HOPE IS MUCH NEEDED

A conversation with Professor Channon Miller, an interdisciplinary Black women's historian, about systemic racism
I

In late July, the university announced it would begin the fall semester with remote instruction for all undergraduate and graduate courses due to the continuing spread of COVID-19 following health agency guidance from the state of California and San Diego County.

Just as USD Magazine was about to go to press in late August, San Diego was taken off the State of California’s watch list. There are new state and county restrictions in the State of California and San Diego County.

We are now planning for a limited return to campus for some of our students.

Our first priority remains the health and safety of our campus community, and we are keeping in close, weekly contact with state and county officials to monitor progress.

Over the past several months, we have made significant investments in technology to enhance the remote instruction experience. This summer, more than 300 faculty members enrolled in workshops and seminars to hone their online teaching skills and learn new ways to engage our students in a remote teaching environment. We are confident that whether providing remote or in-person instruction, all courses will be taught to ensure learning outcomes are met and that students develop a close relationship with instructors.

Our current challenges remind me of a time some years ago in 2005, when my wife and our two children were planning to spend our winter school break in Florida to get away from the cold weather in Philadelphia. Five months before our trip, Hurricane Katrina hit the Gulf Coast. In the months that followed, we heard more about the devastating aftermath of Katrina on the lives of millions of people and learned that many of the people who volunteered to serve in the reconstruction were not going to be able to spend their holidays at home because there was no one to fill in for them, even for a week.

A local nonprofit organized volunteer teams to go to Mississippi and relieve the frontline workers. Mary and I decided we would volunteer and spend our Christmas break in service to others. In other words, we decided it was time to pivot. We canceled our vacation and made a donation of both our time and money to help those impacted.

When we arrived in Bay, Mississippi, we couldn’t believe the devastation, even though Katrina had hit five months before. We were given assignments to work in a relief camp, to help with cleanup efforts and to serve food to local residents who still could not return to their homes.

We spent our nights packed into a small FEMA trailer, but that didn’t matter, because we were all so tired from our long hours of service.

That winter break turned out to be one of the most wonderful Christmas holidays in our lives. We grew closer as a family and met many incredible people who inspired us through their faith, resiliency and strength. We watched our sons take big steps toward adulthood by taking on new responsibilities. And Mary and I grew as a couple as we saw our faith in our fellow human beings grow by witnessing the sacrifice and love of so many people.

During these unprecedented times in 2020, I am inspired by an attitude now that is similar to what I saw in Mississippi in 2005. A spirit of courage, resilience and a Changemaker attitude. A spirit that is alive and well in our Torero community as we confront two of the most urgent challenges facing humanity — the coronavirus pandemic and an acknowledgement by many in our country that we have not lived up to our founding principles.

Confronting racism, white supremacy, prejudice and all forms of oppression begins on our own campus. Racism is a sin and we must confront its impact on our country and on our own campus if we are to live up to our highest ideals.

To this end, we are taking a number of concrete steps in the fall semester to address racism and oppression and demonstrate love and compassion for every member of our campus community. As a faith-based institution, we must continually remind ourselves that light can emerge out of darkness. It is our responsibility as an academic institution to promote dialogue and a sense of solidarity as we take steps to live out our vision. We invite all of you to join us on this journey.

I remain optimistic about the future of USD and see this as a liminal moment and an opportunity to grow and improve as an academic community. I am excited about this academic year, and truly believe great things will continue to happen once again, when our students and faculty engage directly, whether in person or remotely, and the magic of our culture of care embraces everyone.

We are keeping you and your family in our prayers to remain safe and in good health. We also ask for your prayers and support for our campus community during these challenging times.

Peace,

James T. Harris III, DEd
President
Mark your calendar for our annual day of giving:

Torero Tuesday, October 13, 2020

Join USD alumni, parents and friends from across the globe to raise funds that will enhance student scholarships, academic programs and athletics.

Let’s make this our biggest #ToreroTuesday yet!

sandiego.edu/ToreroTuesday
Features

DAWN OF A NEW ERA
The university’s pivot to remote instruction as the country navigates the health and safety implications of the COVID-19 pandemic has required faculty to quickly adapt to new technologies in order to deliver course content effectively. Keeping students engaged is key.

HOPE IS MUCH NEEDED
Professor and interdisciplinary Black women’s historian Channon Miller, PhD, has unbounded enthusiasm for her field of expertise, as evidenced by a recent wide-ranging conversation about systemic racism and the movement for Black lives.

CONFRONTING HUMANITY’S URGENT CHALLENGES
A fall 2020 course, Black Lives Matter: Interdisciplinary Perspectives, will look at issues of systemic racism and the longstanding policies and practices that have led to widespread inequities.

PERSISTENCE, PATIENCE AND RESPECT
Interim Vice Provost for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Richard Miller, DPE, talks about what’s needed to make progress on a variety of social issues.

TORERO NEWS
Empowering the USD Community
USD has made grants totaling $1.5 million over the past four years, funding 30 projects that confront humanity’s urgent challenges.

Economic Recovery
A partnership with small businesses has resulted in a win-win for USD students, who’ve been paired with dozens of local businesses in need of qualified interns this summer.

Providing Solace and Hope
As the community and volunteer engagement manager for Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego, Deanna Wolf ’12 (BA) has seen how faith in action has been an integral part of the organization’s response to the COVID-19 crisis.

New Spaces, New Possibilities
The renovation of Copley Library and construction of the Learning Commons, USD’s newest academic building, was completed over the course of the summer.

Family Bleeds Torero Blue
A Torero parent times four, Mary Levine has watched as her children — Michael ’12 (BA), ’15 (JD/LLM), twins Madison ’13 (BA) and Aimee ’13 (BBA), and Jordan ’21 (BA) — have made their own mark on the campus community.

TORERO ATHLETICS
Playing with Purpose
Ross Dwelley ’18 (BS/BA) reflects on the road that led him to the pinnacle of his athletic aspirations: He’s about to embark on his third season as a tight end with the NFL’s San Francisco 49ers.

CLASS NOTES
Flying High, Under the Radar
It was only relatively recently that Curtis Chambers ’19 (BS/BA) received his degree from USD, but he was a bit busy since he left the university, helping to build Uber into a global presence.

Resilience and Strength
Ellissia (Darley) Price-Fagin ’66 (BA) has seen plenty of history up close. And as a student in the San Diego College for Women, she made history of her own.

Deeply Rooted
The new executive director of the San Diego Audubon Society, Travis Kemnitz ’02 (BA), has made a love of nature his life’s work.

ON THE COVER
Photo of USD Professor Channon Miller by Tarsha P. Jones.

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When it comes to confronting humanity’s urgent challenges, the University of San Diego’s goal is not more of the same but developing dramatic and innovative approaches to issues such as climate change, homelessness and social justice.

As part of its Strategic Initiatives effort, USD has made grants totaling $1.5 million over the past four years, funding 30 projects. The effort so far culminated in a summit held virtually in the spring of 2020.

“While the university’s Envisioning 2024 strategic plan provides a roadmap for the ways that USD is uniquely situated to confront humanity’s urgent challenges, the Strategic Initiatives funding process has empowered the campus community to not only develop initiatives that focus on specific issues but also help collaborate in ways to enhance the collective impact of our efforts,” says Mike Williams, professor of political science and director of USD’s Changemaker Hub.

The Nonprofit Institute at USD, for example, is focused on the Environment and Social Justice Leadership Hub to address climate change and environmental degradation. Over the past year, it facilitated hands-on internships with students at local San Diego organizations and launched a series of on-campus events to engage the USD community.

“We envision the hub as a vital source of collaboration to generate solutions to environmental problems, advance the health of our planet and build a strong and just society,” says Emily Young, the institute’s executive director.

One of the most far-reaching initiatives is the Engineering Exchange for Social Justice, a...
NEW WAYS TO THINK

Virtual events provide real-world applications

by Ryan T. Blystone

In the entrepreneurship world, even challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic can be viewed as an opportunity for finding new ways to think. Since mid-March, when all USD classes were shifted to remote learning, we’ve all had to adjust.

USD’s rapid response is worth noting. Of course, each of USD’s schools have faculty members who teach and use technology differently, but new programs were created to help students become more resilient, examine the job market during uncertain times and gain insights from alumni.

Over the past months, USD’s alumni relations office spent time connecting with Torero alumni in new and beneficial ways. “We had no plans for doing virtual events as of mid-March, but by July 1, we had hosted or partnered on more than 50 events,” says Senior Director of Alumni Relations Charles Bass. Bass (pictured at left, alongside Wine Classic co-host and auctioneer Clint Bell) recognized that his office needed to deepen alumni engagement by offering remote opportunities to stay connected.

“As much as we love our in-person events, our team looked at the situation and used technology to make virtual programming a thing,” he says. Bass and his staff hosted meetings, discussions and one-on-one conversations with interesting USD alumni. Signature and special events were offered on a variety of platforms.

University Ministry was another key adapter. Sunday night Mass could be viewed on Instagram Live. Multiple events were held that served the faith needs of the student community.

Across campus, popular remote events thrived, including The Brink’s San Diego Angel Conference, the Office of Undergraduate Research’s Creative Collaborations, Honors Program Spring Colloquium, the USD and global finals of the Fowler Global Social Innovation Challenge, USD Athletics’ Sports Banquet and the 12th annual USD Wine Classic.

One annual spring event, the Venture Vetting (V2) Pitch Competition, postponed its entrepreneurship competition until Spring 2021, but organizers successfully pivoted by creating “The Resilient Entrepreneur” online series. A collaboration between the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Catalyst at USD and other campus entities, series programming focused on building entrepreneurial skills essential for weathering uncertain times. Participants could hear from in-the-field alumni entrepreneurs, take part in a workshop on financial literacy, witness students pitching their ideas to judges and join a LinkedIn workshop.

“This was a chance to take a step back, think about things, pivot, be creative and offer students an opportunity to be resilient,” says Regina Bernal, the School of Business’ entrepreneurship manager. “At the core, USD has a strong community. I think this series enabled us to shine.”

[resilience]
Interning at a small business wasn’t Laura Bolt’s ’21 (BA) first choice for the summer. But for her, it turned out to be the best one.

In the midst of a pandemic posing unprecedented challenges to USD and small businesses, both are banding together for mutually-beneficial partnerships.

When her study abroad trip to Austria was canceled, Bolt (pictured) began interning with MAKESafe Tools in San Diego. According to owner Scott Swaaley, the plan for this year was to invest heavily in trade shows for the startup firm, which sells industrial safety products. When those events were canceled, the small firm reinvested in digital marketing and advertising.

With her major in physics, Bolt’s technical background and communication skills made her “an obvious choice.” Over the summer, she helped upgrade the firm’s website and search engine optimization efforts. Swaaley says her contributions have been invaluable.

For her part, the internship “turned out to be the best thing I could have done with my time this summer,” Bolt says. She thinks such interdisciplinary experiences will be a “huge help” working with engineering teams in the future.

The internship is just one example of how USD’s Career Development Center and The Brink, its small business development center, worked to pair dozens of students with local businesses in need of qualified interns.

Thanks to the generosity of the Kenrose Kitchen Table Foundation — the philanthropic initiative of J.D. Power and his family, along with other generous USD donors — 86 students were paid for their summer internships, without having to worry about taking a financial hit or having to seek a summer job, says Robin Darmon, senior director of the Career Development Center.

“At a time when students were struggling to find meaningful professional experiences and
small businesses needed more assistance, these connections with our region’s startups were a huge success,” she says.

This spring, The Brink’s San Diego Angel Conference awarded $400,000 to three local startups, including $200,000 to AgTools, which provides real-time data and analysis to farmers and other agricultural businesses.

Through the federal CARES Act, The Brink helped dozens of businesses access emergency funding and trained more than 85 businesses through its Pivot Series workshops focused on raising money and connecting with customers during the pandemic. It also connected small business clients with students’ senior capstone projects to create new ideas for sales channels and market analyses.

Working with San Diego County Supervisor Nathan Fletcher, The Brink also launched Innovate Up, an effort to support entrepreneurs in underserved neighborhoods. As of June 1, some 220 entrepreneurs had received more than 100 hours of training.

Working together, USD and small businesses can make a real impact, says Rhett Buttle ’07 (BA), founder of Public Private Strategies, a Washington, D.C.-based consulting firm.

Some 100 million people — representing the diverse faces of America — are either small business owners or work for a small business, he notes. People of color, for example, own more than 11 million businesses, generating more than $1.8 trillion in revenue, while women-owned businesses generate $1.9 trillion in revenue.

“The best way to achieve a recovery for all is to put small business and their job-creating, wealth-building power at the center of our recovery efforts,” Buttle says. “With the right tools, small businesses can help us all rebuild.”

[decisive]

MEET DEAN KEANE
New head of USD School of Business

by Renata Ramirez ’16 (MBA)

In January 2020, the University of San Diego appointed Tim Keane, PhD, a former Fortune 500 executive and technology entrepreneur, to lead the School of Business. He’s hit the ground running in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent need to shift classes to remote learning for the spring semester.

“As the USD School of Business adapts, our number one objective is to provide shelter in the storm for our students,” he said in his April 2020 newsletter. “We will nurture them and give them hope. That is what we can control. That is our promise for the future.”

Keane joined USD at a pivotal time as the School of Business seeks to further its strong connection to the business community through their students, alumni, faculty and six centers of distinction: the Ahlers Center for International Business, the Burnham-Moores Center for Real Estate, the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Catalyzer, the Supply Chain Management Institute, The Brink Small Business Development Center and the Accountancy Institute.

“Tim’s innovation and collaboration skills connect with forward-thinking business leaders who seek to solve the most vexing issues in society while continuing to achieve financial sustainability,” says USD President James T. Harris. “We are very pleased to welcome him to USD.”

Keane has already accomplished much in a short time. He recently joined the board of directors at the San Diego Regional Economic Development Corporation (EDC) and is co-chairing its anchor institution initiative. The EDC initiative is working toward a goal of producing “50,000 new quality jobs in small business, by focusing on better connecting regional small and minority firms to large customers.”

“The USD School of Business has distinguished itself as one of the premier business schools in the nation,” Keane says. “That foundation has resonated with the local San Diego business community and paved the way for our students and faculty to partner in developing the region’s plans to excel in the postpandemic economy.”

Thanks to the generous support of USD Board Chair and former CEO of Clorox, Don Knauss, and his wife Ellie, the USD School of Business is poised to increase its influence in the coming years as it breaks ground on a new 120,000-square-foot state-of-the-art Knauss Center for Business Education.

“The Knauss Center for Business Education complex will be an innovation and collaboration ecosystem from which our students can grow the perfect combination of business skills, design thinking and emotional intelligence necessary to lead in the new economy,” Keane adds.
Faith transcends our churches, moving beyond pages of Scripture and into our communities. As the COVID-19 pandemic forced houses of worship to close their doors this spring and summer, Deanna Wolf ’12 (BA) witnessed faith taking hold in parking lots and neighborhoods. As the community and volunteer engagement manager for Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego, Wolf (pictured) has seen how faith in action has been an integral part of the organization’s response to the global health crisis.

In 1919, as the Spanish Flu pandemic gripped the West Coast of the United States, Catholic Charities of San Diego was established as a children’s home for those orphaned by the crisis. Now in its centennial year, the organization is once again serving its community in response to a global pandemic.

In March 2020, as the number of U.S. COVID-19 cases rose, the Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego searched for new ways to serve. Under the direction of CEO Appaswamy “Vino” Pajanor ’02 (LLM), the Catholic Charities Emergency Food Distribution Network was established to serve the food insecure and the senior population through weekly food pantries and home deliveries in the region. By utilizing multiple parish distribution locations, mobilizing as a drive-thru pantry, and limiting the number of volunteers at each site, Catholic Charities is able to adhere to physical distancing while providing food to those in need.

“Our faith institutions are where we go in times of trouble and where we’re looking for solace and hope, inspiration and connection,” says Wolf. “Even with the doors to our churches closed, we’ve been able to invite people back to church in a way.”

For Wolf, faith exemplified through action is at the very heart of Jesus’ teachings. “It’s very biblical. As Matthew 25 tells...”
us, you feed the hungry, give drink to those who thirst. The role of church extends far beyond the walls of the building,” says Wolf. “Jesus always healed and always fed. He served human needs before he even got around to the business of teaching, and I think that’s what a good church does, no matter what.”

Since March, the program’s 21 parishes and more than 200 volunteers have spent thousands of hours handing out food at drive-thru pantries in parking lots and providing delivery for those unable to leave their homes. Volunteers have included USD resident ministers, who’ve helped collect and deliver food to the San Diego community.

“University Ministry at USD has enjoyed a long and rich partnership with Catholic Charities,” says Michael Lovette-Colyer, PhD, assistant vice president and director of University Ministry. “When we heard about their plan to respond to the pandemic through the Emergency Food Distribution Network, we immediately asked if we could help. Doing so has allowed us to advance our vision of serving as an anchor institution while responding to the needs of our local community.”

With these community-driven efforts and established relationships, Wolf sees Catholic Charities’ work, both now and in the future, as being accomplished hand in hand with parish partners, establishing long-term connections to support the common good and advance our faith.

And for Wolf, that faith is rooted in Jesus’ love.

“When I think about Catholic Charities and our work with the Emergency Food Distribution Network and other opportunities to volunteer, that is taking the love that Christ has given you and giving it to others, no matter who they are.”

**ANSWERING THE CALL**

*Contact tracing crucial to end pandemic*

by Liz Harman

When it comes to public service, USD graduate nursing student Tiffany Duong stands ready to answer the call.

Over the summer, Duong completed training offered by the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Service on the latest science and tools to fight COVID-19 with contact tracing. Along with identifying people with the virus and whom they’ve had contact with, the training includes information about how best for contact tracers to ask them to isolate and quarantine at home.

While convincing those testing positive to provide such information is not always easy, the training focused “on how to work with different people, all of whom may have a different experience or understanding of COVID-19,” she says. “We learned to ask open-ended questions in a variety of ways.”

The six-hour online training emphasizes building confidence and rapport and was “extremely valuable and practical.”

Duong will likely put her new skills to use this fall at USD, when her team may work directly with the county to identify, notify, trace and support any community members with a positive COVID-19 diagnosis, and those who may need to quarantine due to contact. She says the training will put her in good stead for the future when she graduates in 2021. USD’s nursing school is one of a few in the country whose graduates in the master’s entry program in nursing (MEPN) like Duong earn a public health credential.

“I would love to be a part of the effort to identify and contain any outbreak,” if necessary, Duong says. She worked in hospital administration before entering the master’s program for those with bachelor’s degrees in non-nursing fields.

“I am grateful for this opportunity through our school as it came at such a crucial time and puts us at the forefront of service during this public health crisis.”
In more ways than one, the University of San Diego has experienced a Renaissance. Initially, it was due to an endeavor known as the Renaissance Plan, a plan to not just renovate some of the original and most cherished spaces on campus but to also construct new buildings to enhance learning and the overall student experience.

A key phase of that plan was already in motion when COVID-19 hit, which included the renovation of Copley Library as well as the construction of the Learning Commons, USD’s newest academic building. Both buildings will be completed in the fall.

These new spaces will transform how professors are teaching and how students are learning. It’s transforming how spaces are used, how technology is accessed, where students sit and how they interact with their peers and their professors.

“Our full-time enrollment of students had grown by more than 1,200, and that growth has far outpaced our classroom space for USD’s College of Arts and Sciences or the School of Business,” says Vice Provost Tom Herrinton, PhD. “Each of those schools needed approximately 50,000 additional assignable square feet of classroom spaces to accommodate their needs. So it was definitely time to grow.”

The renovated Copley Library provides places for active learning, teaching, collaboration and research, as well as spaces for classes, group projects, discussions, events and exhibits.

The renovation offers 38 small group study rooms, individual seating for 1,000 users, a lounge/reading room and five individual study spaces in the Camino Hall stacks. It also features expanded exhibit, gallery and display spaces, three new library instruction rooms, two seminar rooms and a presentation room, as well as a faculty reading room, a journal reading room and university archives and special collections. The Mother Hill Reading Room, one of the most beloved spaces on campus, remains unchanged.

“My hope is that the entire
NEW TRUSTEES WELcomed TO USD
Four members join the university’s board

Four new members — Jon Balousek, Sue Cunningham, Virginia Nelson and Alan Schulman — were elected to the University of San Diego Board of Trustees, effective July 1, 2020.

“It is a pleasure to welcome each of these business and civic leaders to the board,” says President James T. Harris III. “We know these distinguished leaders will help guide USD in setting the standard for an engaged, contemporary Catholic university.”

Jon Balousek is an experienced Fortune 500 executive and board director. He currently serves as an advisory board member for Fetch Rewards and runs a consulting practice. Prior to this, he spent 25 years at The Clorox Company — his last role being executive vice president of the specialty division and corporate development. He holds a bachelor’s degree from UCLA and is married to Jane (Rollo) Balousek ’91 (BA).

Sue Cunningham is the president and CEO of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), one of the largest educational associations in the world. Prior to joining CASE, she was vice principal for advancement at the University of Melbourne and director of development at the University of Oxford. She holds a master’s degree from the University of Oxford, a bachelor’s degree from Middlesex University and is an Honorary Fellow of the Melbourne University Graduate School of Education. Cunningham has served on the Alumni Board of Directors, in executive, finance, and institutional advancement, and was a member of the Alumni Board of Directors and was the chair of the university’s Leading Change campaign, the most successful fundraising initiative in the history of USD.

Virginia Nelson ’79 (JD) is a former trial attorney who headed her own litigation firm for more than 30 years. She is past president of the San Diego County Bar Association. Since graduating from the University of San Diego School of Law cum laude, she has been continually active as an adjunct professor, supporter of multiple scholarships and a graduation prize for law students.

Alan Schulman retired from private law practice following a 30-year career specializing in complex class action litigation. He was a member of the faculty at the law school. He was formerly the managing partner of the California office of Bernstein Litowitz Berger & Grossmann LLP, and was a partner in Milberg Weiss Bershad Hynes & Lerach LLP from 1983 to 1999.

Two trustees, Luis Maizel and James D. Power IV ’85 (BA), will be rotating off the board after serving for 15 and nine years, respectively.

During his tenure, Maizel served on the investment, finance and executive committees, where he was vice chair. He also served on the School of Business Board of Advisors.

Power served on the mission and institutional advancement, student affairs, executive, finance, campaign steering, university advancement and trustees committees. He also served as a member of the Alumni Board of Directors and was the chair of the university’s Leading Change campaign, the most successful fundraising initiative in the history of USD.
With a closet full of USD gear and the ability to dress in head-to-toe Torero attire, Mary Levine is wholeheartedly devoted to the University of San Diego.

A Torero parent times four, Levine has watched as her children — Michael ’12 (BA), ’15 (JD/LLM); twins Madison ’13 (BA), ’16 (JD) and Aimee ’13 (BBA) and Jordan ’21 (BA) — have made their own mark on the campus community. From attending Michael’s Torero football games or Madison’s cross-country tournaments, to experiencing a family wedding in Founders Chapel, the Levines are the true embodiment of a USD family.

As the outgoing president of the Parents Association Board in the Office of Parent and Family Relations, Levine has been a constant presence in the organization for the past 10 years. In that time, she has not only watched her children grow, but has also witnessed how the university has changed by adapting to new challenges, taken on new opportunities and, above all else, furthered its commitment to student access to higher education.

Along with her husband, Ira, Levine has been an ardent supporter of the university, beginning with their son Michael’s first year and his involvement on the football team. “We just got into the school spirit,” says Levine. “I would go to all the home games and my husband would fly to all of the away games. It just became a part of our life. It became part of us — we’re Toreros.”

For Levine, who joined the board a year and a half into Michael’s undergraduate experience, serving has given her the opportunity to see “behind the scenes” at the university. “It gives you a look into how the university works and how it really does live by its mission,” says Levine. “They walk the walk.”
An important component of this is the student support Levine witnessed. “It gave me such insight into the tight-knit community,” she says. “This school, where you are leaving your student, is such a special place. Just be confident in the fact that USD has your student’s success in mind — in their life, in their career and in being good human beings. When we dropped Michael off, I was so nervous. But when we dropped Jordan off, I was like, ‘You go, you’ve got this, I know where you are, I know the people around you. You just go and be successful.’ There was never any question that he wouldn’t be supported and taken care of. It’s been great.”

USD’s care for its students has translated into Levine’s own work on the Parent Board. From the board’s work supporting the USD Food Pantry and Torero Closet to the collaboration with the Career Development Center in developing internship opportunities for students, Levine has seen it as her mission to help create a nurturing environment for all of the university’s students. One of the initiatives supported by the board is the Parent Partnership Fund, which was established to help students who are experiencing unexpected financial difficulties. Seeing the direct impact she can have on students has made all the difference for Levine.

“When we raise funds, we get videos or letters from students we have helped. And when you get the thank you letters or you see how it changed their life, I’m choking up just thinking about it,” says Levine. “It’s so touching that you can make a difference in something that for these kids is such a big deal. It is so rewarding and when you get that feedback you just want to go out and ask, ‘What more can we do?’”

This desire to support stems from Levine’s appreciation for what the university has done for her family. “The school gave the kids an opportunity to find their way and what they’re good at. Every one of them is happy where their path is, and every one of them had just the best experience at USD. What USD has given to our family is priceless,” she says. “I never thought four of my kids would end up at USD, but now it’s a home away from home.”

So for Levine, as her son Jordan enters his final year at USD, she’s made it clear that her support for the university won’t end with his graduation. Just as her children have been given the opportunity to pave their own paths, Levine plans to keep giving other students the opportunity to do the same. “They’re part of campus and therefore we take care of them,” says Levine. “You want to see everyone being loved, supported and taken care of. We can do that through the Parent Board. We can help. It’s very rewarding.”

She adds, “I think it’s the best part of being on the board, seeing that we really do make a difference. It’s a group effort.”

For Levine, being involved in campus philanthropic efforts is really just an extension of her role as a parent. Through her work, she’s helping to ensure other students have the resources to not only succeed, but to pave their own path after college. And after all, isn’t that what being a parent is all about? Providing the next generation with the resources they need to thrive.

“We’re not done helping,” she says. “Once a Torero, always a Torero. I will forever be one of the biggest supporters of USD because what they have given to our family is just so amazing.”

And Levine expects that she’ll continue to be a fixture on campus. “I’ll hang out until I’m asked to leave,” she says with a laugh. [AROUND THE PARK]

Wine Classic Raises $80,000+
The 12th annual USD Wine Classic went virtual for the first time on July 11. More than 500 participants enjoyed toasting with their own glass of wine and supporting current-use scholarships for underrepresented students. The USD Alumni Association’s signature fundraising event raised more than $80,000, bringing the total amount raised since the Wine Classic’s inception to more than $720,000. The 2021 event is scheduled for July 10.

$1 Million Gift Benefits Students
Darlene Marcos Shiley’s gift will directly benefit students and comes at an unprecedented time when universities across the country are facing new financial and educational challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. “Darlene’s generous gift will help students directly in a time when many of them are facing financial hardships,” says President James T. Harris. Watch Shiley talk about the gift at sandiego.edu/shiley-2020.

Spencer Named Interim SOLES Dean
After five years as dean of USD’s School of Leadership and Education Sciences (SOLES), Nicholas Ladany was named president of Oglethorpe University in Atlanta. Associate Dean and Professor Joi Spencer began serving as interim dean in July. Spencer (pictured) spearheaded the newest degree in SOLES, the PhD in Education for Social Justice program. A search committee has been formed to help recruit the next leader of SOLES.

Series Celebrates Black Authors
USD’s English Department is committed to the enduring work of antiracism. The Cropper Center is proud to announce that the 2020/2021 Lindsay J. Cropper Memorial Writers Series will be a celebration of Black creative work exclusively. This fall’s offerings include the 2020 Pulitzer Prize winner for poetry, Jericho Brown, the essayist and memoirist Kiese Laymon, and the fiction writer Nana Kwame Adjei-Brenyah. Learn more at sandiego.edu/2020-cropper.
The heat comes early this time of year in Reno. Fleeting morning cool is quickly overwhelmed by simmering waves of Northern Nevada sun rising over the foothills to the east, causing early risers and all-nighters alike to beat a hasty retreat to the air-conditioned indoor comforts the Biggest Little City in the World has on offer.

“It got over a 100 [degrees] a couple of times last week,” Ross Dwelley ’18 (BS/BA) notes. “You’ve got to get out early to get a run in, but honestly, I don’t mind the heat. It makes you focus more on the task at hand.”

For Dwelley, that task is braving the baking elements in order to get in the best physical shape possible in advance of his third season as a tight end with the NFL’s San Francisco 49ers. The 16-game schedule can be a grind to even the hardiest of competitors, and Dwelley has learned the give-and-take between pushing himself and completely stretching his limits during the offseason. Dwelley can’t wait to get started this fall.

“It’s such a dream to be able to do something you’re passionate about for a living,” he says. “Football means so much to me, and I know that I’m capable of getting better. That’s why I don’t take this opportunity for granted. I know I haven’t hit my ceiling.”

To better understand how far Dwelley has come to achieve his dream of playing in the NFL — and subsequently becoming the first Torero to appear in a Super Bowl — he is working tirelessly on developing a more well-rounded athlete.

“I want to develop more than the athletic side of it,” he says. “I want to develop more as a person.”

And develop he has. Dwelley was selected to the NFLPA Collegiate Bowl, an annual event in which only 25 college football players are invited to participate. As the only USD student-athlete to be selected, he will be representing the Toreros on the West Coast team.

But Dwelley is not just focused on himself. He is also a mentor to local high school students who are looking to play football in college and beyond. He has hosted several team workouts and camps for local high school players, providing them with a chance to get a taste of what it’s like to play at the collegiate level.

“Being a mentor is important to me,” he says. “I want to be able to help young athletes see that there is a future in college football.”

And Dwelley has reason to believe that there is a future in college football for him. He has been invited to participate in various NFL Combine events, where he will showcase his skills in front of NFL scouts and team representatives.

“Getting invited to the NFL Combine is a great opportunity for me,” he says. “It’s a chance to show what I can do and prove that I belong at the highest level of football.”

But Dwelley is not just focusing on his own success. He is also focused on giving back to the community that has supported him throughout his journey. He is involved in several community service projects and is an active participant in the USD community, helping to promote the school and its athletics programs.

“USD and USD football have been so good to me,” he says. “I want to be able to give back to the community and the school in any way I can.”

And Dwelley is doing just that. He is a driving force behind the USD football team, both on and off the field. He is a role model for young athletes, and his dedication to his craft is an inspiration to us all.

“Ross is a true leader,” says USD football coach Tom Melo. “He is a hard worker, a great athlete, and a great teammate.”

And Dwelley’s success is not just limited to the football field. He is also involved in several community service projects and is an active participant in the USD community, helping to promote the school and its athletics programs.

“USD and USD football have been so good to me,” he says. “I want to be able to give back to the community and the school in any way I can.”

And Dwelley is doing just that. He is a driving force behind the USD football team, both on and off the field. He is a role model for young athletes, and his dedication to his craft is an inspiration to us all.
Fall 2020 — you need to go back to the day he made the fateful decision to commit to playing just one sport, full time. That was no easy choice.

“It was my junior year in high school, and I was playing first base for the Boston Red Sox junior traveling team,” Dwelley recalls. “I put up some pretty good numbers playing for them, but I just really missed football. At that point, I had to decide which way I wanted to go, and I figured I wanted to play the game I had the most fun playing. I know it’s not that easy for everyone to make that decision, but I just trusted my gut, and it’s worked out since.”

Dwelley’s sterling performance his senior season at Oakridge High School piqued the interest of then-University of San Diego Offensive Coordinator Christian Taylor, who made the trek north to the Sacramento suburb of El Dorado Hills to watch the talented tight end’s on-field exploits firsthand. Dwelley appreciated Taylor’s advice on how to improve his game, and accepted an invite to visit USD on a recruiting trip. After one look at Alcalá Park’s stunning beauty and location, Dwelley knew he had found his home away from home.

“I’m not sure how anyone could visit the USD campus and not want to go to school there,” he says. “I walked around a bit with the coaches, and was ready to [commit] right then and there.”

Five successful years and an industrial and systems engineering degree later, Dwelley cites his time at USD as pivotal in helping pave his path to the NFL. “Being a football player and an engineering major taught me a lot about time management and how to do everything with a purpose. I try to do everything with a purpose; playing football, working out, watching film on opposing teams. My time at USD helped me find that purpose, and I’m using it every day.”

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GETTING TO KNOW JEN PETRIE

HOMETOWN: San Diego CREDENTIALS: Entering into her 22nd year with San Diego after taking over as head coach of the USD Volleyball team in 1999, Jennifer Petrie has established herself as one of the most successful volleyball coaches in the nation. Petrie has not only advanced to the NCAA Tournament 19 times, climbed into the nation’s top five national ranking and been named West Coach Conference Coach of the Year six times, but has done all this while being a devoted mother to her three children. EVERLASTING RELATIONSHIPS: While Petrie has an extensive list of accomplishments on paper, when asked about her proudest takeaways from her years at USD, her answer is clearly from the heart: “I’m so proud of the relationships we have with 20 years of alumni. Having that many players that are still invested in USD Volleyball that look back with fond memories of their time and experience playing at San Diego … that’s probably my proudest memory.”

FAMILY LIFE: A true San Diego native at heart, Petrie loves to spend her spare moments with family, friends or traveling. “With three kids, I certainly love spending time as a family. We travel when we can, but I love spending time watching them play sports or do their crafts, as well as seeing friends, having barbecues and socializing.” DREAM JOB: “I really enjoy custom homes and interior design. If I wasn’t a volleyball coach, my dream job would have something to do in architecture. If I could flip homes, I would. I think that would be a fun job!” — Chloe Zakhour ’21
Experiential or discussion based? Lectures or by the book? Remote or in person? No matter what method of teaching a professor employs, establishing a connection requires one crucial factor: Learning is caring. The present-day reality of the COVID-19 pandemic reinforces the essential and evolving need to find new ways to engage and impart knowledge.

Six months ago, in mid-March, a seismic shift hit the University of San Diego campus community due to the global COVID-19 pandemic. Students were moved off campus and faculty made a monumentally quick move to remote instruction in the middle of the spring semester.
“Remote learning has turned out better than I expected, because it allows students to access educators in ways that weren’t possible before.”

— Evelin Morales ’23 (BA)
This caused the need for students and faculty members to lean on Zoom, Blackboard and other technology platforms for everything from class to office hours, networking, staff meetings and Mass. Signature events had their first virtual experience. The pandemic also cut short promising spring sports seasons as well as the official graduation ceremony for USD’s class of 2020. Plans were in place to move to a hybrid learning model when classes resumed. Then, on July 29, President James T. Harris announced that USD was shifting to remote instruction for the fall semester.

“Due to the continuing progression of COVID-19 and the number of confirmed cases in California and San Diego, neither the State nor the County has issued guidance for institutions of higher education to reopen this fall,” Harris said. “With less than a month to go before we begin fall classes for undergraduates, we reached the point where a final decision had to be made. Until we receive further notice, I am announcing that all undergraduate and graduate courses will be delivered in a remote learning format.”

Neena Din, associate dean for the College of Arts and Sciences, expressed confidence in delivering a successful hybrid class experience during a Zoom Q&A. “We’ve equipped 125 classrooms with new technology, Panopto, which is a capturing system that will allow faculty to be viewed from the back of a classroom as though you are sitting in the room,” Din said. “All of our instructors will accommodate students who need to go 100% remote.”

Clearly, all of that preparation has proven prescient.

While the mantra for COVID-19 protection measures — washing your hands, physical distancing and wearing a mask — is gospel for most of us by now, USD had begun its planning by taking steps to implement precautionary and proactive measures for the start of the 2020-21 academic year, instituting a “low-density campus” population.

On July 9, Carmen Vazquez, vice president of USD Student Affairs, expressed confidence in the work done by campus officials assigned to task force committees to carry out a six-point plan announced by President Harris to reopen the campus in the fall. With enhanced health and safety protocols in place, a physically distanced residential living setup, a hybrid academic learning model that would accommodate in-person and remote options, and faculty gaining confidence following remote training courses this summer, USD officials were committed to a successful reopening.

“We will offer high-impact learning experiences, both in person and remotely,” Harris said.

But a pandemic doesn’t care about the best laid plans of mice and men. And when the daily cases of COVID-19 in San Diego County skyrocketed in July, a tough decision was inevitable. Remote learning was the responsible way forward, at least until the curve flattens.

When the pandemic and the abrupt end to in-person classes in March shifted students off campus, for USD’s faculty, it was imperative to immediately begin a deep dive into the best ways to deliver their course content effectively online.

For some undergraduate faculty, the shift to online teaching meant undergoing a major learning curve in the middle of a semester. But many responded to the possibility of long-term remote teaching by spending the summer enhancing their skillset to serve students better.

“It was brand new for everyone then, but now we all have a little more experience under our belts,” says Lisa Nunn, PhD, a sociology professor and director of USD’s Center for Education Excellence (CEE), an entity that works closely with faculty to enhance their learning and teaching capabilities. “Now, we all have a better sense of what this is all about. This summer has been a chance for everyone to learn and be more thoughtful in how fall classes are designed.”

The CEE, in conjunction with USD’s Learning Design Center (LDC), hosted a number of one-week training courses — Remote Teaching 101 and 102 — to help faculty with their remote teaching needs and gain tips on best practices. “I’ve seen faculty who are highly motivated and have shown a lot of energy in wanting to learn about what’s most effective in both remote and hybrid teaching,” Nunn says.

“USD is known for its small class sizes and high-touch experience,” adds Ashley Kovacs, director of the LDC. “The goal is, ‘How to do this in an online class? How do we make sure students are engaged?’ We are leveraging what we know to enable faculty members to still connect and have those aha moments with students.”

Simon Croom has taught in the School of Business since 2005. Teaching supply chain management to both undergraduates and through a hybrid master’s degree program, Croom understands the importance of getting from point A to point B and beyond.

“Students have such different learning styles and approaches; it depends on the subject as well as on the individual,” he says. “Listening to someone lecture and expecting someone to understand it all is known to not be very effective. You learn by doing, by really digging in.”

Alternative routes to presenting information can be a spark for learning.

“Say you’ve got a flipped classroom, an option in hybrid where students can review content before a class session,” Croom explains. “You can expect them to accomplish what you are trying to explore back in the classroom. It really helps to flip the paradigm with a hybrid approach to student learning. That can’t be anything but a good thing.”

Croom is a big believer in student learning being the main objective, regardless of the platform provided.

“It’s very clear that one of the biggest problems with the quality of education at the post-compulsory level around the world (persons ages 16 and up) is poor learning experiences because of focusing more on content delivery rather than student learning,” he says. “USD is very much about student learning and I think that’s what sets us apart, regardless of the learning mode. A hybrid approach enables faculty members to explore so many different ways of designing curriculum for student learning experiences.”

He also believes — from both personal experience and by speaking with colleagues — that the spring 2020 semester was actually beneficial for USD students.

“I think what makes a difference is that students seemed to have a much closer connection with the faculty in the spring, because the faculty went that extra step to connect and make it personal.”
“I’m pleasantly surprised by how well remote learning has gone so far, and am looking forward to seeing where this goes next.”

— Allyson Meyer ’16 (BA), ‘21 (MBA)
HOPE IS MUCH
Holy is much
Hope is much

PROFESSOR CHANNON MILLER DIVES DEEP INTO SYSTEMIC RACISM

by Julene Snyder
The enthusiasm that interdisciplinary Black women’s historian Channon Miller, PhD, has for her field of expertise is boundless. The rapid-fire speed of her thoughts — informed, complex and backed by meticulous knowledge — makes for a conversation that lingers in the mind long after the last word fades away.

This academic year, Miller (pictured below) will be teaching courses in American Women in History, African American History and African American Women’s History. She sat down with USD Magazine in July to talk about the issues affecting the Black community and what the path forward might look like.

**Q:** Can you tell me about your background? Where did you grow up?

**A:** I’m originally from Hartford, Connecticut. It’s where I learned the value of really being active about creating the type of change that you need and want to see in society. My desire for African American history and Black life in general began in Hartford, which has a significant Black population. That’s where I really cultivated a deep desire to learn more about my history, my family’s history and Black history at large, with the help of other people who were passionate about that.
Q: What do you find most surprising as your students digest information that may be brand new to them?

A: We have a great deal of interest and outrage at not knowing this history before. For example, in African American history when we talk about the institution of slavery, we talk about it from the experiences of African Americans. I’m less interested in what the presidents and the dominant white society was doing in the antebellum period. I’m interested in, ‘What were Black women, men, children doing? What were they thinking? What were their beliefs?’ So the students are really struck by this idea: ‘Wait. For the first time we’re really seeing enslaved people as human.’

The students are also really open to hearing the myths that they’ve had about history broken. They really are intrigued by, for example, things they’ve heard about the civil rights movement and then learning, ‘Wait a minute, it didn’t actually look like that? That it wasn’t this very peaceful, tranquil time; it was filled with violence and turmoil and severe loss and trauma?’

Q: When it comes to broadening the conversation about race, can you talk about the difference between being race conscious as opposed to colorblind?

A: The colorblindness, or a commitment to colorblindness, really erases the complex humanity of Black peoples and others who are of color. Their realities — the day to day from home to work to the neighborhoods in which Black people live — everything about their lives is shaped by color. So to not see color is to deny that part of their reality, to deny or refuse to be involved in taking down the systems that do clearly see and practice forms of race-based discrimination.

Colorblindness is harmful. It doesn’t help lend to solutions against racism, but rather tries to suggest that it doesn’t exist at all. It’s also troubling when institutions claim to be colorblind because it prevents them from interrogating the ways in which they do in reality practice racially discriminatory practices or policies.

Being race conscious is the opposite of that. It’s actually centering and understanding how central a racial hierarchy is in the U.S., and has a commitment to understanding and addressing it. The reality is that improvement is impossible without actually talking about, thinking about and challenging racial inequality.

Q: It seems to me that systemic racism really roots from economic inequality and the ways that Black people specifically have been cut out of earning and keeping wealth.

A: Economic inequality is critical. Economics is the vehicle through which racism is typically manifested or institutionalized and maintained. When you think about the founding of the United States, the enslavement of Black people and the deliberate development of laws that suggested that Africans were not citizens but rather lifelong laborers to be enslaved clearly led to their economic exploitation.

Keeping African Americans out of economic opportunities, primarily using them as a labor pool and exploiting this population economically has been a major tool and part of their experience in the United States.

We also have economic inequality experienced by Black Americans when it comes to housing. There’s a history of redlining or being excluded from the opportunity to have assistance with mortgages or being excluded from home ownership, which definitely prevents or has long prevented African Americans from being able to develop a safety net.

Not only are they being underpaid and overworked in their jobs, not only are they being relegated to low-wage jobs and forms of employment, but they also are unable to afford stable homes. But even if they can afford homes, middle-class African Americans, those who have done the ‘right things’ and are able to enter into middle-class or upper middle-class forms of employment, are blocked out and closed out from those things can really build economic equality.

Q: Can you talk about how the COVID-19 pandemic is disproportionately impacting the African American community?

A: Although they’re 13% of the population in the U.S., (in early June) African Americans represented 30% of COVID cases. This is partly due to their exclusion from stable employment and equal pay. That’s the economic piece. But a significant portion of these African American families are essential workers. They do work in those positions that tend to deal with or include a lot of human interaction and aren’t jobs that allow them to work from home.

Q: The protests in the wake of George Floyd’s death have been happening in all 50 states. What’s different this time?

A: The reality is, before George Floyd, Black communities have consistently been talking about police brutality. It’s a part of the Black community’s everyday lives. Black Lives Matter has never stopped, but the nation’s attention to it stopped. The same can be said for prison abolition, or those who’ve worked towards being a part of releasing nonviolent offenders early. But a lot of this work has been continuous and enduring.

Q: I imagine you’re bound to have some students involved in the protests. How does that inform them?

A: It’s actually been amazing. After the murder of George Floyd, I had several students reach out to me via email and say ‘If I did not take your class, I would not know why there is so much outrage. I would not know that George Floyd is one out of millions who have in American history been assaulted, harmed and killed by police. I would not know that the state has functioned in ways that have
harmed African Americans. I would not know that this is part of a systemic issue that has deep historical roots. That is a part of issues that remain unresolved.’ To have students reach out and share that they are so glad they did the readings to have the understanding of the history that has allowed them to navigate these times has been great.

Q: Do you feel like there’s been a sea change? Seeing these millions of people marching in the street who aren’t just from one particular group: white people, Black people, indigenous people ... does this moment feel different to you?

A: I think that does signify a tremendous change. But how we’ll really know if things change is if policies change. There are clear platforms that the movement for Black Lives is arguing for. Change is now dependent on our state leaders, our city leaders and our federal government to take heed and make change. They need to institutionalize the change that’s being asked for. That’s when we’ll really see mass transformation, if it begins to affect policies and lives. But these protests are definitely the sign of a changing climate.

Q: Do you think that the fact that everybody has a video camera on their phone with them at all times has opened up a lot of people’s eyes? Now there are people hearing bearing witness.

A: There are more people bearing witness, for sure. And I think that it shows us that these reform efforts that have been made over the past several years, since the shooting of Michael Brown in 2014 and beyond, are not enough. Black people are still dying. We want to get to a point where we shouldn’t have to capture George Floyd being murdered on film. That shouldn’t have happened in the first place.

We need to move past reform; we have body cameras, great. It points to the fact that we can’t just advocate for the police to practice things differently, because they’re not doing that. They’ve been asked to wear body cameras, there have been review boards in place, and they’ve been asked to be mindful of how they interact with folks of marginalized backgrounds. There have been tons of videos before George Floyd, but it still happened. It tells us that there’s something inherently wrong with policing in the United States. That policing, in and of itself, has to be drastically changed because lives are still being lost.

Q: Do you ever get students who are stuck in their beliefs? For example, someone who says, ‘It’s fine to say Black Lives Matter but don’t all lives matter?’

A: The great thing about the classroom is that they are surrounded with the reading and the scholarship. It’s not just Dr. Miller with this assertion that Black lives need to explicitly be advocated for. It’s that this has been said by activist organizers and scholars, for decades, for hundreds of years.

With African American history, we really begin on the bottom of slave ships. We begin in the middle passage. The students can see, when they start with the perspective of African Americans, that by the time we get to 2020, it is very hard for them to argue that Black lives need not be center. When we go through enslavement, through Jim Crow, through the challenges of the Civil Rights Movement, I make it clear that it was not an easy road. It had its successes, but it also had pushback and failures.

So when questions like that come up, I say, ‘What does the text say? How would this historical figure respond to your question about all lives mattering? What do you think Frederick Douglass would say about this?’ So bringing them back to the history and to literature is an effective way for them to challenge and rethink some of those ideas.

Q: For white people that want to be a part of the solution, who want to be true allies, what advice would you have?

A: There are so many ways to get involved and to raise consciousness within yourself and within your communities, within white spaces. Of course a lot of folks suggest, rightfully so, doing research, doing the reading. I always encourage really looking at the works of historical figures. Look at Frederick Douglass’ speeches, such as ‘What to the Slave is the 4th of July?’ Look at Angela Davis’ first book, Women, Race & Class. Look at some earlier works that really grapple with these issues. How did we get here? How did we get to 2020? What types of systems have been in place that have created our present reality?

You also need to practice these politics in your day-to-day lives. That means that your Black colleagues, your Black coworkers, your Black neighbors, the Black individual who’s your store clerk at the grocery store: How are you responding to and conversing with that individual? At the mall, do you demean Black employees or Black pedestrians walking about? At work, is there a Black individual who wasn’t hired or provided a certain opportunity that they deserved? It might be important to speak to the boss about that. Maybe a white individual has a position that they think they probably should give to a more qualified Black coworker. Sometimes it’s really in your day to day that this work can be done.

Q: Is there anything you’d like to add that we haven’t discussed?

A: For parents, make sure that your children, at the college-level or even at a high school level, are taking Black history and Black studies courses. It’s important to deliberately decide that it’s a part of their curriculum. And if you don’t see it as a part of your school’s curriculum, ask questions and advocate for that. Our school systems are a critical part of shaping growth and perspectives.

If you have a student in college, ask them, ‘Did you sign up for a Black history course yet?’ You can be a business major or science major, any major, but it needs to become custom to see these types of classes as mandatory. In high school, ask them the same thing. As for the younger age groups, figure out how elementary school teachers can do a better job of engaging these really interesting stories.
CONFRONTING HUMANITY’S URGENT CHALLENGES

NEW COURSES EXPLORE COVID-19 AND THE MOVEMENT FOR BLACK LIVES

by Liz Harman
The protests and calls for change spurred by the shocking death of George Floyd along with the COVID-19 pandemic will likely impact society for years to come. USD professors say students shouldn’t wait to read about them in textbooks; the time to start the discussion is now.

This fall, the course Black Lives Matter: Interdisciplinary Perspectives will explore this moment of social and historical change by looking at issues of systemic racism and the long-standing policies and practices that have led to inequities in criminal justice, the economy, education, health care and other sectors.

“I hope students will take a brave look at anti-Blackness and commit themselves to learning how to personally divest from attitudes and systems of white privilege and build antiracist, intersectional solidarity in their everyday lives,” says Associate Professor and Ethnic Studies Chair May Fu, co-coordinator for the course. “As Black Live Matters organizers remind us, ‘when Black people get free, we all get free.’”

The course will bring together more than 20 faculty members from across the university including the College of Arts and Sciences and the schools of Business, Education, Engineering and Nursing.

“By including multi-disciplines in a single course, students are better able to understand that Black resistance and the goal of dismantling white supremacy are multifaceted and multidimensional,” says Associate Professor of Communication Studies Jillian Tullis, the second co-coordinator. “No single perspective has all the solutions.”

The one-unit course is designed for first- and second-year students but all students may enroll. Each week features a faculty panel that will address a different theme such as issues of antiblackness in science and technology, mass incarceration and policing, popular culture and media, and Black and LGBTQ+ feminisms.

Students will have the opportunity to read some of the latest works by authors, such as Faces at the Bottom of the Well: The Permanence of Racism by Derrick Bell and Between the World and Me by Ta-Nehisi Coates.

Courses like this are “at the core of our university’s mission to create a diverse and inclusive community,” adds Tullis. “We can’t practice an ethic of care or accomplish the university’s mission without addressing this urgent challenge.”

Students say they are excited about the positive changes that a class like this and other actions can create for USD.

Ethnic studies senior Gianna Pray hopes the class will help create “safe spaces” for all students and is “thankful the university is adapting to these necessary changes in our nation and is supporting Black Lives Matters from their academic structure.”

The format for the new BLM course was influenced by an interdisciplinary course taught over the summer about COVID-19. Throughout history, contagions, plagues and pandemics have profoundly changed the shape of societies and contributed to scholarly and academic inquiry and knowledge.

The course, Pandemic Times: Human Experiences and Responses, offered through USD’s Humanities Center, looked at COVID-19 from a variety of disciplines. One class, for example, brought professors from biology, history and physics to explore the definition of a pandemic and its many impacts while another brought engineering, theology, political science and language professors together to discuss the responsibilities of global citizenship during such critical times.

The course was “a remarkable example of an interdisciplinary class for incoming students and really highlights what USD offers as a liberal institution,” says College of Arts and Sciences Associate Dean Ron Kaufmann.

“A class that introduces students to these and other ways of considering the pandemic while it’s happening will deepen their understanding of current events and inform their responses in ways that would be difficult long after the pandemic ends.”

A course in the School of Business over the summer looked at the economic impacts from the pandemic. After starting in one region, “COVID-19 rapidly spread to other areas around the world within a short duration,” notes Economics Chair and Professor Alyson Ma. “Unlike previous pandemics or outbreaks or even the Great Recession, the world is simultaneously experiencing various containment policies. This act alone will have economic shocks that have no historical equal.”

The COVID Economics class explored the pandemic from multiple angles, including its impact on the global economy, the industries and communities most affected, and the trade-offs between lives, economic recession and work safety.

Speakers from Google and Amazon provided real-world examples on how their firms were affected. Students found the class compelling, says Ma. Many “noted that the assignments did not seem like work since they were given the freedom to select countries, industries and companies they wanted to learn more about.”
PERSISTENCE, PATIENCE AND RESPECT
MEET USD’S VICE PROVOST FOR DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

by Julene Snyder
There’s an instant sense of warmth and connection when speaking with the university’s new Interim Vice Provost for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Richard Miller, DPE. While he spoke to USD Magazine from his den in Bowling Green, Kentucky, via the now-ubiquitous Zoom platform, he has since relocated to San Diego. His one-year term in the newly created position began on September 1.

In a conversation that ranged from his early years in upstate New York to his athletic prowess to his long and distinguished career in academia, Miller was eloquent in discussing systemic racism, bias and the work that we as a society need to do to make real progress.

“These are issues that are contemporary, especially in light of the murder of George Floyd and others,” he says. “The level of consciousness — not only on the part of institutions, but on the country as a whole — has reached the point where this dialogue is not only necessary, but critically important. There’s been a lot of talk about diversity and inclusion and equity over the years. But it’s taken on a much different view and approach now.”

Miller grew up in Ithaca, New York, a predominantly white college town. One of four children, he was athletic from an early age. “Most of my young adult life, I was consumed with sports,” he recalls. “I was very active in all three major sports, and was fortunate enough to be gifted to excel in all three.”

He was also studious. His mother was the secretary to the dean of Cornell University’s school of electrical engineering and had a second job typing doctoral dissertations and masters’ theses for students. “She would say to us kids, ‘One of these days, I’m going to be typing your master’s thesis,’ which turned out to be true, in my case.”

While Miller had played baseball, football and basketball throughout high school, once he got to college, he realized that he simply didn’t have time to pursue all three.

“I played basketball and baseball in college, but baseball was the sport I excelled at,” he recalls. When he graduated from Ithaca College in 1969 as an All-America baseball player, he was drafted by the San Francisco Giants organization into one of their minor league teams in Great Falls, Montana, playing third base and in the outfield.

“When asked what stands out about his baseball career, he doesn’t have to think twice. “The first two times up to the plate as a professional baseball player, I hit two home runs. It was kind of a signature moment of my baseball career.”

A career-ending injury occurred a few years later. “I would have loved to move up the ladder to get to the major leagues, but the good Lord had other plans for me, and that’s OK,” he says with a rueful laugh.

Miller believes the values he learned on the athletic field have proven invaluable when it comes to dealing with the various issues that have arisen over the course of his career of 40+ years.

“The carryover has been essential for me. There are lessons that you learn in competition that carry over into a variety of fields of study and areas of work,” he says. “It teaches you confidence. It teaches you that you’re not always going to succeed. It teaches you that you have to be persistent in order to gain perfection. You have to have patience, and that’s something a lot of people lack these days. But the most important thing is that it teaches you to respect your opponent. That is absolutely essential.”

After his baseball career ended, Miller earned a master’s degree in health and physical education from Ithaca College, and his doctorate in exercise physiology from Springfield College in 1975. He subsequently took a position as an assistant professor at Bowie State University in Maryland, a public historically Black university. It was there that he says he was first exposed to an ethnically diverse environment.

“When you’re raised in an environment that’s predominantly white, there’s little focus on African American history or getting more immersed in African American culture. I didn’t have that when I grew up,” he recalls. “When I went to Bowie, I began to learn more about my race and the history of my race than I did when I was growing up. It was a wonderful learning experience for me to become more inculcated in my race and my culture.”

In the early 2000s, Miller first started getting more involved with diversity-related issues and concerns. “My passion for these issues really grew, and carried on into my time at Western Kentucky University,” he notes. In addition to his role as vice provost there, he also assumed the role of WKU’s first chief diversity officer, which he held for 12 years.

When announcing his appointment, Vice President and Provost Gail Baker, PhD, explained her vision for the position at USD, to “identify areas of concern, explore new pathways for improvement, promote the creation of accountability structures, budgetary priorities and other programs throughout the institution.”

The first step, according to Miller, is to learn and listen.

“How can we establish a level of comfort in discussing these issues? People have always expressed some reluctance to talk about issues related to race and bias,” he notes. “But they have to reach a level of comfort to the extent that they can feel free to express their views and concerns without fear of showing ignorance or fear of being politically incorrect.”

For true change, tough conversations are a good place to start. “Once that level of comfort has been reached, you can begin to make some real headway,” says Miller. “I think it’s important for students — as well as faculty and staff — to constantly be exposed to seminars, colloquia and workshops dealing with a variety of issues that relate to diversity, inclusion and equity.”

Miller sees this particular moment in our country as an opportunity for growth and change.

“I think the level of consciousness has reached a point where people realize we need to take a strategic approach. A discussion about implicit bias definitely needs to happen. The time is right.”

And the focus on students is paramount. “We are preparing students for careers in a society that is very multicultural. And so it is all the more important for institutions like the University of San Diego to focus a lot of attention on providing students with the opportunity to engage with more diverse constituents, including students, faculty and staff. They will learn from them, and when they leave, they’ll be more confident, and able to better address some of these challenges.”

B ARBARA FERGUSON
A few years ago, Curtis Chambers was not really on anyone’s radar at the University of San Diego. This in spite of the fact that Chambers—who had nearly completed his computer science degree at USD—was a member of Uber’s founding team. Serendipitously, it was one of Chambers’ former classmates and friends, Lisa Johansen ’04 (BS/BA) who mentioned his name while having dinner with Shiley-Marcos School of Engineering Dean Chell Roberts. The dean reached out to Chambers, who was living in San Francisco, and arranged an initial meeting.

“When I first met him, I couldn’t believe how young and humble he was,” he recalls. “You would never guess that this young guy was the software genius behind Uber.”

Given the stratospheric trajectory of his career, it’s hardly surprising that finishing his degree wasn’t a priority, but a variety of factors convinced him to finally close the loop. He and his wife, Shirley, were renovating their San Francisco home and needed to relocate while the work was underway. Both of their parents live in San Diego and were happy to welcome them home indefinitely. But the primary influencer was Shirley.

“My wife said to me, ‘How are we going to convince our daugh-
Robert A. Wohl (JD) writes that as one of the earliest graduates from the USD School of Law, he attended at night, while building a career in aerospace. This led to multiple key positions over the years, including program control manager for Space Launch Vehicles at Convair Astronautics in San Diego, corporate director of contracts of General Dynamics Corp. in New York, vice president contracts and legal of Canadair Ltd. in Montreal, program manager of Canadair’s Regional Jet Division and finally president of the Bombardier Regional Aircraft Division. “USD Law led to these opportunities,” he adds.

Jeffrey Silver (JD) writes that as one of the earliest graduates from the USD School of Law, he attended at night, while building a career in aerospace. This led to multiple key positions over the years, including program control manager for Space Launch Vehicles at Convair Astronautics in San Diego, corporate director of contracts of General Dynamics Corp. in New York, vice president contracts and legal of Canadair Ltd. in Montreal, program manager of Canadair’s Regional Jet Division and finally president of the Bombardier Regional Aircraft Division. “USD Law led to these opportunities,” he adds.

Mary W. Schaller (BA) reports that her literary career is still alive and kicking with worldwide sales of her Harlequin romance novels totaling nearly three million. The lockdown from COVID-19 “has done wonders for my productivity,” she says. She is working on a nonfiction book about the demise of MGM Studios from her days of working in Hollywood, and in December, she and her husband, Marty, will celebrate their 55th anniversary. “I think of USD and miss the campus and my aging classmates very much. Hope you all well and staying in safe environs.”

Michael Fox (BA) is retired and managing an Airbnb unit in Troy, Montana when he’s not chasing native trout throughout Montana and Idaho.

Jeffrey Silver (JD) served as a county prosecutor and state gaming regulator during the era portrayed in the movie Casino, did stints as a resort hotel executive at two Las Vegas Strip properties and was principal in his own law firm. He is now of counsel at Dickinson Wright and the board chairman of the iconic Mob Museum.

Mark Zecca (BA) received the Lifetime Achievement Award from Top Tech, recognizing the top technology executives in San Diego County.

Albert V. de Leon (JD), a legal and compliance consultant, recently joined the the board of trustees of the National Jazz Museum in Harlem and has become a FINRA arbitrator. He is also on the boards of the New York City Industrial Agency and Build NYC where he chairs the audit committees. He was previously general counsel and head of compliance/ regulatory affairs for the U.S. operations of Dexia Bank, Skandinaviska Enskilda Banken and head of compliance advisory and regulatory matters for Zurich North America.

William “Jody” Gunderman (BBA) was appointed as president of John Deere Savings Bank as it seeks a national bank charter. He also is the bank’s chief financial officer.

James B. Cohoon (JD) retired from the practice of law in 2014 and reports that his debut novel, a thriller titled Do No Harm, was released by Touchpoint Press on June 29.

Michael McMahon (BA) has moved to Wickenburg Ranch, Arizona, after retiring from the financial services industry. Road cycling is his long-term passion and more recently the pickleball bug has bitten him.

Michele (Riley) Kramer (MSN) has been promoted to full professor for fall 2020 in the College of Nursing & Health Sciences at Lewis University in Romeoville, Illinois.

Elizabeth (Colonna) Noriega reports that she and James Noriega ’87 celebrated 30 years of marriage on October 7, 2019. On March 22, 2020, they welcomed their first grandchild, a beautiful baby boy named Daniel.

Jeffrey Silver (JD) writes that as one of the earliest graduates from the USD School of Law, he attended at night, while building a career in aerospace. This led to multiple key positions over the years, including program control manager for Space Launch Vehicles at Convair Astronautics in San Diego, corporate director of contracts of General Dynamics Corp. in New York, vice president contracts and legal of Canadair Ltd. in Montreal, program manager of Canadair’s Regional Jet Division and finally president of the Bombardier Regional Aircraft Division. “USD Law led to these opportunities,” he adds.
Reflections from USD’s first woman Black graduate

by Liz Harman

Living in Washington, D.C. for more than 50 years, Ellissia (Darley) Price-Fagin ’66 (BA) has seen plenty of history up close. And as a student in the San Diego College for Women, she made history of her own.

Her life story is more interesting than many novels. Price-Fagin was born on the East Coast and arrived by train to San Diego as an infant where she was adopted by a military veteran and his wife. From an early age, the family attended Christ the King church, a parish that had Latino, Black and white members. Her father worked for the Navy and reminded her “almost every day” that she was expected to attend college.

After winning a poetry competition, she attended the awards ceremony at USD. “I saw the campus and said, ‘That’s where I want to go to school,’” she recalls.

Her adopted mother had passed away when she was only seven, but had left her brother in Los Angeles some land. When Price-Fagin graduated from high school, he presented her with a check from its sale to pay for college. Price-Fagin was unfazed about attending the College for Women. Being in the minority “was not something different or new,” she says. “I had decided if people didn’t like me, they didn’t like me because of me the person, not my color,” she says with a laugh.

Still, her life experiences stood out. For example, in her civics class, her professor told students that poll taxes had ended in the South. When she reported that her grandmother in Louisiana was still paying them, “the class got very quiet,” she recalls.

While there were two Black students in her class initially, they did not stay, Price-Fagin recalls. When she graduated in 1966,
several of the nuns told her stepmother they believed she was the first Black woman to graduate, although there is no official record.

Asked about the honor of being the first, Price-Fagin is modest.

“I enjoyed it,” she says. “I got a great education.” In 2016, she returned to USD for her 50th reunion and was excited to begin connecting with members of the Black Alumni Network.

“We are so blessed to have her wisdom, knowledge and excellence,” says network chair Kelsi Dantu ’19 (BA). “She deserves to be honored and applauded for her resilience and strength.”

After graduation, Price-Fagin moved to the nation’s capital after marrying a graduate from USD’s College for Men who then attended medical school at Howard University.

When the marriage ended, she stayed in D.C., continuing what would become a 46-year career as a teacher, school counselor and counseling specialist, eventually supervising and training 250 counselors in the Fairfax County school district in suburban Virginia. She received numerous awards, including American Counselor of the Year and the Virginia Counselors Association Van Hoose Career and Service Award. Now retired and remarried at age 75, she serves on two counseling boards and enjoys traveling, reading and singing in her church choir.

Over the years, she’s been an eyewitness to many of the events taking place in D.C., from the riots following the assassination of Martin Luther King to the election of Barack Obama, whom she had a chance to meet before he became president. Dismayed by the current political situation, she remains resolute.

“We’ve got to stand up for what’s right and do what’s right,” she says. “Sometimes you take two steps forward and 10 back, but you have to keep moving forward.”

[1988] SIGRID REBELL (JD) says that after years of doing inheritance law and other legal work in Germany she decided to take another set of exams to become a certified executrix. She enjoys working in the international arena using the knowledge she acquired at the USD School of Law, particularly the trusts and estates class. Her work has taken her to the Jersey Channel Islands, got her in contact with the Isle of Man and will take her to Gibraltar soon. “So stop saying the work of a lawyer is boring!” she says. She enjoyed the USD alumni meeting in Valencia and took a trip to Bali and Singapore with her oldest daughter.

[1990s] 

[1991] GENOVEVA BOCCARDO-DUBEY (BA) and her family have relocated from Orange County, California, to Philadelphia and are loving it so far. She is between opportunities but hopes to secure a good position soon.

RANDY LASER (MBA) was appointed vice president of products and revenue management for the Monaker Group, a technology leader in the travel and vacation rental markets.

GREG STILL (BA) is the recipient of The American College of Foot and Ankle Surgeons Distinguished Service Award, presented annually to a member who has dedicated their time, expertise and service behind the scenes to advance the college’s mission.

[1992] ANTHONY NEILLY (BA) reports that he operates a laser tattoo removal clinic and a marijuana dispensary.

[1994] TIMOTHY EARL (JD), a civil litigation partner at Sullivan Hill Rez & Engel in San Diego, was chosen as a 2020 Super Lawyer.

DEAN S. NORDLINGER (MBA) has joined Blank Rome LLP as a partner in its corporate, M&A and securities group in its Washington, D.C. office.


[1996] SHANNON BISZANTZ (BA) reports that she married James and is looking for work that is satisfying, community-oriented and serves the needs of Hawaii.

KATIE SWARTZ (BA) taught elementary school for seven years and graduated from medical school at the Virginia College of Osteopathic Medicine in 2007. The Navy brought her and her family back to San Diego in 2015.

MIKE TANGHE (BA) writes: “After drawing inspiration from Aaron Blumenkrantz ’97, Mike Tanghe hired a personal trainer to work exclusively on his goal tending and boxing out for rebounds. The two-a-day sessions have paid off as Tanghe successfully deflected one of Blumenkrantz’s famed tomahawk dunks and garnered the rebound all while airborne in the same leap. Bystanders noted that moves like that had not been seen in over 25 years since Tanghe’s Paying the Price intramural team made it all the way to the quarterfinals in the spring of 1994.”

[1997] BRIDGETTE BYRD O’CONNOR (BA), ’99 (MA) reports that after getting married, having two daughters and living in New Zealand, her family moved back to Louisiana where she taught history for 10 years. She now works for a nonprofit that includes the Big History Project and the World History project. “In this very uncertain time, we’re committed to providing all middle and high school students with articles and videos and historical reasoning skills and activities. I had some truly amazing professors at USD, including Dr. Iris Engstrand (my graduate advisor and mentor). Their love of learning and teaching are what inspired me to become a teacher.”

JENNIFER LOTTA (BBA) has been working from home, surviving quarantine with her husband, Dave, an investigator for the local sheriff’s office, and their sons, ages 3 and 5. “We are enjoying our family — both near and far — through virtual chats and dance parties,” she says.

[1998] MARY GRACE ALMENDREZ (BA) was selected as chief diversity officer at the University of Rhode Island.

[1999] FRANCISCO IBARRA (BA) has partnered with DH Hill Advisors and formed Sleeve Financial to educate individual investors on how to manage their 401(k) and other investment accounts with features like draw-down limits and investing funds backed by hard assets like real estate.

VICTORIA RAMIREZ (BA), ’02 (JD) is marking her 15th year as a proud deputy public defender with San Diego County in 2020. “My husband and I adopted Myrtle last year and this fur baby has brought us so much joy! Our house is blessed and full of whiskers, paws and joy.”

[2000s] 

[2001] RACHEL DOLHUN (BA) attended medical school at Wake Forest and movement disorder fellowship training at Vanderbilt University.

“I always longed to spend more time with patients, particularly those with Parkinson’s Disease,” she says. Looking to serve this group, she has joined the Michael J. Fox Foundation as a senior project manager at the Parkinson’s Institute. “I am now privileged to help, on a mass scale, people with Parkinson’s and their families.”

MARK JONES (BA) completed the master’s in executive leadership (MSEL) program in May.

JOSH PROCTOR (JD) has been recognized by California Super Lawyers for 2020, the second year in a row.

[2002] TRAVIS KEMNITZ (BA) was chosen as the executive director of the San Diego Audubon Society after serving for more than 17 years with the San Diego-based Ocean Discovery Institute. “The time to work together to build a broader sense of connection to San Diego’s wonderfully unique wildlife and hab-
itats and ignite a movement to conserve and restore what remains, is now,” he says (see story on page 34).

**Diego Schoeffer** has been the international director for Equustrade, the leading international horse transport company in Argentina since 2004. In 2005 he opened his own international air transport company for horses in Palm Beach, Florida.

**Lester Sebastian (MBA)** reports he has two successful passive income businesses, is coaching his son’s basketball team and daughters’ soccer teams and hanging out with his wife, family and friends. “Enjoying life,” he says.

**2003**

**Basil Considine (BA)** traveled to Paris in early 2020 with his Really Spicy Opera company, which gave the second-ever performance of Emille, ou la belle esclave (1781), an opera written for Marie Antoinette. He also was awarded a 2020-2021 Fulbright faculty fellowship to Madagascar and was the recipient of the American Musico logical Society’s Janet Levy Award in 2018.

**Jonathan Markwardt (BBA)** has authored two business books, one on sales and the other on leadership (GrassIsBrowner.com). He reports that he married Ayfer on June 23, 2018 and their first child, Isabella June, was born on October 24, 2019.

**2004**

**Jennifer Nicolalde (JD)** was awarded Trial Attorney of the Year for the Offices of the Orange County Public Defender.

**Lisa (Saladin) Quartararo (BA)** reports that she and her husband, Jason, are happily living in Moorpark, California with their two boys, Landon, 5, and Dawson, 3.

**2005**

**Oriana Leo (BBA)** has co-founded Nonnie’s Nectar CBD and is launching a health and wellness coaching program for those who suffer from migraines.

**2006**

**Brad Klein (MA), ’08, (MA),** associate director for the Human Rights Program at Southern Methodist University, received the school’s “M” Award, the university’s highest honor.

**2007**

**Kathryn McKinley (BA)** earned a nursing degree after graduating from USD and now works as an oncology registered nurse in New Fe, New Mexico.

**Kathryn Ryan (Maspero) Richter (BA)** is broker and owner of Tarpon Realty in Port Aransas, Texas, specializing in the luxury second-home market.

**2008**

**Chris Feldman (JD)** was promoted to partner at DLA Piper in Seattle in its international tax.

**Navy Capt. Sean Hanley (BA)** assumed command of the USS Thunderbolt in Bahrain on July 11, 2019.

**Laurel Lees (BA)** was recently hired as an executive with Controlled Thermal Resources, a world-class geothermal power and lithium extraction project.

**Vivian Standiford’s (MSEL) company, Rehab Medical,** was expected to be named as one of Indiana’s top 25 fastest-growing company for the third year in a row this summer. Her husband, Stephen, former associate dean in the USD School of Business, was appointed president of Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois.

**2009**

**Cailee Arnold (BA)** had her third baby and built a new house.

**Rachel (Salcer) Dickson (BA)** reports that she and her husband, William, welcomed a baby girl, Brianna Irene, on May 31, 2019 in Long Beach, California.

**Jennifer (Feeley) Gavin (BA)** recently moved back to San Diego to work as a city planner for the city of Del Mar. She reports that she and her husband had a baby boy in November 2019.

**Myra Mazey (BA)** was promoted to vice president of finance and operations at Clearlake Capital Group, L.P.

**2010s**

**2010**

**Brenda Miller (MSN)** is a full-time lecturer at California State University San Marcos.

**Rebecca O’Grady (JD)** a civil litigator at Sullivan Hill Rez & Engel in San Diego was chosen as a 2020 Rising Star by Super Lawyers.

**Christopher Willis (BBA)** founded Lotus Tiny Homes LLC, a Texas-based construction and tiny/small home builder services business in 2019.

**Audrey Anne (Wolffe) Castileberry (BA), ’14 (MA)** reports that she and Christopher Castileberry ’13 welcomed their second child, Col “The Colonel” Castileberry, on March 27, who joined sister Rémy in their home state of Washington. Chris currently serves as an elected tribal council official and treasurer for the Snoqualmie Indian Tribe on a four-year term and Audrey has just completed her fifth year working for the Snoqualmie tribal government as a manager of their social services and tribal events department.

**2011**

**Amanda (Arnold) Garlington (BBA)** reports she married Andrew Garlinton on July 29, 2017. Amanda works as an occupational therapist at Sharp HealthCare serving and rehabilitating children with disabilities and Andrew works as a consultant at Booz Allen Hamilton. He is also a Naval reservist after serving four years on active duty as a surface warfare officer. Amanda and Andrew reside in San Diego and purchased their first home last March. They are excited to welcome their first child this October.

**Sunny Hernandez (BA)** was promoted to college coordinator of high school programs at St. Philip’s College in San Antonio, Texas. “I always think back to all the staff at USD, and how caring they were to us as students,” she says. “In my roles, I have made sure to always put the student first, especially now, amid our national health emergency. Students are under so much disarray, we need to support them through this uncertainty.”

**Alexandra (Previte) Kreitzer (BA)** and her husband, David, welcomed their first child, Daniel George, on May 19. They also moved back to San Diego after spending the last several years in New York City and Los Angeles and are residing in Encinitas.

**Michael Zarconi (JD)**, a civil litigator at Sullivan Hill Rez & Engel in San Diego, was chosen as a 2020 Rising Star by Super Lawyers.

**2013**

**Taylor Goelz (BA)** is a Knauss Marine Public Policy Fellow at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration after earning master’s degrees at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and William and Mary.

**2014**

**Kalial Galvan (BA)** is founder of Framed Marketing. The firm serves small and medium-sized businesses, primarily in the health and wellness industry but has helped many different verticals establish their brand. “Would love to work with any USD alumni!” she says.

**Shannon Merrill (BA)** graduated in December 2019 with an MBA from California State University San Marcos.

**Gwendolyn (Holdgrewe) Roy-Harrison (JD)** was promoted to principal at Offit Kurman Attorneys at Law in Baltimore.

**Todd Simonson (BA),** and his wife, Alyssa, welcomed their second child, Xander Cole, who was born on Christmas of 2019.

**Sarah Zentner (BA)** is pursuing her PhD in English at Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.

**2016**

**Carleigh Fernandez (BA)** recently moved to San Francisco and has been promoted to development manager at NextGen America.

**Ali Le (BA)** writes that she is “taking New York City by storm! Meeting alumni in this amazing city is such a treat. Highly recommend the move out of San Diego to a big city within a few years after graduation!”
ADVANCE YOUR CAREER

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HUNDREDS OF ONLINE COURSES TO CHOOSE FROM pce.sandiego.edu
A n innate, deep-rooted love of nature comes through loud and clear when Travis Kemnitz ’02 (BA) speaks. Perhaps that’s why the new executive director of the San Diego Audubon Society waxes rhapsodic when he talks about growing up in Clackamas, Oregon, outside of Portland. “I grew up on a farm, and I have vivid memories of walking through forests. We were surrounded by animals and nature.”

While he says his dad mainly “dabbled” in farming, the family also had “one of every farm animal” at one point or another. His love of the natural world was deepened by opportunities to travel while still a teenager. When it came time for college, he knew that to continue to feed his exploratory yearnings, he was going to have to leave his home state.

Kemnitz recalls that a friend of his suggested he look at UC San Diego, so at a college fair, he gravitated to a booth with the words “San Diego” prominently displayed. As it turns out, the booth was actually for the University of San Diego. Fortuitously, the admissions counselor manning the booth convinced him to apply to USD. “And then, when I visited campus with my mom, I couldn’t believe it. I was going to college at a resort?”

A lover of the ocean, he initially thought he’d major in marine science. “Then I thought, maybe philosophy. I took an environmental philosophy course with Dr. Mark Woods and I got interested in the social aspect of science and the environment; the day-to-day decisions people make, shaping policies, government management, land ownership.” He took the middle path and settled his focus on environmental studies.

While a first-year student, he got interested in the Ocean Discovery Institute (ODI) during a class, and was brought on as a summer intern. He subsequently joined the institute upon graduation and worked there for the next 17 years.

He says that ODI started at the Mission Bay Sports Center “in a kayak closet,” over the years growing in its mission. Around 2007, the institute underwent a full rebrand. “We became hyper-focused on one community, City...
By exercising, enjoying the outdoors, and interacting with teachers and staff, Kemnitz led his team to pursue the position of executive director of the San Diego Audubon Society. When he was hired in February 2020, he had no idea that the world was about to change. But in a way, he’d been preparing for much of his career. “What’s interesting is, on my resume, I’ve always been the primary respondent to crises.”

So when COVID-19 and the subsequent societal shutdown hit, he was ready. “The pandemic played into my skillsets of 20 years,” he says. “It made me rise to a different level of leadership that I wouldn’t have been able to meet otherwise. We had to look at our programs and decide: ‘Do we go virtual? Do we put them on hold?’”

Since the society’s programs typically shut down to San Diego youth in the summer, Kemnitz and his team were able to look to the future. “This time has allowed us to reflect on how to launch in the fall and figure out how best to work with our youth in the summer,” he says. “It made me rise to a different level of leadership that I hadn’t been prepared for much of his career. “What’s interesting is, on my resume, I’ve always been the primary respondent to crises.”

[2017]

JENNIFER M. ABMA (JD) has joined the board of Traveling Stories, a nonprofit empowering kids to outsmart poverty through literacy by falling in love with reading. She also is an intellectual property attorney practicing trademark law with IPLA, LLP in San Diego.

NADIA BAMDAD and Xavier Delgado graduated from the master’s credential cohort from the School of Leadership and Education Sciences in 2017 and reported being married a few months later. In 2018 they moved back to their hometown in East Los Angeles, hoping to utilize the skills and knowledge they gained at SOLES to serve the children of the communities where they grew up. Xavier continues to be a successful high school teacher, now working with the Los Angeles Unified School District. After the classroom, Nadia moved into the role of senior programs and writing manager at the nonprofit 826LA. She acts as an instructional coach for its educational programs and has implemented changes to the organization’s literacy pedagogy to ensure curriculum and programs are accessible to students of all abilities. This spring her first book project was published, in which she acted as project manager and editor for the organization’s 15th anniversary compendium of student-written stories.

BRONTE BENESH (BACC) was just promoted to international tax senior associate at PwC.

NANCY CORDOVA-MOLINA (MA) reports that she and her husband, Jorge, welcomed a baby, Esteban, in May 2019. “He is a blessing!” Nancy says. She has worked for the Disciples Seminary Foundation for more than a year and is also promoting her music as an independent artist.

NAOMI HARDING (BA) has been working in San Diego and began a master’s program in education over the summer at Johns Hopkins University.

ELAINE POEU-EN (MED) enjoys working full-time at USD and loves traveling with her husband and three children. She also runs the Khmer American Mutual Association of San Diego, a nonprofit charitable organization focused on cultural and ethnic awareness. “Traditional art and music of Cambodia were almost lost during the Cambodian genocide between 1975-1979 when the Khmer Rouge took over the country,” she says. “My passion is giving back to my community and bridging the gap between generations by preserving and promoting Khmer cultural heritage.”

GRACE PU (MBA) is a product marketing manager at Amazon.

CHRISTOPHER REIMANN (BA) is teaching history at a middle school in Los Angeles.

[2018]

DEVYN BRYANT (BS/BA) is working as an engineer at San Diego Gas & Electric Co.

AMANDA NGUYEN (BA) has started medical school at the University of Washington.

EMILY (MIDDLETON) STONE (DNP) reports that she recently married Adam Stone.

[2019]

DANIEL CALTON (JD) sat for the bar exam in February. He is working at H&R Block.

AMIT TUGNAIT (MBA) was hired as a technical program manager at Google.

In Memoriam

TRUSTEE EMERITUS DANIEL W. DERBES, who served on the University of San Diego Board of Trustees for 14 years from 1981 to 2005, including as chair from 1993 to 1996, passed away on Dec. 14, 2019 after a brief illness. He earned her California teacher credential in 1974. She was survived by her husband, George ’74 (BS), sons Matthew and Joshua, and five grandsons.

MARCUS MENDOLIA, who was pursuing a master’s degree in supply chain management passed away Jan. 18, 2020. A Navy SEAL, he completed deployments in multiple areas in support of the global war on terrorism.

CYNTHIA (BWY) SCHEUERMANN passed away Jan. 12, 2020. She attended the San Diego College for Women during the 1959-1960 school year and is survived by her husband, Renee ‘64 (BA), along with three children and seven grandchildren.

Contact

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he USD School of Business’ real estate program owes its very existence to Daniel (Dan) F. Mulvihill’s vision, drive and his belief in its value. He passed away on July 1 and is survived by his loving wife, Mary, six children and 12 grandchildren.

As one of the leaders of America’s commercial mortgage banking industry, Mulvihill served a term as honorary treasurer of the industry’s national trade group, the Mortgage Bankers Association of America (MBA), in Washington, D.C. His term as treasurer provided an opportunity for Dan to work closely with Mark J. Riedy, former executive director of the MBA from 1978 through 1985. In the spring of 1992, Dan recruited Riedy to build a real estate program at USD.

At Mulvihill’s invitation, Riedy visited San Diego and accompanied him to meetings with James Burns, former dean of the USD School of Business, and former USD President Author E. Hughes. Together, the pair shared their vision for a comprehensive real estate program, starting at the undergraduate level, with a graduate program to follow.

Based on their respect for Mulvihill and his endorsement of Riedy as the person capable of building an outstanding real estate program, the concept of bringing the program to life was approved. The first classes began in fall 1993.

Within five minutes of gaining President Hughes’ approval, Mulvihill quietly provided the first of his many significant gifts to support the program. He also chaired a fundraising committee composed of national, regional and local industry and civic leaders, which raised $1.5 million to create the Ernest W. Hahn Endowed Chair in Real Estate Finance within the USD School of Business. Riedy held the Hahn chair throughout his more than 20 years leading the real estate program at USD, a title which Norm Miller, PhD, presently holds.

For his extraordinary faith in and support for values-based real estate education, firmly grounded in practical applications and close relationships with industry professionals, USD took the uncommon step of honoring Mulvihill with a fully endowed professorship more than a decade ago.

Since the real estate program was launched in 1993, it has grown rapidly, supported strongly by the real estate industry and the Burnham-Moores Center for Real Estate. The program now includes a Master of Science in Real Estate, launched in 2004, and dual degree programs in law and business.

Because of Dan Mulvihill’s willingness to take a leadership stance, to build a case, communicate well and be a constant supporter of the program and of the real estate students — both inspirationally and via his checkbook — he made a tremendous impact on USD, the real estate community in San Diego, and the futures of many, many students. That is his legacy.
University of San Diego has formed a partnership with Bartell Hotels. Richard Bartell, a School of Law alumnus, has opened the doors of his eight premier hotels to the USD community. The USD–Bartell Hotels partnership means you receive a special rate when you book your stay at one of the conveniently located Bartell Hotels in San Diego. A portion of the room cost comes back to USD to support student scholarships, promote university events and marketing efforts and create community awareness about the partnership.

“We’re opening our doors to you and contributing to USD every time you visit.
Richard Bartell ’75 School of Law

To take advantage of these special rates and USD family amenities, visit bartellhotels.com/usdpartnership or call 800.345.9995 to book your stay at any of the Bartell Hotels.
Rally to support USD student scholars on our annual day of giving, **Torero Tuesday**: Tuesday, October 13
Be informed by President Harris’ **State of the University**: Wednesday, October 14, 4 p.m.
Be inspired by those who have gone “beyond the limits” during **Torero Talks**: Thursday, October 15, 12:30 p.m.
Play and “party with a purpose” at the **Fabulous Torero Casino Night**: Friday, October 16, 6 p.m.
Reconnect and show your Torero Spirit at the **Torero Big Blue Bash**: Saturday, October 17, 4 p.m.
Celebrate the USD community at the **Alumni and Family Mass**: Sunday, October 18, 10:30 a.m.