for example, produces about 1 million barrels a day and supports 100,000 jobs in south Texas. Exploration in the Marcellus Shale has returned nearly \$1.5 billion to communities in Pennsylvania, one of four states the formation touches, since 2011.

Exploration of both plays has produced revenue streams that have been used to improve schools and infrastructure, among other projects.

## University crosses \$100 million R&D threshold

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette has a 2020 vision and nearly \$101 million it spent on research is bringing the future into focus.

UL Lafayette expended a record \$100.98 million in the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2017, placing it among the top 25 percent of U.S. colleges and universities in terms of research and development funding.

That's according to the Higher Education Research and Development Survey, the National Science Foundation's annual index of research expenditures.

UL Lafayette competes against other universities and private development firms for federal and state government grants and private sector contracts. The money faculty researchers secure comes to the University, which acts as a steward for the funds.

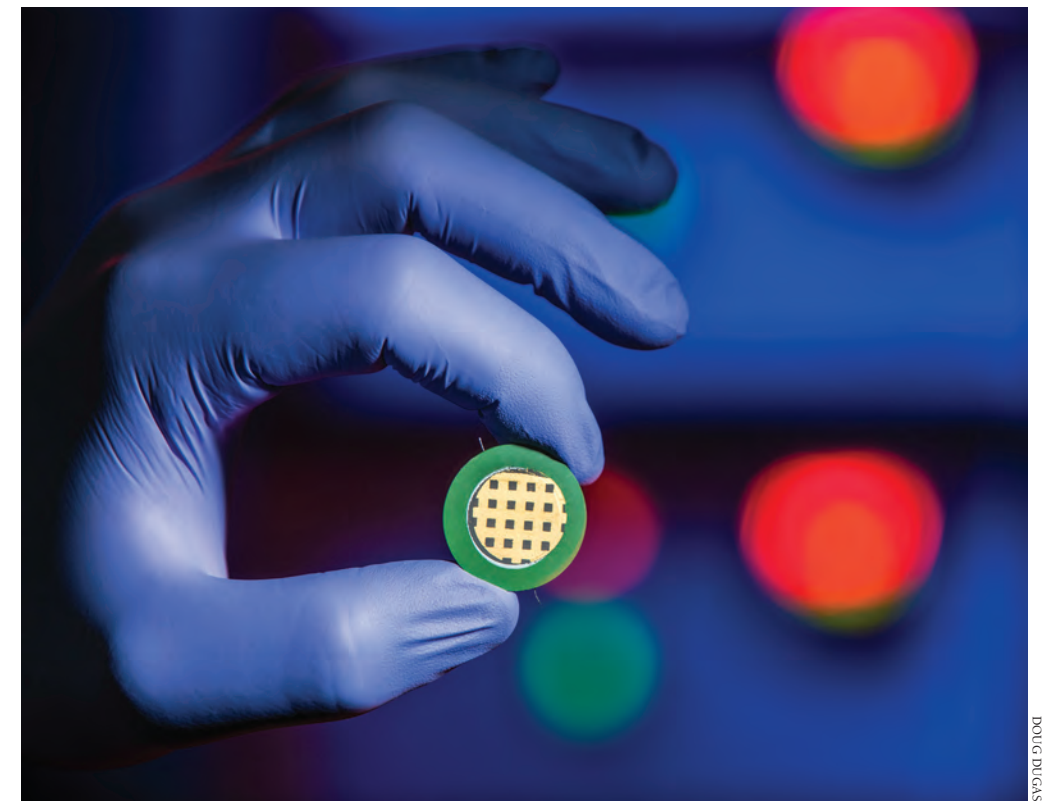
UL Lafayette spent \$80 million in 2016 and ranked 158 among 640 institutions the HERD Survey included. Of those institutions, just 148 disbursed over \$100 million.

As *La Louisiane* went to press, the University's 2017 ranking hadn't been released. The \$100.98 million nevertheless satisfies a goal of the University's strategic plan: to reach \$100 million in R&D expenditures by 2020.

Dr. Ramesh Kolluru, vice president for Research, Innovation and Economic Development, said the "hard work of our outstanding researchers" made reaching the milestone possible. "Their intellect got us this far, and it will enable us to reach the next level," becoming a Research 1 university.

The Carnegie Classification of Institutions of Higher Education categorizes universities based on research activity, among other criteria. UL Lafayette is considered a Research 2 university.

UL Lafayette's strategic plan envisions Research 1 status by 2020.



## Department of Energy grant empowers UL Lafayette engineer's fuel cell research

A chemical engineering professor's research into high-performance, low-cost fuel cells has received a boost from the U.S. Department of Energy.

Dr. Xiao-Dong Zhou secured a nearly \$500,000 grant from the department's Office of Fossil Energy. The money will further his research of solid oxide fuel cell, or SOFC, technologies.

Solid oxide fuel cells are electrochemical devices. They convert chemical energy into electrical energy from coal and natural gas at an efficiency as high as 70 percent, Zhou said. By comparison, the thermal efficiency of a gasoline engine is about 30 percent.

In addition, SOFC technologies generate cost-effective electricity, emit little, if any pollutants, and can produce clean water.

The cells are tough. During preliminary research, Zhou operated them for more than 500 hours. They showed no sign of degradation at the end of the period, "even while operating at a very high power," he said.

Zhou, director of the University's Institute for Materials Research and Innovation, said he will use the grant to examine how the cells' internal chemistries and structures affect "their durability to generate electricity at the highest power."

The research aims to uncover "the thermodynamic principles that govern the longevity of a fuel cell." That information then can be applied to the production of "a high-performance fuel cell with a superior stability for use in reliable and durable SOFC power systems," Zhou explained.

The Energy Department announced the grant June 29. UL Lafayette and 15 other universities and companies were awarded a total of \$13.5 million in federal money. Each institution also received funding from outside sources.

Other recipients include the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Michigan State and West Virginia universities, and the universities of Pennsylvania, Connecticut, South Carolina and Maryland.

Private research and development firms in Ohio, Connecticut, New York and Maryland also secured grant money.

Federal funds Zhou received will be supplemented by \$125,000 from UL Lafayette.



# on campus

## Under Construction

Student housing complex will include retail space

What do students want in on-campus housing?

The answer is a paradox.

“On-campus residents want to feel as if they live off campus,” said Jules Breaux, UL Lafayette’s director of Housing.

The Heritage at Cajun Village should provide the ambience that students are seeking.

The University began constructing it in May.

The complex will include five buildings with 590 beds at the corner of Johnston and East Lewis streets. One of the buildings that will front that intersection will have 4,883 square feet of retail space on its first floor, with apartments on the second and third floors.

The Heritage mirrors the latest national trends in on-campus housing. It also reflects UL Lafayette students’ wishes.

The University conducted three rounds of market research to determine what students want in a living space. Two surveys in 2015 and a third in 2016 showed the same requirements among respondents.

“Today’s student is most concerned about convenience, safety, privacy and amenities,” Breaux explained. “They want a safe and convenient location. They want blazing fast internet and they want to cook their own meals.”

An article published earlier this year in a national real estate trade publication said students who live in on-campus housing also want “useful” amenities, such as common study

spaces, and top-notch health and fitness facilities.

“That’s not to say today and tomorrow’s students aren’t still interested in more stylish features,” the article stated. “Luxury touches are still expected.” Those “must-haves” include swimming pools and grilling areas.

The Heritage has all that and then some.

It will offer students a choice of two-, three-, and four-bedroom units. Each furnished apartment will have a full kitchen, and washer and dryer. Meal plans will be offered but not required.

The complex’s outdoor recreation areas will include a pool, sand volleyball court and grilling pavilion. A clubhouse will feature a fitness center, study and game rooms, and a common area.

Breaux said The Heritage delivers “the off-campus experience on campus, just as students told us they wanted.”

Retail space, a first for University housing, also reflects a growing national trend in student living, Breaux said. “To whichever vendor is awarded this promising piece of real estate, an amazing opportunity awaits them for a unique connection to our institution.”

The Heritage is scheduled for completion by Fall 2019.

Plans include 632 parking spaces for residents, guests and retail customers. More than half of the spaces will be on the east side of Coulee Mine, which runs through the site. A new pedestrian bridge will connect the properties.

The complex sits on a 12-acre section that formerly was home to Youth Park. The University acquired the park in 2012 when it sold its former horse farm – now Moncus Park – to Lafayette Consolidated Government.

UL Lafayette can accommodate 3,190 students in its existing housing. The additional 590 beds will enable 22 percent of the University’s student population to live on campus.

Residents of the apartments will range from sophomores to graduate students.

Construction of the five buildings on the site is anticipated to cost \$48 million.

The University of Louisiana System Board of Supervisors approved the expenditure of up to \$105 million if the University chooses to expand the apartment complex.

The project will be financed through a partnership with the private, nonprofit Ragin’ Cajuns Facilities Inc.

The University’s partnership with Ragin’ Cajuns Facilities Inc. began in 2003. The late Robert Trahan, a Lafayette businessman and alumnus, founded the organization, which acts as a financial extension of the University.

Ragin’ Cajun Facilities Inc. maintains funds needed to design and build student housing and other University-related construction projects. It qualifies for tax-exempt status because it is a nonprofit. Bond funding enables the University to construct facilities without having to compete for limited state capital outlay funds.



The partnership was responsible for the 2003 construction of Legacy Park, the University’s first apartment-style housing, and the addition of 1,800 suite-style units in four residence halls between 2011 and 2012.

In 2010, the University began a renovation, replacement and construction program for its on-campus housing. It received UL System approval for up to 5,000 new beds in anticipation of the University’s continued growth.

RISE Real Estate, formerly Ambling University Development Group, is project developer of the new complex. Niles Bolton Associates is the architect, and The Lemoine Company is the general contractor. Each firm was on the project design and development team for the 2011-12 student housing renovation project.

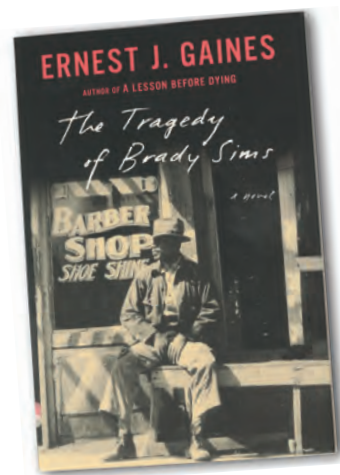
Learn more about on-campus housing at [housing.louisiana.edu](http://housing.louisiana.edu)

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## From the Bookshelf



**The Tragedy of Brady Sims**  
Ernest J. Gaines  
Penguin Random House

In *The Tragedy of Brady Sims*, Ernest J. Gaines' first book-length publication in 12 years, UL Lafayette's writer-in-residence emeritus offers a story of race and power in the fictional Louisiana town of Bayonne.

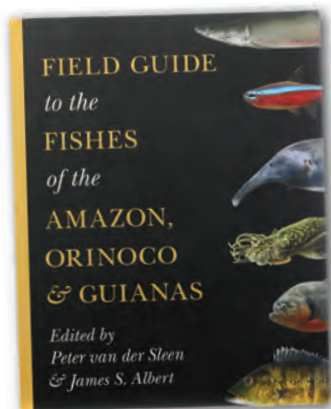
After his son is convicted of robbery and murder, Brady Sims shoots him in the courtroom. The incident leads a newspaper reporter to approach the denizens of a local barbershop in search of details about the shooter's life.

Barbers and shop regulars narrate the story with empathy, sadness and humor. They portray Sims as an honorable, but unsparing man who, in a self-appointed role, beat the town's children if he believed they had misbehaved.

Learning good behavior as children might ensure good behavior as adults, he reasoned. In the often violent Jim Crow South, a person's behavior could mean the difference between life and death.

The 114-page novella is "a taut and searing tale about race and small-town justice," a reviewer wrote in the American Library Association's *Booklist*.

"The history the men recount is, indeed, riveting in its insights into how racism harms everyone, crystallized in (local sheriff) Mapes' heartbroken tribute to his friend: 'Hell of a man, that Brady Sims.' Gaines tells a hell of a story."



**Field Guide to the Fishes of the Amazon, Orinoco, and Guianas**  
Peter van der Sleen and James S. Albert, editors  
Princeton University Press

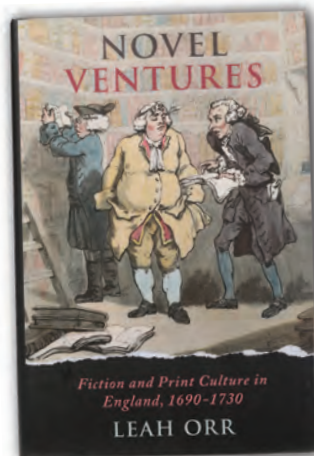
The Amazon and Orinoco river basins and the Guianas region in northern South America contain the highest concentration of freshwater fish species on Earth. Piranhas, electric eels and stingrays are among more than 3,000 species and 564 genera.

*Field Guide to the Fishes of the Amazon, Orinoco, and Guianas* is the first comprehensive overview of the fishes in Greater Amazonia, an expanse of more than 3.2 million square miles.

The region's size and its fish diversity have long defied even the most basic standardization of names. The guide offers a remedy. With 700 drawings, 190 color photos, 500 maps and an illustrated glossary, it provides descriptions and identification keys for all known fish genera in Greater Amazonia.

Dr. James S. Albert and Dr. Peter van der Sleen are the volume's editors. Albert is a UL Lafayette biology professor; van der Sleen is a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Texas at Austin's Marine Science Institute.

The guide's more than 50 contributors include four doctoral candidates in UL Lafayette's Department of Biology: Maxwell J. Bernt, Jack M. Craig, Lesley Y. Kim and Brandon T. Waltz, and one former Ph.D. candidate, Dr. Kory M. Jackson.



**Novel Ventures: Fiction and Print Culture in England, 1690-1730**  
Leah Orr  
University of Virginia Press

Dr. Leah Orr's debut book offers a compelling portrait of 18th-century English publishing. She considers all 475 works of fiction printed during a 40-year period, including new texts, translations of foreign works and reprints of older fiction.

Readers meet printers and booksellers; see how publishers manufactured, priced and advertised volumes; and learn how imitations of popular works drove fiction's development.

The Licensing Order of 1643 imposed restrictions on printing, including strict censorship, in Parliamentary England. The act lapsed in 1695, an event that scholars previously argued freed authors such as Daniel Defoe and Henry Fielding to write masterpieces *Robinson Crusoe* and *Tom Jones*, respectively.

Orr offers a counter narrative. The UL Lafayette assistant professor of English suggests that publishers, and not authors, capitalized on the lack of limitations and fueled the genre's growth. Orr concludes publishers ultimately had more influence on the 18th-century "rise" of the English novel than writers did.

*Novel Ventures* "challenges orthodoxy at almost every turn," one reviewer noted. Another concluded that "the trailblazing study ... will help shape the contours of 18th-century fiction studies for decades to come."

## Montezuma's reign: Rare cypress takes its place on roster of champions

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette campus is home to more than 2,000 trees and large shrubs, but only one is a champion.

The campus' sole Montezuma cypress joined the Louisiana Forestry Association's Directory of Champions earlier this year. The association judges native and naturalized trees on their height, circumference and crown spread to determine which make the championship cut.

UL Lafayette's Montezuma cypress stands 60 feet and has a circumference of 16 feet. Its branches spread 80 feet. By comparison, the largest Montezuma cypress in the United States is 70 feet tall and 28 feet in circumference, and spreads 90 feet. It's in San Benito, in southern Texas' Rio Grande Valley.

"This is the largest Montezuma cypress in Louisiana," said James Foret, an instructor in the School of Geosciences. "There may be a bigger one out there somewhere that we don't know about, and we'll get bumped off the list, but for now, it's the largest."

Whether the Montezuma's reign is long or short, the University is planning accommodations fit for a king. That's appropriate, since the tree shares its name with two rulers of the Aztec Empire that flourished in Mexico between 1345 and 1521.

The tree, behind Billeaud Hall, was boxed in by a parking lot, a greenhouse and a maintenance building. The University has removed four parking spots and will build a deck with seating around the tree's base. That will alleviate the pressure of concrete on its root system and enable the cypress to receive more water, oxygen and nutrients, improving its viability.

"We should see a burst of growth," Foret said.

The University's efforts to preserve the champion Montezuma cypress exemplify proactive measures that have earned UL Lafayette nine consecutive Tree Campus USA designations by the Arbor Day Foundation, said Gretchen Lacombe Vanicor, director of the University's Office of Sustainability.

"This tree is pretty magnificent," she said, looking up at the cypress' drooping branches carpeted with green, feather-like leaves.

How UL Lafayette's Montezuma cypress arrived on campus is something of a mystery, although University lore holds it was planted by Ira S. Nelson. He was a nationally recognized horticulturalist and professor from 1941 until his death in 1965.



Nelson traveled the world in search of rare plants. He collected those that he knew would respond well to South Louisiana's semitropical climate and distributed them to local plant enthusiasts.

So, speculation that Nelson brought the Montezuma cypress back to Lafayette and planted it on campus seems logical, Foret said.

The tree's size suggests it was planted in the early 1950s.

The species has gained popularity among local gardeners in recent years because it grows well in Acadiana and offers shade, said Frank Thibodeaux of Bob's Tree Preservation. That company maintains campus trees, particularly the more than 250 live oaks.

He was standing among the parking spaces that will be removed and replaced by the planned deck. He studied the Montezuma cypress and marveled that the modern mindset that places a premium on parking has been reversed so that a champion tree can thrive.

"How about that?" Thibodeaux said. "The tree finally wins."



## Public policy center to examine far-reaching issues

Kathleen Babineaux Blanco concluded her term as governor in 2008. The University of Louisiana at Lafayette is ensuring her legacy of service continues.

The planned Kathleen Babineaux Blanco Public Policy Center will house the former governor's papers. It also will contribute interdisciplinary, independent research to public policy areas such as criminal justice reform, poverty and economic opportunity, governmental ethics, and education.

"Gov. Blanco championed these issues throughout her career," said Dr. Jordan Kellman, dean of the College of Liberal Arts, which will oversee the policy center in partnership with Edith Garland Dupré Library.

"The center will draw on expertise from UL Lafayette faculty and other scholars from across the country who will gather data and offer nonpartisan analysis to confront challenges facing our state and nation."

The center will issue policy papers that inform public discussions and host lectures and symposiums.

Blanco graduated from the University in 1964 with a bachelor's degree in business education. During her 25-year political career, she was elected twice to the state House of Representatives, twice to the Public Service Commission and twice as lieutenant governor.

She was governor from 2004 to 2008 and remains the only woman to have served as the state's chief executive.

Blanco said the center will do more than gather information for academic purposes. "I see it also as a voice of balance, a voice of honesty so that the people can trust in the information delivered from the center. I envision it as the voice of reason."

As governor, she led economic trade missions to Cuba, Taiwan, China and Japan. She also directed the single-largest



Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco

increase in education funding in Louisiana history. Blanco expanded the state's pre-kindergarten program and fully funded colleges and universities for the first time in a quarter of a century.

In August and September 2005, Hurricanes Katrina and Rita struck Louisiana. At the time, they were the largest natural disasters in U.S. history.

Blanco's gubernatorial papers detail her direction of storm recovery efforts as well as her administration's other priorities. The 90 boxes of material she donated to UL

Lafayette will be transferred to the policy center and made available to researchers once University archivists process the collection.

Gubernatorial collections are rare in Louisiana. Prior to 2015, state law permitted former governors to retain ownership of their papers. Most chose not to make the materials publicly available. However, Blanco hired an archivist and "ensured that future generations would have an unparalleled vantage point from which to view an extraordinary period in Louisiana's recent past," Kellman said.

Most of the funding for the \$2.7 million center will come from private gifts.

The center's founding director is expected to be hired by the end of the year. There are plans to open the center in 2019 in Dupré Library.

## Homecoming: Alum returns as chief academic officer

Dr. Jaimie L. Hebert didn't need a map to navigate campus when he became UL Lafayette's provost and vice president for Academic Affairs in July.

He knew the terrain well. The Abbeville, La., native earned bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees from the University.

"It was a wonderful school when I attended, but what this University has become over the past several decades is just astounding – literally a nationally ranked institution of higher education," Hebert said.

"There has been so much progress. It's amazing what has happened since I left. But there are many things that haven't changed, and it's all the good stuff."

Hebert returns to his alma mater after serving as president of Georgia Southern University in Statesboro.

As UL Lafayette's chief academic officer, he'll collaborate with administrators, college deans and faculty to determine and implement the University's academic priorities.

Hebert said the responsibility is eased by "the enormous amount of intellectual capital that exists on this acreage. In brains per square foot, we outdo everyone."

"We have extraordinary faculty. We have well-prepared, wonderful students who have great work ethics. We have a community that goes to bat for us and welcomes our students into it. Those are all the things that every provost wants. I walk in with those."

Hebert pointed to a drink coaster on his conference table. A fleur-de-lis, part of the University's academic and athletic logos, is embossed on it.

"When people see that symbol, I don't want them to think just about food and wonderful music and a great community. I want them to think about one of the most extraordinary undergraduate and graduate experiences in the country. That's what we need to be associating with that symbol."



Dr. Jaimie Hebert

"That's my challenge to myself. We shouldn't be only a good option for students. We want to be a destination."

Hebert became Georgia Southern's president in 2016. In that role, he led its consolidation with Armstrong State University in Savannah, Ga.

Hebert previously was provost and vice president of Academic Affairs at Sam Houston State University. He also served as dean of the Huntsville, Texas,

university's College of Arts and Sciences, and as chair of its Department of Mathematics and Statistics.

Hebert taught at Appalachian State University in Boone, N.C., as an assistant professor of mathematical science.

He earned three degrees in statistics from UL Lafayette: a bachelor's in 1986, a master's in 1988 and a Ph.D. in 1990.

Hebert said the foundation he received at UL Lafayette prepared him for his 28-year career.

"This place made me ready to launch the fortunate career that I have had. Being able to come back and to work to help a place progress that's so close to my heart is just, oh, I don't even know how to describe it. No one deserves to have it this good."

Hebert replaces Dr. David Danahar, UL Lafayette's interim provost since 2016.



## New virtual tour shows off campus

Anyone who's considering which university to attend can take a "stroll" around campus via a new virtual tour coordinated by UL Lafayette's Office of Communications and Marketing.

A series of short videos, accompanied by features such as an interactive map and text, enable prospective students to step inside classrooms and laboratories, and learn about myriad academic and research opportunities.

The virtual tour also offers a peek at a colorful region of Louisiana that's famous for its distinctive food, festivals and music.

It paints a detailed portrait of University life, said Aimée Abshire, the University's interim chief communications officer.

"Potential students can explore a place where they will live, learn, make friends and build a foundation for successful futures," she explained.

The virtual tour isn't intended to replace in-person tours, which can be scheduled through UL Lafayette's Office of Admissions and Recruitment.

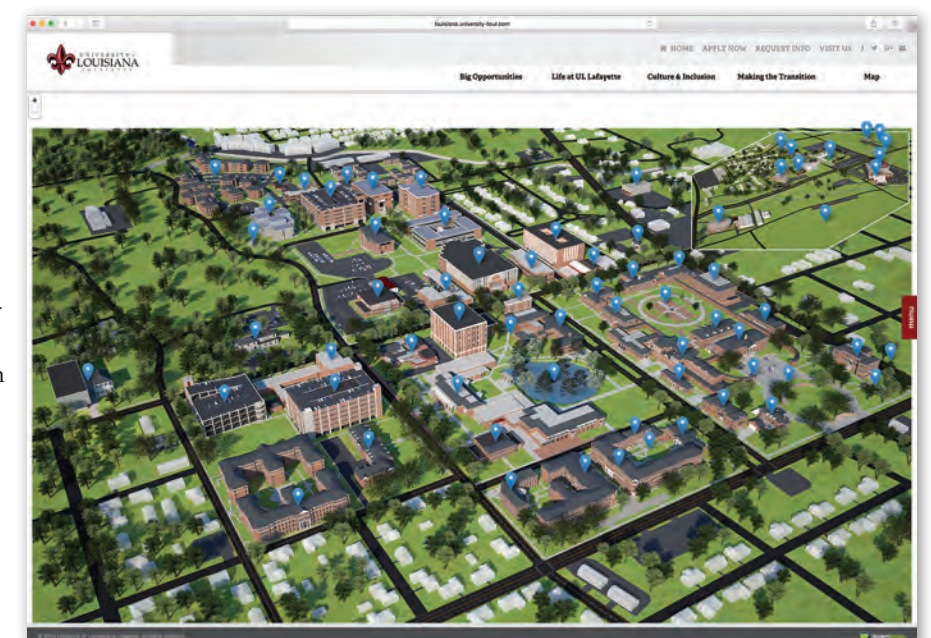
"It's another option to discover what the University has to offer, especially for people who aren't able to travel to campus," Abshire said. "And, online visitors can make return trips any time they would like."

The tour is intended to help bolster the University's already strong enrollment. It particularly targets prospective students from other states and countries.

About 12 percent of the University's more than 19,000 students are from outside Louisiana, said Dr. DeWayne Bowie, vice president for Enrollment Management.

"The virtual tour provides a valuable recruitment tool for engaging a much wider pool of potential applicants by showcasing what a great University we have," he said.

Watch the tour at [louisiana.university-tour.com](http://louisiana.university-tour.com)





# students

## 'Community' Nursing

Students leave campus to broaden perspectives on care

BY JAMES SAVAGE  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY DOUG DUGAS

"This is the most people I've had in the house in ages. It's usually just me and Maggie."

"Miss Pauline" surveys her Lafayette living room. It's filled with visitors. Sitting in a red and blue striped armchair that envelops her 4-foot-9-inch frame, the 96-year-old isn't complaining. Neither is Maggie, an aged schnauzer that bounces happily among the new faces.

Nursing student Zoe Ainsworth runs her fingers through the dog's grey coat. Being attentive to Maggie is a way to build trust with "Miss Pauline," so Ainsworth references the pooch a few times as she proceeds to check her patient's blood pressure, respiration and pulse. She gently reaches beneath the nonagenarian's shirt, and presses a stethoscope against her stomach to listen for digestive sounds.

Ainsworth is enrolled in Nursing 340, the formal name for a course that requires a personal touch. As shorthand, students and instructors call the class "Community."

The moniker reflects concisely what the course entails: it takes second-semester juniors in the College of Nursing and Allied Health Professions out of a hospital setting where they perform clinical work and puts them in grocery stores, jails, homeless shelters, libraries, businesses, parks, living rooms and in an on-campus clinic.

The students meet a myriad of people and offer health screenings, information on diet and exercise, and at times, help with technology.

During her home visit with "Miss Pauline," for example, Ainsworth showed her how to text iPhone photos of Maggie to friends and family. The point of "Community" is to treat the whole person, not just an ailment.

Dr. Lisa Broussard, associate dean of the college, said it's an important lesson. "People always think of nurses as taking care of sick people in the hospital. So it's really good for our students and the community to understand the wide role nurses play," she said.

The course encompasses several elements: Wellness Wednesday, a free clinic available to University students, faculty and staff; community outreach, which includes health promotion events; and Community as a Client, a semester-long examination of Acadiana municipalities to discover what's ailing residents. Students also do rotations in area psychiatric facilities.

Dr. Jessica McCarthy is a nursing instructor, one of four who taught the course in the spring. She said it enables



Zoe Ainsworth talks with "Miss Pauline" at the 96-year-old's home.

student nurses to experience "the dynamics of vulnerable populations" – the elderly, prisoners, the homeless and children – so they'll be better prepared to help a wide audience when they enter the profession.

"A lot of times, nursing graduates will go right into the hospital to work and they don't realize what needs are out there," McCarthy continued. "They may not have worked in these populations but when they go into a hospital setting, they will."

Students also conducted basic screenings for some inmates at the Lafayette Parish Correctional Center. For several hours, they checked vision, hearing, pulse and blood pressure and made other health assessments for LPCC employees.

At the conclusion of each week's work, students filled a first-floor conference room at V.L. Wharton Hall on campus to recount their experiences and share what they learned.

McCarthy gave an example of the kind of feedback instructors receive. "Let's say you have inmates who are in the hospital. One of the big things students mention about the jail is that it's closed. There are no windows. So, what is one of the most important things to that inmate when he goes into the hospital? Opening the blinds, so he can see the light."

Every nurse should have respect for patients and the ability to quickly adapt to changing situations. The Community course emphasizes both, said nursing junior Margaret Pellerin. "They always say to be prepared for the unexpected in nursing. You cannot go into a day of nursing and have your day planned. You can have an idea, but that's not how it works out at all."

Pellerin was taking a break during her shift at Wellness Wednesday. It was a busy morning during a busy spring semester. The clinic provided nearly 1,700 screenings in the nine days it was open. In 2017, nursing students performed 3,500 screenings at the clinic alone, and provided just short of 10,600 individual services across the course's three facets.

The screenings that the clinic provides focus on preventive health, while the University's Saucier Wellness Center treats students who are ill.

The clinic's three rooms are filled with exam tables, scales, and equipment for testing hearing and vision. Eye charts and anatomy posters cover the walls. Forget about its location in Wharton Hall, and it could be any doctor's office, anywhere.

Bailey Romero was on the same Wellness Wednesday shift as Pellerin. A few weeks earlier, she and her classmates taught first-graders the value of oral health as part of the course's Community as a Client requirement.

Through observations and interviews with pharmacists, elected officials, doctors, school counselors, business owners, clergy and first responders, student teams compile data, diagnose a town's greatest health need, and then engage in a service learning activity to promote healthy habits. In the spring, they visited 16 communities and offered wellness education sessions in each.

The town Romero's group visited doesn't have a dentist's office. So, using a comically large set of teeth, they demonstrated proper brushing techniques at the elementary school there.

Romero explained that Community requires nursing students



Student Mi M. Dinh offered free clothing during a community outreach event.



Nursing students put encouraging notes in bags of snacks they distributed.

to shift mindsets. Rather than focusing on patients when they are ill, as taught in clinicals, the course emphasizes prevention through assessments and education.

"Nurses don't just treat someone in a bed in a hospital room. It can be a difficult concept, but it's important."

Dr. Deedra Harrington, an assistant nursing professor, said the interactions student nurses have with the public during the course teach them to "treat the person and not their situation."

"We expose them to all facets, so when they see people in the community, they see them as part of the community. Whether they live on the streets, they live in the jail, or they live in a mansion – we care for them all."



## The Soprano

Graduate student takes the stage at fabled New York City venues

Aspiring opera singer Natalie Bodkin had a chance to hone her performance skills in New York City in June. The 23-year-old graduate student in the University of

Louisiana at Lafayette's School of Music and Performing Arts sang at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall and The National Opera Center.

Bodkin, who is from Zionsville, Ind., was training with the New York Lyric Opera Theatre. The professional company conducts a month-long program that includes performances and voice lessons. She was one of 34 artists selected from applicants across the world.

Bodkin made the most of the opportunity. "I better understand now what it takes to fully develop an operatic role and make it your own," she said.

The soprano's biggest role was Pamina, a lead character in Mozart's "The Magic Flute."

Elizabeth Hastings, stage director for the production, said among many attributes, Bodkin puts "a lot of thought into what she sings."

Opera singers must be actors who are able to convey emotion with the timbre of their voice, Bodkin explained. "If something horrible happens, you might sing with a darker tone or, during an intimate duet, with a softer tone."

Character study – researching personality traits and motives – is also essential. Bodkin studied Pamina, a princess rescued from an evil demon, intensely. "It gave me the ability to make decisions such as, 'Pamina is like this, so I believe she would do this.'"

Singers must often study different languages, as well. Bodkin has performed in Italian, French, German and Spanish. Understanding the meaning of words is crucial for delivering them with the proper context or feeling. "It's sometimes hard to catch nuances of language – especially in German – because there are words that have no English equivalent," she said.

Bodkin is a classically-trained pianist. She began taking piano lessons at age 6; she joined her school choir in seventh grade.

In high school, she was an all-star lacrosse player on a state championship team. She quit after coaches suggested she give up music to concentrate on the sport. "I never looked back or regretted it. It just gave me more time to focus on piano and voice," Bodkin said.

Music, after all, is in her blood.

Bodkin's father, Clyde, the owner of a marketing communications firm, plays accordion and was once a wedding singer. Her mom, Jill, a nurse, plays piano.

Clyde Bodkin's love of Cajun and zydeco music contributed to his daughter enrolling at UL Lafayette. He's a longtime volunteer for the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival and for the Breaux Bridge Crawfish Festival. Natalie often accompanied her dad on trips to south Louisiana and fell in love with Acadiana.

When she began to consider colleges to attend, she checked out UL Lafayette. "It was a really good fit for me."

Bodkin liked the music faculty, including Margaret Daniel, who recently retired after 45 years at the University. Daniel was Bodkin's professor and primary voice teacher. "As a musician, it's really important to find a teacher who will help you improve and I found that in Ms. Daniel," she said.

Daniel said that of the hundreds of students she has mentored, Bodkin is among the best. "I would say top three."

Bodkin realized that with a "music school that is a little smaller than some, I knew I would have many chances to perform." In April, she starred as Gretel in the UL Lafayette Opera Theatre's adaptation of "Hansel and Gretel." Bodkin also performed in the University's production of "Sweeney Todd," a tale about a barber who kills his customers. She played the part of Johanna, who is imprisoned by an evil judge.

Shawn Roy, the School of Music and Performing Arts' coordinator of vocal studies, directed Bodkin in "Sweeney Todd," and has coached her during voice lessons. "Natalie has a beautiful voice, is studious and has an open mind. She's a huge asset to our program, not just as a performer, but as a teacher."

Bodkin earned a bachelor's degree in vocal performance in May 2017. She will earn a master's of music in vocal performance in Spring 2019.

She is teaching a voice class this semester. Her time in the classroom will help her prepare for her second career. "I want to make a living in opera as long as possible, then find a really great university where I can impart whatever wisdom I've garnered," she said.



Natalie Bodkin practices with voice coach Margaret Daniel.

BODKIN/DUGLAS

## Honors Program thrives as it hits the half-century mark

UL Lafayette's Honors Program marks its 50th anniversary this year.

Since its inception in 1968 as an eight-member "honors community," it has given "bright minds more room to use that brilliance," said Dr. Julia Frederick, the program's director.

To be admitted to it, students must meet required ACT or SAT scores and maintain minimum GPAs – 3.0 for freshmen and 3.2 for sophomores, juniors and seniors.

Students take some classes with only fellow Honors Program members. In courses they share with non-Honors students, program members complete additional projects and assignments to receive honors course credit. Before earning an honors baccalaureate, they must complete and present a thesis.

The Honors Seminar, a weekly intellectual exchange between faculty and students, remains the program's centerpiece. It was one of the first courses the nascent program offered. Seminar tackled subjects in a freewheeling, immersive style that differed from traditional lecture courses.

Honors operated as a "community" until 1975, when it became a formal program with 50 students. That year's *L'Acadien* yearbook listed topics the Honors Seminar explored: music, human biology, drama,



computers, dance, movies, black culture, firearms, pornography and philosophy.

"Students often asked members of the Honors Seminar to explain what Seminar was," the yearbook's editors wrote. "All answers were different."

When the program marked its 30th birthday during the 1998-99 school year, the yearbook again asked for a description. The program's director had her answer down pat.

"The purpose of the seminar is to build community among Honors students, and to provide practice in discussion and

leadership," said Dr. Patricia Rickels, who helped formalize the program in 1975. She became its director four years later.

"She was Honors," said Frederick, who succeeded Rickels in 2007. Rickels died in 2009.

Honors' Fall 2018 semicentennial class has an enrollment of nearly 1,600. Frederick said class members share a quality with the students who preceded them.

"They think in different ways. That's the wonderful part of Honors. It lets you dive into a subject, dance with it and then think about doing new things with what you have learned. That's what you do with knowledge. You open doors and windows and lift shades and decide what you want to do."

## University makes Top 25

UL Lafayette is the only Louisiana university to rank in the Top 25 of *U.S. News and World Report's* list of "Universities and Colleges Where Students Are Eager to Enroll."

It's sandwiched between Dartmouth (23) and Duke (25).

The ranking, released earlier this year, is based on universities' popularity with first-time freshmen.

The list includes schools with selective admissions that have a high "yield." That term refers to the percentage of students admitted by an institution who end up enrolling at the school.

*U.S. News and World Report* studied data from national universities. It classifies a national university as one that offers a wide range of undergraduate, master's and doctoral degree programs.

Stanford University had the highest yield among national universities, according to data submitted by 294 schools.

Brigham Young University was second, followed by Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Yale was No. 5.

UL Lafayette's yield was almost 51 percent.

High yields reflect a school's popularity among applicants, and the ability of a college or university to enroll a first-time freshman class composed of a large number of academically prepared students.

Dr. DeWayne Bowie, vice president for Enrollment Management at UL Lafayette, said "the ranking by *U.S. News and World Report* reinforces what we already know."



"Students want to attend the University, and we, in turn, attract academically gifted students."

The rankings are based on data from the Fall

2016 semester.

In Fall 2016, the 3,024 freshmen who enrolled at the University marked the third-largest freshman class in school history. That class had the highest average GPA, 3.39, and the highest average ACT score, 23.87, in school history. It also included 160 high school valedictorians.





# Power Player

By James Savage  
Photography by Doug Dugas

At dawn, the 4,200 solar panels that inhabit six acres of University Research Park begin another workday. The black rectangles – standing in martial rows like a battalion awaiting a command – ingest the first rays and, with nary a hum, start to make electrical power. By day's end, as the western horizon envelops the sun, they'll have produced up to 1.1 megawatts, enough to power 220 homes, or, in UL Lafayette's case, much of the Louisiana Ragin' Cajuns athletic complex.





Student Cy Kipp adjusts a solar panel inside the PART Lab's flash tester, or artificial sun.

The solar panels are the public faces of the Photovoltaic Applied Research and Testing Laboratory that went live in June.

The lab's mission control is three miles from University Research Park, in Rougeou Hall on campus. A wall-mounted screen enables real-time monitoring of the field's power production. In adjacent rooms, high-tech equipment sits ready to evaluate whether solar panels can withstand Louisiana's sultry climate.

The data the lab collects, analyzes and releases will buttress a slowly evolving conversation about solar energy's place in the state's energy landscape.

Renewable energies provided 4 percent of Louisiana's power last year. Biomass energies, which come from plant and animal material, and hydroelectric power accounted for much of the total. Solar was just a sliver. Fossil fuels such as natural gas produce 60 percent of the state's electrical power.

One of the PART Lab's major objectives is empowering students to think more broadly about where energy traditionally has – and where it potentially can – come from.

UL Lafayette is the only Louisiana university, and one of a handful nationally, that can examine solar technology outside and in a controlled, indoor laboratory space, said Dr. Terrence Chambers. He's a mechanical engineering professor and director of the University's Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Energy Center who oversaw the lab's development.

A light-soaking chamber bombards panels with intensified artificial sunlight that inflicts years of degradation in a few weeks. Another instrument, called a multi-tracer, controls how power is distributed through a module. A tilt table permits testing a panel at any angle in relation to the sun.

The centerpieces of the collection are a thermographic camera and a flash tester.

The thermographic camera is 21 feet long. A solar panel is placed in a steel frame carriage, which can be moved

toward or away from the lens along tracks. That lets researchers photograph an entire panel in search of defects and evidence of degradation.

"We take a solar module, we apply power to it, and it will glow," Chambers explained. "The glowing is not visible to the human eye, but it is visible to a thermal camera." Hues of yellow, orange and red appear on a nearby computer screen and indicate hot spots that have retained heat; less-vibrant colors pinpoint areas that aren't functioning.

The flash tester is a black cabinet containing 140 LED lights that's sometimes called an artificial sun. Solar panels are mounted on the inside



Dr. Terrence Chambers and graduate student Mounirat Mahmoud examine the thermal camera.

of the cabinet's door. When the door is closed, the LED lights replicate the sun's rays in a controlled setting so researchers can gauge a panel's longevity without worrying about clouds and other obstructions.

"We are going to every year remove a sample of modules from the field, bring them to the lab and very accurately characterize how they are performing. And then we do it a year later, and then a year later, and we'll see how they've degraded."

Analyses the UL Lafayette lab complete will be shared online, so consumers can use the information to assess solar energy's feasibility, said graduate student Deepakjain Veerendrakumar. He is pursuing a Ph.D. in systems engineering and helped construct testing equipment as it arrived, in pieces, at the University.

Sandia National Laboratories provided Chambers with a list of five pieces of essential solar testing equipment. That's when luck intervened. A contact told Chambers a research firm was shutting down and selling its equipment; the liquidation sale included the five pieces on the Sandia list, at a fraction of what they would cost new.

"We got them all," Chambers said, his satisfaction still evident.

As planning began for the lab, Chambers visited facilities he terms "the big boys" – the National Renewable Energy Laboratory in Colorado, Arizona State University, and the Sandia National Laboratories in New Mexico, among others. He asked staff at each the same two questions: "What do you do, and how do you do it?"





The PART Lab’s 1.1 megawatts partially powers the red-shaded areas of the University’s athletic complex and other adjacent spots.

There’s also potential for collaboration with national firms to compare how solar panels respond to environments that aren’t as hot and humid as Louisiana. Endurance is part of solar’s appeal, Veerendrakumar said.

“People think that solar is just cool stuff and that it’s still in the beginning stages. We need to show people it’s not only cool. It’s also cost-effective compared to other sources of energy.”

The power produced at the solar facility will electrify University-owned property and buildings from Johnston Street to West Congress, and from Coliseum Road to Bertrand Drive. The area includes Cajun Field, M.L. “Tigue” Moore Field at Russo Park, Lamson Park,

# Photovoltaic Applied Research and Testing Lab

Bourgeois Hall, Blackham Coliseum and the Ira S. Nelson Horticulture Center.

An underground power line carries current to a substation near the intersection of Johnston Street and Cajundome Boulevard, over a mile away.

The panels produce 1.1 megawatts; athletic facilities and other buildings require 1.2 megawatts of power, so the solar panels rarely will produce more than is expended. Also, without a battery system to store the unlikely excess, the panels will provide power only during daytime hours.

On sunny days during a typical semester, the PART Lab will produce about 10 percent of the 10 megawatts of power the University uses daily. In a year, the solar facility will make about 3 percent of the University’s energy and save UL Lafayette \$100,000 on its electric bill.

The lab is also moving UL Lafayette toward an objective of its Sustainability Strategic Plan, which calls for a decrease in campus energy use by 2021 as well as an increase in available renewable energy sources.

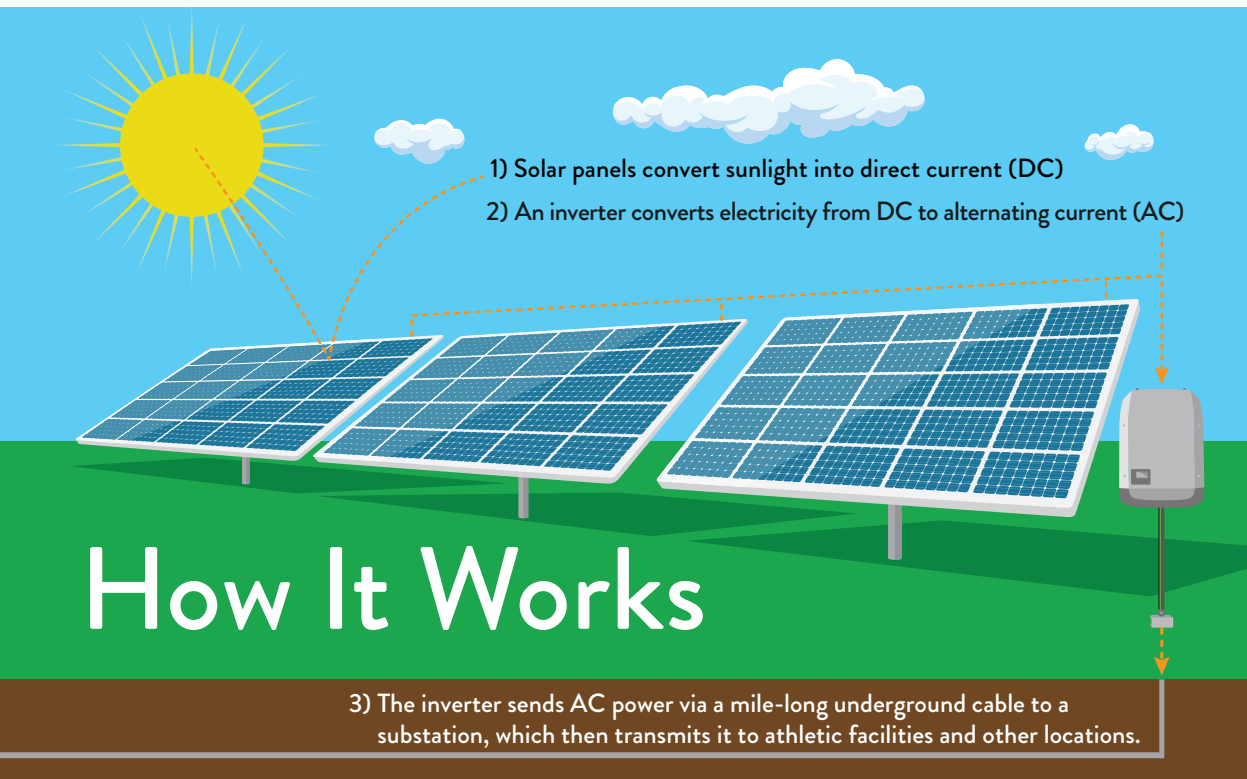
Gretchen Lacombe Vanicor, the University’s director of sustainability, said the PART Lab “reduces our emissions associated with purchasing

electricity generated from nonrenewable sources, namely coal. This is critical to achieving our goal to cultivate a healthier, more resilient campus community.”

There are two types of solar energy technology: photovoltaic, which generates electricity directly from solar power, and solar thermal, which uses heated water as a go-between.

Four years ago, UL Lafayette invested in solar thermal. With the opening of the PART Lab to study photovoltaic technology, the University has all its solar bases covered.

The Cleco Alternative Energy Center, a partnership between UL Lafayette and Cleco, a power company that serves south and central Louisiana, opened in 2014. Equipment at



the facility turns rice hulls, switchgrass, sweet potatoes and similar agricultural products into energy. Other systems convert animal and farm waste.

The center, like its counterpart in Lafayette, provides testing and lab space. But its most notable feature is two banks of mirrored, parabolic solar troughs that gradually track the sun’s path, and use the harnessed sunlight to heat water held in tubes beneath the panels. Steam that’s produced powers a turbine that generates electricity.

The panels, part of the Solar Thermal Applied Research and Testing Lab, are responsible for more than electricity. They also laid the groundwork for the PART Lab, said Dr. Mark Zappi, dean of the University’s College of Engineering.

Not long after the Crowley facility became operational, Louisiana Generating LLC and its parent company, NRG Energy Inc., approached the University with an offer.

NRG Energy proposed an investment of \$4 million for a rooftop system of solar panels, similar to smaller residential installations, but enough to provide 1.1 megawatts of power. They’d also invest \$1 million through the UL Lafayette Foundation for the maintenance of the system for 25 years.

“We want the University to be a living laboratory,” Chambers explained. “We wanted this to be a way to make power for the University. We wanted this to be an educational facility. We wanted it to be a research facility. We wanted it to be accessible to our students and to the

public. To make that possible, we had to put it on the ground and not on the roofs.”

The University countered: Would NRG consider funding a photovoltaic research and testing laboratory?

On a cloudless spring day, Chambers stood at the heart of the company’s answer. “This is the result,” he said, with a grin. “This will allow us to do education, research, outreach, workforce development and have a much bigger public impact than simply putting solar panels on the roof.”

The University initially considered five locations for the lab, but Chambers said the choice came down to an intuitive maxim: “Let’s do research in the research park. And here we are.”

A brick and mortar structure with classroom space that could accommodate the testing equipment now housed in Rougeou Hall is on Chambers’ wish list. It would also serve as a visitor center for tour groups to learn about sustainable energies, he said.

The mechanical engineering professor has already used the field as an open-air classroom. In late spring, before the facility went live in June, he took students in his graduate-level sustainable energies course to the research park.

“We are studying solar energy right now,” Chambers said before the visit. “We are actually in the section of the book for photovoltaic power. This is perfect. I can bring my class out there. We can walk through the solar field, and I can say, ‘This is an inverter. This is a monocrystalline panel. This is polycrystalline panel. This is the thin film module. This is how this whole thing works.’ That’s the real benefit.”





# AGAINST ALL ODDS

David Begnaud's unlikely rise to the top of TV news

BY CHARLIE BIER

CBS News national correspondent David Begnaud's broadcasts and social media posts when Hurricane Maria battered Puerto Rico last year kept millions of viewers riveted to the plight of the island's 3.4 million residents.

The storm made landfall as a Category 4, just 2 mph shy of a Category 5. It knocked out all of the U.S. territory's electricity, destroyed its communications infrastructure, flattened property and wiped out crops, causing as much as \$95 billion in damage. Estimates of the number of people killed have varied drastically, from the Puerto Rican government's total of 64 to a report by Harvard researchers that put the death toll at more than 4,600.

Disaster relief was widely criticized as particularly slow. Many hurricane survivors were stranded for days, weeks and months without power, drinking water and adequate supplies.

Begnaud arrived on the island three days before Maria hit on Sept. 20. He and a CBS crew spent the next 15 days reporting on the effects of the hurricane. His coverage spurred quicker, more efficient aid from Puerto Rican officials and federal agencies.

There were several followup trips. Six months after the storm, his focus was on the Puerto Rican government's failure to restore electricity in many areas, and loss of temporary housing for evacuees relocated to places such as Florida.

Begnaud's relentless reporting earned him a prestigious George Polk Award for public service. His obvious compassion for the Puerto Rican people elevated his status to superhero in the eyes of many.

During an interview with *La Louisiane*, Gayle King, who co-hosts "CBS This Morning," summed up why Begnaud's reporting of the hurricane's aftermath was so powerful: "David got to the heart of that story and he got to the heart of the people."

Few viewers watching Begnaud's coverage of the crisis in Puerto Rico knew how improbable it was that he would ever have a career in broadcasting, much less one on the world stage.

Begnaud has Tourette Syndrome, which is characterized by involuntary movements and vocalizations called tics. Tics are classified as complex or mild.

"Complex motor tics might include facial grimacing combined with a head twist and a shoulder shrug," according to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke. Some people with severe cases may uncontrollably wave their arms wildly. Others are unable to completely control their speech, so they randomly blurt out inappropriate words, such as curses or epithets.

Milder symptoms, like Begnaud's, include repeated sniffing and grunting, and sudden movements. He sometimes sticks his tongue from his mouth at an odd angle, for example. "I sort of kick it out to the side like a lizard," he explained.

Maria Placer is a former, longtime news director at KLFY-TV 10, the CBS affiliate in Lafayette where Begnaud got his professional start when he was only 18.

In an interview this summer, she reflected on the extraordinary situation she found herself in as one of the eager, ambitious young man's first mentors. She still marvels at the incongruous career choice he made.

"Imagine a kid with Tourette's wanting to be on national television," she observed.

A neurologist diagnosed 36-year-old Begnaud with Tourette Syndrome when he was 7.

During elementary and middle school, manifestation of his symptoms were the equivalent of wearing a "kick me" sign on his back. He left home each morning braced for stares, snickers, taunts or shoves from other kids.

"It was a brutal thing to deal with," he recalled in an interview with *La Louisiane*.

At one point, guidance counselors went to some of Begnaud's classes

to talk with students about Tourette's, hoping the children would stop their abuse once they knew why he sometimes acted a little differently. It didn't help.

Begnaud enrolled in four schools in eight years. He wasn't able to outrun the abuse.

Fourth-grade classmate Ashley Guidry Allen of Lafayette recalls school being "very, very tough" for him. "I always remember seeing the hurt in his eyes," she said.

Medications would ultimately help mitigate the symptoms of Tourette's. But Begnaud said he relied heavily on denial to cope.

"In many ways, I had to almost lie to myself and just say that everything was rosy. That was the only way I could get through the day."

Begnaud's gift for communication and his natural charisma began to surface when he was a teenager at Teurlings Catholic High School in Lafayette.

He sacked groceries after school at Adrien's Supermarket. The store manager told Begnaud's father, Glenn Begnaud: "He'll talk to anyone and people will come in asking for him. He's the best





ambassador for the store we've ever had."

Begnaud credits Josette Surrat, Teurling's then-speech and debate coach and an English teacher, with planting the seeds of his broadcast journalism career.

Surrat noticed what she calls "the voice" when he was a freshman. "His voice was definitely a broadcasting voice," she recalled.

Surrat approached Begnaud about participating in speech and debate, but he was the football team's videographer, which took much of his spare time. She made her pitch again at the beginning of his sophomore year. "He was a little reluctant," she remembered, "but by December, I said, 'OK, it's now or never.'"

Begnaud relented. It was a smart move. He placed second at his first tournament against more than two dozen competitors. At least two spectators marveled when, tic-free and poised, he nailed his debut.

"My jaw dropped in amazement," Glenn Begnaud said.

Mom Cydney Begnaud's reaction was stronger. "Tears just started rolling down my face. He never missed a word. He never paused. To this day, I treasure that moment," she said.

Surrat said Begnaud earned trophies at each of the dozens of local, state and national tournaments he competed in during high school.

Lindsay Fite Finley, a speech and debate rival who attended St. Thomas More High School in Lafayette, remembers the first time she saw Begnaud "strutting down the hall" at a hotel where competitors were staying during a tournament. "I thought: 'Who is this guy with all this confidence?'"

They quickly became friends and Finley learned that Begnaud's confidence was surface deep after he began opening up to her about how he was tormented at school because of having Tourette's.

"People were pretty cruel to him and I think it affected him deeply," she said.

Begnaud's foray into broadcast journalism began when he sought and landed a gig as a teen reporter for KLFY.

Placer quickly noticed several traits: talent, a strong work ethic, drive, and boundless curiosity. He was also tenacious when pursuing information.

She would walk on a treadmill at Red Lerille's Health and Racquet Club before starting her long, busy days at the television station. Begnaud, eager for one-on-one time to learn about the news business, showed up one morning to walk on a treadmill next to hers. He joined her morning after morning.



David Begnaud with Gayle King, co-host of "CBS This Morning"

"He was like a little leech," Placer fondly recalled, with a deep laugh.

"He had all of these questions: 'What's a good story? How hard should you press sources? In what instances shouldn't you reveal the names of sources?'" These questions were flowing through his mind and he needed answers."

Begnaud proved a quick study.

He became a full-time reporter at the station at age 18. He quickly moved into bigger roles, including evening anchor and host of "Passe Partout," KLFY's morning newscast.

After about four years at the station, and simultaneously earning a degree in general studies from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, he left in 2005 to work in other markets.

Begnaud logged stints at several regional news outlets, including in Shreveport, La., and Sacramento, Calif. Before joining CBS, he covered national breaking news as a Los Angeles-based reporter for Newsbreaker at ORA TV, a social media platform. He was also a regular contributor to "Entertainment Tonight."

Begnaud became a full-time correspondent with CBS News in August 2015. The previous month, the network had enlisted him as a freelancer to cover the Grand 16 Theater shooting in Lafayette. A gunman, described by police as a mentally ill drifter, opened fire in the movie theater. Two people were killed; nine were injured. The gunman died after turning his gun on himself.

"I had a responsibility to bring a certain humanity to the story because the victims were my people but I also had to maintain the veneer of a journalist. I couldn't get super-emotional. In many ways, I felt like the network was testing me to see how I would do in my hometown," he recalled.

He passed the test.

CBS News hired him full-time and stationed him in Miami. In early 2017, he relocated to the network's Dallas bureau.

He has found a niche covering breaking news. Assignments have included volcanic eruptions in Hawaii and the 2016 nightclub shooting in Orlando, where 49 people were killed and 53 others were wounded. He has covered the separation of children from parents who tried to enter the country illegally at the U.S./Mexico border.

"I'm just here until the phone rings and then I hop on a plane and go. I really enjoy being at the scene of a big story," he said.

Begnaud has never divulged – on a large scale – that he has Tourette Syndrome.



At UL Lafayette's Fall 2017 Commencement, David Begnaud urged new graduates to "find the public service in your profession."

He told a boss at CBS News only after agreeing to talk with *La Louisiane* about his experience with the disorder. "I said, 'FYI, this is going to come out.'"

Begnaud feared an admission of having Tourette Syndrome would have stunted his career. "I worried it would create a glass ceiling," he said. Keeping quiet was easier because his symptoms have lessened, which can happen in adulthood. Begnaud quit taking medication to control his symptoms at about age 18.

Although he still displays symptoms at times, they disappear when a TV camera is rolling.

"When the red light goes on, I don't tic," he said, referring to the signal that indicates the camera is recording.

When people with Tourette's participate in activities they enjoy or that engross them, tics can lessen, said Dr. Jack Damico, a professor in UL Lafayette's Department of Communicative Disorders.

"When you're focusing on talking and making something happen, or you're really engaged in something you're interested in, you end up doing a lot of voluntary motor movements," Damico explained. "The tics really come to the forefront when you're at rest, or when you're not focusing on other things."

Begnaud said he decided to open up about his Tourette's because he's tired of keeping it a secret.

More importantly, he wants to use his enormous public platform to inspire and influence others with Tourette's. It's estimated that 200,000 Americans have the most severe form; as many as one in 100 exhibit milder symptoms.

There is a precedent for his revelation. In June 2018, Begnaud sent a tweet that conveyed that he is gay. Although he had not hidden his sexual orientation, he had not publicized it, either.

"Reporting the truth means sharing my own," his tweet stated. In a follow-up Facebook post the next day, Begnaud said he hoped "that this story is the encouragement that other people need to tell their story."

Likewise, he told *La Louisiane* that he hopes that talking about his own experience with Tourette's will "help people see that their struggles – if it's Tourette's or something similar to it – won't keep them from achieving their goals."

Begnaud realizes that, in some ways, he's lucky. His Tourette's symptoms were not extreme.

Still, he doesn't minimize the traumatic affect that bullying had on him when he was growing up.

"I came out just fine on the other end but I wouldn't want any kid to go through what I went through," he said.

Begnaud harbors no ill will toward classmates who made his life difficult. "When I see some of them today, they're so proud and they're so complimentary. It makes it easier for me to let go," he explained.

Fourth-grade classmate Ashley Guidry Allen is more than proud of him. She gathers strength from remembering his childhood struggles.

Her third child, Jake, has cerebral palsy. She's anxious about enrolling the 6-year-old, "who's not going to walk the same as his classmates" in kindergarten.

"I saw David not long ago and I told him that I hope my son has the drive that he does, because he overcame something that was very tough."





# Her Majesty Queen Endymion *LII*

*Hannah Autin*

By Charlie Bier  
Photography by Chris Granger

The 52nd Queen of Endymion, Hannah Autin, is often asked about the costume she wore this year for New Orleans' largest Mardi Gras parade.

Her dazzling, bejeweled crown doesn't prompt the bulk of the questions. Neither do inquiries about her one-of-a-kind gown, nor the spangled white tennis shoes she wore beneath its floor-length hem, a concession to comfort.

People want to know how she kept her balance while carrying a 5-by-5-foot headpiece that fanned out behind her on the queen's float. Made of a frame covered with cloth, rhinestones, sequins, intricate beading and ostrich feathers, it weighed 50 pounds.

Autin didn't bear any of the load of the accessory. It was suspended by small chains hanging from a huge purple-domed crown that sat on four golden columns.

"It rests right above your shoulders," she explained.

Autin is a senior at UL Lafayette majoring in biology who plans to attend medical school after she graduates.

On Feb. 10, she filled one of the most coveted Mardi Gras roles in a city that hosts one of the world's premier revelries before the start of the Lenten season.

She had dreamed of being Endymion queen since middle school, when she applied to wear the crown. "I checked every year to make sure I was still on the list," she said with a laugh.







"There's nothing to really compare it to," said Autin, a 21-year-old from Galliano, La., a small town south of New Orleans.

After beginning her big day dressed in blue jeans and a long-sleeved T-shirt, she received royal treatment. She had her hair and makeup done at the Hyatt Regency Hotel early that morning. She was then ferried to the Mercedes-Benz Superdome to find her gown, which was hanging in a Tulane University football locker room, along with the gowns of her four-maid court.

Autin's gown was encrusted with silver and black rhinestones. Her crown was fronted with her initials – HJA for Hannah June Autin – and a representation of her beloved pet dog, a Goldendoodle named Zoe. The initials were also featured on Autin's beads, which were thrown from the queen's float.

Once her transformation from college student to queen was complete, Autin joined krewe members and their families at a Catholic Mass inside the Superdome. It was led by the Most Rev. Gregory Aymond, archbishop of New Orleans. The solemnity of the service was infused with touches of Mardi Gras excitement. One of the priests reminded krewe members who would be riding on floats to be considerate of spectators. "Throw beads to them, not at them," he advised.

Afterward, Autin and her maids headed to two Mid-City restaurants, Maypop and Ralph's on the Park, where family members and friends were waiting to pay tribute. In one toast, Charles Giraud III, father of maid Robin Giraud, summed up the magic of their extraordinary experience. "Ladies," he said, "today the streets of the city are yours."

Due to their tight schedule, Autin and her court were given food – including po-boys, Thai beignets and fried oysters – to eat in a Mercedes-Benz van that would take them to the parade formation site near City Park. A police escort accompanied them as they traveled along streets barricaded to other vehicles. "It was so out of the norm that it was kind of cool and weird at the same time," she said.

After arriving at the staging area, Autin first walked over to say "hello" and shake hands with the driver of the tractor that would pull the queen's float.

Before stepping aboard her float, she spotted some young girls behind metal barriers who were looking at her as if she were Cinderella incarnate. Autin spoke with them warmly and posed for photos.

"I was so excited I could bring them so much joy," she said.







Because of a threat of rain, the four-hour Endymion parade began about 30 minutes earlier than originally planned Saturday afternoon. It traveled six and a half miles through Mid-City thoroughfares.

Talk of cancelling the 2018 parade, due to weather forecasts, swirled in the days preceding it. The show went on despite intermittent showers. The queen didn't mind the weather. Neither, apparently, did revelers.

"It just seemed to make the crowd more enthusiastic," said Autin, who basked in cheers and waves from spectators standing beneath trees festooned with multi-colored beads.

The Krewe of Endymion's motto is "Throw 'til it Hurts." True to its word, members flung about 15 million beads, doubloons and trinkets, such as bouncing balls and illuminated flying discs, to about a million parade-goers.

Autin's pink and purple chariot featured several emblems of Louisiana architecture and culture. A fleur-de-lis that changed colors was on the front. Her float was flanked on both sides by white balustrades tinged with pink. LED and fiber-optic lighting sparkled and pulsed.

Her father, Shull Autin, is president of an offshore supply boat company in Larose, La. He has ridden in the Endymion Parade for the past 15 years.

His daughter, perched atop her throne, "looked like a 7-year-old girl in a toy store," he said.



Amid the purple, green and gold, Hannah Autin saw plenty of vermilion and white. Parade spectators wearing University colors and flashing displays of Ragin' Cajun spirit heartened her.

"I saw a lot of people giving the UL signal," she said, referring to the ubiquitous hand gesture that symbolizes UL Lafayette pride.

Shull Autin said acknowledgement from UL Lafayette students and supporters was gratifying.

"The thing that stands out in my mind was the hundreds of people representing UL. To hear them screaming 'Our queen! Our queen!' was fantastic. It brought goosebumps to the back of my neck," he said.

The parade capped weeks of duties for the queen. One of her responsibilities was to choose the Endymion king. She randomly pulled the name of Jacob Winfield of New

Orleans from among the names of eligible members of the all-male krewe.

She also hosted the Queen's Party on Jan. 27 at the Roosevelt New Orleans, A Waldorf Astoria Hotel. She worked with a caterer to choose which foods to serve to about 250 guests and added her personal touch to decorations.

At her suggestion, fried potatoes — one of her favorites — were on the menu, along with dishes such as shrimp and grits. Yellow flowers — another favorite — were scattered among traditional Mardi Gras-colored decorations of purple, green and gold.

The captain of Endymion selects the queen, with input from an executive board. Autin was crowned during a coronation ceremony Jan. 20 in the Ernest N. Morial Convention Center.





# **UL Lafayette sophomore reigns as Queen Evangeline LXXIX**

Lauren Guilliot, Queen Evangeline LXXIX, the Queen of Carnival, carried more than a wand for Lafayette’s Krewe of Gabriel; she carried on a family tradition.

Five generations – more than two dozen of the 19-year-old UL Lafayette student’s relatives – have played prominent roles with the Krewe of Gabriel, the largest krewe in Lafayette. The tradition started with Guilliot’s great-grandfather, Paul John Blanchet Sr., who reigned as King Gabriel XIX. Members of her family have also been queens, dukes, pages and maids.

Queen Evangeline is traditionally a college-age daughter of a Krewe of Gabriel member. Guilliot’s father, Paul, is a member. This year’s King Gabriel LXXIX, the King of Carnival, was Dr. Michael Judice, ’77, a Lafayette pediatrician.

Evangeline and Gabriel were chosen as names for the king and queen of Lafayette Mardi Gras celebrations in 1934. They were inspired by the hero and heroine of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow’s poem, “Evangeline.” According to gomardigras.com, the names were suggested by Edith Garland Dupré, an English professor for whom UL Lafayette’s library is named.

The poem, published in 1847, is set in Nova Scotia and Louisiana, and revolves around the deportation of Acadians. It tells the story of a French-Canadian woman who spends years searching for her fiancé after the couple is separated on their wedding day. The names remained after the Krewe of Gabriel was formed in 1949.

The krewe hosts two signature parades. The Queen’s Parade rolls on the night of Lundi Gras, which is the Monday preceding Mardi Gras. The King’s Parade is held the next day.

For Guilliot, a sophomore in UL Lafayette’s pre-dental hygiene program, Lafayette’s Mardi Gras fun and celebration amounted to a whirlwind.

She was interviewed by reporters and posed for photographs. Also, she helped host a Queen’s Luncheon at the home of her parents, Paul and Mary Gretchen Guilliot, ’88.

She also learned the protocol for the post-parade Grand Ball of the Greater Southwest Louisiana Mardi Gras Association, where she would reign with King Gabriel LXXIX.



Monarchs have ruled Mardi Gras in New Orleans since the city’s first parade in the mid-1850s, said Wayne Phillips, a Louisiana State Museum curator. “Royalty is so important to Mardi Gras because in many ways the monarchs are the public face of the whole celebration,” he explained.

Autin was joined on her float by her father and a security guard. The trio led a procession that included a stream of floats, marching bands and torch-bearers carrying flambeaus fueled by kerosene. One of the floats is more than 300 feet long and carries more than 250 riders.

Heavy rainfall began right as the parade entered

the Mercedes-Benz Superdome; it’s the only parade to travel through that venue.

About 20,000 guests had gathered inside for the Endymion Extravaganza. A white spotlight trained on Autin heralded the star of Endymion.

Thousands of guests danced as purple, green and gold lasers pierced the darkened ’dome’s interior. After the last float exited, British rock legend Rod Stewart and hip-hop/pop/and R&B artist Jason Derulo performed, along with other entertainers.

“It was an amazing way to end such a remarkable experience,” Autin said.

“It was a long week, but it was an amazing experience,” Guilliot said.

The Queen’s Parade began at Pontiac Point near downtown Lafayette and ended near Cajun Field. The procession rolled down Johnston Street, near the University.

“It was awesome around that area. It was cool to throw beads and wave to people I knew from Kappa Delta, and the Ragin’ Jazz Dance Team,” said Guilliot, referring to fellow members of two student organizations to which she belongs.

More than revelry, Guilliot relished claiming a familiar spot on the family tree.

“I feel so honored to be a part of my family’s legacy,” she said.



## Glory Days

Documentary to chronicle weightlifting team's national triumphs

**M**ary Perrin and Cheryl Thompson sat side-by-side on a sofa at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette's Alumni Center and chatted. A few steps away, their husbands, Warren Perrin and Mike Thompson, were time traveling, reliving their glory days as members of one of the nation's most-successful collegiate weightlifting programs.

Mary and Cheryl know every inch of this particular stretch of Memory Lane. "Oh, yes, we've heard *all* the stories," Cheryl said with a laugh.

There are many stories to tell. Between 1957 and 1972, the University's squad won eight national championships.

A forthcoming documentary, "The Ragin' 13," will chronicle the University's improbable domination of the sport. The title is a reference to the number of first- and second-place finishes the team collected, explained filmmaker Nick Campbell.

"It's an underdog story. They excel on every level, beating universities that had a lot of support and a lot of money behind them," said Campbell, who holds bachelor's degrees in history and media art from UL Lafayette.

Competitive weightlifting requires speed, skill and strength. In the 1950s through the 1970s, judges scored lifters as they hoisted bars loaded with weighted iron plates in three competitions: the clean and press, the snatch, and the clean and jerk. Elevating the weights was only part of the struggle. As a three-judge panel watched, lifters were required to "hold and control" the weight with their arms fully extended overhead for two seconds, then return the weight to the platform in a similarly restrained manner.

Weightlifting at UL Lafayette, then known as Southwestern Louisiana Institute, began in the mid-1950s at an off-campus gym owned by student Mike Stansbury.



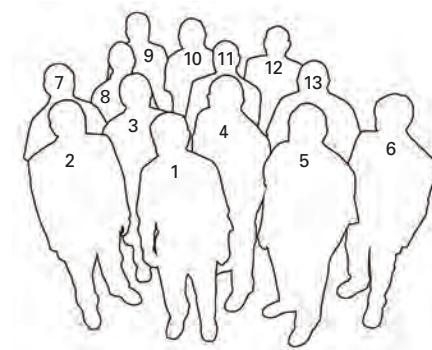
Jim Reinhardt demonstrates a lift for members of the University's 1966-67 weightlifting team. Watching him, from left, were John Stelly, John Arceneaux, Warren Perrin, George Weatherford, Randy Peloquin and Eddie Ortego.

Among the students Stansbury introduced to the sport was Walter Imahara, one of the most-decorated student-athletes in UL Lafayette's history. As a weightlifter at SLI, in the U.S. Army, and after his discharge, Imahara amassed nearly 200 regional, national and international titles between 1957 and 2005.

In 1955, Imahara enrolled at SLI and met Stansbury, whose gym on Jefferson Boulevard in Lafayette welcomed students who wanted to lift. By 1956, a group of them – with the blessing of Dean of Men Glynn Abel – felt confident enough in their skills to represent the school at the National Collegiate Weightlifting Championship. The team placed second.

The following year, the team took the crown decisively, more than doubling the score of its nearest opponent, the University of Hawaii. It was the first national championship in any sport in UL Lafayette's history.

Seven more titles followed, in 1963, 1965, 1966, 1967, 1968, 1970 and 1971. National competition was cancelled for 1969, because of a lack of a sponsor. It resumed the next year.



The team's record, which included undefeated seasons, regional team titles and individual records, drew attention from national weightlifting publications and newspaper sportswriters. It was an irresistible story: a small college with no coach and little money that managed to defeat better-equipped and better-funded programs such as Pennsylvania State University and the universities of Michigan, Texas and Maryland.

The squad would return from championships with trophies in tow, and a small group of students and the University's band would be waiting. The next day, team members would be back in Earl K. Long Gymnasium, where they trained after Stansbury's downtown gym closed in 1960, preparing for the next meet.

With cameras rolling, the veteran lifters returned to Earl K. Long Gym in July carrying only memories.

Jim Reinhardt and Alvin Chustz peered into a storage space where they first trained. It's beneath the bleachers. They recounted that the low clearance meant lifters had to take care when they hoisted barbells above their heads or else they might hit and damage the bleachers' underside.

The squad later moved its equipment into a more-spacious former handball court in the gymnasium's recesses. They called it "the dungeon," and as the veteran lifters returned to the space during their tour, they greeted the room like an old friend.

The film crew had placed a barbell in the room's center. Imahara approached the bar and began to explain for the cameras – and to the hushed ex-lifters who stood around him in a semicircle – the importance of foot positioning, gripping the bar properly and breathing on successful lifts.

"OK, I think we got it now, Walter," teased squad member Gene Hebert. "Now lift it."

Imahara, now 81, smiled, but declined. "I didn't bring my belt with me," he said.

During the summertime, the unairconditioned "dungeon" grew so hot that the walls dripped with humidity. Despite the conditions, "we wanted to be there," recalled Jay Trahan. "Our bond was weightlifting."

Team members shared and devoured training publications and



Former members of the University's weightlifting teams gathered in July at the Alumni Center for documentary filming. They included (1) Walter Imahara, (2) Rollie Andre, (3) Bill LeBlanc, (4) Mike Thompson, (5) Gene Hebert, (6) Jim Reinhardt, (7) Jay Trahan, (8) Warren Perrin, (9) George Weatherford (10) John Arceneaux, (11) Alvin Chustz, (12) Lynn Aurich, and (13) Wayne Vizzini.

replicated stances demonstrated in photographs. They had no coach, but they had each other, recalled Warren Perrin, who approached Campbell with the idea for the documentary.

"We all came from unique backgrounds, but we helped each other gain a positive attitude, that through hard work, you win – and gain pride."

"It was a shared passion for the sport – man against iron – that forged the team and its successes," Perrin said.

Weightlifting at the University of Southwestern Louisiana – the school's name changed from SLI in 1960 – ended after the 1972 season, when the squad's last two members graduated.

Recreating the 17-year period the sport existed at the University requires scores of primary sources. Training diaries and scrapbooks of photographs and newspaper clippings kept by the competitors are particularly valuable. Many were on display at the Alumni Center on the first day of filming for the documentary.

The material will help corroborate decades-old details recounted by ex-lifters during interviews, Campbell said.

"Walter (Imahara) has an old notebook. It's yellowed and brownish from age, but it's got every single competition he ever took part in – every single one.

"Warren (Perrin) did the same exact thing. Every competition they were ever a part of, how much they lifted, what they felt they could have done at that moment to do better. All the guys who were really successful kept one.

"You can't ask for any better primary sources than that."





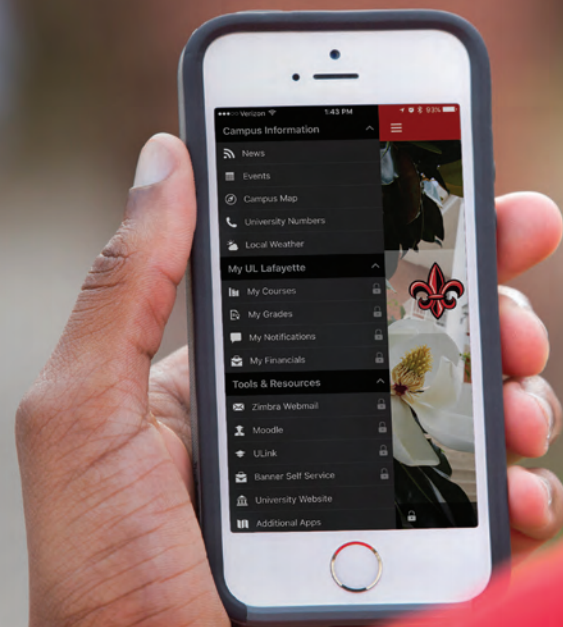
## 2018 LOUISIANA FOOTBALL SCHEDULE

GRAMBLING	SEPTEMBER 1   CAJUN FIELD   6 P.M.
MISSISSIPPI STATE	SEPTEMBER 15   STARKVILLE, MS   6:30 P.M.
COASTAL CAROLINA	SEPTEMBER 22   CAJUN FIELD   TBA
ALABAMA	SEPTEMBER 29   TUSCALOOSA, AL   TBA
TEXAS STATE	OCTOBER 6   SAN MARCOS, TX   TBA
NEW MEXICO STATE	OCTOBER 13   CAJUN FIELD   TBA
APPALACHIAN STATE	OCTOBER 20   BOONE, NC   TBA
ARKANSAS STATE	OCTOBER 27   CAJUN FIELD   TBA
TROY	NOVEMBER 3   TROY, AL   TBA
GEORGIA STATE	NOVEMBER 10   CAJUN FIELD   TBA
SOUTH ALABAMA	NOVEMBER 17   CAJUN FIELD   TBA
ULM	NOVEMBER 24   MONROE, LA   TBA

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COACH OF THE YEAR FOR SECOND TIME  
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JIM PHELAN NATIONAL COACH OF THE YEAR





# alumni

## 1959

**JAMES R. POUSSON** retired after working 33 years as an electrical engineer. After graduating from SLI, he was employed by Baker Hughes, an oilfield services company, as a staff engineer. In 1967, he began working for Thompson Ramo Wooldridge, which provided products to the defense, aerospace and automotive industries. He retired in 1992 as a senior staff engineer. He and his wife, Maria, live in Manhattan Beach, Calif.

## 1966

The Louisiana Political Hall of Fame in Winnfield included former state Rep. **CHARLES D. LANCASTER JR.** among its 2018 inductees. He represented portions of Jefferson Parish in the Louisiana House of Representatives from 1972 to 1976, and from 1980 to 2008. His 32-year tenure made him the lower chamber's longest serving Republican member at the time of his retirement. Lancaster attended USL on a track scholarship and earned a bachelor's degree in history. He then attended Loyola University New Orleans College of Law. He was later a fellow of Loyola's Institute of Politics and served as president of the National Republican Legislators Association. Lancaster retired as a major after 22 years in the Louisiana Army National Guard.

## 1968

The UL Lafayette College of Arts

presented architect **EDWARD C. MATHES** with its 2018 SPARK Lifetime Achievement Award. Mathes holds a bachelor's degree in architecture from USL. He became president of Mathes Brierre Architects in 1970, and the firm's chairperson 12 years later. He directed the expansion of the National World War II Museum in New Orleans; the design of the J. Edgar and Louise S. Monroe Library at Loyola University New Orleans; and the renovation and restoration of two cotton warehouses that are now part of the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts. Mathes' work has earned regional and national awards from the American Institute of Architecture. He established the Edward C. Mathes Endowed Superior Graduate Student Scholarship in Architecture at UL Lafayette in 2013. Two years later, he endowed a lecture series in the School of Architecture and Design. Previous SPARK award winners include **A. HAYS TOWN, '22**, locally renowned architect; Elmore Morgan Jr., landscape artist and UL Lafayette professor; and George Rodrigue, an artist known for his "Blue Dog" paintings.

## 1975

**KEVIN M. FRILOUX** retired after a 29-year career working for government agencies in two Louisiana parishes. From 1976 to 1988, he was administrator, and then president, of the St. Charles Parish government. He served

as the St. Charles Parish School Board's assistant tax director from 1991 to 2004. Friloux also was the Concordia Parish Police Jury's secretary-treasurer from 2013 until his retirement in 2017. He earned a bachelor's degree in political science from USL and served in the U.S. Naval Air Reserve. He now owns a real estate agency in Vidalia, La., and is a notary public.

## 1984

**CHARLES GADDY** is a senior environmental project manager at Freese and Nichols, an engineering firm in Fort Worth, Texas. He previously worked at APTIM, a construction company, as a senior engineer. After managing the company's office in Dallas, he

oversaw the environmental assessment and remediation of the Trinity River Vision Authority and the Texas Regional Water District, both in Fort Worth. Gaddy has also worked on environmental projects for multiple state agencies, including the Texas Department of Transportation and the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality. He earned a bachelor's degree in geology from USL. He also holds two master's degrees – in geology and in environmental water resources engineering – from Vanderbilt University in Nashville.

## 1991

**ABDULLAH BIN IBRAHIM AL-SAADAN** was appointed chairman of the Royal Commission for Jubail and Yanbu in June. The Royal Commission is an autonomous organization of the Saudi Arabian government. Jubail and Yanbu are industrial cities in Saudi Arabia. Al-Saadon has served as senior vice president of finance, strategy and development at Saudi Aramco, as well as other key positions in that company, according to *Arab News*. He holds a bachelor's degree in chemical engineering from King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, and a master's degree in chemical engineering from UL Lafayette. Al-Saadon also holds a master's degree in business administration from Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

## 1995

**LIONEL ROBERT**, an associate professor of information at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, is an expert on human-computer interaction. He has conducted two studies on human trust in autonomous vehicles, and is working on a third. Robert has published papers on the humanization of robots in several peer-reviewed journals, including the *International Robotics and Automation Journal*. Robert holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's degree in telecommunications from USL. He also earned a master's degree in industrial management

from Clemson University and a master's degree and doctorate in information systems from Indiana University in Evansville. He and his wife, **LORRAINE L. ROBERT, '96**, live in Ann Arbor.

## 1998

**DR. JACK BEDELL** received two notable accolades in 2017. Gov. John Bel Edwards selected the author and professor as Louisiana poet laureate. Bedell's two-year term expires in 2019. In addition, *Louisiana Life* magazine named him one of its 2017 Louisianians of the Year. Bedell's nine books include *Call and Response*, a 2010 poetry collection he coauthored with former poet laureate and retired UL Lafayette English professor **DR. DARRELL BOURQUE, '65**. Bedell's *No Brother, This Storm* is set for release in 2018. In addition to a doctorate in English from UL Lafayette, he holds a master of fine arts degree from the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville and bachelor's and master's degrees in English from Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, La. He is an English professor at Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond.

## 1999

PR News, an information source for communications and marketing professionals, recognized **LORI MEAUX STEELE** with its 2018 Top Woman in Public Relations Award. Steele was among more than 90 recipients honored during a Jan. 23, 2018, awards banquet in New York City. Steele is the Louisiana Organ Procurement Agency's community educator. In that role, she has worked to increase donor awareness among college students, which resulted in the addition of 1,000 names to the Louisiana Donor Registry since 2012. Steele earned a bachelor's degree in mass communications at UL Lafayette. She is a former anchor and reporter at television stations in Lafayette and Baton Rouge, La. She and her husband, Mike Steele, live in Denham Springs, La.

## 2011

**REX MOROUX** was recently a contestant on Jeopardy! A Lafayette commercial real estate agent, he appeared on an April episode of the popular television game show. He went into the Final Jeopardy! round with \$9,000 after answering five of the last seven clues, including a Daily Double. The Final Jeopardy! clue was: "Congress met in June 1778 to sign these but found errors in the official copy; it had to reconvene with a new set in July." Although Moroux asked the correct question – "What are the Articles of Confederation?" – to accumulate \$15,500, he placed third. In a first-person account published in *The Current*, a local online magazine, he summarized the experience. "It was uncomfortable, surreal, and one of the greatest experiences of my life." Moroux holds a bachelor's degree in political science.

## 2013

**ANDREW R. BESSE** is a special education teacher at Port Barre High School in Port Barre, La. He earned a bachelor's degree in history from UL Lafayette and holds a master's degree in teaching from Louisiana College in Pineville. He and his wife, Elizabeth Dunn Besse, live in Rayne, La.

**NATHAN WALKER**, a professional dress designer known as Romey Roe, created gowns worn by two actresses who walked the red carpet at the 69th Primetime Emmy Awards. Shanna Forrestall and Liz Fenning donned dresses for the ceremony designed especially for them by Walker. Regional lifestyle magazines have featured cover models wearing his work. Raw Artists, an international organization that provides tools and publicity to novice filmmakers, musicians, and hair and makeup artists, named Walker its Fashion Designer of the Year in 2013. He studied fashion design at the University from 2008 to 2013.

## 2014

The U.S. Department of State and the J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board named **DR. MATTHEW**

**TEUTSCH** as a recipient of the Fulbright U.S. Scholar Program Award. Teutsch earned a Ph.D. in English from UL Lafayette and was interim director of the University's Ernest J. Gaines Center. He is an English instructor at Auburn University in Alabama. As a Fulbright scholar, Teutsch will lecture at the University of Bergen in Norway. His residency will explore how African-American authors imagine and represent the Southern United States to a global audience. Teutsch is among more than 800 U.S. citizens named as 2018-2019 Fulbright scholars. The Fulbright Program is an international educational exchange sponsored by the U.S. government. It is designed to build connections between the United States and other nations. Congress established the program in 1946.

## 2015

**ANGELA BOXIE** is a 2017 recipient of the prestigious Milken Educator Award. She is a teacher and head of the Math Department at Edgar Martin Middle School in Lafayette. Boxie is the first Lafayette Parish educator to receive the award since the Milken Family Foundation first presented it in 1987. She was among 44 recipients in 2017, and received a \$25,000 cash award. Boxie holds a master's degree-plus 30 graduate hours with a math specialization from UL Lafayette. She previously earned a bachelor's degree in elementary education and a master's degree in educational leadership from Southern University in Baton Rouge, La.



## In Memoriam

**KALISTE J. SALOOM JR., '39**, who served four decades as Lafayette City Court judge, died Dec. 2, 2017. He was 99. Saloom was a link with UL Lafayette's past who knew each of its six presidents. In a statement following Saloom's death, UL Lafayette President Dr. Joseph Savoie eulogized the retired jurist as "a walking encyclopedia of University and community history" and an integral participant in the school's development and evolution. As an SLI student, he was a member of numerous academic and leadership fraternities and honor societies. He was president of the Newman Club, a Catholic student organization, and was on the staffs of *The Vermilion* student newspaper and *L'Acadien* yearbook. He later served as Alumni Association president from 1958-1959. Saloom received a bachelor of arts degree from SLI and then a law degree from Tulane University in New Orleans in 1942. He joined the U.S. Army Counter Intelligence Corps during World War II and served in North Africa, France and Germany as a special agent. Saloom returned to Lafayette in 1946 and became city attorney two years later. In 1953, he was elected city court judge. He remained on the bench until his retirement in 1993. At the time of his death, Saloom's judicial tenure was the second-longest in the state's history. As judge, Saloom instituted reforms to the city court's operations that other systems in the state and nation emulated. He also became a recognized expert in traffic safety. Saloom is survived by his wife of 59 years, Yvonne Nassar Saloom; four children, **KALISTE J. SALOOM III, '81**, current Lafayette City Court Judge **DOUGLAS J. SALOOM, '82**, Leanne Saloom





Howell and Gregory J. Saloom; 11 grandchildren; and five great-grandchildren. The family asks that memorial donations be made to the Judge Kaliste J. Saloom Jr. Eminent Scholar Endowed Chair in Political Science, administered by the UL Lafayette Foundation.

**DALTON COMEAUX, '43**, a retired county agricultural agent, died Friday, Jan. 5, 2018. He was 96. After graduating with a bachelor's degree in agriculture from SLI, he served in the U.S. Army during World War II. He worked in St. Landry Parish for 25 years for the Louisiana Cooperative Extension Service. Comeaux spent six years in the African nation of Tunisia, teaching local ranchers techniques for raising beef cattle. The U.S. Department of Agriculture later asked him to continue the program in five other West African countries. He was a member of the American Legion for 60 years and organized the St. Landry Parish Cattlemen's Association. Survivors include his daughter, Ann Carol McKinney of St. Simons Island, Ga.; two grandchildren; and three great-grandchildren. His wife, Evelyn Toups Comeaux, preceded him in death.

**ADOLPH BERNARD CURET JR., '44**, a newspaper columnist and historian, died May 4, 2018. He was 94. *The Pointe Coupee Banner*, a weekly newspaper in New Roads, La., first introduced his "Fricassee" column in 1947. It became a regular feature in 1952, and appeared uninterrupted until 2012. Curet was a reporter and editor at the newspaper from 1950 to 1974. He authored *Our Pride, Pointe Coupee*, a history of the southeastern Louisiana parish, and contributed stories to newspapers in Baton Rouge and New Orleans. The New Roads native earned a bachelor's degree in history from SLI. He is survived by seven children, Adolph "Dolph" Curet III, Thomas Curet, Stephen Curet,

Elizabeth "Betsy" Curet Crigler, Marion Curet Coffman, **MICHAEL CURET, '85**, and Isabel Curet Pease; 19 grandchildren; and 11 great-grandchildren. His wife, Elizabeth Grayson Curet, preceded him in death. His family has established the Bernard Curet Endowed Scholarship in Journalism through the UL Lafayette Foundation.

Retired Rayne, La., City Court Judge **DENALD A. "DENNY" BESLIN, '51**, died Oct 29, 2017. He was 88. At SLI, he was a member of the Blue Key Honor Society and an officer in the National Honor Society. He was president of Pi Lambda Beta Pre-Law Fraternity and secretary of Pi Gamma Mu national honor society for the social sciences. After graduating from SLI, Beslin earned a *juris doctorate* from Loyola University New Orleans' College of Law. He returned to Rayne and began his legal practice in 1952. In 1958, he was elected to the Rayne Board of Aldermen and served as mayor pro tempore until 1962. He began his tenure as city court judge in 1965 when he completed his predecessor's unexpired term. Beslin was elected subsequently to five full terms. His tenure totaled 32 years. He was a member and past president of the Acadia Parish Bar Association, the Louisiana Juvenile Court Judges' Association and the Louisiana City Judges' Association. The Evangeline Area Council Boy Scouts of America honored Beslin with its 2012 Distinguished Citizen Award. He is survived by his wife of 65 years, **CLAIRE ARCENEUX BESLIN, '51**; seven children, **ANNE CREDEUR, '80**, **DENISE TRAHAN, '77**, Jeanne Walk, Marie Elise Trahan, Matthew Beslin, **JOHN JUDE BESLIN, '87**, and Luke Beslin; 13 grandchildren; and 13 great-grandchildren. Beslin's son, **MARK F. BESLIN, '80**, preceded him in death.

**HORACE H. RAY, '51**, died Oct. 17, 2017. He was 91. He served in the

U.S. Navy in the Pacific Theater during World War II. He was a Seabee, a member of the U.S. Naval Construction Battalions, a military construction unit. After his discharge in May 1946, he earned a bachelor's degree in engineering from SLI. He then worked for a seismograph company, where he helped create instruments to measure earthquake waves. He also worked as a mechanical engineer for Mississippi Road Services until his retirement. Survivors include a brother, **WILLIE O. RAY JR., '51**, of Flora, Miss.; two daughters, Kathy Ray Denson of Ridgeland, Miss., and Jayne Hust, of Madison, Miss.; four grandchildren; and a great-grandson. His wife, Martha Hunter Ray, preceded him in death.

**JAMES HUBERT "RED" DUMESNIL, '52**, who worked 40 years for Lafayette's Guaranty Bank & Trust Co. and its successor institutions, died March 18, 2018. He was 86. A Lafayette native, he received a bachelor's degree in business administration from SLI, where he was a member of the tennis team. Dumesnil was a longtime member of the Alumni Association, which recognized him as its 2009 Spring Gala honoree. He earned a master's degree in economics from LSU. Service in the U.S. Army from 1954 to 1956 interrupted Dumesnil's pursuit of a doctorate at Tulane University in New Orleans. He returned to Lafayette after his discharge and joined Guaranty Bank as a teller in 1957. He retired in 1998 as chairman emeritus of Bank One Acadiana. He received the Lafayette Civic Cup in 1993 and was a 2013 inductee into the Junior Achievement of Acadiana Business Hall of Fame. He and his wife established the Hubert "Red" and Gertrude Dumesnil Endowed Professorship in Economics at UL Lafayette in 2006. In addition to his wife, survivors include two sons, Emile Dumesnil and James Dumesnil Jr.; five daughters,

**EILEEN FRUGE, '81**, Catherine Hardy, Lucille Bourgeois, Gertrude Trahan and Yvonne Shelfer; and 16 grandchildren.

**DR. SAMMIE W. COSPER, '60**, a former vice president for Academic Affairs at USL who later served as the state's higher education commissioner, died Sept. 19, 2017. He was 83. Cosper was the University's chief academic officer from 1973 to 1989. During his tenure, USL expanded its existing computer science and nursing programs; strengthened its ties to the area's oil and gas industry; prioritized the preservation of South Louisiana's Cajun and Creole cultures; and assumed a role in the restoration of the state's coastline. As higher education commissioner from 1990 to 1994, Cosper was an advocate for the creation of a statewide community and technical college system. Cosper enrolled at SLI after serving in the U.S. Navy. He graduated first in his class with a bachelor's degree in physics. Cosper then earned a doctorate in nuclear physics at Purdue University in 1965. His postdoctoral research at Lawrence Radiation Laboratory at the University of California at Berkeley resulted in the discovery of four previously unknown isotopes. Cosper returned to USL in 1967 as chair of the newly created Department of Physics, which was then under the guidance of the College of Liberal Arts. He was the college's dean from 1971 to 1973. Survivors include his wife of 63 years, Shirley Aguiard Cosper; three daughters, **CAPRICE COSPER, '77**, **MICHELLE C. ABSHIRE, '80**, and **RENEE C. REAUX, '85**; five grandchildren; and two great-grandchildren.

**WILTZ P. CHAMPAGNE JR., '63**, a former University professor and administrator, died May 4, 2018. He was 79. Champagne held a bachelor's degree in mathematics from USL and

*Continued on page 42*

## Acclaimed chef's restaurant isn't a secret anymore

Two years ago, when Kevin Tien, '09, and his business partner were preparing to open their new restaurant in Washington, D.C.'s Petworth neighborhood, residents would stop in to ask what kind of food it would serve.

Tien and co-owner Carlie Steiner cooked up a stock answer: It's a secret.

So when it came time to name the restaurant, the pair chose "Himitsu," the Japanese word for secret.

In retrospect, the moniker was ironic. Himitsu didn't stay a secret for long.

Measuring about 1,000 square feet and seating only two dozen patrons at a time, the restaurant is a small space that's earned big praise since it opened.

Within a few months, the James Beard Foundation – the nation's premier culinary arts organization whose annual prizes are considered the Oscars of food – had named Tien a semifinalist for its 2017 Rising Star Chef Award. He was an award semifinalist this year, too.

*Bon Appetit* magazine listed Himitsu among its 2017 Top 50 Best Restaurants in America. The restaurant has appeared on best-of compilations by *The Washington Post* and *Eater*, an online publication.

Earlier this year, Tien's skills as a chef were on display for an international audience when he was a contestant on the Food Network's "Iron Chef Gauntlet." The reality competition uses a series of cooking challenges to test a chef's versatility, innovation and resourcefulness.

Tien was eliminated in the second season's third episode, which was broadcast in mid-April. But the setback didn't stop the accolades.

In May, *Food & Wine* magazine named Tien among its 2018 Best New Chefs. The magazine's editors wrote: "Tien has devised a highly personal, individualized style of cooking that's as hard to categorize as it is to forget. But then again, why would you want to?"

Tien bristles at the term "fusion" to describe the restaurant's fare, but the menu includes Mexican-influenced Japanese dishes, a Vietnamese breakfast dish combined with Latin American strip

steak, and Peking duck served with Southern-style biscuits.

"Our restaurant isn't Japanese," Tien told *Food & Wine*. "It's not Vietnamese. It's not Southern. It's all of those things – everything I love on a plate."

Himitsu is Tien's first foray into restaurant ownership, although at age 31, he might be considered an industry veteran.

The Lafayette native's first job was behind the sushi counter at Tsunami, a downtown restaurant and bar. He was 17 and a student at Ovey Comeaux High School. He remained on staff while earning his bachelor's degree in business administration from UL Lafayette until he moved to Washington, D.C., six years ago.

After arriving in the nation's capital, Tien worked at Oyamel, owned by José Andrés, the award-winning chef who's credited with introducing the small plate concept to American restaurants. Under Andrés' tutelage, he learned the ways Asian and Latin American cuisines complement each other.

In opening Himitsu, Tien wedded the food freedom he witnessed at Oyamel with the camaraderie he felt at Tsumani.

"I really like the idea of the space feeling like you are going over to your friend's house for good food, drinks and a good time," Tien said in an interview with *La Louisiane*. "Having a smaller space gives you that feeling because you get to see all the action that happens in the restaurant, from the drinks being made to every

dish that comes out of the kitchen."

And if customers stick around long enough, they might see an unusual sight: its award-winning executive chef washing dishes.

"I did them last night," Tien said with a laugh. "You always hear fame changes people, but with all success and attention comes even more eyes on you and your business. If anything, I need to keep my head down and work even harder."

"It was easier being unknown, but now we are busier than ever, and we just want to keep serving good food and drinks. Hard work brought us here and continuing to work hard will take us even further."



FOOD NETWORK

Kevin Tien was named one of *Food & Wine's* 2018 Best New Chefs.



ALUMNI INFORMATION FORM

If you enjoy reading about where your former classmates are now and what they're doing, consider this: They'd like to read about you, too. Please fill out the form below and mail it back to UL Lafayette or go to [louisiana.edu/louisiane](http://louisiana.edu/louisiane) to submit the information online.

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MAJOR & DATE OF GRADUATION			
OR THE SEMESTER YOU LAST ATTENDED THE UNIVERSITY			
CURRENT JOB TITLE			
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BUSINESS ADDRESS			
PROFESSIONAL DUTIES			
ACCOMPLISHMENTS			
SPOUSE'S NAME			
FIRST	MIDDLE	LAST	MAIDEN NAME
SPOUSE'S USL OR UL LAFAYETTE GRADUATION DATE			
AND MAJOR, IF A FORMER UL LAFAYETTE STUDENT			
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or send it online at <a href="http://louisiana.edu/louisiane">louisiana.edu/louisiane</a>			

later earned a master’s degree in mathematics from the University of Texas at Austin. He joined the USL faculty in 1966 as an assistant mathematics professor and later served as registrar and as dean of admissions. He retired in 1996. Survivors include two daughters, Anne Marie Gaudin and **JENNIFER LEMEUNIER, ’92**, executive director of the UL Lafayette Alumni Association; and seven grandchildren. Champagne’s wife, Catherine Sanford Champagne, preceded him in death. The family requests memorial donations to the Wiltz and Catherine Champagne Education Endowment, which supports UL Lafayette music education students. The UL Lafayette Foundation manages the fund.

**MARY A. WASHINGTON, ’77, ’84**, retired president of the Louisiana Association of Educators and former member of the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, died April 4, 2018. She was 63. A native of Crowley, La., she earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in education from USL, and completed a master’s degree-plus 30 graduate hours in 1990. Washington was a 34-year employee of the Lafayette Parish School System. She taught math. As a teaching specialist, she later coached teachers in mathematics instruction. She and a colleague created Project Opportunity, an alternative program designed to help overage middle school students earn a high school diploma or equivalency. As LAE president from 1994 to 2000, she represented 20,000 public school employees. Louisiana Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco appointed Washington to a four-year term as a BESE member-at-large in 2003. Washington also served on the state Board of Regents’ Louisiana Systemic Initiative Project advisory panel and as president of the Lafayette Parish Association of Educators. Survivors include five sisters and three brothers.

**MARK F. BESLIN, ’80**, died July 29, 2017. He was 60. He was retired from the Louisiana State Probation and Parole Office, where he worked for more than 33 years. Survivors include his wife, **RENÉE BULLER BESLIN, ’81**; two daughters, **JENNIFER RICHARD, ’03**, and **MARGARET BESLIN, ’17**; a son, **MARK F. BESLIN II, ’08**; mother, **CLAIRE ARCENEUX BESLIN, ’51**; four sisters, **ANNE CREDEUR, ’80**, **DENISE TRAHAN, ’77**, Jeanne Beslin Walk and Marie Elise Trahan; three brothers, Matthew Beslin, **JOHN JUDE BESLIN, ’87**, and Luke Beslin; and five grandchildren.

**DR. GEORGE S. LOLI**, a professor in the School of Architecture and Design for 36 years, died Dec. 28, 2017. He was 72. A native of Syria, he held a doctorate in architecture from the University of Florence, Italy. He also studied drawing at Florence’s Accademia di Belle Arti. Loli joined the UL Lafayette faculty in 1975 and taught courses in Paris and Florence through its Study Abroad program. He retired in 2011. Survivors include three children, Joseph Loli, Juliana Loli and **JENNIFER LOLI, ’06**; seven siblings; and a granddaughter.



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**LOUISIANA**  
L A F A Y E T T E

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Industrial Institute

1921-1960  
Southwestern Louisiana  
Institute

1960-1999  
University of Southwestern  
Louisiana

1999-PRESENT  
University of Louisiana  
at Lafayette

## Death march survivor has a grateful nation's thanks

James Bollich, ’49, has lived every day, and more than a few nights, of the last 76 years with memories of Bataan. The Philippine peninsula fell to Japanese forces five months after the United States entered World War II. Bollich was among 76,000 American and Filipino defenders who retreated to Bataan, a finger of land on the western edge of Manila Bay, in a last-ditch effort to hold the islands.

Surrounded and without reinforcements, “we ran out of everything,” Bollich recalled in an interview with *La Louisiane*. “We had to kill and eat cavalry horses. After those were gone, we ate a few mules. By that time, we were completely out of food.

“The Japanese brought in new troops. That’s when our general decided to surrender. We were in no shape to do more fighting, and it would have been slaughter if he hadn’t.”

The Bataan Death March followed. It claimed at least 10,000 lives. Japanese guards beat and starved prisoners, and executed captives who collapsed or attempted to get water.

Untold others died in prison camps, but Bollich survived. In May, the 97-year-old received the Congressional Gold Medal, one of the highest awards the U.S. government confers on civilians.

The Eunice, La., native left Southwestern Louisiana Institute in August 1940 to join the U.S. Army Air Corps. After more than a year of training, he arrived in the Philippines 18 days before the Dec. 7, 1941, Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, brought the U.S. into World War II.

By April 1942, Bollich was a prisoner. His ordeal lasted 40 months. Before forcing captives to march 100 miles to Camp O’Donnell, a former military facility converted into a prison, the Japanese first stripped internees of valuables, Bollich said.

“If anybody had a watch, a wallet, dog tags, mess kits, they took everything we had. And once we had nothing left to steal, that’s when they started beating on us.

“They didn’t give us food or water. Every community had an artesian well next to the road. And it got to the point, around



James Bollich shows his Congressional Gold Medal to visitors in his home.

midday of the second day, that we figured they were trying to kill us all. So, we were going to get water whether they wanted to give it to us or not. The minute we left the road, the Japanese would start shooting. And if you were lucky, you got a little bit of water and got back on the road. If you were unlucky, you died right there.”

After walking for five days, Bollich arrived at Camp O’Donnell, where captors made him dig graves for the 20 to 30 prisoners killed daily by malnourishment and disease.

“I probably dug graves for four, five, six weeks. That place was just dying bodies all over, open latrines, and everywhere you looked, these big flies. If one touched what you had to eat, you may as well throw it away, because if you caught dysentery, you were going to die.”

Later, Bollich was sent by ship to a prison camp in Manchuria, in northeastern China. The voyage lasted 32 harrowing days.

“We were just packed in. Unfortunately, some of the guys had dysentery, and at night, they’d shut the hold. It was dark and hot. They were screaming and cursing and praying. It was just unbelievable. That, to me, was much worse than the entire length of my POW experience.”

Bollich remained in Manchuria for the remainder of the war. Soviet forces liberated the camp in August 1945, and Bollich returned to Eunice to discover his two older brothers had died serving in Europe. The following year, he re-enrolled at SLI, but his wartime experiences haunted him.

Even today, more than three quarters of a century later, dreams occasionally awaken him.

“I dream I am across a big ocean, by myself, in the jungles. And I know I have to walk for days and days and days and miles and miles and miles before I get to where I want to go. And in my mind, I think, gosh, I thought I did this already.”

After graduation from SLI, Bollich worked more than 35 years as a petroleum geologist. He published his memoir, *Bataan Death March: A Soldier’s Story*, in 2003.



## High Five

Eminent Faculty Award recipients give all – to their students and communities

A nurse, a chemist, a biologist and two engineers. That might sound like the start of a “walked into a bar” joke, but it describes the recipients of the 2018 Eminent Faculty Award and their accomplishments are no laughing matter.

The University of Louisiana at Lafayette Foundation has recognized top faculty members annually since 1965. More than 190 UL Lafayette educators have received its awards in the past half century.

Three awards – the Distinguished Professor Award, the Dr. Ray P. Authement Excellence in Teaching Award, and the Leadership in Service Award – are presented through the Eminent Faculty Award program.

Dr. James Albert and Dr. Xiaoduan Sun are the 2018 Distinguished Professor Award honorees. Albert is a biology professor. Sun is a civil engineering professor.

Established in 1965, the award is the oldest honor the Foundation presents. It recognizes faculty for their research, teaching effectiveness, and contributions to their professions and campus life.

Dr. Jennifer Lemoine, an assistant nursing professor, and Dr. Febee Louka, an associate chemistry professor, received the Dr. Ray P. Authement Excellence in Teaching Award this year.

Named for the University's fifth president, it has honored

faculty commitment to teaching and innovation since 1992.

The Leadership in Service Award went to Dr. Terrence Chambers, a mechanical engineering professor. It pays tribute to a faculty member who combines service learning with classroom instruction to forge skills and knowledge that students can apply to community leadership opportunities. It was first presented in 2016.

Speaking at an April awards banquet, UL Lafayette President Dr. Joseph Savoie said honorees embody “love of teaching, enthusiasm for students and their futures, and limitless curiosity for their fields of expertise.”

“They have shown us that thoughtful inquiry can combat ignorance, can improve lives, can inspire others, and ultimately can ensure a future that is brighter than the past.”

Nominations are made by fellow faculty members. A committee with representatives from each academic discipline selects recipients. Each honoree receives a \$5,000 stipend.

Video profiles of the recipients and a photo gallery from the ceremonies can be viewed at [ullafayettefoundation.org/event/efavideos](http://ullafayettefoundation.org/event/efavideos).

The UL Lafayette Foundation assists with the acquisition of donations to the University. It invests and manages all private assets given to the University.

newborn babies were critically ill and their mothers' postpartum needs required a deft hand as well.

“I focused on neonatal nursing because it is such a vulnerable population,” Lemoine recalled. “I was always a teacher. As a bedside nurse, there's always a level of teaching that's done.”

Her journey to babies and bedsides began in a bank, where she worked as a mortgage loan officer while pursuing an economics degree.

“My happiest customers were nurses,” she recounted. They “all relayed stories of making a difference in the lives of their patients. So, I thought to myself: Does being a mortgage loan officer really make a difference at the end of the day? Am I transforming lives? The answer was ‘no.’”

Lemoine soon changed her major to nursing and “never looked back,” she said. She's now an assistant professor and the recipient of the 2018 Dr. Ray P. Authement Excellence in Teaching Award.

Neonatology is her primary focus. She and two colleagues conducted a study on safe sleep practices for newborns. She also examined how opioid use by pregnant women has resulted in a rise in neonatal abstinence syndrome, or withdrawal, in newborns.

Lemoine is considered an expert on effects of state and national public health policies on patients' access to quality care.

She coordinates the college's Doctor of Nursing Practice program. It's offered mostly online to professionals already working in the health care field; their work schedules and the University's hours don't often align.

The clock and calendar make no difference to Lemoine. Students who email her on weekends or after hours likely will receive a prompt response, said Dr. Lisa Broussard, associate dean of the College of Nursing and Allied Health Professions.

“When she's called to help, she doesn't say ‘no.’”

It's all in a day's – and night's – work, Lemoine said. “If I can help students succeed, and it's not necessarily between the hours of 9 and 5, then I am willing to do that.”



## Dr. Febee Louka

Dr. Febee Louka has great chemistry with her students. More than a dozen current and former pupils wrote letters to support her nomination for the Dr. Ray P. Authement Excellence in Teaching Award.

Mark Spell took undergraduate chemistry courses with Louka while at UL Lafayette, and worked alongside the associate professor of chemistry in her research lab. Spell is pursuing a master's degree in synthetic organic chemistry at LSU in Baton Rouge.

“Dr. Louka cares for every single student in her classes. She wants them involved in the learning process, answering questions and obtaining a real understanding of the material rather than just memorizing, a method that doesn't work in a subject such as chemistry,” Spell said.

“During three semesters of research in her laboratory, I found my passion for chemistry. While she cared for the chemistry work being done, she cared even more about the individuals doing it.”

Since joining the chemistry faculty in 2005, Louka has mentored 70 undergraduate researchers. They assist her as she examines environmental pollution caused by chlorinated hydrocarbons, which are used to manufacture insecticides and synthetic rubber.

When the research results in publications or conference papers, Louka lists the students as coauthors.

“They are doing the work, and they deserve credit,” she said. “And, they understand that we are a team.”

Chase Louviere collaborated with Louka on a 2014 paper on polycyclic hydrocarbons. He was pursuing a bachelor's degree in biology at UL Lafayette at the time. He's now a pharmacy major at the University of Louisiana at Monroe.

“Dr. Louka's lab never felt like I was doing something menial,” Louviere wrote. “She explained every process while showing exactly why we were doing the work. Over the course of the semesters, I began to feel less like her student and more like her family.”

Chemistry faculty members echoed praise Louka's students have given her. They rated her classroom instruction as the department's best for three consecutive years.

“Dr. Louka is an active and strong mentor, tirelessly advising students and helping them in their quest to reach their educational goals,” said Dr. Thomas Junk, head of the Chemistry Department. “She is well known among students for her patience and insight.”

## Dr. Jennifer Lemoine

Dr. Jennifer Lemoine was a teacher before she ever set foot in a classroom. She joined the College of Nursing and Allied Health Professions faculty in 2007 as an instructor.

She also was working as a neonatal nurse practitioner at the time. The job required her to tend to newborns and to instruct new parents and other family members on proper care. It was a delicate task. Some





## Dr. James Albert

The ghost knifefish, electric fish and armored catfish aren't in the same scientific families, but they are related – sort of.

Each is named for a member of the Albert family. The ghost knifefish, or *compsaraia samueli*, honors Dr. Samuel Albert, a physician. His son, UL Lafayette ichthyologist Dr. James Albert, inspired names for the remaining two. The biology professor has studied freshwater fishes in South America and Central America for nearly 30 years.

Among James Albert's 112 peer-reviewed publications are descriptions of more than 50 species and six genera previously unknown to science.

'Dr. Albert is one of the smartest and most complete scientists I have worked with.'

Dr. Victor A. Tagliacollo

The ghost knifefish is one. Samuel Albert accompanied his son on an expedition to the Peruvian Amazon in 2005, the same year the younger Albert joined UL Lafayette's biology faculty. While perusing the day's catch at a market, Samuel Albert noticed a fish with elongated jaws that set it apart from specimens the expedition was collecting. He purchased the fish and brought them to his son.

"And sure enough, they turned out to be a new species," *compsaraia samueli*, James Albert recounted.

Nine years later, James Albert's colleagues named two newly discovered South American species – an electric fish, *brachyhypopomus alberti*, and an armored catfish, *hisonotus alberti* – for him.

The recognition confirmed Albert's status as an international expert on neotropical fishes. Colleagues who wrote letters supporting Albert's Distinguished Professor Award nomination labeled him "an icon," whose work has made him



"almost a synonym for neotropical diversity."

Other scientists have cited Albert's scholarship more than 3,700 times. His three book-length publications have extended his influence as well, and students he's taught at UL Lafayette are on university faculties around the world.

Dr. Victor A. Tagliacollo was among a number of students drawn to UL Lafayette by Albert's reputation.

He's now an environmental science professor at Brazil's Universidade Federal do Tocantins. As an undergraduate, Tagliacollo used Albert's "Historical Biogeography of Neotropical Freshwater Fishes" as a textbook. It deepened his interest in systematics, a biological field that concerns classification, and convinced him to apply to the University's biology doctoral program.

"It was my best decision," Tagliacollo said. "Dr. Albert is one of the smartest and most complete scientists I have worked with."

## Dr. Terrence Chambers

When Dr. Terrence Chambers was 12 years old, his Boy Scout troop leader instructed him to "police the campsite" by picking up gum wrappers, cigarette butts and other refuse left behind by previous campers. The idea was to leave the area better than the troop had found it.

As Chambers advanced in rank, he and his fellow Scouts began to look for other problems they could solve. They repaired bridges and restored eroded trails, for example.

The lesson of improving a community is one Chambers – the 2018 Leadership in Service Award recipient – never forgot. Now a mechanical engineering professor, he strives to instill that principle in his students through service learning projects.

Chambers sees engineering as a giving profession. He admits he's playing against type. People don't often think of engineers as humanitarians.

He begs to differ. "Engineers have reduced the incidence of many major diseases, such as malaria and dysentery, by providing clean drinking water and sanitary waste disposal. We generate electrical power, invent cars and airplanes, and build highways and bridges. We provide air conditioning.

"We provide for instantaneous worldwide communication through a network of satellites, cell towers and cell phones.

"We help people all day, every day."

Chambers' courses require students to volunteer as a way to engage different communities. Like his scoutmaster did, Chambers encourages his students to identify a need and then meet it.



'Engineers have reduced the incidence of many major diseases ... by providing clean drinking water and sanitary waste disposal.'

Dr. Terrence Chambers

He recalled one service project in which students cleaned up the Vermilion River.

At first, they used personal boats to fish trash from the water. To expedite the process, they then

designed a barge that would float down the river and scoop up more litter more quickly.

"They were internalizing the concept that engineering is a service-type profession," he observed.

Chambers' work in solar and renewable energies provides another example of his giving ways, said Dr. Mark E. Zappi, dean of the College of Engineering.

Chambers' partnerships with businesses led to the creation of the Cleco Alternative Energy Center in Crowley, La., and the Photovoltaic Applied Research and Testing Lab, a solar farm in University Research Park on campus.

The projects are "a huge service," Zappi said, "to the entire globe."



## Dr. Xiaoduan Sun

Dr. Xiaoduan Sun is driven to save lives. The civil engineering professor's pioneering highway safety research has resulted in a reduction in roadway fatalities in Louisiana.

It's a critical issue in a state that consistently ranks in the Top 10 nationally in traffic fatalities. The 704 crashes on Louisiana's roadways in 2016 resulted in 757 deaths.

Each was avoidable, Sun said. Aggressive behavior behind the wheel, speeding, drinking and driving, low seatbelt usage and a host of other factors combine to increase roadway risks.

"Accidents happen. A crash is preventable," she said.

Sun is a groundbreaker, both in her field and at UL Lafayette. When she joined the College of Engineering faculty in 1994, she was its first female professor.

Sun was among the first researchers in the state to link highway design with safety. She created an innovative highway engineering safety course that's since been emulated by universities worldwide. Her early research asked how infrastructure improvements might mitigate collisions and improve traffic flow.

Her studies indicated that the addition of edge lines along rural two-lane highways reduced crashes by 17 percent, for example. Another study showed that converting an undivided four-lane section to a five-lane highway resulted in a 25 percent reduction of crashes and saved local communities \$3 million annually.

Installing rumble strips and cable barriers along highways and rural roads, and roundabouts in urban settings, have reduced

'Her multifaceted contributions are not just within academic circles, but directly impacting Louisiana citizens as they take to the road to travel. For an engineer, there is no better proof of the value of one's work...'

Dr. Mark E. Zappi

collision rates even further. Each is a monument to Sun's research, said Dr. Mark E. Zappi, dean of the College of Engineering.

"Her multifaceted contributions are not just within academic circles, but directly impacting Louisiana citizens as they take to the road to travel. For an engineer, there is no better proof of the

value of one's work than when this work is used and success is noted," he said.

Sun has broadened her research focus in recent years. She now explores how human psychology affects highway safety. She offers guidance to engineers on how they might take human factors into account when designing roadways.

While her interests have changed, her career-long desire to reduce fatalities hasn't.

"Saving lives is a noble cause," Sun said. "Safety is a very serious issue facing the state, facing the nation, and facing the whole world."





DOUG DICAS

The reptilian residents of Cypress Lake, a managed wetland on UL Lafayette's campus, are always ready to lend a hand — or a pair of webbed feet — to help a friend.

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