



# **ALUMNI NEWS AND NOTES 2020-2021**

Monique Alavi (AB '20) is attending law school at the University of Virginia School of Law.



Ricardo Alvarez (AB '17) married his high school and college sweetheart Jessica Jonel Sagastume (AB '16) in October 2019. He is currently the project manager for Lobo Landscape and Construction, LLC and his wife is the front office manager at Five Points Chiropractic.

Andrea Arnold (MPA '95) was hired as City Manager of Decatur in January 2019.

John Ashley, Jr. (AB '12) left the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs in January 2020 to become a Senior Consultant at the Department of Veterans Affairs, Office of Information and Technology (VA OIT), where he is a part of the Congressional Support Team, helping VA OIT communicate effectively with Congress.



Shallum Atkinson (AB '17) was the graduate commencement speaker for his December 2019 graduation in his Master of Education Policy program at American University. He has also returned to Capitol Hill to advise on policy for Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney.

David Ballard (AB '07) and his wife welcomed their daughter in October 2020.

Olivia Benecke (AB '19) celebrated 1 year at Deloitte in August, consulting for the CDC on projects during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rachel Borgel (AB '20) started law school at Georgia State College of Law.



Shelby Brown (MPA '18) became engaged to her boyfriend of 10 years in May 2020 and will be married April 2021. She also received a promotion with the Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta in October 2019 and transitioned from the role of Donor Service Coordinator to the Annual Giving Manager. She was also selected to be a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals Diversity Fellows Program for 2019-2020.





**Naji Bsisu (PhD '20)** started a new job at Maryville College as an Assistant Professor of Political Science.

**Paul Carlsen (PhD '12)** was selected by The Aspen Institute College Excellence Program as a 2020–2021 New Presidents Fellow. This Fellowship is a multifaceted program to help community college presidents in the early years of their tenure accelerate transformational change. He is one of twenty five leaders chosen for this inaugural cohort.



**Marli Collier (AB '18)** was promoted to Press Secretary for Senator Shelley Moore Capito.

**Ali Crook (AB '13)** graduated with a Master of Heritage Preservation Degree from Georgia State University in 2018 and founded Georgia Historic Real Estate, LLC in connection with the Real Living Capital City Realty Brokerage.

**Andrea Daniel (MPA '92)** received the International Athena Award from the Athens Chamber of Commerce in 2020. She was also elected a Board of Trustees member representing the State of Georgia by SACSCOC.



**Anna Davidson (AB '18)** was inspired by her experiences in the UGA at Oxford Programme in 2017 and is now beginning a PhD at the University of Oxford in Area Studies for Russia and Eastern Europe after receiving a master's degree at Oxford in Russian and East European Studies earlier this year. At the same time, she works as a consultant in defense and nuclear energy with organizations based in the UK, US, and Europe.

**Laura Davis (AB '14)** completed her first tour on board USS JOHN P MURTHA (LPD 26) and is completing training to assume the duties as Navigator onboard USS OSCAR AUSTIN (DDG 79).

**Maddison Dean (MPA '18)** was promoted from City Clerk to Director of Economic Development for the City of Winder in March 2020.

Brian Dill (AB '94, AB'19) is currently in his second year as President of the UGA Alumni Association and is an ex-Officio member on UGA Athletic Association Board and UGA Foundation.



Briauna Dingman (AB '12, AB '12) started a position with DIA in January 2020. She also welcomed a beautiful baby boy, Cayden Dingman, in April of 2020.



David Dove (AB '09) and Courtney Dove (AB '09) celebrated the birth of their second son, Wells Underwood Dove, in February 2020, who has now successfully recovered from two heart surgeries. David was appointed as one of four commissioners to the Uniform Law Commission. He was named one of "Georgia's Top Lawyers" by James Magazine and was awarded the designation of "Rising Star" by the Fulton County Daily Report.



Donavan Eason (AB '09) was recently named to the Board of Trustees for the Zell Miller Foundation, named as Co-Chair of the Premises Liability Section of the Georgia Defense Lawyers Association (GDLA), and also named Director of the Disaster Legal Assistance Committee of the Young Lawyers Division of the State Bar of Georgia.



Nikki Farago (AB '04) and her husband welcomed their fourth child, a daughter, in September 2019. Following parental leave, she resumed her role as Assistant Commissioner for Children and Families with the Minnesota Department of Human Services where she provides oversight and leadership for the state's child welfare, child support, child care, economic assistance and food support programs.

Hannah Farhadi (MPA '20) graduated in 2020 with a Masters of Public Administration with a specialization in Non-Profit Administration, and then in June accepted a full time position as the first Development Coordinator for the Southern Conservation Trust.



Ethan Gallagher (AB '17) completed two years in his appointment of service at the Department of Agriculture during which time he assisted in bringing high-speed broadband infrastructure to remote, rural, and tribal communities.



Nekabari Ledum Goka (AB '12) recently began managing all transportation electrification policy efforts for Exelon in DC, Maryland, Delaware, and New Jersey.



Jacquelyn Harms (AB '19, AB '19) started her new position at the Department of Defense in March 2020, marking the start of her career in public service.

Brittany Helliar (AB '20, AB '20) is a Litigation Assistant at Bondurant, Mixson & Elmore and will assist its paralegals with their legal research.



Cassie Hodges (AB '13) recently married Thomas Christopher Kiggen in a backyard ceremony due to COVID with plans to celebrate with friends and family in the fall. She also now serves as the Director of Communications at the National Venture Capital Association D.C., where she leads strategic communications and media efforts to empower the U.S. venture community, startups and entrepreneurs.

Norbert Hummel, IV (AB '07, AB '07) was sworn in as the 74th President of the State Bar of Georgia's Young Lawyer's Division in June 2020. He was also promoted to partner at his law firm and was awarded Rising Star by Super Lawyers Magazine and Ones to Watch by Best Lawyers. He was appointed to the Executive Committee of the State Bar of Georgia, as well as the Chief Justice's Commission on Professionalism.

Stanley Jackson (AB '06) was promoted to Assistant to the Vice President for Student Affairs at UGA's Institute for Higher Education to lead the division's communications, digital engagement, data, and information technology strategies and initiatives.

Alex B. Johnson (AB '09) joined Leake and Andersson, a legal practice that focuses on international trade and business matters, including international public policy and government relations. Prior to this he served as an Assistant District Attorney and also worked in both the U.S. House and Senate on multiple committees.



Jennifer Johnson (MPA '14) is a CDC Public Health Advisor assigned to the Tennessee Department of Health working in Public Health Emergency Preparedness. She was a featured speaker at the 2020 Preparedness Summit Virtual Conference held by the National Association for County and City Health Officials and was promoted to Senior Preparedness Field Assignee in 2020.



Shalin Jyotishi (AB '15) was selected to join the Advisory Board for the MIT Science Policy Review, quoted in Forbes for a program he oversees at APLU, and published op-ed in RealClearEducation. As the CEO of the Journal of Science Policy and Governance, he was invited to testify before the United Nations Commission on Science and Technology for Development.



Adam Kincaid (MPA '06) was one of the Republican 40 Under 40 award recipients this year with the American Association of Political Consultants.

Ivy Le (AB '05) ran a successful Election Protection Program through her organization in November 2020, and her podcast FOGO: Fear of Going Outside is being licensed by Spotify.



Larissa Martinez (AB '04) was awarded grants totaling a half-million dollars to state-based training nonprofits across the country on behalf of her organization, Women's Public Leadership Network (WPLN).



Jeri Milstead (PhD '93) was inducted into the American Nurses Association Hall of Fame in October 2020, which is ANA's most prestigious award.

Brian Mink (AB '11) recently joined Norfolk Southern as Legal Operations Director, leading a team responsible for overseeing the strategic business and tech initiatives for one of North America's largest railroads. Based in Atlanta, he is an Adjunct Professor for the Legal Analytics & Innovation course at UGA Law. He was previously a practicing attorney at Troutman Sanders law firm in Atlanta.

Brendan Murphy (AB '05) was unanimously appointed in July 2019 by the Superior Court Judges of the Cobb Judicial Circuit to serve as the Chief Magistrate of Cobb County. In June 2020, he was elected to a full four year term.

Frank Neal, Jr. (AB '91) celebrated his 1 year anniversary as Town Manager of Thunderbolt, GA located in the Savannah metropolitan area.



Caroline Paris Paczkowski (AB '11, MPA '13) welcomed her first son, Sawyer Michael Paczkowski, on December 10, 2020.

Carroll Padgett, Jr. (AB '69) was elected to Loris, South Carolina's city council in November 2019.

Charlotte Partrick (AB '19) now works for Cox2M as a Smart Communities Project Manager to bring smart IoT solutions to cities across the United States.

Matthew Paulk (AB '17) graduated from law school at University of South Carolina in 2020 and sat for the bar exam in July. He is now working for Circuit Court Judge Alex Kinlaw in Greenville, SC.



Karson Pennington (AB '20) was granted an assistantship to continue her education with SPIA, in the PhD in Political Science & International Affairs program.

Rebecca Perrera (AB '10) was named a 2020 Flinn–Brown Fellow, part of a flagship program of the nonpartisan Arizona Center for Civic Leadership.



Shelly Peskin (AB '19) was featured in a news publication as a spotlighted young activist. She was featured for her work with DACA recipients, renewing their work permits and deferred action status. She has since started a new role at LALDEF doing other types of immigration applications and legal assistant work.



Samantha Plotino (AB '11) assumed the role of Executive Director of The Provident Bank Foundation April 2020, where she previously served as Associate Executive Director. Samantha and husband Tommy Calhoun also welcomed their first child, Malcolm Thomas Calhoun, on June 28, 2020.

Ryan Prior (AB '12) currently works as a health features writer for CNN, covering the global coronavirus pandemic. He moved into this position after writing CNN's top performing story of 2019. This past summer, Prior also served as RIAS Fellow, joining fellow journalists on a tour exploring German politics and media, the European Union, NATO, and the enduring importance of the trans-Atlantic relationship.



Kenneth Rankin (AB '87) is opening a new business in Warner Robins, GA called Splinters Axe House.



Cecile Riker (AB '13) married Kyle Bickwit in April 2020, who is also a UGA alum. They had a very small ceremony in their backyard with just their parents.



Scott Riley (AB '13) has been working as a middle grades Social Studies teacher in Durham Public Schools since 2018.

Jason Shepherd (AB '98) was appointed in July 2020 to the Board of Directors of Friends of Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park, a non-profit organization which works alongside the National Park Service to provide educational support and volunteers to help maintain the second most visited Civil War Battlefield in the nation.

Amanda Sheriff (AB '07) joined the Oxford University Saïd Business School team running the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses UK small business education programme as Head of Alumni Engagement.



Deborah Silcox (AB '85) was featured as one of the Top 100 Most Influential Women in Georgia in the January/February 2020 issue of Engineering Georgia Magazine.

Julia Spitler (AB '13) changed employment from associate SAAG with Pereira and Associates to associate attorney with Meriwether and Tharp in May 2020. Julia also became engaged to David White of Kennesaw, Georgia in June 2020.

Elijah Staggers (AB '14) is completing his first year as an associate attorney in the Atlanta office of King & Spalding LLP where he litigated challenging issues in federal court and novel issues of tort law in the Georgia Court of Appeals. In the past year he has published two pieces of legal scholarship and this year will begin a federal district court clerkship in Virginia's Western District, as an understudy to Judge James P. Jones.



Sharon (McCoy) Swabb (AB '10) was married in April 2020.



Andrew Thompson (AB '03) was married in February 2020.

Shivani Vakharia (AB '15, AB '15) transitioned from the office of Representative Tom Graves (GA-14) to the National Endowment for Democracy in August 2020.

Philip Ward (MPA '08) welcomed his second child, Brody Beckett Ward, in August of 2019. He was admitted to practice law in the United District Court, District of South Carolina and before the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals.

Matthew Weiss (AB '05) was named Deputy General Counsel for the Democratic Party of Georgia.



Taryn Winston (AB '11) graduated from the University of Georgia School of Law in 2018, and she currently serves as a term law clerk to the Honorable Steve C. Jones, United States District Judge, in Atlanta, Georgia.