

# UVU magazine

## A NEW SPOT ON THE BENCH

*Two new coaches bring varied experience to Wolverine basketball teams* PG. 20

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# UTAH VALLEY WOLVERINES™



## MEN'S BASKETBALL

### Home Schedule

11.01.19	College of Idaho (exhibition)
11.05.19	Westminster
11.12.19	Ottawa (AZ)
11.21.19	Lamar
12.04.19	Weber State
12.14.19	Northern Arizona
12.28.19	Antelope Valley
01.16.20	New Mexico State
01.18.20	UT Rio Grande Valley
01.29.20	California Baptist
02.08.20	Seattle U
02.20.20	CSU Bakersfield
02.22.20	Grand Canyon
03.05.20	Kansas City
03.07.20	Chicago State

## WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

### Home Schedule

10.26.19	Western Colorado (exhibition)
11.09.19	Southern Utah
11.16.19	Nevada
11.30.19	Antelope Valley
12.03.19	Idaho State
12.07.19	Montana
12.21.19	Utah State
12.28.19	Ottawa (AZ)
01.02.20	Chicago State
01.04.20	Kansas City
01.11.20	Seattle U
01.23.20	CSU Bakersfield
01.25.20	Grand Canyon
02.13.20	UT Rio Grande Valley
02.15.20	New Mexico State
02.26.20	California Baptist

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Dear Wolverines,

What an extraordinary year it has been for me and my family! As we left the “Little Red Dot” (Singapore) just over a year ago, we were filled with excitement and also some trepidation. What will UVU be like? Will we fit in? Will the kids like school? Can Mom (that’s me!) learn to drive and maybe master I-15?

The answers to those questions have all been positive. What my family and I have loved most of all is UVU. I have been amazed daily by the diversity, strength, and grit of our student body, the care and accountability of our faculty and staff, and the warmth and welcome of our community. My time at UVU has been a homecoming to a Wolverine family that I cherish now, and will do so forever.

It has been an honor in the past year to work alongside our UVU faculty, staff, administration, and Board of Trustees as we’ve solidified our mission and mapped our way forward. We have clarified and refined our mission statement, foundational values, and action commitments. We have made “Come as you are — UVU has a place for you!” our calling card. We are committed to inclusion and developing all human potential. And, as you will see in “Verbatim” and “Engage” on the pages that follow, our students not only hear this message, but they truly believe it to be true.

In the coming months, you will be hearing more about UVU’s Vision 2030 Plan, a comprehensive strategy focused on student success and completion of meaningful credentials; accessibility, flexibility, and affordability of UVU’s educational delivery; and community engagement and partnerships for workforce and economic development. UVU’s leaders have outlined eight strategic initiatives under this plan to help us focus our time, energy, and resources. Although the Vision 2030 document is still undergoing refinement, I am confident that it captures the relevance of our dual mission as an integrated university and community college. We have successes to celebrate,

plans to implement, and a worthy mission to help build better lives and stronger societies through higher education.

What a great time to be a Wolverine! I hope you will feel this way as you read this edition of UVU Magazine. You will see our academic and engaged-learning strengths as you read about our Wolverine Fund (real-life private equity investing by students!) and our leadership and participation in the 68th annual U.N. Civil Society Conference this past August. The U.N. conference highlighted inclusive and sustainable communities, ideas that are embedded in UVU’s own ethos. On the athletics side, we are building on a strong foundation and have ushered in a new vanguard of excellence in our men’s and women’s basketball programs. I hope you will all raise green pom-poms with me and cheer on coaches Mark Madsen and Dan Nielson as they lead our men’s and women’s basketball teams, respectively.

As you read further, you will be drawn into the celebratory pieces on our Dance Team, our ROTC program, and our alumni. In each, you will find examples of the exceptional character, talents, and heart of our amazing Wolverines.

My first year as president is one that I will never forget, thanks to YOU. I look forward to my second year at this great institution. Go, Wolverines!

Warmest regards,

Astrid S. Tuminez, Ph.D.  
President



## UVU CULINARY ARTS EARNS MULTIPLE HONORS

Utahna Warren, a senior at UVU’s Culinary Arts Institute, won gold at the Global Chefs Challenge in Toronto on May 25. As the winner, she earns the title of best young chef in the Americas — plus a coveted opportunity to represent the Western Hemisphere at the world championships to be held next summer in Russia.

Chef Todd Leonard, certified executive chef, apprentice AnnaLis Nielsen, a graduate of Utah Valley University, and Jake Morgan, a second-year student at UVU, brought back to Utah Valley a second-place finish from the Competition of the Americas hosted by the World Association of Chefs Societies.

Leonard won the USA Chef of the Year in 2018, so he was there to represent UVU and America. For this competition against Chile, Bolivia, and Canada, Leonard and team put in more than 400 hours to be ready.

He prepared four courses, each with 12 portions, for a total of 28 plates completed in seven hours.

PHOTO BY AUGUST MILLER

## ENDURANCE RACE TEAM TAKES FIRST PLACE

Utah Valley University’s Endurance Race Team picked up a stunning upset victory in the ChampCar Endurance series race held July 28 at the Utah Motorsports track in Tooele, Utah. The win is not only the first for the UVU team, it’s the first time in the 10-year ChampCar Series history that an entry from any college won an endurance race.

“This is unbelievable,” said Matt Hasara, driver and assistant professor in UVU’s automotive technology program. “This has never been done before. We just shocked everybody. I’m so happy for these students after all the hard work and dedication it took to pull off this upset.”

The eight-hour endurance race featured 233 laps of racing, beginning at 8 a.m., and it wasn’t until the last lap at 4 p.m. when the green UVU Miata passed the front car to come across the finish line in first place. The Miata was made race-ready by 12 UVU students who spent hundreds of hours to get the car prepared for the long race in 90-degree temperatures.







UVU STUDENTS BRING HOME GOLD MEDALS IN SKILLSUSA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Nine UVU students won national championship gold medals at the 55th Annual SkillsUSA National Championships held June 25-28 in Louisville, Kentucky. UVU students competed in 22 categories and won medals in nine. Based on the nine national medal categories won, UVU earned the ranking of No. 2 in the nation for all colleges and universities in the United States. For 19 consecutive years, UVU has been ranked among the top five in the nation.

Much like the Olympics, an overall ranking is determined by the total medal count earned during the national competition. Gold medals were awarded to Utah Valley students in collision damage appraisal, entrepreneurship (four golds), firefighting, photography, and robotics and automation technology (two golds).

UVU NAMES VESSELA ILIEVA DEAN OF SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Utah Valley University has appointed Dr. Vessela Ilieva as dean of the university’s School of Education. Ilieva has been serving as the interim dean since fall 2018 and was officially named dean in April 2019.

“Dr. Ilieva is a leader in the state in educational innovation, based on her experiences as a teacher, administrator, and scholar,” says Jeffery E. Olson, UVU’s former senior vice president of academic affairs. “She has worked extensively with K-12 communities in our service region, and led efforts to develop and implement a cutting-edge embedded clinical teacher preparation program.”

Ilieva joined UVU in 2010 as an assistant professor in the School of Education. A self-proclaimed “global educator,” Ilieva’s work focuses on learning and teaching in ways that are accessible and understandable to every child and considering local and global contexts.

DUFF THOMPSON APPOINTED AS UVU BOARD OF TRUSTEES CHAIR

R. Duff Thompson, managing general partner of EsNet Management Group, has been named chair of UVU’s Board of Trustees. James Clarke was appointed as the first vice chair, and Jill Taylor was named second vice chair.

Elaine Dalton served as chair since June 2015 and will remain a member of the board until her term ends in 2021. The former second vice chair, Jack Sunderlage, completed his service on the board on June 30, 2019.

“I wholeheartedly support UVU’s integrated dual mission, and am honored to be selected by my peers to chair UVU’s Board of Trustees,” Thompson says. “In following the accomplished, remarkable footsteps of Elaine Dalton, I am committed to continuing the positive trajectory of one of the most exciting places in higher education in this country.”

In addition to these changes, Qualtrics co-founder Scott Smith was appointed to the Board of Trustees in August 2019.



UVU FLIGHT INSTRUCTORS PARTICIPATE IN HISTORIC AIR RACE

Exciting, exhilarating, exhausting, fun, awesome, humbling — those were some of the adjectives two UVU flight instructors used to describe flying in the Air Race Classic, a 2,538-mile, multiple-day race. One phrase they consistently applied to the event was “the adventure of a lifetime.”

Lindsay Jarman and Jessica Washburn are both graduates of UVU’s aviation program and are certified flight instructors for the university. They flew a Cessna to Tennessee to start the race. After some time studying rules and safety briefings, they set off on their journey, with more than 100 other racers, all female. Jarman and Washburn had top-three finishes in two of the nine legs of the race.



UVU RECEIVES NATIONAL FIRST FORWARD DESIGNATION

The First-Year Experience and Student Retention Office at Utah Valley University received the “First Forward” designation. It’s an honor from The Suder Foundation and The Center for First-generation Student Success, an initiative of NASPA (the Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education). This designation recognizes only a small number of institutions that have demonstrated a commitment to improve experiences and advance outcomes of first-generation college students.

UVU’s I Am First is a community of students, staff, faculty, and other key stakeholders that seeks to provide the crucial support needed for first-generation students to thrive at the university. This is just one of the many programs that have come from UVU’s First-Year Experience and Student Retention Office.

Some of the experiences that the I Am First group offers are a mentor program that connects first-generation students with staff and faculty mentors, leadership development for freshmen, customized orientations, learning lunches with staff and faculty, and many scholarship opportunities.





**I HAVE GOTTEN TO KNOW A LOT OF PEOPLE BY WORKING WITH THE FACULTY AT UVU, AND I'VE TAKEN MY TIME AT UVU TO EXPAND MY KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT I CAN DO TO HELP THE PERCUSSION COMMUNITY.**



**WHEN** Tracy Furr's parents offered to buy him a musical instrument when he entered high school, he decided on a marimba. Furr had always loved percussion instruments, but this one presented a problem: a \$12,000 price tag.

With fresh-from-middle-school enthusiasm, Furr set out to solve the problem by making an instrument for himself. Today, he is making marimbas for other people and finding success in a new hobby-turned-business.

A Utah Valley University student majoring in music performance, Furr remembers the trial and error involved in his first home-built marimba.

"After looking around to see if there were any that were cheaper than the \$12,000 model, we found that there was a set available that didn't have resonators on it," he says. "My dad operates a machine shop, so we figured I could use the skills I had obtained from working at the shop and use his equipment to make my own set of resonators. That led to looking into just building the whole marimba from the ground up."

Finding instructions online and with his machine-shop background, Furr built his first instrument.

"I finished it and did not like how it turned out at all," he says. "So I built an even better one out of better materials and got a way better result from learning from my mistakes on the first one."

A friend asked if Furr could build a second one for him, and the building — and reputation — grew from there, expanding into becoming a fix-it man for all sorts of musical problems.

"From that point, I was getting requests from high schools about building equipment for their marching bands," Furr says. "So I started building speaker and mixer carts, along with carts to mount percussion equipment for taking onto the field. Once I started doing that, I got requests to fix up or restore older percussion equipment to make them look new again and upgrade the old frames. Now I'm at a point where I have started this business of building marimbas, restoring old equipment, and fixing equipment. I'm basically an instrumental repair shop for percussion equipment."

The native of Orem is continuing to attend UVU and will graduate in 2020 with an associate degree. His abilities for building and repair have spilled over into his interactions with the university, as he works part-time doing what he describes as "upkeep and maintenance of the percussion equipment — basic things like if a screw has come loose on an instrument, a drum has an old head that needs

# HARMONIOUS HANDYMAN

**UVU STUDENT TRACY FURR PUTS FIX-IT SKILLS TO USE BY MAKING MARIMBAS BY HAND**

*by JAY WAMSLEY | photos by BROOKE STEINICKE*

replacement, part of a hardware stand comes apart — I put that all back together again.

"Basically I've become a mini mobile repair shop person that makes sure everything is kept running."

Furr has also built the music conductor podiums (the lifted platform on which the maestro or conductor stands to be seen by his or her musicians) for the Noorda Center for the Performing Arts. He drew up the designs for them and built them in his shop.

"I approached the music department faculty about making the new podiums for the new building because I knew that there weren't a lot of options for them online to choose from, and I wanted them to have nice quality podiums that fit the rooms they will be in," he says.

But the bulk of his time is spent with the marimba. He plans on making this a full-time job, along with "helping out the schools and music community around Utah to develop the percussion programs and fix all the issues that have accumulated."

Furr has built 20 marimbas and about 40 different pieces of equipment "for other odd-end jobs." He describes building a marimba as a "very intricate and difficult process." He uses Honduras rosewood along with over 100 feet of aluminum tubing per marimba. The building process takes a lot of proper alignment to get everything right for the marimba to properly vibrate for the correct sound. The key, he says, is to "have the cords running through the bars line up in the right spots, or else the vibrations of the bars will be choked off. Each resonator has to line up perfectly under each bar, and the plug in the resonator has to be in just the right spot for it to resonate fully."

Tuning the bars themselves requires not only tuning the fundamental note, he says, but also tuning up to four overtones in the bar to give it an equal dark timbre sound across the bars.

"This all has to be done while making sure the finishes and textures of the marimba are smooth and beautiful to make a perfect matching of the sound and looks of the marimba," Furr explains. "It can be stressful at times, trying to work in my current shop space right now which is a second garage at my grandma's house, but I'm looking to move into a bigger and better shop space so I can have more space for my tools."

"The end results of my labor, though, always give me joy, and being able to hear the final product always makes me happy."

Furr has begun to attend conferences and events promoting his business. He continues to learn more and more about the marimba — "I have learned a lot about how the instrument should sound and proper playing technique. But this has been something I have slowly learned, as I have been attending school."

He says his full package of UVU courses has helped him solidify his life goals and decide on a career path. He took classes that helped him learn more about the acoustics of the instruments, along with the business side.

"What really sparked my interest was seeing a need for people to have more affordable marimbas and not having the ability to have one at home to practice. I have gotten to know a lot of people by working with the faculty at UVU, and I've taken my time at UVU to expand my knowledge of what I can do to help the percussion community." ■









After capturing numerous first-place honors, including a world championship in April, Utah Valley University dance coach Bri Sorenson says the heart of their program is their motto: “First-class, first place.”

“We don’t want to just train good dancers, but good people,” Sorenson says. “They are kind, and they are classy. They represent the university well and have good reputations.”

At a parade in Utah County this summer, one bystander commented how friendly the dancers were and how they took time to meet the public cordially.

Fourth-year dancer Sam Taylor says she has learned much from her experiences, but one thing stands out to her.

“The biggest thing I will take away is the idea of being first-class,” she says. “It will have a positive influence on my life. It is the most important thing I have learned.”

The dancers are not the only ones who appreciate that emphasis on being first-class. Greg Williams appreciates the emphasis a lot; he has a daughter currently on the team.

“I am pleased the team’s expectations are high,” he says. “The dancers are more prepared for the real world.”

“My daughter learned some things about the role they can play outside of being a dancer,” he says. “They are things like supporting teammates, having a good work ethic, getting enough sleep, and time management. You do it because you love to dance, and you really want to be a part of something special.”

## FIRST PLACE

The UVU team has won several national titles at various competitions in prior years, but this year they participated in — and won — a different, more massive event.

“While we were at nationals, some people reached out to us and encouraged us to look into the ICU World competition,” says Ashley Hardison, UVU’s Spirit Squad coordinator. The International Cheer Union held its championship event in Orlando in April. It included teams from around the world, from both universities and professional groups.

“It was essentially the Olympics for dance and cheer,” Hardison says. It included an opening ceremony with a parade and flags of the nations, medals for the winners, complete with playing that country’s national anthem,



*above: UVU represented Team USA in the Team Cheer Jazz category, winning gold with a slightly altered version of the routine that won them first place in UDA’s Division 1 Jazz national competition.*



and a closing ceremony stating each country’s medal count. UVU’s dance team members say the experience was moving.

“We will never hear the National Anthem the same way again,” Sorenson says. “The pride and patriotism — you will never forget that feeling of accomplishment.”

“When they were singing the National Anthem, we had tears coming down our faces. It was the coolest thing,” Taylor says. “The fact that we were chosen out of the entire country was insane. Wearing the country’s flag on your chest is amazing. I am representing the United States of America, the entire country. It was kind of surreal and a little bit of pressure.”

With the win, more people are watching UVU’s dance team. The number of followers across the team’s social media accounts has almost doubled, from nearly 4,000 to 7,300. It also eliminated the element of surprise in future competitions, as UVU’s reputation has grown.

Not everything about the team is as visible, however.

“There was a deaf girl at the championship that had some special needs also,” says Taylor, who is majoring in deaf studies. “I saw them signing. I went over and talked to her in sign language. I think she was glad to see that a USA representative was willing to talk to her. It was good to use my schooling, and was cool to be able to put aside the dancing and be able to talk to this girl.”





WHEN THEY WERE SINGING THE NATIONAL ANTHEM, WE HAD TEARS COMING DOWN OUR FACES. IT WAS THE COOLEST THING. THE FACT THAT WE WERE CHOSEN OUT OF THE ENTIRE COUNTRY WAS INSANE.

#### PERSONAL GROWTH

“You sacrifice a lot to be on the team,” Hardison says. “For example, you work family vacations around dance. You have to be a full-time student. You do community appearances and ribbon-cuttings. There isn’t really an off-season.”

Although they are not under the umbrella of athletics at UVU, the dancers perform at many athletic events throughout the school year.

Sorenson says she likes to teach perspective, telling the dancers not to worry about elements such as their competition. “We can only control what we put on the floor,” she says.

Another challenge is fundraising. The budget from UVU doesn’t cover all the expenses, and the dancers work part time or raise funds by creating relationships with companies, getting donations and sponsors.

“The dancers learn about dance, friendships, discipline, teamwork, and being dedicated to something,” Hardison says. “You can’t learn those on your own. Anyone who watches them knows they are professional and collegiate. They are being their best version. We take it very seriously. Satisfaction comes from mastering skills, setting goals and accomplishing them.”

Taylor outlined a typical day, along with the rewards.

“We get up, go to school, practice from 4 to 7, go home, do homework, then go to bed and do it all over again,” she says. “But it has made me so involved with Utah Valley University. It is easy to get a little disconnected from the spirit part of it. Dance team has given me an in. Not only am I improving my danceability and getting better, but I am involved with UVU and getting to know so many amazing people I wouldn’t have been able to know without the program.” ■

*opposite page:*

UVU dancer Taylor Williams waves an American flag during the ICU opening ceremonies.










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A photograph of two men in dark suits and patterned ties on a basketball court. The man on the left is sitting on the floor, holding a basketball, and smiling. The man on the right is standing behind him, also smiling. In the background, a basketball hoop and a green banner with the name 'RYAN NOLSON' are visible. The title 'A NEW SPOT ON THE BENCH' is overlaid in large white letters with orange dots for the 'O's.

# A NEW SPOT ON THE BENCH

**TWO NEW COACHES BRING  
VARIED EXPERIENCE TO WOLVERINE  
BASKETBALL TEAMS**

BY Jay Wamsley | PHOTOGRAPHY BY Jay Drowns

**AFTER** a whirlwind spring marked by job interviews, press conferences, hiring assistant coaches, and hitting the recruiting trail, Utah Valley University's two new basketball coaches have found what they like to sell about their new athletic program.

Hired within a month of each other this past March and April, Mark Madsen — leaving the bench of the Los Angeles Lakers for UVU — and Dan Nielson — top assistant coach with the successful Brigham Young University women's program — will head the Wolverine men's and women's basketball squads, respectively.

"I think the biggest thing we want people to know about UVU basketball," Nielson says of his new undertaking, "is 'Come be a part of it.' If you're a recruit, this is the place where you can do big





– Mark Madsen

***This is going to be a program where I hold myself accountable, where I hold my players accountable to our mission, to our goals to succeed in the classroom and on the court, and in the community.***

things. This is the place where you can grow and find your potential, as a person and academically. I think our potential is untapped, and we have so much room to grow.”

Madsen, with two NBA championship rings on his fingers, agrees: “There are so many things about Utah Valley University that make this place special. Number one, the academic rigor here is fantastic. In the two or three months that I’ve been here, I’ve had the chance to meet with professors, with administration, and it is impressive how seriously we take academics. That’s a goal of our student-athletes — to get that degree and not only to get a degree, but to learn, to forge relationships, and to get hands-on experience that will help them when the time comes to walk and get that diploma.”

Nielson, who spent four years as a UVU assistant coach from 2009-2013 and was a part of two Great West Conference championships, says he hopes to recruit players who reflect the same spirit as the university as a whole. He says he wants to put girls in his program who are willing to “not always take the easy route.”

“For us,” he says, “we are looking for people who are tough, and that’s not just physically tough, but mentally tough, where they are able to take every aspect of their life and maybe not do it the easy way but maybe the hard way, the way that will make them the most successful. Maybe that’s placing a screen in basketball, doing the extra practice, or the extra study hall. That’s what we are looking for, the personality that is willing to do the hard work.”

Nielson says he realizes UVU may not sign many ESPN top-100 players, “but you can always combat a higher talent level with players who are willing to think, and be smart, and be tough.”

He is also happy to point out to recruits what a beautiful part of the country they will be living in, to go along with their academic pursuits and exciting basketball schedule.

“I always tell recruits how beautiful it is,” he says. “The minute you step off the plane in Salt Lake City, you are surrounded by beauty. We really have an amazing package here to put that together with our schedule. These guys are going to be playing some of the best teams in the country. We are going to put together one of the best schedules in the state and country.”

Nielson, a native of Round Rock, Texas,

has worked a total of 18 years in women’s basketball at UVU and BYU, including 139 wins and four NCAA Tournament appearances with the Cougars.

Madsen coached with the Utah Flash, formerly of the NBA D-League; at his alma mater Stanford, where he also earned an MBA in 2012. He was the head coach of the G-League Los Angeles D-Fenders (now the South Bay Lakers), and an assistant coach with the Los Angeles Lakers from 2013-19. While playing at Stanford, his teams compiled an impressive 105-24 overall record. He then played in the NBA with the Lakers and the Minnesota Timberwolves for eight seasons.

With all his experience, Madsen says he is reminded that basketball needs to be fun.

“With the best teams I have been on, you have fun when you play,” Madsen says. “You leave practice happy, upbeat, energized for the day because it has been fun. One of the ways to make it fun is to make it competitive — let the guys play against each other. Guys need to feel the energy, the juice, the spirit of competition. I want to create that environment.”

With that energized environment, Madsen says his teams will be identifiable by certain characteristics, namely being accountable to each other.

“We want to have a great tempo with our teams at UVU,” he says. “We want to play as fast as possible while still being true to our principles. There is going to be a lot of movement, both on the ball and off. And we want to be a team that really gets into people defensively. There’s never been a team that wins championships that only plays one side of the ball. We want to be a potent, powerful team on offense, but we also want to be a defensive juggernaut. And to do that it takes repetition, it takes training, and it takes accountability. I think every athlete longs for accountability. This is going to be a program where I hold myself accountable, where I hold my players accountable to our mission, to our goals to succeed in the classroom and on the court, and in the community.”

That reliance on defense will be a cornerstone of the women’s team, as well, Nielson says, along with preparation.

“For us, our style starts on defense,” he says. “We are really big into game planning, and we want to be ready for each game with our defense principles to stop our opponent. If you can slow or stop your opponent on



*I think the biggest thing we want people to know about UVU basketball is ‘Come be a part of it.’ If you’re a recruit, this is the place where you can do big things.*

defense, play a lot of man-to-man defense, you will take away the opponent’s advantage, and we will plan for that. Offensively, we want to run a lot of motion, we want to let the players think and be able to move. We’ll run some plays, but the biggest thing is letting the players be able to think for themselves. I have found as a coach that once I teach them the correct way to do things, then in the game they are just having fun. And that’s when players are doing the best, when they relax and know what they are doing. Our job is to prepare them now so that when they go into the games, it’s just things we do every day and having fun.”

Madsen was selected by a committee headed by UVU President Astrid S. Tuminez and then-Interim Athletic Director Dr. Jared Sumsion, who was named UVU’s AD also in May. At Madsen’s appointment, Sumsion said, “Mark Madsen embodies the mission and vision that we strive for here at UVU. He’s hungry and filled with passion. Coach Madsen will work tirelessly to help his players achieve their dreams.”

Tuminez echoed Sumsion, saying, “With his strengths and experience, he will inspire our student-athletes in and out of competition, and will help us build even stronger relationships with our broader UVU community.”

Likewise, Tuminez said she was thrilled to welcome Nielson “back to UVU and back to ‘the Den,’” the UVU student cheering section

for athletic events.

Nielson says he got his first taste of coaching when he was a high school player. His summer league coach was unable to get to a game on time, and called and told Nielson to be the coach for the night.

“So, I was kind of player-coach for that one game, and I had a blast. I remember thinking, ‘I like this coaching thing, I like the strategy and the thinking behind it,’” Nielson says. “And then there was a meeting I had with coach (Jeff) Judkins at BYU, a great friend and great mentor to me in coaching. I was just a player on the practice team, about my second year there, and he pulled me into his office and said, ‘Hey, you ought to consider coaching, you know what you are talking about.’ So, for a young guy, that was pretty meaningful, coming from a former NBA guy, and kind of sparked even more the thought process of going into coaching.”

Madsen says legendary UCLA coach John Wooden shaped his life decisions. After reading and being inspired by Wooden’s book, “They Call Me Coach,” Madsen had the opportunity to meet the coach: “I had the chance to pick his brain briefly and considered it an honor. In his book, he says he was in coaching for one reason only — to help his players achieve their goals. And truthfully, that’s it for me. I love basketball, but I want to help our players achieve their goals, on the basketball court and off the court.”

Madsen says he appreciates the basketball tradition at UVU, “the practice facility, the banners on the wall, the NBA players, the men and women who have helped to put building blocks in place, the loyalty the players and coaches here have had for each other. Coming here is such a great fit for me.

“Going forward, I want this team to be in a position where we are competing for the WAC championship. That is our goal. We want that automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament... the goal here is to win the WAC Tournament and go to the NCAA Tournament. That is how I will measure our program, year in and year out.”

Nielson points to postseason activity as his team’s goal as well. He says he felt last year’s team was “gaining momentum and taking steps forward... it’s realistic to believe we can make a real run in the postseason.”

But, he says, he also wants his team members to grow as individuals.

“These are outstanding, genuine people, and that stands out when you meet them,” the new coach says. “We want parents to know that this is a good place, that this is a place where their girls will be taken care of and helped to succeed, both on and off the court, and I think that starts with us and the way we treat their daughters. As a player, this is a place you can really thrive. And we love to have those kinds of people here at UVU, who want to do something different.” ■

— Dan Nielson



# VENTURING FORWARD

*UVU's Wolverine Fund gives students hands-on experience  
managing big money in venture capital*

BY LAYTON SHUMWAY  
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BROOKE STEINICKE







In recent years, the state of Utah has become a hotbed for entrepreneurship and startups. Utah-based companies have received billions of dollars in venture capital over the past 10 years, and with the growth of Silicon Slopes, that trend is likely to continue. And as venture capital firms seek new investment opportunities, they need employees with experience and confidence in vetting and researching those opportunities.

But how do you get involved in venture capital if you're not from the Bay Area? How do you gain experience managing billion-dollar investments if you're a first-generation college student?

In other words: how do you run the "shark tank" if you're not already a shark?

That's where the Utah Valley University Wolverine Fund comes in: a student-run venture capital group, managing exclusively donated funds, giving UVU students real-life experience in investing, due diligence, and research.

"These guys are getting as real a venture experience as you're going to get without actually working in venture," Wolverine Fund Director Jefferson Moss says. "They're putting all these different skills together and applying them in a very real situation."



## THE ENTREPRENEURIAL ECOSYSTEM

The idea for the Wolverine Fund started with the UVU Foundation, which supports the vision of the university with experience and financial resources.

Under the direction of Board Chair James Clarke, a Foundation task force was created to look for ways to connect with the entrepreneurial ecosystem, while also providing more diversification for the endowment. After looking at several different approaches, the task force came up with the recommendation to launch a student-run venture fund.

But at other universities — most of them at the Ivy League-level — such a fund would likely be restricted to MBA students only. Although a stretch, the Foundation task force wanted to provide opportunities for UVU's undergraduates to immerse themselves in Utah's venture capital landscape.

In order to get the fund off the ground, they needed adjunct professors to help teach the course. Given the real-world nature of the fund, the professors needed to have actual experience in determining the value of companies, growing businesses, and investing in startup companies. Moss turned to two friends in the Utah startup scene, Bryson Lord and Matt Peterson, both to provide initial investments and to help teach classes.

## FORMING THE TEAM

With teachers in place, and initial donations totaling more than \$500,000, the next step was to find interested students. Matt Bryson, a UVU business student at the time, made it his mission to find the right group of students to help the fund be successful. It wasn't easy at first to get students interested.

"It was especially hard to entice students who have no idea what venture capital is," Bryson says. "A lot of students I talked to come from blue-collar families. A lot of them are first-generation students. They've never heard the terms 'venture capital' or 'private equity.'"

The hope was to form a team with diverse experience, not just business students, because performing due diligence in venture capital covers so many bases. One student, Brayden Cutler, was studying information systems when Bryson approached him.

"I was really intimidated at first," Cutler



says. "Matt tracked me down in the hallway and asked me to join, and I said, 'I don't even know what VC is.'"

After joining the team, however, Cutler says he understood how his technology background helped him evaluate startups in that field and ascertain whether their businesses were worth investing in.

"You're assessing the value of the tech and saying, how good is this tech?" Cutler says. "Is it easily replicable? Are there competitive advantages that they've found that other people haven't found? How big is the actual market?"

Eventually, the initial recruits were whittled down to a group of 10 students who formed the official Wolverine Fund team. From there, they began meeting with startups in the Utah business community, who would come pitch to the class and field questions from the students.

"It was overwhelming at first," says Kai Schulze, a first-generation UVU student studying finance. "Everything was so new. You can't understand how much work venture capital takes until you get your hands dirty and do it. It was hard, but nothing in my college career has come close to providing the engaged-learning experience that I have had with the Wolverine Fund."

NOTHING IN MY COLLEGE

CAREER HAS COME CLOSE TO PROVIDING

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# WHAT'S COOL ABOUT UVU

STUDENTS IS WE'RE VERY RESOURCEFUL. WE MAY NOT KNOW THE ANSWER, BUT WE'RE NOT PRIDEFUL ENOUGH TO SAY THAT WE KNOW IT WHEN WE DON'T. WE EMPHATICALLY SAY WE DON'T KNOW, BUT WE'RE WILLING TO GO FIND OUT AND WORK FOR IT.

Everyone who saw the students' preparation came away impressed. "It was a little bit of a risk on our part," Moss says. "If they would have floundered, we would have lost a lot of credibility with these VCs, who we depend on to give us opportunities to invest alongside them. I heard from every single one of them, 'Wow, these kids are smart.'"

After conducting research and due diligence, the Wolverine Fund team met with an investment committee made up of experts in the venture capital industry, where they presented their findings and recommended whether or not to invest.

"Basically, the students act as junior analysts at a venture fund," Peterson says. "And we just grill them. How'd you come up with that number? What about this? Did you consider that? You've got to be on your toes. It really does create some cool bonds between the students and advisors.

"I wasn't sure what to expect from UVU students," Peterson adds. "Now that I am here, my respect for UVU students has grown exponentially. These students have the potential to accomplish incredible things."

## THE TASTE OF VICTORY

Along with the hands-on experiences and classroom learning, the Wolverine Fund team took part in the Venture Capital Investment Competition (VCIC), where teams of five students from universities across the country act as investors and hear pitches from startup companies.

Getting into the competition was an achievement itself, because participation was allowed only by invitation. But when another team was forced to drop out, UVU grabbed the opportunity. The team was placed in the Northeast bracket and defeated Pitt, Michigan, American Universi-

ty, and others to win the regional and qualify for the national finals.

While the UVU team felt intimidated by their inexperience at first, Bryson says their underdog status helped them find innovative solutions and dig in harder.

"What's cool about UVU students is we're very resourceful," Bryson says. "We may not know the answer, but we're not prideful enough to say that we know it when we don't. We emphatically say we don't know, but we're willing to go find out and work for it."

While Bryson and five other Wolverine Fund members participated at the national VCIC competition in North Carolina, the rest of the team supported them with research and due diligence. And in the end, the UVU team took second place, defeating larger universities such as Miami, Georgetown, Cornell, and Notre Dame in the process.

"I think there's something cool about that moment where you recognize how hard you worked and to taste that victory," Carson Rawle, a UVU finance student and a VCIC team member, says. "This experience showed me what our team could accomplish when we work hard and work as a team."

## ROOM TO GROW

Moss says the goal of the Wolverine Fund is to be self-sustaining. It follows the traditional venture capital fee model, except that all funds go directly to help students. When donors contribute to the Wolverine Fund, 2% goes to management and operational costs, which includes participating in events like the VCIC. When the investments come to fruition, 20% of the carry (the profit after paying back investors) is placed back into student scholarships, stipends for internships, and funding for UVU's Entrepreneurial Institute. That helps UVU graduates get a head start on their own businesses and careers, making it possible for them to give back to the Wolverine Fund in the future. Moss says the fund is seeking further donations to bring the total amount from \$500,000 to \$1 million.

"We see this as a very cool cycle," Moss says. "If our students do a good job of investing those funds, when those companies have an exit five years from now, a big chunk of that money will go back into future student entrepreneurs, creating more opportunities.

We're hoping that starts to create its own cycle."

This experience has already given the next cohort of Wolverine Fund associates a leg up on their future careers. "I applied for the fund for the networking and opportunities and was immediately connected with an investment company for an internship," UVU student Amy Bowman says. "I've met numerous influential business owners and investors over the summer, and my time on the Fund is only beginning."

Bryson, who graduated in 2019, has seen his experience as a leg up into his new career. "In my job right now, what I did in the Wolverine Fund, I am literally doing it for work," Bryson says. "How many times have you heard a student say that? You never hear that. And how rewarding is that? How comfortable does that make me feel? I can say I do know what I'm doing. I did it before and I was successful at it. So why can't I be more successful in my future career here? That is incredible, to have that confidence." ■

*These photos of UVU Wolverine Fund team members were taken at Kiln, a coworking community with locations in Lehi and Salt Lake City. UVU Magazine would like to thank Kiln for the use of their space.*







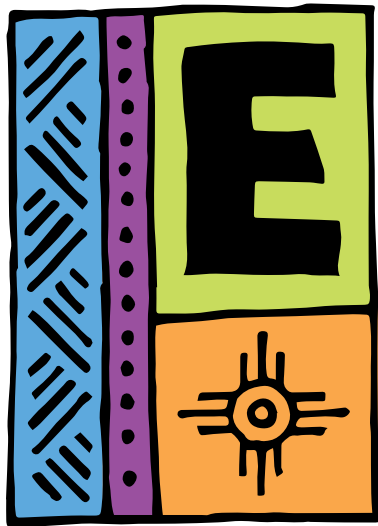
# A UNITED FUTURE

UVU's role in bringing a United Nations conference to

Utah provides unprecedented opportunity for students

BY LAYTON SHUMWAY | ILLUSTRATION BY SHARI WARNICK





# Education is fundamentally concerned with the future —

preparing young people to lead and succeed. But too often in politics and global affairs, young adults don't get a say in the policies and programs that directly affect the world they will inherit. Baldomero Lago, Utah Valley University's chief international officer, knows that well. In addition to his 30 years of educational experience, he has served his native country of Spain as honorary consul since 1999 — service which earned him a knighthood. And all that experience, much of it teaching young people, has taught him how important it is to provide opportunities for students to become globally aware. And to be heard.

"It's critical that youth at a very early stage have a venue to express their voices and to bring a conversation to the table, so the rest of us can actually listen and make some decisions based on their say," Lago says. "I think it is critical that we engage with them."

This year, UVU students got an unprecedented chance to participate in global affairs. Thanks to the efforts of Lago and others at UVU, along with the cooperation and partnership of leaders throughout Utah, the 68th annual United Nations Civil Society Conference was held in Salt Lake City — the first time the conference has been held anywhere in the United States other than New York City. And the conference's topic, "Building Inclusive and Sustainable Cities and Communities," not only fits perfectly with UVU's mission, but it also might be the most important subject for young people.

"This conference is historic because it's an opportunity for the public to voice their opinion to the United Nations," says UVU student John McIlmoil, who worked with the conference's outreach committee to contact other universities. "The U.N. is really wanting youth participation because we are the future leaders of the world."

## Seizing the Opportunity

UVU's Office for Global Engagement, led by Lago, facilitates international engaged-learning experiences such as study abroad and exchange programs, internships, diplomacy, and intercultural events. Diplomats from foreign countries often visit UVU to give lectures and meet with students, from countries as diverse as Russia, Austria, Peru, Azerbaijan, Tajikistan, and Spain in the last year alone.

Lago credits his predecessor in the Office for Global Engagement, Rusty Butler, with laying the foundation for this work, in addition to making connections with the United Nations. "We have had a great culture at UVSC and now UVU of hosting dignitaries," Lago says.

In addition, Lago says, many UVU programs align with the aims of the United Nations, especially in its Sustainable Development Agenda. For example, UVU is home to the Utah International Mountain Forum, a coalition of student clubs on campus that promotes the sustainability of the world's mountain environments and livelihoods through youth efforts. In December 2017, UVU was granted affiliate membership status by the U.N. Department of Public Information — the only university in Utah so affiliated. And in March 2019, a delegation of nearly 50 UVU students traveled to New York City to address the United Nations.

"We have all these different entities on campus that, in essence, whenever you talk to any of them, you realize they align with the mission of the United Nations," Lago says.

With the relationship between UVU and the United Nations in place, a rare opportunity presented itself. For its annual Civil Society Conference, the U.N. usually alternates between hosting in New York City and in a nation outside the United States, every other year. Due to unforeseen circumstances, plans to host the conference in a foreign nation fell through, and the U.N. began searching for a different global location to host the conference. Lago, together with U.N. Department of Public Information member Felipe Queipo, surprised the U.N. by inquiring whether Utah could be a venue.

"At first, they wondered, 'Why Salt Lake City of all places?'" Lago says. "But I believe the humanitarian work that we do in this state, the spirit of volunteerism, the global component that we have, made us very unique in comparison to other states in the United States. I think that we had a pretty good ticket."

But they needed a local partner. Governments cannot convene U.N. conferences, only recognized nongovernmental organizations can. Fortunately, due to UVU's 2017 recognition, the university qualified as a convener. They just needed an ally in a local city to act as host. Lago found one in Salt Lake City Mayor Jackie Biskupski.

"Given Salt Lake City's mission of building a sustainable and resilient city, it made perfect sense to approach the city to help make this dream a reality," Lago says.

In a press release, Biskupski said, "I can think of no better time and no better place than Salt Lake City for the United Nations and the world's NGOs to expand awareness in this country of sustainable development goals and the value of global unity."

## Making a Difference

With more than 8,000 individuals registered to attend from more than 138 nations, the U.N. Civil Society Conference brought a global audience to the very doorstep of UVU students. And many took advantage.

UVU student Michael Hinatsu, vice president of UVU's Utah International Mountain Forum, presented on UIMF's successful advocacy work on sustainable development and how UVU's engaged-learning model can benefit learners throughout the world. He emphasized the value of that experience for himself and other students.

Another UVU student, Sam Elzinga, served on the conference's Youth Subcommittee, which published its own declaration alongside the Civil Society's main outcome document.

"We are the future of the world," Elzinga says. "Therefore, we have the most to gain from participating in these discussions. Conversely,

At UVU, there are students working every

day to establish connections. We can make a

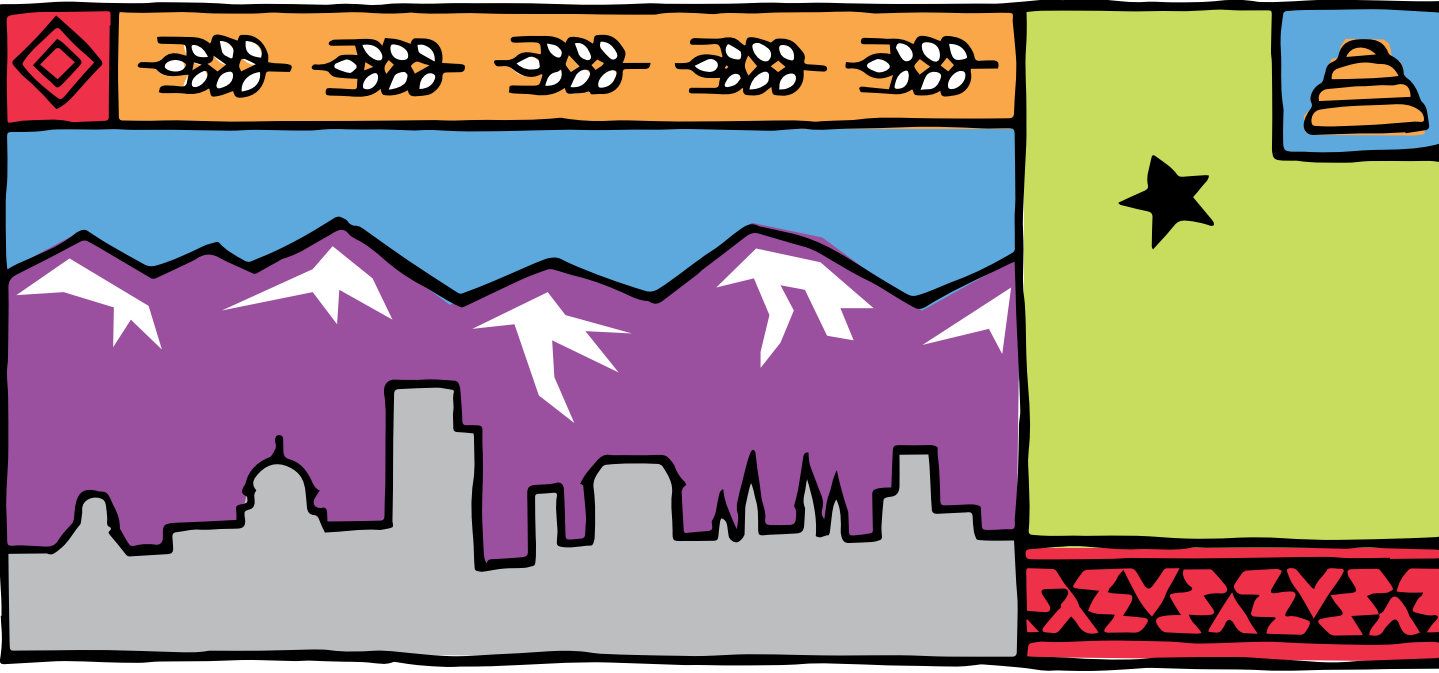
real difference in the world — I've seen it.

we have the most to lose if we shirk our responsibility to address these international issues."

"If we really care to make any real change, we need to get involved," UVU student and presenter William Gum says. "Not involving young people in discussions on international issues that affect all of us excludes the voices of those who often have fresh, new perspectives on tackling global issues. We care just as much as the older global policymakers."

UVU President Astrid S. Tuminez spoke during the plenary session and moderated a panel at the conference. "I'm proud of the students from UVU and other Utah schools who have worked with the U.N. to bring the conference to our region, helping to create an opportunity for Utah's leaders, educators, and young people to collaborate with global NGOs and build a sustainable future for everyone," President Tuminez says.

"Students and youth are vital to continue the process of dialogue, advocacy, and impact," Gum says. "At UVU, there are students working every day to establish connections. We can make a real difference in the world — I've seen it." ■







# HANDS-ON CHALLENGE

UVU RANGER CHALLENGE TEAM TAKES ON THE WORLD AT WEST POINT EVENT



THE UTAH VALLEY UNIVERSITY ROTC Ranger Challenge team went to West Point, New York, in August, facing off against national and international-level competition designed to test and hone various skills.

*By Jay Wamsley | Photography by Jay Drowns*





The UVU squad competed against ROTC teams from Utah, Wyoming, and Colorado earlier in October 2018. After winning at that regional level, they competed at the brigade level, in San Antonio, Texas, where they faced other regional winners. Events at each of the competitions can vary, but can include activities such as a ruck march (with a 40-pound pack), marksmanship, weapon disassembly/assembly, artillery simulation, as well as evaluation of a casualty, hand-grenade assault course, fitness challenge, navigation and orienteering, and others.





There were 65 teams at West Point, 14 of which were international, and many from the service academies. The UVU Army ROTC team consisted of Gwynyth Simons, Joshua Peles, Gilbert Burns, Joseph Lloyd, Josh Butikofer, Cooper Wimmer, Travis Hall, Hyrum Ahlman, Tyler Miner, Austin Slade, and Jessica Evenson.



# ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE

*Mother of quadruplets overcomes heartbreak to finish degree at UVU*

*After taking classes at the University of Utah and Brigham Young University, Pamela Neeleman Clark soon realized the financial and academic demands of postsecondary education. Several years later, Pamela returned to school, attending Utah Valley University to finish what she had started and earn her degree at the age of 56. UVU Magazine asked Pamela to relate her story.*

If you have ever seen “Napoleon Dynamite,” you are probably familiar with the satirical line from the character Kip in response to a young girl trying to save money for her postsecondary education: “Your mom goes to college!” For my children, that line always leads to laughter, because, for them, it was true. What they may not know is that they were a large part of the reason I chose to finish my degree.

Growing up, I always knew that I wanted to be a successful mother. I also fancied the idea of being a teacher because I had always loved my teachers in school. After taking some classes, I quickly discovered that school was expensive, and I wasn’t very good at math. I moved to the Bay Area to work with my brother and his company, Morris Air. After several years, he sold the company to Southwest Airlines, and I decided it was time for a career change.

I was living in the heart of Silicon Valley during the dot-com boom, and fortunate circumstances led me to open my own restaurant and catering business. I have always been a foodie, and after attending a local culinary arts program,

Everything Fresh was born. Everything Fresh catered to various companies in the area, and everything went well until the dot-com bust.

Opportunity in Utah seemed promising, and I decided to move back to Utah to take a job at a resort, but not before marrying my husband, Stephan. Later, I became pregnant with quadruplets, and Stephan, Carter, Dillon, and Abigail were born. Our son Stephan, who we called Bindy, struggled with many medical issues, and as a result of needing cleaner air, we made a permanent residence in Heber City.

While we were waiting for our house to be built, we lived in some apartments next to the UVU Wasatch Campus. Each day on my way to and from work, I would pass by the campus and think about returning to get my degree. I wanted to show my children the importance of education and how it can lead to success in life. Even more so, I wanted to do something that I told myself I wasn’t capable of doing. After being accepted, I set out to finish what I had started so many years earlier and complete my degree.

Coming back as a nontraditional student was difficult. I still struggled with math and had to retake several classes. It was determined that I had a math learning disability, but with the help of tutors and academic counselors, I found my way through. Doug Miller in UVU’s hospitality department and J Wattereus in University Studies, in addition to many academic advisors, were all dedicated to helping me succeed. UVU is full of people who are committed to students — I know because they believed in me and helped me achieve my academic goals.



*By Pamela Neeleman Clark  
With Kadee Jones  
Photography by Erik Flores*



*Pamela worked toward a degree in university studies with an emphasis in hospitality. She worked as the general manager at a Wyndham resort, and the struggle of trying to balance family life, work, and school proved to have its challenges. Just six months before her expected graduation date, Pamela lost her son, Bindy and finishing her degree seemed nearly impossible.*

After my son passed away, I wanted to quit. I was only one semester away from graduation, and I could not even fathom the idea of leaving my house and broken family to go back to class. It was so painful, but as had been the case with my whole experience at UVU, my professors all worked with me to catch up by the end of the semester. I was also working full-time, and I was so sleep-deprived. I don't think I ever slept more than five hours a night for four years.

Just six months later, I walked across the stage at graduation. Next to getting married and having my quadruplets, it was the happiest day of my life. After feeling so much pain, heartache, and self-doubt, my graduation day was that much sweeter.

If I could say anything to nontraditional students, it would be that no matter how far out it seems to go back and finish your degree, no matter how many years have passed, or how much money it will take, anything is possible if you are committed and find the right people to help you make it happen. ■



*I wanted to show my children the importance of education and how it can lead to success in life, but even more so, I wanted to do something that I told myself I wasn't capable of doing.*

# UVU VETERAN HATS

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# 2019 ALUMNI AWARD WINNERS

By BARBARA CHRISTIANSEN | Photography By AUGUST MILLER



**YOUNG  
ALUMNI  
AWARD —  
AMANDA  
KIMBALL**

*A living individual who has served to further the purposes and the mission of UVU through their affiliation with the University as an employee or volunteer. Their act of service should be recent and have a profound effect upon the University.*

Richard R. Tolman's recent retirement came at the end of a 55-year career in science. He started in 1964 in the public school system, then became a community college faculty member and held a 13-year appointment on the National Science Foundation's Biological Science Curriculum Study. He taught at Brigham Young University and held several leadership positions in its College of Biology and Agriculture. He had been a professor of biology at Utah Valley University since 2003.

Tolman was nominated for the alumni award by Dean Daniel J. Fairbanks of UVU's College of Science, who says, "It would be most fitting for UVU to honor him in this manner, for he is unquestionably deserving of such. It is a rare honor for UVU to be the institution where someone of his caliber and influence has so capably served in the last chapter of a truly world-class career."

Tolman is known for mentoring students and adding to the effort to provide more than 100 scholarships for them.

"What I enjoyed most has been the interaction with students from junior high school, where I started, to the college level," he says. "It has been a choice experience to work with the students."

*A recent graduate of UVU who continues to support the University in a profound and substantive manner. This award is given to an individual who has continued to contribute their time, energy, and/or money to help support the University even after graduation.*

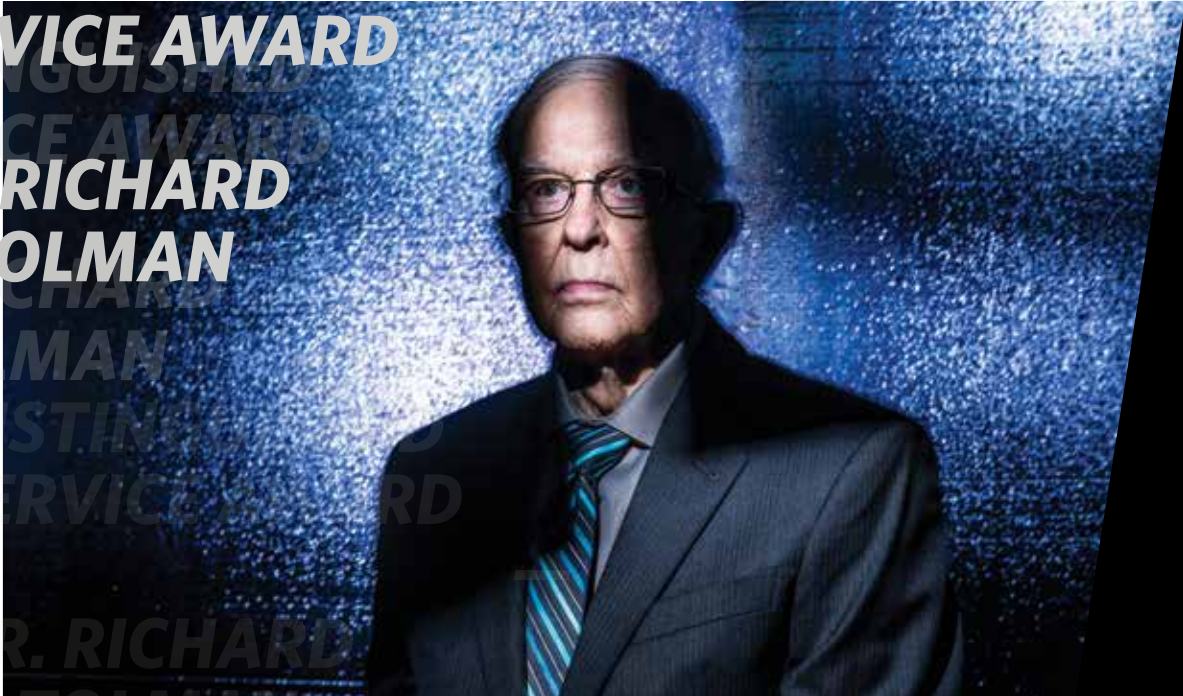
Amanda Kimball graduated in 2011 with a bachelor's degree in music. Her piano and vocal studies indirectly led her to her career as a corporate event planner, but the field draws upon her talents in much more than music.

She keeps up her interest both in music and in UVU through the UVU Alumni Music Society, which she founded. Kimball also serves as vice president of the Young Alumni Board.

After her graduation, she and other alumni wanted to perform together and put the name of UVU out in the community, she says. Some of their performance opportunities were service-based, such as singing at rest homes and doing special performances. "We did a Disney princess day at the Orem Library," she says. "To this day, it is one of my favorite memories."

"I feel UVU gave me the experiences and life skills necessary to be a whole person," she says. "I feel like I would not have had the same experiences at another institution. The professors here saw my potential even when I didn't see it. They challenged me and gave me opportunities. UVU has passion and I have passion."

**DISTINGUISHED  
SERVICE AWARD —  
DR. RICHARD  
R. TOLMAN**



**UVU  
LEGACY  
AWARD —  
JACK  
SUNDERLAGE**

*An alumnus/alumna or friend, living or deceased, whose contribution to UVU and/or the Alumni Association was above and beyond the call of duty. The recipient of this award have gone the extra mile to contribute time, energy, and/or money to UVU and/or the Alumni Association.*

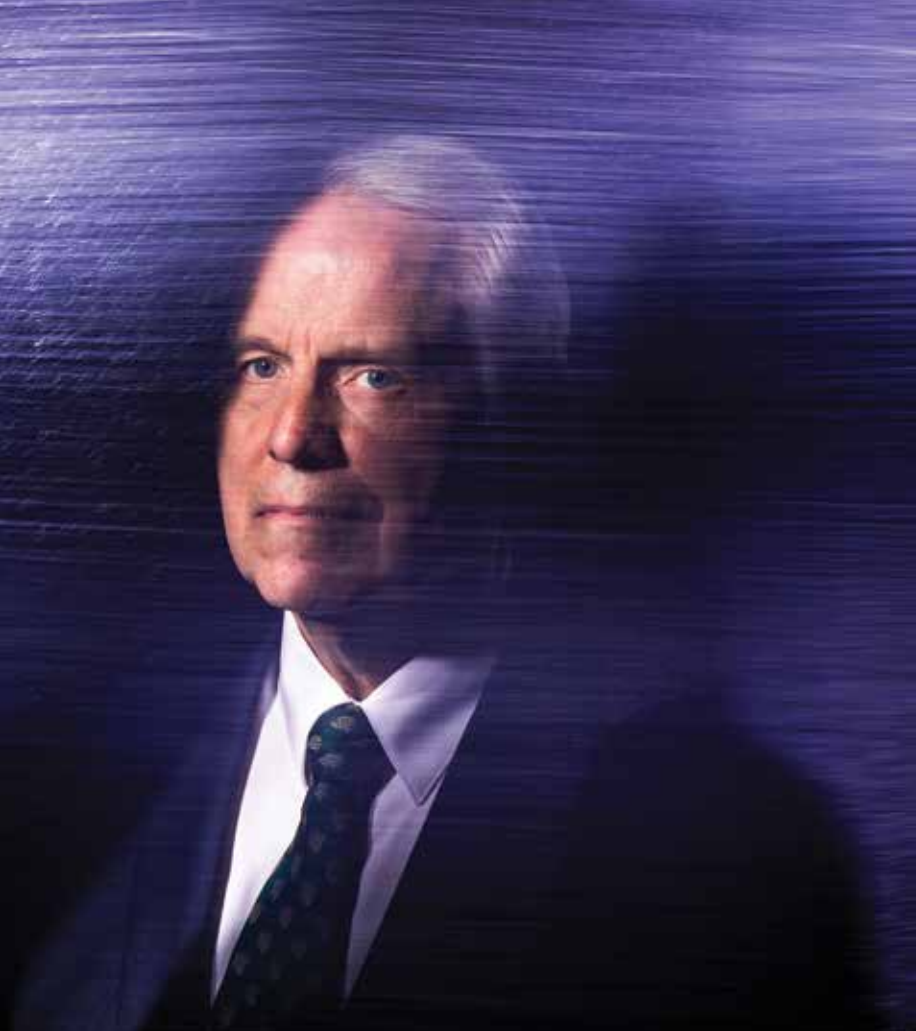
Jack Sunderlage served on UVU's Board of Trustees and on the President's National Advisory Board, serving as chairman of the latter group. He has also chaired the Utah Technology Council and spent 41 years in the technology industry.

"The UVU experience has just been terrific," he says. "I have gratitude and satisfaction for having played somewhat of a role in the transformation of UVU from state college to a university." He also looks back fondly at other milestones he has seen. "Being on Capitol Hill and getting approval for The Noorda Center for the Performing Arts was also very satisfying. Being on the search committee for President Astrid S. Tuminez was great. We could see the potential of this woman and how good she was. She could take UVU to the next level."

Despite his years of volunteer service, Sunderlage said he was surprised to receive the honor. "I feel like I am part of a team," he says. "I am aware of so many other people who have done so much. I feel very humbled and honored to get this award."



# WILSON W. SORENSEN LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD — JEFF OLSON



*An individual who has continually served throughout their life to further the purposes and the mission of UVU through their affiliation with the University as an employee, past or present, who has made a significant contribution. This award is given to someone who has dedicated themselves throughout their life to the growth and advancement of UVU.*

On June 23, 1973, Jeffery Olson decided to devote his career to transforming lives through higher education as a professor and administrator. He sought guidance from University of Utah President David P. Gardner, and Executive Vice President and soon-to-be Utah State Commissioner of Higher Education Arvo Van Alstyne. This resulted in his seeking a J.D. from the University of Utah and a Ph.D. in higher education administration and policy from Stanford University.

After completing the J.D., Walter Oberer, the dean of the College of Law, asked him to stay as the assistant dean. In 1984, after seven years as assistant dean and then associate dean, he left for Stanford for the Ph.D. There he was asked to take a leave of absence for a semester to serve on the faculty. The next year, he took another leave to serve as director of a study of indirect cost rates in major research universities.

In 1988, he joined the faculty of St. John's University, New York, because of its mission of providing access to first-generation students. For the next 26 years, he taught leadership, organizational theory, the economics of education, and law, primarily to aspiring university and school administrators, and conducted research in related areas. For the last 16 of those years, he also served as associate provost, primarily launching a university-wide transformation to enable all students to benefit from online learning and services. In the first year that U.S. News ranked online programs, two of St. John's programs were ranked in the top-10 nationally.

In 2014, he joined Utah Valley University as senior vice president of academic affairs and redirected his efforts to meet the postsecondary educational needs of the people of Utah, Wasatch, and Summit counties, and anyone else who chose to enroll.

During that time, UVU's enrollment grew from 31,331 to 39,931 (17%), 89 new academic programs were added, and 310 full-time faculty members were appointed. He oversaw the development of an academic master plan and a plan for the university's digital transformation. He also served as acting president during the summer of 2017 and interim president during the summer of 2018.

On July 1, 2019, after 42 years as a professor and administrator, seeking to transform lives, he retired. In retirement, he plans to continue to help UVU meet the needs of the people it serves.

# OUTSTANDING ALUMNI AWARD — JAKE REYNOLDS



*A living alumnus/alumna who has a distinguished record and service in their specialized area of endeavor, thus bringing honor and recognition to the University.*

Jake Reynolds is a 2005 graduate of UVU who leveraged his education and basketball experience to build a career that continues to flourish. He has served as chief revenue officer for the Philadelphia 76ers of the National Basketball Association. He has also held responsibility for the team's affiliate, the New Jersey Devils, and the Prudential Center in which both teams play. His positions have put him in charge of the team's sales and service departments. Through Reynolds's oversight, the 76ers have always been near the top of the league for new season ticket membership and related businesses quantifiers.

Prior to his position with the 76ers, Reynolds was the director of inside sales for Monumental Sports and Entertainment, overseeing the ticket sales, servicing, and sales staff efforts for the Washington Wizards, Washington Capitals, Washington Mystics, and Georgetown men's basketball. His first job out of UVU was an internship with the Indiana Pacers, then sales manager experience with the Pacers, followed by being named premium sales manager for the New York Giants of the National Football League.

A native of Salt Lake City, Reynolds thanks those he calls "mentors that have invested in me" at UVU who have helped the father of three to get to the top in a special form of business.

# CORPORATE CATALYST AWARD — NOEL VALLEJO



*A business whose pioneering initiatives have demonstrated success and contributions to the community and the mission of UVU. This award recognizes strategic planning, employee development, community involvement, customer service, and corporate integrity.*

The CEO of TestOut Corporation, Noel Vallejo attended UVU and loves supporting the university. His company develops training products and technologies that enable networking professionals to prepare for the industry certification exams that help them progress in their information technology careers.

Vallejo often speaks to students in the Woodbury School of Business and says he enjoys the experience. "My favorite part of anything that I do here is really speaking with the students, talking to them about careers, and trying to instill hope in their futures," he says. "It gives an opportunity to go back in the room and eat lunch with a few of the students and be able to understand their stories, what their background is, their struggles, and hopes.

"There are so many students at UVU, but if I could help one person finish school or encourage them to excel, be successful, that would be the best reward I could receive. It's really all about the one, helping the individual, even though there's a lot of students out there. You may not be able to touch everyone—but if I could help one person, it would be worth it."



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**EACH YEAR** during Homecoming we celebrate Founders Day, which is our way of saying happy birthday to UVU. In the fall of 1941, the state of Utah officially established Central Utah Vocational School (CUVS), and Hyrum E. Johnson was the school’s first director (1941–1945).

Under the leadership of the school’s second director, Wilson W. Sorensen (1945–1982), the name of the college changed several times to reflect its growth, and the need for a mascot became evident. The administration quickly settled on a wolverine. It is said that President Sorensen was fond of this choice. He liked to compare the school to a wolverine because of its small size but fearless attitude. Later, the wolverine mascot was named “Willy,” short for President Sorensen’s first name.

Today, our wolverine mascot is an identifying symbol of school spirit that invokes a sense of pride and tradition to students, alumni, and friends. We will unveil a new Willy the Wolverine statue during our Founders Day celebration on Monday, Sept. 23, at 11:30 a.m. The statue will stand in front of the Student Life and Wellness Center on the northeast section of campus and greet visitors who drive south on College Drive.

Virgil Oertle, an alumnus of UVU, sculpted the statue. Virgil graduated in 2000 with an associate degree in science and received a master’s degree in sculpture from the Pennsylvania Academy of Fine Arts in 2008.

Virgil said, “The most significant part of doing this sculpture has been to see where the school started, where it is now, and where it’s heading.” Virgil also noted that this is the largest mascot statue he has created. It measures approximately six feet high by seven feet wide. He has created other mascot statues across the nation and in Utah, having completed figures of Cosmo at BYU and Swoop at Utah.

We want to thank Andrea and James Clarke, whose donations to the university made this statue possible.

Join us on campus this Homecoming season (Sept. 23-28) and be sure to stop by and get a photo with Willy the Wolverine. Visit [uvu.edu/homecoming](https://uvu.edu/homecoming) for a complete list of activities.

Sincerely,

Kevin Walkenhorst  
Senior Director, Alumni Relations





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**MARCO  
VALDIVIESO**

**UVU 2017**

**I am UVU**

**MARCO VALDIVIESO.** Native of Peru, husband, father, and grandfather. B.A. Languages, Spanish. Minor English and Portuguese. Class of 2017.

After receiving an award from UVU "Latinos Unidos," I was inspired to become a UVU student at 60 years old. When I felt far away from graduation, I said to myself, "What kind of example and legacy would you like to leave your children and future generations?" Education brought me power to conquer my challenges, and I became a very confident person. I am a proud Wolverine! I am UVU.

Share your story at **uvualumni.org**

