Behind the Bling
Unveiling the Class of 2018 ring

All Natural
Step by step, team measures AT

The Catalyst
Entrepreneur fights cancer

a long way home
During last year’s Ring Dance, Laura and I were honored to each receive a Virginia Tech class ring, a gift from the Class of 2016. Class rings are special because they represent the history and traditions of our university. They are also a tangible reminder of the knowledge, skills, and experiences we carry with us into the future. Apparently, Hokie rings sometimes take surprising journeys and turn up in unexpected places. Perhaps those treks have something to do with the adventurous spirit of our alumni.

In keeping with that spirit, we have an opportunity to break new ground in higher education. Last year, we embarked on an ambitious project, “Envisioning Virginia Tech–Beyond Boundaries.” Thousands of faculty, students, staff, alumni, and partners participated in shaping a vision for Virginia Tech a generation into the future.

We began with our strengths and sought opportunities to build our national global leadership profile. These strengths have led us to form “Destination Areas,” which are intended to be destinations that attract talent, partnerships, investment, and future-focused innovation. Our first five Destination Areas are Intelligent Infrastructure for Human-Centered Communities; Global Systems Science; Adaptive Brain and Behavior; Integrated Security; and Data Analytics and Decision Sciences. These destination areas do not replace our traditional fields of study; they are instead intended to connect our students and faculty with rapidly emerging issues and opportunities. Consider the swift development of drone technology. Earlier this year, the Virginia Tech Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership partnered with Google and Chipotle to test a drone delivery system (see page 9), an important step toward making automatic drone deliveries a convenient and safe part of the intelligent infrastructure of our daily lives.

All these new programs have extensive experiential components. They prepare students with both depth of discipline and breadth across multiple subject areas. In addition, learning and experience occur in the context of our motto, Ut Prosim (That I May Serve). Everything we know about the direction of our global economy tells us that our undergraduates must be able to reinvent themselves professionally more than a dozen times over the course of their careers. We need to start thinking about the college experience differently. How can we become more valuable to our graduates and do more good for society?

We have an opportunity to become leaders in higher education and define the future of a 21st-century university education. Provost Thanassis Rikakis and I are confident that we will attract the world’s best faculty talent from across the globe to drive this transformation, and we will admit the best students from the state, the country, and around the globe. Our graduates will have the entrepreneurial skills to be resilient as the world around them changes. They will be at the forefront of research and discovery. We will create an intellectual environment that will open up the “Blue Oceans” to our explorers.

We envision a campus where faculty and students come together from many disciplines to work as a diverse team to address the complex issues of tomorrow—a dynamic organization that offers a vibrant living-learning environment and a collaborative experience that transcends the traditional college structure. We will not leave our history and tradition behind. On the contrary, we will carry them forward with us. It is our heritage to be trailblazers and innovators. We’re embarking on an adventurous new journey, Hokies; hold on to your rings!
Battle at Bristol: Eighteen years in the making, an outrageous idea by Speedway Motorsports Inc. owner and CEO Bruton Smith roared to life on Sept. 10 at Bristol Motor Speedway in Bristol, Tennessee: a football game in the middle of the track. Despite the Hokies’ 45-24 loss to the University of Tennessee, the Battle at Bristol was one for the ages: A record-breaking crowd of 156,990 packed the historic speedway, surpassing the 115,109 in attendance at a 2013 game between the University of Michigan and Notre Dame in Michigan Stadium. The Corps of Cadets’ cannon, Skipper, made its first out-of-state trip, firing each time the Hokies scored. Photos by Jim Stroup.

Unveiling the 2018 Ring
In How Tech Ticks, get an up-close look at each element of the newly revealed Class of 2018 ring, from the “flaming VT” to the class motto, *Mentes apertae, fines consociati*.

All Natural on the AT
A team of Hokies is studying the Appalachian Trail to produce the first comprehensive dataset on the famed footpath’s condition and sustainability. And on page 36, read further about Global Systems Science, one of five Destination Areas that criss-cross the university’s colleges and position Virginia Tech for world-class leadership.

A Long Way Home
Our beloved class rings sometimes slip away—but some of them return. Turn the pages to find a half-dozen truly remarkable tales of lost-and-found rings.

The Catalyst
When three cancer-related deaths in Brian Slingerland’s family led the entrepreneurial alumnus to launch a biotechnology company, he didn’t know he’d end up a part of one of the largest biotech deals in history.

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On the cover: If a lost class ring has a mind to find its way home, even the New River—and its fish—won’t stand in the way. Photo by Jim Stroup.
letters to the editor

Diplomas in the ’40s and ’50s

The summer edition article “Diplomatic,” by Alison Matthiessen, interested me especially. During the time when I received my bachelor’s and master’s degrees in 1942 and 1943, the process of producing diplomas was quite different.

A classmate and I were students in architectural engineering. We were taught to draw and letter. He lettered the names and majors in Old English and dates in script on all diplomas in 1942 and most in 1943, including his master’s degree. The following quarter, I took over the lettering job and lettered my own master’s degree. Dean [John Edward] Williams died in the spring and could not sign any requiring his signature. As a result, I learned to write his signature, and his daughter said she could not tell which was real and which was the forgery.

During the 1950s, I was on the faculty of architectural engineering. By then, diplomas were ordered with names, majors, and dates in place. It was not possible to add “with honors” until grades came in.

Consequently, Registrar Clarice Slusher had me come to Burruss Hall early on commencement day to add that.

In the 1950s, some graduates from the early 1900s would lose a diploma and ask for a duplicate. Some large blanks from the early 1900s would lose a diploma and ask for a duplicate. Some large blanks from then were available, so it was possible to honor the request. Back then, all the faculty signed the diplomas, so reproducing the signatures was a challenge!

When you stay around a long time, as I have, you do become a historian!

Bertram Y. Kinzey Jr. ’42, Blacksburg, Virginia

Pesticides used by beekeepers to improve honeybee health may actually harm the bees by damaging bacteria communities in their guts, according to research led by Mark Williams, an associate professor of horticulture in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and an affiliate of the Fralin Life Science Institute. The team’s findings were published in the journal Frontiers in Microbiology.

For the project, Williams’ team extracted genomic data from honeybees living in hives treated with pesticides, and then compared the data to that of bees living in pesticide-free hives. Honeybees from chlorothalonil-treated hives showed the greatest change in gut microbiome, said Williams.

Because particular microbes are essential to honeybee health and the ability to stave off disease naturally, Williams plans to investigate specific changes in gut microbiota activities that affect honeybee survival.

Honeybee health has been declining since the 1980s, and the approximate rate of hive loss in Virginia is more than 30 percent annually. Continued loss is expected to drive up the cost of such crops as apples, melons, and squash, which honeybees make possible.

Abuzz:
For a video of the project, go to vtmag.vt.edu.
Interactive Thinkabit Lab launched in National Capital Region

Providing students and teachers with a dynamic, collaborative learning environment—equal parts lab, makerspace, and classroom—the Qualcomm Thinkabit Lab launched in early September at Virginia Tech’s Northern Virginia Center in Falls Church.

The lab, which marks a multiyear collaboration between Tech and Qualcomm Inc., introduces innovative science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) learning activities and future career opportunities to underserved students and those traditionally underrepresented in STEM fields.

Qualcomm’s sixth Thinkabit Lab and its first outside San Diego, the facility in Tech’s National Capital Region is led by the Department of Engineering Education in the College of Engineering and by the School of Education in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences. Leveraging Tech’s academic depth in both disciplines, the lab will also prepare educators in the Washington, D.C., metro area to carry out Thinkabit-inspired STEM experiences in area schools and programs to foster critical skills necessary for the 21st century.

“Beyond being a space to inspire the next generation of inventors,” said Qualcomm CEO and Virginia Tech alumnus Steve Mollenkopf, “the lab enables research and practical application that will bring new advancements to STEM education at all levels.”

“We know that STEM skills can enhance every student’s future, regardless of students’ field of study,” Tech President Tim Sands said, “and we need to prepare both students and teachers to address the complex challenges of tomorrow. The Thinkabit collaboration with Qualcomm will allow us to join complementary strengths and work synergistically to create opportunities and to lower barriers.”

For a video of the lab’s opening and its interactive activities, go to vtmag.vt.edu.

Code for cool. With imagination and creativity, participants from National Capital Region middle schools create, code, and collaborate to build a “Robo Craft” with electronic equipment, including laptop computers, Arduino servos, resistors, circuits, LEDs, breadboards, and solar panels.

Hokie legacy

More than 30 years have passed since Sheila and Jeff Brown were students at Virginia Tech, but they have seen their fair share of Blacksburg in the years since. Their children inherited the Hokie gene: Two sons have graduated from Virginia Tech and a third started his first year this fall. Blacksburg feels like a second home to the Browns.

The Browns are active and involved as alumni, as Hokie parents, and as donors. “We believe that sharing our time, as well as our resources, is essential to the environment of learning and strength of community,” said Sheila. “There is no place quite like Virginia Tech, as the Hokie Nation can attest, and we enjoy giving back.”

The Browns previously served on the Division of Student Affairs Alumni Advisory Board and currently are members of the Parent Committee. Both groups provide guidance, counsel, and resources to the division, which strives to offer students an environment in which they can thrive.

Sheila (biology ’86) was a homecoming queen candidate, served as a member of and leader in Kappa Delta sorority, was a Student Alumni Associates member, and worked on the Bugle staff. Jeff (finance ’84) fondly recalled “living on campus in Pritchard Hall for three years, dining in Dietrick Hall, playing intramural sports, and attending many a game with my hall-mates, all while receiving a top-notch education,” he said.

In the spring of 1984, when Jeff was a senior and Sheila was a sophomore, the couple met at a Virginia Tech Karate Club mixer. Today, the family lives in White Stone, Virginia, where Jeff owns a marine construction firm and Sheila owns a women’s clothing boutique. They also own a real estate investment company.

Hokie home

Ethan (A.S. agricultural technology ‘11, agrisbusiness management ‘14), a member of the National Agris-Marketing Association and Gamma Sigma Delta agricultural honor society while at Tech, is an account manager for Ruppert Landscaping in Alexandria, Virginia.

Austin (M.S. crop and soil environmental sciences ’15), who was an officer in the Real Estate Club and manager of Campus Cookies while at Tech, is an electric power generation service advisor for Carter Machinery in Richmond, Virginia.

Brendan, the youngest, who enrolled at Virginia Tech this fall, plans to major in real estate and play club or intramural soccer.

The Browns are members of Virginia Tech’s 1872 Society, a philanthropic group that recognizes donors who make leadership annual gifts each year. They also generously support the Division of Student Affairs and the Hokie Parents Fund; an annual giving program that enriches the student experience and supports such areas as the Common Book Project, the Student Emergency Fund, various clubs and organizations, and family weekend events.

Jeff ‘84 and Shelsa Brown ‘86 visit with their son, Brendan. To read the full story, visit vtmag.vt.edu.
University reveals plans for $225 million Global Business and Analytics Complex

Virginia Tech is planning a more than $225 million Global Business and Analytics Complex to galvanize people who share a passion for an analytic approach to problems.

The complex will include four new buildings, including two academic buildings and two living-learning residential communities for about 700 students on the Blacksburg campus. The academic buildings will house the Pamplin College of Business, faculty offices, classroom spaces, and open work spaces where faculty from all colleges will work on collaborative projects for teaching and conducting research focused in the Data Analytics and Decision Sciences Destination Area.

“The world is moving at a much faster pace today, which means we need to be more efficient in our decision-making processes,” said Rob Sumichrast, dean of the Pamplin College of Business.

In mid-September, Tech’s reputation for outstanding dining literally reached new heights when unmanned aircraft delivered Chipotle burritos to waiting customers at a closed test site on campus.

Conducted by Project Wing—a division of X, an innovation lab formerly known as Google[x]—and Tech’s Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership, the research flights were the first in a series of extended flight tests that will yield technical, safety, and user-experience data for the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). As the FAA takes steps towards safely integrating unmanned aircraft deliveries into the airspace and into everyday life, from natural disaster relief to emergency medicine to shopping, Project Wing’s research seeks to inform the fine-tuning of such deliveries, which could potentially lower costs, decrease delivery times, and prove more environmentally friendly than ground transportation.

“The commercial use of drones for package and food delivery in U.S. airspace is rapidly becoming a reality,” said U.S. Sen. Mark R. Warner of Virginia. “We are pleased to work with Project Wing when great partners work together in a collaborative, innovative environment. We are continuously seeking new opportunities to support Virginia’s economy and prepare our students for the future.”

The Virginia Tech Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership was selected by the FAA in 2013 as one of six national test sites for unmanned aircraft. Since then, researchers have investigated medical supply delivery to remote locations, worked with NASA to research a traffic management research platform for unmanned aircraft, assisted in search and rescue missions, and enabled a range of unmanned aircraft applications.

However useful, none of that research included a bag of tortilla chips.

For a video of the test flights, go to vtmag.vt.edu. To read more about intelligent infrastructure at Virginia Tech, visit vtpros.vt.edu/destination-areas.
Two food trucks now serving campus

On the first day of fall semester classes, two brand-new food trucks—The Grillfield and the Periodic Table—rolled in to feed underserved areas of campus.

In line with years of research and planning by Dining Services and the Division of Student Affairs, as well as ample input and feedback from students, both trucks steer clear of predictable menus. Along with chef specials, The Grillfield serves Latino-fusion meals, such as smoked pulled-pork tortas and beef barbacoa tortillas, while the Periodic Table serves Asian-fusion meals, such as Thai peanut pork rice bowl and lemongrass chicken yaki-ramen. Future plans are to vary each truck’s menu by season.

Two food trucks now serving campus

Two food trucks now serving campus

Facebook executive invigorates campus

During a late-August visit, Facebook executive Regina Dugan ’84, ’85 inspired Hokies, including (at upper left) Executive Vice President and Provost Thanasia Rasikis and President Tim Sands.

A part of Virginia Tech’s inaugural Beyond Boundaries Presidential Lecture series, Regina Dugan (mechanical engineering ’84, M.S. ’85) returned to campus in late August to discuss rapid innovation, a topic in which she has sustained expertise.

Before joining Facebook to lead its new advanced research group, Dugan, who earned a Ph.D. at the California Institute of Technology, oversaw Google’s Advanced Technology and Products Team and is the former head of DARPA, the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. In 2013, CNN named her to its top 10 list of thinkers in science and technology who are “changing the world with their insights and innovations.”

Said President Tim Sands in his introduction of Dugan at the Moss Arts Center: “She’s a scientist, a businesswoman, an inventor, and a leader in disruptive innovation. She knows Virginia Tech well because she’s also a Hokie; Beyond Boundaries is President Sands’ visioning initiative that challenges the university community to imagine Virginia Tech a generation into the future and to consider how to advance as a global land-grant university.

Dugan, who stressed that companies—and universities—need to be forward-thinking, said she often hears concerns that large organizations like Virginia Tech are too bureaucratic to create an architecture and culture of innovation, an assessment she doesn’t believe. “What we choose to endeavor to do,” she told the audience of students, faculty, staff, and community members, “becomes the future.”

Building a culture of innovation requires organizing work differently, Dugan said. “It’s a way of life. It is something you can learn. It is something you can get better at. It is something you test, adapt, and change with the time. You treat it as a discipline, and you get better.”

A member of the Virginia Tech College of Engineering’s Academy of Engineering Excellence, Dugan said that innovation is a discipline requiring speed, agility, and the ability to change and adapt. “I’ve been fortunate to be part of many great organizations. I know that the best of them challenge the very notion that their past is what makes them great,” she said. “Instead, they use their history of accomplishment to give them confidence to change and look forward to the future. They seem to focus, always, on a future that can be even greater than their past.”

Read more about Dugan in “The Edge of Possibility” in the summer 2013 edition of Virginia Tech Magazine.
Unusual new species of extinct reptile shows dinosaurs copied body, skull shapes of distant relatives

A multi-institutional team of paleontologists that included Hokies identified, described, and named a new species of extinct reptile that predated dinosaurs by at least 100 million years but bore an iconic dinosaur head shape.

Published in September in Current Biology, the study introduces Triopticus primus, whose thickened skull roof looks just like the distantly related pachycephalosaur dinosaurs that lived much later. Many of the other extinct animals found with Triopticus also display structures that resemble later dinosaurs, such as the long snouts of Spinosaurus, the toothless beaks of ornithomimids, and the armor plates of ankylosaurs.

“What we thought were unique body shapes in many dinosaurs actually evolved millions of years before in the Triassic Period, about 225 million years ago,” said Virginia Tech College of Science researcher Michelle Stocker.

In Newport News, the Tech Center at Oyster Point will offer business, research, retail, and living spaces. Renderings courtesy of Tech Center.

Expanding opportunities in Newport News

The Virginia Tech Corporate Research Center (VTCRC), which has been widely recognized for its effectiveness in bringing highly skilled jobs to Blacksburg, is collaborating on a similar initiative in Newport News, Virginia. Tech Center at Oyster Point will offer not only business development and research space, but also retail and housing.

“The new paradigm of successful economic development is living, working, and playing in the same area,” said Corporate Research Center President and CEO Joe Meredith, who is managing the research-park portion of the location, which is being developed by the W.M. Jordan Co.

The first phase, which included 250,000 square feet of restaurant and retail space, is now open. It features businesses such as AT&T and Zoe’s Kitchen. The second phase, a fitness center and apartments, is scheduled to open this fall. Construction of the first research-park building in phase three is on pace to begin by the end of the year.

“Our vision is to be a catalyst for using science from two major federal laboratories—the Thomas Jefferson National Laboratory and NASA/Langley—to create new companies and expand the capabilities of existing businesses,” said W.M. Jordan Co. President and CEO John R. Lawson (geophysics ’75). “There are world-class technologies and entrepreneurial skills available in our community. Virginia Tech will lead the way to increased collaboration and communication.”

Virginia Tech to build on-campus Hyperloop track

Virginia Tech will build a Hyperloop test track on the Blacksburg campus, the first of its kind on the East Coast. Hyperloop is a high-speed transportation system using a passenger-carrying pod in a near-vacuum tube that is envisioned to reach speeds in excess of 700 mph. Earlier this year, a Virginia Tech team placed fourth among more than 120 teams at an international competition at Texas A&M University to design a Hyperloop pod. The team unveiled its pod in September, and will test the pod at a 1-mile track in California.

“With the hands-on experience this test track will provide, our students will make technological breakthroughs the world has never seen before,” said Stefan Duma, the Harry Wyatt Professor of Engineering and interim director of the Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science. “It’s a physical manifestation of the university’s commitment to creating intelligent infrastructure for the 21st century.”

To read more about intelligent infrastructure for human-centered communities, visit provost.vt.edu/destination-areas.
Students in the College of Natural Resources and Environment’s Wood Enterprise Institute (WEI) have given new life to two historic campus trees felled by disease. Each year, the student-run, faculty-supported entrepreneurial organization designs, constructs, markets, and sells a wood product, and this year’s team incorporating the salvaged wood of the trees into three unique tables. Proceeds from two of the tables benefited the university’s urban/campus forest sustainability program and Smithfield Plantation. The third will be donated.

The Grove white oak: This giant tree has 314 rings, but it grew for years before it produced rings, so it easily predates 1700. For perspective, the original Drapers Meadow settlement in the area wasn’t established until 1749.

The Henderson Lawn sycamore: In 2010–11, WEI students obtained the butt log (more than 4 feet in diameter) from this 140-year-old tree. Students used slabs of the darker sycamore to fill in where wood at the pith of the white oak had to be removed.

A laser-engraved sycamore inlay marks the ring denoting the year Virginia Tech was founded—1872.

To showcase the wood, the students left a live or natural edge. The original table required about 250 combined student hours of work.

A bow tie spline crafted out of sycamore was used to stabilize a large end split in the oak. The spline stops further splitting while adding unique aesthetic value. Detail images courtesy of Earl D. Kline.

The new building provides state-of-the-art learning spaces

Nearly 10,000 students began taking classes this fall in the $42 million, three-story, 73,400-square-foot Classroom Building, which contains 15 classrooms and four interdisciplinary teaching labs with seats for more than 1,450 students, as well as study rooms and group meeting space.

The new learning spaces are designed to support increasingly interactive and technology-driven learning experiences. “The demand for learning environments that support collaboration and deep engagement has grown steadily,” said Jill Sible, assistant provost for undergraduate education. “The realization of an entire building that supports this type of learning is a dream come true. This amazing building truly sets Virginia Tech apart.”

Classrooms features include moveable furnishings, wall-mounted writing spaces, and multiple screens for projecting shared material and student work. Some rooms were specifically designed to facilitate team-based, active learning as an alternative to lectures, even for large-enrollment classes.

The Classroom Building is an integral component of the planned future development of the North Academic Precinct, which is currently anchored by Goodwin Hall.
The Hokies were humbled by a visit to the “winderstandsnest,” or "resistance nest," assaulted by soldiers under the leadership of 1st Lieutenant Allie Oberoi, a senior international studies and Russian major and Naval ROTC member. "After the bells stopped, the silence was deafening," she said. "Standing at the sites they had studied in detail, cadets gained a deeper understanding of history. "When [we're] reading numbers in history books, it is very easy to forget how many men sacrificed their very lives to liberate the French people. Walking down the sidewalks through the cemetery puts everything in perspective," said Lindsey Bittner, a senior industrial and systems engineering major and Naval ROTC member.

As part of the experience, cadets related historic events to modern international relations. Christopher Selig, a junior mechanical engineering major and Army ROTC member, said, "The sheer magnitude of operations and logistics that occurred, not only for the initial invasion, but for the follow-up resupplying, still baffles me. To get multiple nations to work together and come together in order to accomplish the invasion is something that I could only imagine. To get paid from inner-city Pittsburgh land upon a line of work that has allowed him to travel the world and assess global management practices?"

"Fascinated by economics and finance as an undergraduate at the University of Pittsburgh, Wokutch didn't exactly picture himself working for the World Bank in international development efforts. Stepping off an elevator in Pitt's Cathedral of Learning to pick up an application to take the GMAT (Graduate Management Admission Test), Wokutch saw a sign: "Get a Ph.D. in [what was then called] environmental influences on management." He asked about the program and was whisked away to the program head's office. "If you get a Ph.D. in business," the professor told him, "you can do all sorts of things: consulting, teaching, running your own business." Wokutch paused for a moment: "Okay, that's what I'll do." All told, it was a 15-minute conversation.

"As a graduate assistant for the business school's associate dean, Wokutch—who still had designs on working for the World Bank—was advised to join academe and become tenured because he was told that he "wasn't young enough anymore." And thus his globe-trotting research began in earnest.

After two Fulbright fellowships and the publication of two books, Wokutch introduced Pamplin students to study abroad programs to Asia. "At that point, my research and teaching and the study abroad programs really merged," he said. Wokutch introduced Pamplin students to study abroad programs to Asia. "At that point, my research and teaching and the study abroad programs really merged," he said.

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BEHIND THE BLING

U
nealed in early October, the Class of 2018 ring—
designed by students, just as it is every year—was packed
with meaning.

Mountains
The range that stretches across both
sides evokes the little slice of heaven
in the mountains.

Torgersen Bridge
Spans Alumni Mall, Torgersen
Bridge serves as the gateway to
Virginia Tech. The
screeching eagle
flying below it,
the symbol of
strength and
freedom, has
been a traditional element on the ring
since 1911.

University shield
Created in 1896.

Skipper
Since 1946, “Skipper” has been a
Corps of Cadets tradition at
football games and corps and
university events.

Lost we forget
Engraved into “The Rock” found
on the Upper Quad, these words
honor the VPI alumni
lost in World War I.

Corps of Cadets crest

Ut Prosim
The motto, Ut Prosim (That
I may serve), is the founda-
tion of the university side
of the ring, as well as the
university itself. The motto is
in the same location and style as
on the 1969 class ring worn by the
2018 namesake, Frank Beam.

Hokie Stone

Burruss Hall

In the lobby of Burruss Hall, a
timepiece, the Hokie
topper, a student
success,
represents Virginia Tech’s
strength and success.

Flaming VT
The “Flaming VT”
tests between the corps crest
and university shield,
symbolizing the
strong Hokie
spirit shared
by civilians
and cadets.

The Rolls Royce turbine
hanging in the lobby of Goodwin Hall
represents Virginia Tech’s
stellar academic
and research.

Snowman
The snowman represents special times
students enjoy on snow days, as well
as the annual cadets versus civilians
snowball fight.

Turbine in
Goodwin Hall

Hokie Bird

President Sands in
graduation cap
The likeness of President Tim Sands
wearing a graduation cap and standing
under the summertime tree signifies
that he began his tenure
with the Class of
2018 and will complete his
“senior year” with them.

Drillfield events
The fire wheel welcomes students
back to campus at GobbleFest.
The ribbon celebrates the tra-
dition of being the No.
1 collegiate Relay
for Life. The text
symbolizes Hokies
coming together to
serve the community
at the Big Brown.

Class of 2018 motto
Adverso operas, fines circumcrescunt
(Minds open, aims united).
The Class of 2018 em-
braces difference.

Downtown
Blackburg

Commonwealth Cup
Hold high by a student, this
cherished cup is awarded to the
winner of the annual Virginia
Tech-VA Tech football game, which
Tech has won for 12 consecutive years.

Beamer Way
Beamer Way, formerly called Spring
Road, is named in honor of Coach
Frank Beamer ’59.

Main Street
celebration
On Sept. 6, 2014, Hokies flooded downtown
Blackburg after the football team
beat Ohio State in what would later
win the national championship.

CXLVT
The Class of 2018 will be the 146th
class to graduate

33 Hokie trackers
An unbroken chain around the
gemstone; one each for the Hokies
lost on April 16, 2007

1872
The year Virginia Agricultural
and Mechanical College opened

19
10/10/2016
The championship scoreboard is a tribute
to the Battle of Bristol football game

9 Pylons
Brotherhood, Honor, Service, Loyalty, Sacrifice, Leadership, Duty, and Ut Prosim

2 trees
Two oak trees representing autumn
and spring

2 trees
Two oak trees representing winter
and summer

18 in Roman numerals

BY THE NUMBERS
Find these elements in the ring!

7 stars
To honor Virginia Tech’s seven
Medals of Honor recipients

2 crossed sabres
An element from the cadets’ class rings

1858
2018 in Roman numerals

1051x732
1149x656
99x165
526x629
686x148
Commanding attention

When Associate Professor Greg Justice isn’t directing plays and teaching acting classes at Virginia Tech, he’s engaged in an artistic form of outreach: showing Fortune 500 executives, teachers, professional speakers, interviewees, and others how to employ acting techniques to command audience attention. In the Alumni Association’s 100 Days ‘til Graduation program, Justice has shared tips with graduating seniors; this summer, he spoke at Nashville and Knoxville alumni chapter events.

VOCALS

Because the English language often places key words at the end of sentences, maintain your vocal energy throughout your statements. Teens, in particular, will finish sentences with falling energy. Imagine the Shakespeare line, “what light through yonder window breaks,” with a half-hearted delivery.

CHANGE SCENES

Venture into the audience, and the frame around you shifts, like a video camera panning. Or break the audience into small groups for discussion, like a commercial break in television.

ENERGY

Stand on the balls of your feet, in the “positive energy zone,” to project your energy toward the audience. When you field a question, shift backward into your heels to share the floor—but to answer the question, retake the audience’s attention by shifting your energy forward.

WARM UP

According to survey after survey, not even the fear of death exceeds the fear of public speaking, Justice said. Nerves cause tension, and a tense throat will cause a shaky voice and restrict oxygen to the brain, leading you to lose your train of thought. Just like an athlete or actor, ease the tension with stretching and relaxation techniques.

CROSSES

Move from STAGE RIGHT to stage left, because the movement mimics how we read HEROES enter from stage right.

Move to DOWN CENTER to underscore a main point, because you’ll seem larger in the audience’s eyes and subconsciously reinforce your words.

Move from STAGE LEFT to stage right, against the grain, to introduce tension. Villains enter from stage left.

For a video of Justice sharing his wisdom, go to vtmag.vt.edu.
Running as fast as you can some 45 yards while hoisting a flexible pole nearly three times your height is difficult enough. But use that pole to fling yourself, momentarily upside down, some 18 feet in the air over a horizontal bar and then cascade back down, without seeing your landing, into a pit that resembles a giant inflated bed: That’s entering another realm.

Requiring some 36 distinct movements in the span of about a second, pole vaulting is a complex endeavor. With one wrong move or equipment malfunction, an athlete can overshoot the pit and plummet onto a less-forgiving surface.

Junior pole vaulter Torben Laidig has, of course, had that happen. And still he says, “Once you’re over the bar and begin falling back to the pit, it’s definitely the best feeling in the world.” Indeed. Pole vaulting may be the perfect event for an athlete who’s not afraid to take chances. Laidig came to Virginia Tech, sight unseen, from his native Germany on the good word of fellow Germans and Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) champion pole vaulters Stephan Munz, now a doctoral student and a volunteer assistant coach at Tech, and Martina Schultze, Tech’s record holder and a five-time ACC champion, only the second woman in conference history to win three straight outdoor titles.

Laidig, who arrived at Tech vaulting 5.20 meters (17’-1”), achieved a personal best and set a new program record at seemingly every meet during a remarkable 2016 season: 5.62 meters (18’-5.25”) indoors, an ACC record; and 5.60 meters (18’-4.5”) outdoors, breaking Tech’s all-time record set in 2006.

In early June, carrying exceptional momentum into the NCAA track and field championships in Eugene, Oregon, Laidig delivered, clearing 5.55 meters (18’-2.5”) to claim second. Named to the ALL-ACC Academic Team, Laidig is pursuing a dual degree in biochemistry and biological sciences with a minor in chemistry, heady stuff for a nationally competitive athlete. “In Germany, an athlete can’t combine school and sports,” he said. “I’m grateful to be able to do that here.”
T<br>raveling around the world to recruit prospective students and connect with fellow alumni might sound like a dream come true. And for me, it is. As assistant director for admissions and recruitment at Virginia Tech’s Language and Culture Institute, I roam the globe to attract the best and brightest international students, scholars, and professionals to the university. Working in conjunction with Undergraduate Admissions and the Graduates School, I extol the benefits not only of the Language and Culture Institute, but also of the broader university. Plus, I’ve got my trusty companion, HokieBird, with me.

Bird in hand, I get to see places most people only read or hear about. On Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, the HokieBird can be seen at the pyramids of Egypt, the Kuwait Towers, high schools in China, and near the Red Sea. While searching for new students and visiting countries near and far, I also email alumni and tell them I’d like to say hello. Almost immediately, I get a response: “Yes! Please, let’s meet!” In Saudi Arabia, I met up with Emer LeBoone (Ph.D. curriculum and instruction ‘06), who is now a senior learning and development specialist at the Islamic Development Bank. Before heading to Kuwait, I sent out a generic email to alumni living in the country. Within 24 hours, I’d heard back from Ahmed Alkandari (industrial systems engineering ‘01). While he couldn’t meet with me, he gave me three other contacts. From there, I was able to schedule a meeting with alumni faculty members at Kuwait University’s College of Engineering and Petroleum and to have dinner with brothers Mijbel (computer engineering ‘04) and Bader Al Qattan (business information technology ‘05) and their cousin, Hamad Alsane (accounting and information systems ’07). What starts out as a meeting of strangers winds up being a homecoming of sorts. They treat me as a cherished friend. It’s humbling. These members of our family value their memories of Blacksburg. With fondness and nostalgia, they reminisce about their favorite advisor, restaurant, apartment, friendships, and experiences.

They are proud alumni and a vital part of our community. And they want to assist and remain involved in any way they can. They help to identify alumni they know and spread the word to others about updating their records through the Alumni Association. In turn, we can call on them to speak with prospective students at fairs and high schools. They can engage with current students and provide guidance and support where needed. Meeting Hokie alumni can also go a long way to reassure families about the strength of our programs and the potential for student success.

As my journey continues, I will meet more members of my extended family and utilize their generosity to further build pathways to and from Virginia Tech. Meeting families, future students, and devoted alumni throughout the world is exciting, exotic, and exhausting. The HokieBird and I wouldn’t have it any other way. Jacqueline L. Nottingham (family and child development ’88) is the assistant director for admissions and recruitment at the Language and Culture Institute. She can be reached at ntnghm@vt.edu.
After an eventful first year at the helm of Virginia Tech’s Advancement Division, Charlie Phlegar ’78, ’87 was pleased to see the university break a record for annual fundraising.

Rather than putting his feet up on vacation, he took his family on an eight-day, seven-night paddling trip in the Grand Canyon. “It was probably the most intense experience of our lives,” said Phlegar. “No cell reception, no bathrooms, and a harsh climate. It required a lot of teamwork.”

Phlegar, who has run, cycled, or exercised five days per week for nearly 40 years, is no fan of sitting still. It’s a professional philosophy as well as a personal one, and it shapes his fast-moving approach with the university’s advancement team, comprised of Alumni Relations, University Development, and University Relations.

Among others, new initiatives during Phlegar’s first year have included relaunching the 1872 Society to recognize current-use donors, investing in the young alumni programs, and opening a studio so that faculty experts can give better interviews to national media. Priorities for the future include increasing awareness of Virginia Tech beyond its home state, topping fiscal year 2016’s fundraising total of $100.42 million, engaging young alumni to a greater degree, and encouraging more alumni to give back to the university.

“Surveys indicate we Hokies have great affinity for Virginia Tech,” Phlegar said, “but there’s no way to hide the truth that we lag well behind our peers in the percentage of alumni who actually donate. Hokies are naturally generous, but we must do more to educate them about the importance of philanthropy to our success.”

Phlegar said that today’s competitive environment won’t reward universities for being risk-averse. Rather, “Virginia Tech must dare to be bold and innovative,” Phlegar said. “With President Sands’ leadership, we will meet the challenge of our Beyond Boundaries envisioning project. We will evolve as an institution, in order to advance excellence and expand access to the Virginia Tech experience.”

With those ambitions in mind and with such a deep love for Virginia Tech, Charlie Phlegar is unlikely to slow down anytime soon.  

Albert Raboteau is the director of advancement communications.
Four elements of Taylor's educational path—diving deep into an academic discipline, solving big problems with an interdisciplinary team, applying knowledge in real-world settings, and living to serve others—typify the Virginia Tech experience. We call it being a VT-shaped student.

LEARNING BY DOING
Taylor knew that mechanical engineering principles could underpin a solution to neonatal hypothermia. In the 2015-16 academic year, she led six undergraduates to develop a warming device they later called the “baby pod.”

DIVING DEEP
A doctoral student in the Department of Engineering Education, Taylor holds a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering and master's degrees in mechanical engineering and public health. In her studies, Taylor’s mentors have encouraged her to apply engineering knowledge to other disciplines. Her work with maternal and child health and international development began while she was an undergraduate, when she helped design Global AIR, a breathing device for newborns.

SPANNING DISCIPLINES
Taylor has partnered with the university’s Office of International Research, Education, and Development in several initiatives, including a program that works to ensure women benefit from international research projects. An engineer with a focus on public health, Taylor said she has faced her share of detractors who don’t believe she fits the mold of what an engineer “should” be. “I think that Virginia Tech is really working on expanding that definition and making sure we don’t put a box around the definition of what people think engineers are.”

LIVING TO SERVE
Taylor will carry that message back to Malawi this fall. She plans to work with a local university on the recruitment and retention of women in engineering, furthering her goals to reinforce the importance of STEM education.

Warmth: Doctoral student Ashley Taylor led a team that developed a warming device for infants in Malawi.

In summer 2015, doctoral student Ashley Taylor was returning to the U.S. on a transatlantic flight. She was unable to rest, still thinking about what she had seen. While touring the neonatal ward at Domasi Rural Hospital in southern Malawi, her group learned that doctors face a big problem in keeping infants alive—keeping them warm. Lack of reliable, consistent electricity means that some babies die during cold nights in the neonatal unit.
All natural

Minimalist: Virginia Tech’s Jeff Marion embodies the Leave No Trace principles of hiking (on which he, as a founding member of the organization, quite literally wrote the book) by hammock-amping to minimize his footprint. Seen here in July near the Appalachian Trail’s southern terminus in Georgia, where a growing number of hikers are affecting the environment, Marion met his research team as they wrapped up their second summer of measuring trail conditions.
Along the Appalachian Trail (AT) this summer, thru-hikers—those hiking the entire 2,185 miles from Georgia to Maine or vice versa—might have encountered a trio of Virginia Tech researchers armed with stakes and measuring tape and various electronic gadgetry. Being long-distance hikers themselves, the researchers couldn’t help but test the gullibility of hikers who encountered one of the transect lines placed across and above the trail tread.

The project was to measure average step height, the researchers would say. Or problem-solving abilities in the woods. Or smells. Yes, that’s it: a hiker smell-o-meter. “They’re losing it right now,” said Mitchell Rosen, a senior in the College of Natural Resources and Environment (CNRE), of the thru-hiker mindset. He chuckled, and then paused. “So are we, maybe.”

In truth, the transect lines were measuring the trail itself. The research project is a three-year study funded by the National Park Service to characterize and help reduce the impact of millions of AT hikers on the trail tread, campsites, and shelters by assessing and evaluating the sustainability of trail alignments, camping locations, and management practices. Led by Jeff Marion, an adjunct professor in the College of Natural Resources and Environment since 1989 and a research ecologist with the U.S. Geological Survey, the team examined 1,050 transect lines within 21 randomly selected 5-kilometer stretches along the AT’s northern third in 2015 and 21 stretches in the southern third this year, with plans to measure the middle third in 2017.

On June 2, the ninth day of the summer’s work, Rosen—along with CNRE graduate student and team leader Johanna Arredondo (forestry, natural resources conservation ’13) and field staff member Fletcher Meadema—tackled the sixth segment, located just north of Grayson Highlands State Park and just east of Mt. Rogers, the highest point in Virginia. Southbound from the Old Orchard shelter, when a Trimble GPS device buzzed to tell Meadema (architecture ’12) that he had reached one of the segment’s preprogrammed sites, he stopped to begin assessing trail conditions. At the spot, pooling rain runoff had caused a mud hole, effectively widening the trail as hikers step around it.
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VIRGINIA TECH'S NEW GLOBAL SYSTEMS SCIENCE DESTINATION AREA GROWS FROM ROOTS THAT EXTEND BACK TO THE UNIVERSITY'S FOUNDING AS A LAND-GRANT COLLEGE, TO BRANCHES THAT INCLUDE THE GLOBE'S MOST URGENT AND COMPLICATED CHALLENGES.

One of five new Destination Areas—sites of interdisciplinary collaboration where experts are positioned to address the full complexities of pressing problems worldwide—Global Systems Science targets the interface between society and the environment.

"The heart of the Global Systems Science Destination Area is the intimate and complex relationship that we have with the environment," said William Hopkins, director of the Global Change Center at Virginia Tech and professor in the Department of Fish and Wildlife Conservation. "For example, as the need to provide food, energy, and water to a growing human population continues to escalate, how do we prevent, halt, or reverse undesirable side effects like pollution and climate change?"

Global Systems Science targets what are known as "wicked problems," challenges considered difficult, if not impossible, to solve because of their complexity, size, economic effects, or continuously changing nature.

"They cannot be solved with our traditional research and training models," Hopkins said. "They require new science and technologies, advanced computational methods, and highly transdisciplinary approaches, to include an integrated combination of collaborating scientists, engineers, and social scientists, as well as diverse non-academic stakeholders."

Fortunately, the same complexity that makes wicked problems so tough to tackle plays to Virginia Tech's strengths. Students, faculty, and staff from a variety of backgrounds and academic pursuits collaborate daily to tackle challenges in the spirit of Virginia Tech's land-grant mission and its motto of Ut Prosim (That I May Serve).

Take, for instance, the groundbreaking work by the Flint Water Study research team led by Marc Edwards, the Charles Lunsford Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering, which exposed a public health crisis in the industrial Michigan city.

"From the forest to the faucet, securing clean water is crucial to the future of the global population, and Virginia Tech is poised to play a key role in that endeavor."

"The demand and need for water are definitely expanding rapidly, but it's a finite resource," said Stephen Schoenholtz (seen at left), director of the Virginia Water Resources Research Center and professor in the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation. "Fresh water is essential in every person's life every day. It's essential for energy and food, and there are no replacements. It's a major issue that affects everything."

Amy Pruden, the Thomas Rice Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering and a member of the Flint Water Study team, has conducted important water-related research into the growing problem of antibiotic resistance. Pathogenic bacteria have evolved so that traditional antibiotics no longer control them. One study found that, by 2050, infections resistant to drugs—infections that now kill about 700,000 people a year—will grow to kill 10 million people annually, more than the current number killed by cancer.

"Antibiotic resistance is a major public health threat," Pruden said. "It's become apparent that we need an interdisciplinary approach to understand this growing resistance and to develop strategies to stop it. It's such an urgent problem; we need our antibiotics to keep working. When you have an urgent, interdisciplinary problem, you need people of different backgrounds to come together and work to find solutions."

Global Systems Science, along with the four other Destination Areas—Adaptive Brain and Behavior, Intelligent Infrastructure for Human-centered Communities, Data Analytics and Decision Sciences, and Integrated Security—aim to bring Hokies together in interdisciplinary collaborations to tackle these and other broad, societal-scale problems facing the world.
In all the excitement surrounding the Virginia Tech class ring tradition, there is a sad, seldom-spoken truth: Your ring may run away from home.

Some rings come back, though, bearing stories from the road.
sounds fishy
by Charlie Masencup '92

It is interesting that when we are very young, or very old, that half-years count when telling one's age. So it was with my 102-and-a-half-year-old grandfather, T.J. Horne (agriculture '34), who died in April 2015. His funeral, far from a sad affair, was a celebration of his life. He had plenty of closure at his age, telling each of us for the past several years that it might be his last time seeing us. Inevitably, it would be true.

The sad part is that you don't know what you don't know. Hours could be passed easily in silence. Utterly sharp until the very end but not talkative by nature; T.J. rarely offered conversation.

Because I was born two generations removed from the Greatest Generation, the gap between us was significant. I wondered what he must have thought of youth and the state of our country today, given what he was born into in 1912: a rural Southwest Virginia farming family with no plumbing, no car, and no TV, in a country still showing wounds from the Civil War and about to enter World War I, the Great Depression, and World War II, in which he would serve.

There are many fascinating stories begging to be told about my grandfather's life that will never be heard, save for this story about a ring. Not one ring, but three generations of Virginia Tech class rings.

Once, in a conversation around the kitchen table while we admired what is left of my grandfather's well-worn Virginia Polytechnic Institute (today's Virginia Tech) Class of 1934 ring, he revealed that he had lost the ring for several years. During his tenure from 1949 to 1969 he had lost the ring for several years. He somehow lost his ring. A few years later, he was again digging in his garden and heard a metallic "tink" as the shovel struck something. He had found his ring, and he ran inside to enthusiastically share the news with his family.

My father, Wallace Masencup (business administration '64), met my mother, Margaret Horne, T.J.'s daughter, on a blind date. After being married in the Blacksburg United Methodist Church, my parents moved to Amherst, Virginia, and started a family.

It came as a surprise to no one that I would attend Virginia Tech, even if some may have been surprised that I actually graduated from the Pamplin College of Business in 1992. As various jobs took me to different locales, I landed for a while in Worcester, Massachusetts. I lived in a little lake house, one that required extensive renovations. I did much of the work myself and wouldn't wear my ring while working. Over a period of several months, multiple work crews also helped out. Before the renovations were complete, I took a job in South Carolina. And while I didn't necessarily suspect foul play—more blaming my own absent-mindedness—I found myself dispossessed of my ring.

Four years later, my home phone in Charleston, South Carolina, rang. Verifying my identity, a Worcester police detective asked if I was missing a class ring—one that had been found on a "crackhead," he said, and the police had suspected that the ring didn't belong to him. A few days later, I received a small, square, brown box, one that I shook to hear the sound of a heavy "clink" from inside. I was grateful to be reunited with my missing ring, which I promptly washed thoroughly.

I saved the best, the most incredulous story for last.

Before moving to Amherst, my father was having around in the New River one summer day when he lost his Class of 1964 ring. He knew it right away, but he had no luck in recovering it. As was the custom, his name and hometown, "Wal-

lace Edwin Masencup III, Amherst, VA," were engraved inside the ring.

You may know that the New River is one of the few rivers that flows north. Just like me, my dad received his ring some years later in the mail—from a West Virginia address. At the time, all you needed was the name and town, and a piece of mail could be delivered. A note accompanying the ring explained the unbelievable story. While fishing in the New River near his West Virginia home, a man had caught a large fish (some variety of bass, I think). While cleaning it, his knife slit down the belly of the fish and yielded that same metallic "tink" sound. Out came my father's ring.

I'm guessing that he washed it like I did. The ring's formerly sharp features now have the same well-worn blur that my grandfather's ring exhibits, but I'm unsure how much of the polishing occurred while the ring tumbled—or swam—100 or so miles downstream.

To her credit, my sister, Kristi Masencup (English '96), maintains a tight hold on her ring.

Charlie Masencup (management '92) lives in Charleston, South Carolina.
My colleague Shirley Fleet sent me an email from someone who had found a stolen 1968 class ring on propertyroom.com, an auction site that sells property that police confiscate. I found a picture of the ring on the site and could see a portion of a last name, “...ttingly,” and a portion of the hometown, “...nd, Va.” I checked our alumni database and found Paul Mattingly (biological sciences ’68). I emailed and called him, leaving a message. I then emailed the website, and a customer service representative responded and asked to have Paul contact them.

Meanwhile, I hadn’t heard back from Paul. I had nearly given up hope and saw that the ring was going to be sold. With an hour and 15 minutes left in the auction, Paul called. His hometown had been Richmond. The auction representative soon agreed that the ring was probably Paul’s, and the item was pulled from the auction. He had lost the ring about 18 months earlier and had it replaced with a new one. He was thrilled to know he was going to get the original back.

Laura Wedin (M.F.A. theatre arts ’84) is the Alumni Association’s director of alumni/student programs.

Replacing your ring

Dating back to the Class of 1923, most rings can be replaced in their original design. If you need to purchase, replace, or have your class ring repaired or resized, please send the following, required information to Shirley Fleet at fleets@vt.edu, or fax to 540-231-3039: Full name, birthdate, mailing address, class ring year, major, email address, daytime phone number, and advisor name and email address (for graduate students only).

Calling all brochures

View past class rings and ordering brochures at alumni.vt.edu/classrings/pastrings.html. The Alumni Association is looking for more historic ring brochures and order forms—especially those from the ’50s, ’60s, ’70s, and ’80s. If you have an old brochure or form, contact Laura Wedin at lведен@vt.edu or 540-231-6285.

In the late ’80s, I purchased a plant from a dealer in North Carolina. When I removed the plant from its plastic pot, a ring fell out of the dirt at the bottom of the plant. I washed the ring off and saw that it was from Virginia Polytechnic Institute. The name engraved inside was Charles Lawrence Legg Jr., Class of 1982. I called the school, but the lady I spoke to courteously but firmly said that the records of past students could not be given out and she could not help me locate Charles. I tossed the ring into a jewelry box and went back to work. I have been divorced and remarried and have moved four times. In 2005, I was cleaning out some old junk and came across the ring. I had not seen it in years. Since I was forced into learning about computers to continue my real estate business, I decided to see what information the computer would give. I found that the university home page had a lost-and-found link.

Richard W. Frye, a resident of Pinehurst, North Carolina, spoke with the Alumni Association’s Shirley Fleet, who located and called Charles Lawrence Legg Jr. (horticulture ’82). After much laughter, Legg asked if his ring had been found in North Carolina. The summer after he graduated from Tech, while working in landscaping, Legg had lost the ring that his grandmother had purchased for him. This tale is excerpted from a 2005 email received by the Alumni Association.
surf’s up

by LARRY WILLIAMS ’70

In July 1973, as a struggling young couple who had not been able to take a real honey- moon, my wife and I drove to Cape Cod for a week of vacation. While we were there, we visited Marconi Beach to swim and picnic. After discovering that I wasn’t hardy enough to swim very long in the 54-degree water, I began picking up stones and skipping them in the surf. Since the shoreline was rocky, I began picking up stones and skipping them in the surf. In a panic, I dove toward where the ring plpped into the water, groping and trying in vain to see through the pounding surf, hoping to catch a glimpse of the ring. After 10 minutes of bone-numbing chill as I threshed in the water, I gave up. The ring was gone, and all I could do was hope to replace it one day. I was crushed because, as all Virginia Tech graduates know, the rings are a symbol of the sweat equity we invested in our degrees, as well as a visible, lasting reminder of our experiences at Tech. I languished without the ring for three years before contacting the ring manufacturer and having a new ring made. The new ring matched the original order, except it was a half-size smaller to prevent a recurrence of the ring-tossing event. I wore the replacement ring proudly, retelling the story of my stupid rock-and-ring tossing many times, never once thinking I’d see my original ring again.

In early September 2005, Shirley Fleet at the Alumni Association wrote to say that someone had emailed the association claiming to have found my 1970 ring. I was so amazed that I read the letter several times to make sure I hadn’t misunderstood it. I phoned Shirley the next day, and she gave me an email address for Les Hegyi, a Canadian.

The next day on the phone with Les, I learned that he had found my ring in the surf on that Cape Cod beach the same summer I had lost it, in 1973—when he was three years old. He was on vacation with his parents, who went to Cape Cod each summer because it was near their home outside Montreal. Les had seen something sparkly in the pebbly surf as he walked along the shore with his parents. He picked up my ring and took it home, where he played with it as a young boy. As he grew up, he forgot about it—until a couple of years ago when he was looking in a shoebox of childhood things that his parents had kept. Inside the ring, he saw my name and hometown, and he contacted the university. He was unable to find anyone to help him locate the owner, so he put the ring away. This summer [in the mid-2000s], he came across the ring again and tried to contact Tech again. On the website, he found several articles about the return of lost rings, and so he contacted the Alumni Association. His persistence finally put him in touch with Shirley.

After we talked, Les sent the ring to me. Thanks to his unselfishness, honesty, and persistence, I now have my 1970 class ring to wear. He wanted nothing in return, other than the satisfaction of seeing the ring back in the possession of its rightful owner. I can’t thank Les enough for what he did to return my ring, but I certainly can share the story with other Tech graduates who may have misplaced or lost their class ring and think there is no way they’ll ever see it again. I’m proof that neither international boundaries nor the span of more than 30 years are enough to keep a Tech ring away. How his class ring ended up in a town where Brantley had never set foot will probably remain a mystery. Brantley didn’t wear the ring much after recovering it because it fit only on his pinkie.

During the years the ring was missing, Brantley told himself, “It’s just a material thing. I graduated, so it doesn’t make any difference. I have the diploma to prove it.” But Brantley was glad to have the ring back. In the late ‘90s, he said, “I keep it on top of my chest of drawers where I can see it once in a while and ask, ‘Where have you been?’”

This story is excerpted from the spring 1998 edition of Virginia Tech Magazine.

“where have you been?”

The late Paul Brantley Jr. (agricultural engineering ’51) was so proud of his class ring that he wore it even before the Ring Dance. After graduation, he wore the garnet ring to Germany, where he was stationed until 1954. When Brantley returned and went into farming in Ivor, Virginia, he began wearing the ring only on special occasions. In 1957, the ring disappeared. He and Frances, his wife, searched everywhere, including a vacation spot on the James River. No luck.

In 1997, 40 years later, Brantley received a surprising phone call. Michelle Mutter, of Deep Creek, Virginia, had found the ring while tilling her garden. Deep Creek is about 40 miles away and not connected to Ivor by any waterway. Brantley’s name and hometown of Ivor were still barely visible on the inside. How his class ring ended up in a town where Brantley had never set foot will probably remain a mystery. Brantley didn’t wear the ring much after recovering it because it fit only on his pinkie.

During the years the ring was missing, Brantley told himself, “It’s just a material thing. I graduated, so it doesn’t make any difference. I have the diploma to prove it.” But Brantley was glad to have the ring back. In the late ‘90s, he said, “I keep it on top of my chest of drawers where I can see it once in a while and ask, ‘Where have you been?’”

This story is excerpted from the spring 1998 edition of Virginia Tech Magazine.
Far-flung

by Charles "Chuck" Cox '73

A couple of years after graduation, I was at a picnic at the Peaks of Otter picnic area. Before lunch, several of us began throwing a frisbee around. I decided to try a long throw and flung the disk as hard as I could. The disk flew out of my hands, along with my class ring. The disk went several hundred feet. When I felt the ring leave my finger, I listened intently to hear any sound of it hitting a tree, limb, or leaves that covered the ground. Nothing! I immediately informed my friends of my plight, and we scoured the area for over an hour. No luck.

I felt horrible, but we continued the picnic and eventually returned home to Lynchburg. I told my dad about it the next day. After all, he had paid for the ring. He said, “Let’s take a metal detector back to the picnic area and see if we can find it.” The next day, my dad and I returned to the picnic area and began searching for the ring. After no luck for about an hour, we noticed a car approach. It was a park ranger; and while he sympathized with my loss, he informed us that metal detectors were not allowed on park property. We packed up our gear and headed home. Over the years, my family and I would occasionally return to the picnic site for an outing. Each time, I would look for the ring, but never with any luck.

About 25 years later, the telephone rang at home. I picked it up and a woman’s voice on the other end asked if I was Charles Cox. I said yes. She said, “Did you go to Virginia Tech?” I was beginning to think she was a telemarketer, but decided to answer, “Yes.” She asked if I had lost my Tech ring. I said, “Yes, almost 25 years ago.” She asked if I could describe it. I identified the ring by the stone color and the college I had graduated in. Sure enough, she had found it!

While she and her husband were walking a trail near the picnic area after a very hard rain, she noticed a shiny spot on the ground. After some digging, the entire ring was extracted completely intact, albeit a little dirty and slightly dulled. She took the ring home, cleaned it up, and was able to read my name and city inscribed inside. I met this woman the next day and gave her a small reward, which she only reluctantly accepted, and after nearly 25 years, I had my Tech ring back.

This was an amazing story, as I had given up hope of ever seeing my ring again! I’ll always be appreciative of that woman’s fortune in finding my ring and her honesty in returning it.

Charles "Chuck" Cox (economics, science ’73) lives in Lynchburg, Virginia.
We know I.T.

“Not only were the instructors knowledgeable, but the students came from all over with experiences that were very helpful during class discussions.”

—Flex Vaughn, 2013 Graduate, Manager Information Security and Compliance, Virginia Tech

Marketing manager, U.S. naval officer, network engineer, technical writer, business analyst, graphic designer, volunteer, web applications specialist, third-grade teacher. While their backgrounds may be different, students in the online master of Information Technology program at Virginia Tech are pursuing a common passion, technology.

Back in the late 1990s, the VT-MIT program was created at the direction of the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia to serve the future needs of the Commonwealth of Virginia, with the specific goal of bringing non-IT professionals into the IT arena. Seventeen years later, not only is the program teaching working professionals in the commonwealth to take on tomorrow’s IT challenges, it’s also educating out-of-state students, who make up 60 percent of the student body.

With the unique partnership between the College of Engineering and the Pamplin College of Business, students are able to customize a plan of study to include module completion in such areas as big data, software development, decision support systems, and healthcare IT. For working professionals, the flexible format and interdisciplinary design allow students to reasonably manage professional, personal, and academic priorities. U.S. News & World Report agrees, ranking the VT-MIT program #2 in “Best Online Graduate Information Technology Programs” for the past three years.

Interested in learning more? Check out our website: vtmit.vt.edu.
For more than 40 years, the Virginia Tech Alumni Association has offered quality group travel to alumni and their families and friends. Embark on the journey of a lifetime with other Hokies, and enjoy adventures filled with beauty, intellectual stimulation, and unforgettable moments.

**2017 alumni travel tours**

Baja & the Riviera | Jan. 7-17
Mystique of the Maya | Jan. 11-22
Pure Polynesia | Feb. 4-16
Antarctica | Feb. 9-22
Grand Cuban Voyage | March 13-27
Outrageous Outback | April 7-23
Palms in Paradise | April 24-May 10
Dutch Waterways | April 24-May 2

Ancient Traditions of the Inland Sea of Japan | April 30-May 10
Virginia Tech Grad Trip – Essential Europe | May 21-June 7
Vineyards and Vignettes | May 23-June 4
European Collage | May 27-June 4
Southern Culture & Civil War | June 3-12
Riches of the Emerald Isle | June 27-July 8
The Majestic Great Lakes | July 8-17
Cruise the Rhine River | July 10-18

Awe-Inspiring Alaska | July 14-21
Baltic & Scandinavian Treasures | Aug. 22-Sept. 2
Great Pacific Northwest | Sept. 17-25
Barcelona Immersion | Sept. 19-23
Island Life Ancient Greece | Sept. 18-26
Great Trans & Grand Canyons | Oct. 1-7
Medieval Masterpiece | Nov. 5-14
South African Explorer | Dec. 5-21

*Dates, prices, and itineraries are subject to change.

This unique Mississippi River cruise aboard the grand American Queen brings Southern culture and the American Civil War to life. Take in historic sites from Memphis to New Orleans, visiting Shoshone National Military Park, Greenville, Vicksburg, Natchez, St. Francisville, Baton Rouge, and Nottoway. The trip is hosted by James I. “Bud” Robertson, Jr., Virginia Tech Alumni Distinguished Professor Emeritus.

Experience the majesty of the Grand Canyon and other stunning sights across Arizona on this six-day, once-in-a-lifetime journey. Six million years in the making, the Grand Canyon’s dynamic colors and textures inspire reflection on nature’s power and beauty.

For more information or to register for a trip, visit www.alumni.vt.edu/travel.
Brian Slingerland (finance ‘00) co-founded Stemcentrx, a biotechnology company in San Francisco developing new types of cancer treatments. With five cancer drugs in human clinical trials, Stemcentrx was acquired in June by AbbVie Inc. in a deal valued up to $10.2 billion, one of the biggest biotechnology deals in history.

After launching his career in investment banking, Slingerland resigned from Goldman Sachs as a managing director in 2008 to co-found two companies: tech-focused investment bank Qatalyst Partners; and Stemcentrx, with research scientist Scott Dylla.

Slingerland was eager to “be an entrepreneur rather than just service entrepreneurs,” he said. And the cancer-related deaths of three relatives, including a beloved aunt, brought new clarity to his focus. “After three of these in succession, frankly I hated cancer. And nobody had any good answers for how we were going to cure it.”

That is, he said, until he met Dylla and learned about the stem-cell approach that seeks to identify and kill “the root cells that initiate cancer and perpetuate it.”

Speaking at the Pamplin College of Business commencement in May 2016, Slingerland offered graduates three points to keep in mind:

“1. You have what it takes to be the catalyst to start innovative businesses that change the world. The best ventures have a sound balance of technical and business skill. And most ventures will not get off the ground without a business mind like yours.”

“2. Make your avocation your vocation. I encourage you to align your passion and personal mission with your job. And if you do, you’ll have a sustainable career that you’ll love. It’ll be very tempting over the years to maintain the status quo and choose the less risky path. But I cannot emphasize to you enough how amazing it is to work every day on something that inspires you, instead of just working for a paycheck.”

“3. Choose a life partner, and surround yourself with friends who will give you honest advice and encourage you to pursue your dreams and reach your potential. While I was pitching to investors the idea of starting Stemcentrx and recruiting our first employees, behind the scenes, it was my wife, Emily, and my parents and my close friends who encouraged me and gave me the confidence to start Stemcentrx.”

First-person
When did you first think about being an entrepreneur?
“1. When I operated my own lawnmowing business starting at age 10 and captured strong market share in my neighborhood in Syracuse, New York. It was very exciting.”

Why did you want to be one?
“I admired people who have built, from the ground up, great companies, cultures, and products—especially ones that change the world for the better.”

What was it about the stem cell approach to cancer that had you persisting for six years to start Stemcentrx?
“This was a new approach to treating cancer that had massive potential to be revolutionary and needed to have a chance to be tested in cancer patients.”
The Mother Teresa of Puerto Plata

F or one Virginia Tech alumna, a student organization she co-founded in 2006 has turned into her life’s work and resulted in her being compared to Mother Teresa.

Caitlin McHale (interdisciplinary studies: leadership and social change ’06), and sophomore Kristin Peave (English ’07) established a student organization called Project Esperanza after a 2005 volunteer trip to the Dominican Republic.

While there, they visited an orphanage and nearby “bateyes,” areas where the poorest of the poor (primarily Haitians who came to Dominican Republic to work in sugarcane plantations) lived under metal roofs, on dirt floors, and without regular access to electricity or water. After returning to Blacksburg, they set about raising awareness and funds for both.

McHale serves as director, and she and a board of directors lead the organization with additional support from faculty advisor Reed Kennedy from the Pamplin College of Business. Day-to-day programs and summer camps are carried out by approximately 30 two-year staff and 30 volunteers.

In 2016, Project Esperanza completed two crowdsourcing campaigns, revitalized its connection with the Virginia Tech community (including uniting with the student organization Hokies for Haiti), and secured a loan to purchase a 4,367-square-foot building for a permanent school. In addition, the education program is on track to become the first in the country to be accredited with a bilingual Haitian Creole-Spanish curriculum.

McHale (now Floral) spends most of her time in the Dominican Republic, where she lives with her husband and two children. She returned to Blacksburg in 2012 to deliver a TEDx talk, in which she said, “It was a fearless love that led me to do this without looking back.” She hopes more graduates will apply their world-class U.S. educations in places where people need it most.

“Caitlin just has a heart of gold. She works to provide housing and education for these children,” said Kennedy, director of international programs in Pamplin. “She is the Mother Teresa of Puerto Plata.”

Floral has made a real difference in the lives of the poor and disadvantaged, helping them while living among them. Street census results show fewer children and adolescents are working on the street shining shoes or selling eggs than in 2006, and fewer of them are Haitian. The number of Haitian children enrolled in school rose from zero in 2006 to 42 percent in 2015. The word “esperanza” means hope—and Project Esperanza has provided hope and more to the Haitian children and youth in the Dominican Republic.

Sherrie Whaley was a communications specialist with University Relations.
Johnny Moody (business administration ’38), a Virginia Tech student-athlete for more than 40 years, died Aug 8 at the age of 83. A former football player and U.S. Army veteran, Moody retired in 2013 from his role with the Virginia Tech Athletic Fund, also known as the Hokie Club. He was inducted into the Richmond Hokie Club Hall of Fame and the Virginia Tech Sports Hall of Fame. The John Moody Scholarship Fund was endowed in his honor, and the John S. Moody Award recognizes the person who signs up most Hokie Club members annually.

Michael C. Boomer Jr. (IE), Blacksburg, Va., received Virginia Tech’s 2016 Alumni Distinguished Service Award. Moody retired in 2013 from his position as athletics fundraiser for more than 5,000 hours of service.

Johnny R. Barr (HIST), Martinsville, Va., received the 2016 Poultry Science Alumni Distinguished Service Award.

Katie Gehrt (psychology ’97, art ’02) was the College of Architecture and Urban Studies doctoral mentor for Maria De Los Angeles Adames Rivera’s 15-year journey to earning a doctorate in environmental design and planning from the College of Architecture and Urban Studies. She took her from Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico, to Virginia Tech, back to Puerto Rico, and again to Virginia Tech. As she continues teaching at the University of Panama and writing articles for magazines and journals, Adames is pleased to see an example for her children, her students, and others in Panama who may want to pursue higher education.

“Perseverance is very important. It’s something I hope to transmit to other generations,” Adames said. “Things get hard in life, and if you persevere, you can accomplish what you want. The support of my family and people who care about me has been very important in finishing my degree. It doesn’t matter how old you are. I am 53 years old. I may be close to retiring soon, but I think it’s important for other generations,” Adames said. “Things get hard in life, and if you persevere, you can accomplish what you want. The support of my family and people who care about me has been very important in finishing my degree. It doesn’t matter how old you are. I am 53 years old. I may be close to retiring soon, but I think it’s important for other generations.”

Maria De Los Angeles Adams River’s 15-year journey to earn a doctorate in environmental design and planning from the College of Architecture and Urban Studies took her from Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico, to Virginia Tech, back to Puerto Rico, and again to Virginia Tech.

Florida B. Kitchen Jr. (IE), Alexandria, Va., received Virginia Tech’s 2016 William H. Ruffner Medal for notable and distinguished service to the university.

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Alumni welcome parties

The Virginia Tech Alumni Association hosted its inaugural “Welcome New Alumni” events on Aug. 25 to welcome the Class of 2016 to the Hokie Nation. On the same night at the same time, the events were held in five locations, in the Charlotte, Richmond, Tidewater, National Capital Region, and New River Valley chapter areas. Hokies from all classes came out to celebrate, enjoy complimentary appetizers and Hokie swag, and mingle with other local alumni.

To see how our team worked together to help Maryah reach her goal, visit CarilionClinic.org/Goals. Common goal. Common ground.

Institute for Orthopaedics and Neurosciences

Be covered wherever your degree takes you.

Through The Alumni Insurance Program®, Hokies can take advantage of insurance plans that stay with you when you need them most, unlike many employer plans. Call 1-800-822-1245 today or visit www.TheAll.com/VT for a full list of products including Life, Health, Auto, Home, and Travel.

Find your home:

Find your local chapter at alumni.vt.edu and check out their upcoming events. You’ll find programs that provide opportunities to network, socialize, and even compete in local sports leagues. We encourage you to join in and take advantage of all the resources your local chapter has to offer.
James K. Lowe Jr. (CE), Roanoke, Va., was inducted into the Charles E. Via Jr. Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering Academy of Distinguished Alumni.

Ken E. Glover (MIEID), Weymouth, Mass., was named a fellow by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

Cynthia Fleming Lamb (MIEID), Manassas, Va., was named a fellow by the American Society of Mechanical Engineers.

M. Stephen Rabbiner (PSYC), Portsmouth, Va., was named a fellow by the American Society for Engineering Education.

Raymond M. Sea (FLPP), Longwood, Va., received the 2016 Medal of Distinguished Service Award.

John M. Anderson Jr. (CE), Roanoke, Va., was inducted into the Academy of Distinguished Alumni.

Christopher E. Mandel (MKTG), Ashburn, Va., received the 2016 Medal of Distinguished Service Award.

Roanoke, Va., was inducted into the Academy of Distinguished Alumni.

Virginia Beach, Va., was named once again to the Virginia Tech 2016 Alumni Distinguished Service Award.

Diane Ragone (PSYC), Newport, R.I., received Virginia Tech’s 2016 Presidential Teaching Award.

StreamVane.

studying with propulsion experts (ME, ME).-

American Inn of Court for 2016.
89 Aud D. Gordon (PSY '70), Richmond, Va., was appointed as the new executive director of the Virginia Biotechnology Association.

90 Robert A. Shain (BA '81, CE '81), Richmond, Va., was appointed as the new president and CEO of the Virginia Institute for Professional Engineering.

91 Andrea R. Miller (PSY '90, CE '90), Richmond, Va., was appointed as the new dean of the School of Education at Virginia Commonwealth University.

92 Kelly J. Meyer (FIV), Pinetop, Ariz., was appointed as the new executive director of the Arizona Biotechnology Association.

93 Susan Jackson Labar (FIV), Blacksburg, Va., was appointed as the new executive director of the Virginia Biotechnology Association.

94 Lauren W. Arnett (PSY '94), Blacksburg, Va., was appointed as the new executive director of the Virginia Biotechnology Association.

95 John R. Talbert (CHEM), Norfolk, Va., received the Virginia Biotechnology Association's 2016 Outstanding Researcher Award.

96 Joseph L. Ware (MATH), Blacksburg, Va., was appointed as the new executive director of the Virginia Biotechnology Association.

97 Kelly T. Smith (FIV), Blacksburg, Va., was appointed as the new executive director of the Virginia Biotechnology Association.

98 Sally T. Miller (PHYS), Blacksburg, Va., received the Virginia Biotechnology Association's 2016 Outstanding Researcher Award.

99 Joseph P. Hammer (FIV), Blacksburg, Va., was appointed as the new executive director of the Virginia Biotechnology Association.

100 John B. Hope (HIST), Fairfax, Va., was appointed as the new executive director of the Virginia Biotechnology Association.

101 Kelly R. Dykes (IS, ISE '06), Blacksburg, Va., was appointed as the new executive director of the Virginia Biotechnology Association.

102 Jason M. Beddow (EE), Blacksburg, Va., was appointed as the new executive director of the Virginia Biotechnology Association.

103 Marc D. Boardman (SOC), Blacksburg, Va., was appointed as the new executive director of the Virginia Biotechnology Association.

104 Elizabeth T. Shaffer (PSY '96), Blacksburg, Va., was appointed as the new executive director of the Virginia Biotechnology Association.

105 William C. Miller (MSE), Blacksburg, Va., was appointed as the new executive director of the Virginia Biotechnology Association.

106 Laura E. DeNardo (STS), Blacksburg, Va., was appointed as the new executive director of the Virginia Biotechnology Association.

2016 Homecomings and Reunions

Nov. 12 – Georgia Tech
Pamplin College of Business
College of Liberal Arts and Humman Sciences

Nov. 12 – Virginia Tech
Division of Student Affairs – former student leaders
Graduate School alumni
Alumni Greta Harris (architecture ’83) and Jeff Veatch (finance ’93) joined Virginia Tech’s Board of Visitors after being named to three-year terms by Gov. Terry McAuliffe this summer.

Harris (above left), of Richmond, Virginia, is president and CEO of the Better Housing Coalition, the Richmond region’s largest nonprofit community development corporation. Previously, she was vice president for Local Initiatives Support Corp., a national nonprofit community and economic development corporation. Before serving in that role, Harris was the organization’s senior program director for Virginia. The Virginia unit supported local organizations in developing more than $250 million in real estate in central Virginia.

She was appointed to the Virginia Tech Foundation board in 2016. She also serves on the University of Virginia’s “Double Hoo” grant, which helps a graduate and undergraduate student pursue a common research project.

Christopher G. DeMattei (HSE), Quadrant Corp., along with several other Hokies, climbed Kala Patthar, a mountain near Mount Everest. Other Hokies, including other Hokies, climbed Kala Patthar, a mountain near Mount Everest.

Harris is a leader of Leadership Metro Richmond’s Class of 1995. She was named the Virginia Tech Black Alumni Association’s 2016 Philanthropist of the Year and was recognized as a 2014 Outstanding Virginian by Equality Virginia.

Harris has helped the University of Virginia’s “Double Hoo” grant, which helps a graduate and undergraduate student pursue a common research project. She was appointed to the Virginia Tech Foundation board in 2016. She also serves on the University of Virginia’s “Double Hoo” grant, which helps a graduate and undergraduate student pursue a common research project. She was appointed to the Virginia Tech Foundation board in 2016. She also serves on the University of Virginia’s “Double Hoo” grant, which helps a graduate and undergraduate student pursue a common research project. She was appointed to the Virginia Tech Foundation board in 2016. She also serves on the University of Virginia’s “Double Hoo” grant, which helps a graduate and undergraduate student pursue a common research project. She was appointed to the Virginia Tech Foundation board in 2016. She also serves on the University of Virginia’s “Double Hoo” grant, which helps a graduate and undergraduate student pursue a common research project.

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Harris is a leader of Leadership Metro Richmond’s Class of 1995. She was named the Virginia Tech Black Alumni Association’s 2016 Philanthropist of the Year and was recognized as a 2014 Outstanding Virginian by Equality Virginia. In addition to her Virginia Tech degree, she has a master’s in architecture and urban design from Columbia University. Veatch (above right), of Alexandria, is a successful entrepreneur, businessman, community leader, and philanthropist. He co-founded Apex Systems, which is now a billion-dollar business operating primarily in the field of information-technology staff augmentation.

Apex Systems has more than 1,200 full-time employees, more than 60 offices, and employs close to 30,000 consultants a year. Apex Systems is now a division of the largest publicly traded information-technology staffing and services firm in America.

Over the course of his career, Veatch has been recognized as Entrepreneur of the Year by Ernst and Young and selected to the Philanthropic 50 by Washington Life magazine. He is a member of the board of On Assignment, has served as a founding member of an effort to bring the Olympics to the Washington, D.C., region, and holds board and leadership positions within Inova Health System and other organizations.

An active philanthropist, he formed the Veatch Charitable Fund, which focuses on education, health care, and the community. Veatch, along with other Apex Systems founders, named the Apex Systems Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship based in Virginia Tech’s Pamplin College of Business.
**Show Your Colors**

From left to right: Molly Cole (future Hokie), Chris Bryan (computer science ’87), La’Erin Brown (biological sciences, psychology ’08), Sam Chairman ’19, (public and urban affairs ’19), Chris Finnigan (environmental sciences ’06), Chris Clark (animal and poultry science ’17), Staff. Then (mechanical engineering ’17), Paul Louise (business management ’90), Allison Elliott (business management ’96).

Virginia Tech Magazine fall 2016
class notes | 5 things

5 things about leaders

As vice chairman of Heidrick & Struggles’ global CEO and board of directors practice, John Thompson (economics ’70, M.B.A. ’72) has become one of the nation’s most respected CEO and board consultants. Over the last 30 years, he’s completed more than 200 CEO searches and more than 300 board searches, assisting companies like Google, Apple, and FAO Schwarz in hiring chief executives. Finding the right fit for each company takes a lot more than just reviewing résumés, though. Here, Thompson describes what qualities he looks for in leaders:

1. **Hurdle-rate qualities, or what it takes to clear the first bar:**
   “Most leadership jobs take a certain level of intellect. You don’t need to be a Nobel Prize-winning candidate to be a leader for sure, but there’s a certain level of intellect that’s required. I always look for integrity. I also look for authenticity, a person who’s genuine.”

2. **Emotional quotient:**
   “I look for a person who lives in the here and now, and is willing to experiment, to challenge assumptions, and really be a critical thinker. Sometimes you can get fooled into believing the words coming out of your mouth, and it’s really important to challenge that.”

3. **The person, not their style:**
   “By and large, there’s really no set formula. There are so many styles that can be effective. When I was in school, it was, ‘You want to be like this person or that person.’ The reality is that style per se doesn’t matter, as long as it’s not abusive or abrasive—and even that can work in fast-growth times, but as soon as growth starts to slow, people leave because they’re not going to put up with it.”

4. **The particular skills and personality needed to helm a particular organization:**
   “There are certain skill sets you need for a board or company. That could be experience in an industry or global experience. Probably the most important things in an interview aren’t on the résumé; the most important component is the person, what defines a person, and whether they fit with the company or organization’s culture. Does it fit with where that organization is in its lifecycle, whether turnaround, growth, or maintenance?”

5. **Pattern recognition:**
   “I have a hypothesis that the biggest contributor to success in leaders is pattern recognition. From all my experience, that is the key, driving factor. Leaders need to make decisions very quickly today. They have to be able to pull the trigger on big decisions, sometimes massive financial commitments, with very little information. That would have been scary to people 20 or 30 years ago, but people today have to make decisions very quickly. I prefer working with executives who are good at pattern recognition and can see things coming. Overall, leaders do make an enormous difference in any organization.”

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Rouse gives back to Friendship Village

Former Green Bay Packer and New York Giant Aaron Rouse (sociology ’07) is giving back to the community he grew up in. Raised in Virginia Beach’s Friendship Village, Rouse just held his first annual Back-to-School Supply Giveaway for children in the low-income housing community.

Rouse also founded SMART2 (Smart Squared), an organization that promotes education and being the best you can be. He hopes that SMART2 is a constant, positive message to remind students and others to perceive, plan, pursue, and make progress toward their goals.

As a professional athlete, Rouse said he came across all walks of life. Those who were successful, he noted, had one thing in common—a strong foundation in education. “I wanted to have an organization that is built on education,” he said. “SMART2 wants to be that constant reminder” of the importance of education.
Jeff Beck (marketing ’85) knew he was having fun again when he found himself in a St. Louis hotel ironing the shirt of Atlanta Braves starting pitcher Roberto Hernández.

It wasn’t the ironing that gave Beck a boost but rather the fact that he was ironing for Hernández—a client (for the second time) of Beck and former Hokie baseball player Bean Stringfellow’s Proformance baseball agency. Hernández was about to make his first start for the Atlanta Braves following his return to the Big Leagues in August 2016.

The moment was made even sweeter by the fact that Hernández was a critical part of the reason, back in 2012, that Beck and Stringfellow were forced to re-evaluate their business. After a great role in the 2011 World Series, the former Hokies pitcher was suspended from the game for pitching for the Cleveland Indians under the false identity of Fausto Carmona. He also left the agency, leading to some economic woes for Proformance.

Stringfellow and Beck had studied the book “Blue Ocean Strategy,” which argues that success comes not from battling rivals toe-to-toe in a bloody red ocean of competitiveness, but from creating untapped market spaces—blue oceans. They looked at how player salaries had exploded since they had started their business in 1992 and realized that the 5 percent fee of the 1990s is equivalent to less than 1.5 percent today. As a result, they could reduce their fees.

“We knew that was something the competition couldn’t replicate,” Beck said. “We just reorganized.”

As a result, they could reduce their fees.

33 years ago, members of the Old Guard Class of 1933 reunited at a homecoming football game. 

To celebrate the 80th anniversary of the 1933 class, the Old Guard Class of 1933 returned to Virginia Tech to reunite at a homecoming football game.

Robert Alan Yousten, a professor emeritus of microbiology, died Aug. 24. Yousten focused his research on the microbiological control of insect pests, publishing two books and more than 300 research articles. Yousten joined Virginia Tech in 1971.

Today, 30 years ago, a committee selected Chicago maroon and burnt orange after discovering no other college used this combination of colors.
A year to remember

By Matthew M. Winston Jr. '90

By the time you read this, I will be concluding my first year as Virginia Tech’s chief alumni officer, and oh, the things I have seen.

I watched as more than 7,000 students and their families celebrated earning their degrees and officially joining the alumni ranks. During these past 11 months, I saw some of Virginia Tech’s most amazing students reaching new heights of community service by raising more than $500,000 to battle cancer through Relay for Life and volunteering by the thousands on a cold, snowy winter’s day during The Big Event. I watched as more than half of the Class of 2017 continued the grand tradition of exchanging class rings at Ring Dance last spring and enjoyed being with the Class of 2018 this fall as their ring design was revealed.

I have observed the powers of discovery and service as Professor Marc Edwards and his team of students and researchers saved the town of Flint, Michigan, from water contamination. I have enjoyed sharing with others Virginia Tech’s rise in rankings designating our campus community as among the most healthy, the most beautiful, the best buys, having the best food, giving students the best opportunities for jobs, and being the most committed to effective diversity programs.

I have watched the university celebrate the legacy of a legend in former head football coach and fellow alumnus, Frank Beamer, and embrace the new head coach, Justin Fuente.

I have seen the construction of phenomenal facilities, like the Corps of Cadets’ Pearson Hall and the new academic facility across from the Holtzman Alumni Center. These buildings will continue to transform the way Virginia Tech students live and learn.

Best of all, I have watched Hokie alumni, young and old, demonstrate success in every endeavor imaginable. Hokies have rung the bell at the New York Stock Exchange, climbed the peaks of the world’s highest mountains, and earned Olympic medals.

Our students, faculty, staff, and graduates are capable of doing extraordinary things, and they have an unwavering love for their alma mater.

Now more than ever, Virginia Tech will depend on you to serve her. My wish for you is that you get the chance to nurture or rekindle your relationship with your university and the fellow members of your Hokie family in your communities and around the globe. Remain connected, remain involved, remain engaged. The world will reward you for it; your heart will thank you for it.

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“Arboria”: Gothic cathedrals, Islamic architecture, and Archimedean solids combined in a huge interactive walk-in luminarium on the Drillfield that bedazzled kids and adults alike during Hokie Hi, a series of events that welcomes students to campus each year. The installation, designed by Architects of Air, was presented by the Moss Arts Center
Tim Bell ’17 gives his all. He transferred in as a junior and is making the most of his two years studying environmental horticulture and viticulture. Interning at the Hahn Horticulture Garden this past summer let him “put what I’ve learned into practice.” Tim’s grateful that current-use donations made this hands-on learning experience possible, because “if I hadn’t had that help, I would have had to get a different job over the summer, and the internship wouldn’t have been available.”

Students like Tim graduate ready to give more, thanks to those who give back to Virginia Tech.

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