

University of South Carolina Palmetto College

# CONNECTIONS

[www.palmettocollege.sc.edu](http://www.palmettocollege.sc.edu)

Spring 2025



## Faculty Excellence Awards

honor individual teaching, service and scholarship



Please submit all items for the Fall/Winter 2025 edition no later than Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2025.

**USC Palmetto College Connections** is published biannually, at the conclusion of the spring and fall semesters.

If you have an interesting story to share with the Palmetto College community, please share the news with the following contact for your respective campus/ location:

**USC Lancaster**  
[Shana Dry](#)

**USC Salkehatchie**  
[Stephanie Gruber](#)

**USC Sumter**  
[Alethia Hummel](#)

**USC Union**  
[Annie Smith](#)

**Palmetto College Columbia**  
[Jean Carrano](#)

**Palmetto College Central and Online**  
[Jason Darby](#)

Archived editions of **USC Palmetto College Connections** from the Fall 2015 semester edition onward may be found [online](#) on the Palmetto College website.

## **USC Palmetto College:**

The inside cover of this issue of Palmetto College Connections highlights our involvement in Carolina Day.

The Palmetto College community had a great showing at the 2025 Carolina Day at the South Carolina State House.

Carolina Day is a significant advocacy event for the University of South Carolina System. The day provides a unique chance for alumni, students, faculty, staff and supporters to communicate the impact of USC's campuses on South Carolina's people, communities, industries and economic development to state legislators.

Among the USC System, supporters of the Palmetto College campuses at USC Lancaster, USC Salkehatchie, USC Sumter, USC Union and Palmetto College Columbia, as well as Palmetto College Online, showed the strength of USC Palmetto College and its impact on local communities across South Carolina.

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and scholarship



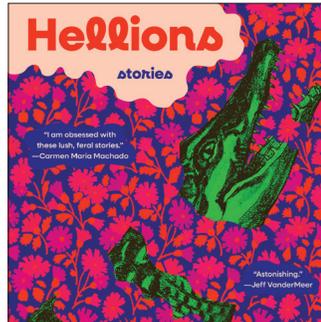
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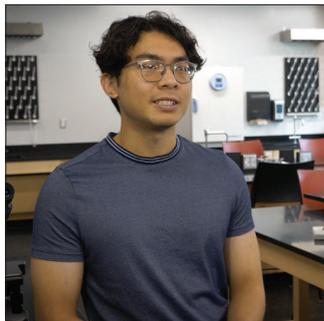
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# Palmetto College: Celebrating the Past, Looking Forward to the Future

It is a privilege to be able to share with you an update (and highlights) for USC Palmetto College. Palmetto College mission of providing USC degrees that are accessible, affordable and flexible for all South Carolinians continues unabated!

We're exceedingly proud of the key accomplishments of the two-year Palmetto College Campuses led by our outstanding Deans.

USC Lancaster, led by Interim Dean Courtney Catledge, has celebrated their 65th anniversary this year, with a historic record fall 2024 enrollment of 2,592. Once again, they were ranked the No.1 two-year campus in South Carolina for the eighth year in a row by Niche.com, and the campus was recently awarded a \$2.8 Million grant to develop the USCL Center for Healthcare Workforce Development!



USC Salkehatchie, led by Dean April Cone, was recently awarded a \$1.9 Million grant by the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Environmental Management for USC Salk DRIVES (Driving Rural Innovation into Visions of Employment in STEM) to launch a traveling STEM bus for K-12 students. A new state-of-the art forensic chemistry laboratory opened at the Allendale Campus to provide hands-on experience in forensics-related workforce development, and Salk has secured approximately \$10.5 Million in federal grants, internal grants and philanthropic gifts since 2013.

USC Sumter, led by Interim Dean Eric Reisenauer, has increased enrollment over the past decade and reached a historic high enrollment milestone of over 1,800, with 1,804 in Fall 2024. The campus completed an \$11 Million renovation of the Science Building and announced the grand re-opening this year. USC Sumter

also received funding to construct a new \$33 Million facility in partnership with SCETV in the downtown Sumter area to house professional and collaborative bachelor's degree programs.

USC Union, led by Dean Randy Lowell, has experienced substantial growth in enrollment, from a headcount of 484 in Fall 2013, to record headcounts of 1,354 and 1,353, the past two fall semesters, nearly tripling enrollment over that time. USC Union has significantly

expanded the campus footprint, including numerous building renovations such as the new Nursing Simulation Laboratories Building, the Rippy Science and Nursing Building, along with many other facilities renovations. The campus also completed an ambitious new Campus Master Plan for the next 5-10 years (and beyond) as they celebrated the 60th anniversary since the campus opened with a single building in 1965.

Palmetto College Columbia, led by Dean Ron Cox, launched the Palmetto Pathway Program in Fall 2019, which experienced a 93% success rate with the 2023-24 cohort as 91 of 98 students were admitted to USC Columbia. The academic unit also executed a revised memorandum of understanding between Palmetto College Columbia and Fort Jackson to offer online bachelor's degree programs to military students on post and around the world. PC Columbia has also awarded more than \$45,000 in tuition assistance to 75 military students via the Robert V. Phillips Memorial Scholarship.

In addition to the outstanding work being done by our two-year Palmetto College campuses, we also collaborate with our excellent USC System partners at USC Aiken, USC Beaufort, USC Columbia and USC Upstate that provide students an opportunity to finish

not just an associate degree but also bachelor's degree completion programs that are offered both online and directly on our two-year campuses. Since the 2013 launch of Palmetto College Online, our list of degrees and offerings has grown from seven original programs to 38 programs in 2025.

Among our online bachelor's degree completion programs, Palmetto College has served 8,000 majors, enrolled 1,314 students this semester and we will have conferred over 4,000 degrees (over the past 12 years) once spring commencement concludes, with a projection of 4,126.

In addition, to meet the nursing workforce needs of our communities, we are very grateful for the on-campus BSN partnership programs with Columbia, Aiken and Beaufort, along with the online RN-BSN partnership with Upstate... that have resulted in over 1,300 BSN degrees awarded since 2013.

We are pleased to report that Palmetto College enrollment covers the entire Palmetto State, with every county represented among the 6,775 in-state majors, as well as 1,225 out-of-state majors (with the majority of out-of-state students being members of the United States Armed Forces).

As I conclude my 12-year tenure as Palmetto College chancellor, I reflect on our theme across Palmetto College this year: "Celebrating the Past, Looking Forward to the Future."

This theme seems apt as we have recently completed one strategic plan from the past few years and have launched our new strategic plan for the future. We have experienced many successes among the six goals outlined in our previous strategic plan, including the following highlights:

- **Enrollment Growth** of our Palmetto College campuses of 54% from 4,240 to 6,535 and our online partnership programs from 503 to 1,373 from Fall 2013 to Fall 2024.
- **Student Success Rate** increased from 58.4% to 70.5% from 2013 to 2024.

- **Faculty and Staff Excellence** highlights include the creation of a new Palmetto College Staff Senate and an increase in Sponsored Awards by our Faculty and Staff from \$1.34 Million to \$5.63 Million.
- **Commitment to Service** highlights include the creation of Food Pantries on each campus, along with the new iCarolina labs that provide community internet access at eight locations across South Carolina, with over 42,000 visits since inception.
- **Organizational and Financial Health** includes raising over \$20 Million in philanthropic gifts and distributing over \$164 Million across the USC System through the online partnership programs.
- **Strategic Planning** – the new Strategic Plan for 2024-2025 – 2028-2029 was developed and launched on July 1, 2024.

As we have been "Looking Forward to the Future" with the launch of that new strategic plan, the six top priorities in alignment with the USC Columbia plan have placed us in a good place for continued future growth. Enrollment growth continues, student success rate has continued to increase, total research expenditures have increased, budgets are on target to be balanced with 2-3 months fund balance for all campuses, and we have already exceeded our goal for dollars raised.

In conclusion, I would like to express my gratitude to President Amiridis, the members of the USC Board of Trustees and our USC System partners for their role in the creation and continued success of Palmetto College and for the opportunity to serve students and communities across our great state!



**Susan A. Elkins, Ed.D.**  
Chancellor  
University of South Carolina Palmetto College

Bettie Obi Johnson, F. Evan Nooe and Susan Cruise  
Photo Credit: Shana Dry, USC Lancaster

A photograph of three people standing outdoors in front of a brick building with green trees in the background. On the left is a woman with dark hair wearing a blue short-sleeved top. In the center is a man with short dark hair wearing a grey blazer over a light blue and white checkered shirt. On the right is a woman with blonde hair wearing a light blue long-sleeved top. They are all smiling and looking towards the camera.

# 2024-25 Palmetto College Excellence Awards honor individual faculty teaching, service and scholarship

# Each spring, the **Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Excellence Awards** for teaching, scholarship and service are announced, and awarded by the Palmetto College Campuses Faculty Senate.

The **John J. Duffy Excellence in Teaching Award for Palmetto College Campuses** has been presented annually since 2009 to a faculty member who exemplifies excellence in dedication and commitment to students and their academic success inside and outside of the classroom.



This year's recipient of the John J. Duffy Excellence in Teaching Award for Palmetto College Campuses is **Susan Cruise**, associate professor of sociology at USC Lancaster. She earned a Ph.D. in sociology from Texas Woman's University.

Her compassionate and student-centered approach to teaching has prepared her students to become thoughtful and empathetic global citizens.

In May 2022, Dr. Cruise, along with Dr. Angela Neal, led a transformative study abroad trip to Eastern Europe, which included a visit to the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp.

They not only provided an enriching educational experience but also demonstrated a profound commitment to service by raising nearly \$20,000 to ensure all students could partake in this invaluable opportunity.

As part of the course, the class brought 28 large suitcases filled with donations for war-displaced refugees, with numerous contributions raised by the Lancaster community.

Beyond her role as an educator, Professor Cruise is a devoted mentor who actively empowers her students. Thanks to her mentorship, a Lancaster student received a mini-Magellan grant of \$1,000 for her project

“Addressing Food Insecurity Among Students at the University Of South Carolina Lancaster.”

Dr. Cruise fosters an atmosphere of mutual respect that encourages students to express their opinions, facilitating critical thinking and expanding their world view.

She states, “When the classroom environment is welcoming and students feel their opinion is valued, they are more open to learning from the perspective of others—even if those viewpoints are different from their own.”

Cruise's dedication to teaching and her innovative approaches in the classroom have made a significant impact on her students and colleagues.

The **Chris P. Plyler Excellence in Service Award for Palmetto College Campuses** is presented to a faculty member who personifies excellence in extraordinary service to the campus, university, community and profession. The award was first given in 2015.



The Chris P. Plyler Excellence in Service Award for Palmetto College Campuses has been awarded to **Bettie Obi Johnson**, professor of chemistry at USC Lancaster. She earned a Ph.D. in analytical chemistry from Georgia Institute of Technology.

Professor Johnson's service work encompasses all four areas: campus, system, community, and professional.

Her impact is evident in her extensive contributions to faculty governance. She has played a vital role in

shaping policies and initiatives through her service on the Palmetto College Faculty Senate, where she has also chaired the Faculty Welfare Committee.

Additionally, she has served on numerous campus committees, including Tenure and Promotion, Athletics Advisory, Student Scholarship, and Native American Studies—demonstrating her unwavering commitment to faculty and student success.

A devoted mentor and advisor, Dr. Johnson advises second-year students with majors in chemistry, biochemistry, pre-pharmacy, and engineering. Her dedication is reflected in the success of her advisees—over the past four years, 9 of her advisees have been admitted into pharmacy schools.

Professor Johnson has also served as a sponsor of the USC Lancaster Chemistry Club, which provides opportunities for students to socialize, learn, and network. Her mentorship has left a lasting impression, as reflected in the words of the club's president who states, "Through Chemistry Club, I have witnessed her love of knowledge, dedication to the university, and enjoyment of helping others."

Professor Johnson's commitment to expanding opportunities for students goes even further. She has been instrumental in bringing the SC LEND program to the Lancaster campus, a federally funded initiative that prepares future professionals to work with individuals with developmental disabilities. Thanks to her efforts, Lancaster seniors can now engage with SC LEND leaders and participate in hands-on clinical experiences.

Her passion for education also extends into the community. As an Upward Bound instructor, she has designed creative lab experiments that cover essential chemistry concepts in a fun and engaging way.

Fostering an early interest in science, Dr. Johnson has also inspired young learners through hands-on experiments at local elementary schools during

Community Career Day.

Professor Johnson's professional service is equally impressive. She has served as a session judge and moderator for the South Carolina Academy of Science, the Southeastern Regional Meeting of the American Chemical Society, and for Discover USC.

Further highlighting her dedication to advancing scientific knowledge, she has been a peer reviewer for esteemed journals, including the Journal of Chemical Education, Chemistry Africa, and Plant-Environment Interactions.

Johnson's exceptional service and contributions to the college community have been invaluable.

The **Denise R. Shaw Excellence in Scholarship Award for Palmetto College Campuses**, first given in 2017, is presented annually to a faculty member who exhibits outstanding scholarly research or creative achievement.



The Denise R. Shaw Excellence in Scholarship Award for Palmetto College Campuses goes to **F. Evan Nooe**, assistant professor of history at USC Lancaster and historian for the Native American Studies Center at USCL. He earned a Ph.D. in United States history from the University of Mississippi.

As one would expect for the recipient of the Shaw Award, Professor Nooe's scholarly achievements are quite impressive.

His book, *Aggression and Sufferings: Settler Violence, Native Resistance, and the Coalescence of the Old South*, has received prestigious recognition, earning the Anne B. and James B. McMillan Prize and the 2024 Best Book Award from the National History Honor Society, Phi Alpha Theta. These accolades are a testament to the significance of his work.

In addition to his book, Dr. Nooe has published in esteemed, peer-reviewed journals. His article, "It's in the Blood: Settler Family Memories of Native Violence in the American South" was featured in *History & Memory*, a high-impact, international journal. Another article, "Making Florida History at Disney Springs: Florida's Past as Themed Tourism" appeared in the *International Journal of Disney Studies*, further highlighting his breadth of research.

Professor Nooe's dedication to scholarly work is also evident by the acquisition of numerous grants, including USC's Research Initiative for Summer Engagement (RISE) Grant and USC Lancaster's Research and Productive Scholarship mini-Grant.

And Dr. Nooe's contributions to the field of history continue to grow. He has several scholarly works in progress, including his forthcoming book, *Florida Reveries: The Three Histories of Walt Disney World's Disney Springs and the Re-Creation of Florida's Past*.

Additionally, he is serving as co-editor for the upcoming book, *More than Lost Causes: Settler and Indigenous Memory in the American South* for which he is also writing an article entitled, "Consecrating the Hampton Massacre: Native Resistance, Settler Memory, and the Coalescence of South Carolina."

Dr. Nooe's extraordinary scholarship and dedication to research have greatly enriched our academic community, and Palmetto College is truly privileged to have such an extraordinary scholar among us.

Nooe's scholarly work and dedication to research have greatly enriched the academic community of Palmetto College.

# USC Regional Palmetto College Campuses announce Teachers of the Year



USC Lancaster  
Distinguished Teacher  
of the Year Award

**Bettie Obi Johnson**  
Professor of Chemistry



USC Salkehatchie  
Distinguished Teacher  
of the Year Award

**Kirsten Iden**  
Associate Professor of English



USC Sumter  
Student Government  
Association Teacher of the  
Year Award

**Christopher Defossez**  
Associate Professor of  
Psychology



USC Union  
Distinguished Teacher  
of the Year Award

**Sarah Carter**  
Assistant Professor of English



**Sahar Aghasafari**, assistant professor of art and graphic design at USC Lancaster, was recently

announced as a 2025 recipient of the [Garnet Apple Award for Teaching Innovation](#). This prestigious recognition celebrates faculty members who excel in teaching and innovate to enhance student learning, reflecting USC’s commitment to educational excellence. She will be honored at [Oktoberfest: A Symposium on Teaching on Friday](#), Oct. 17, 2025.

She was also selected as the 2025 Humanities Teacher of the Year at USC Lancaster.

Aghasafari published an article, titled “Creative Visual Arts and Biology Processes: Examining Emergent Bi/Multilingual High Schoolers’ Meanings,” in *European Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 1(3), 200-209.

She was appointed an editorial board member for the journal [Visual Arts Research](#) (VAR), 2024-present.

Aghasafari created the book cover design for STAR Scholars publication series [Graphic Design]. In STAR Scholars (Ed.), Publications in educational and social science disciplines. STAR Scholars Network. Summer 2024 Designs| Amazon Link | STAR Scholars Press Catalog | Another STAR Scholars Book

Aghasafari is serving as an ASCD+ISTE Community Leader, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD), and International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE), 2024-present.



**Shemsi Alhaddad**, associate professor of mathematics and statistics at USC Lancaster, published a peer

reviewed article: S. Alhaddad. “Best Practices for Data Embroidery.” *Proceedings of Bridges 2024: Mathematics, Art, Music, Architecture, Culture*, 2024, pp. 243-250.

Alhaddad presented the paper “Best Practices for Data Embroidery” at the Bridges Math Art conference in Richmond in Aug 2024.



**Lakeshia Allen** has been hired as the director of the Opportunity Scholars Program at USC Salkehatchie.



**Connor Austell**, assistant professor of music, had a paper “Exploring the Compositions of Thomas

‘Blind Tom’ Wiggins” accepted for publication in *American Musical Perspectives*, an academic journal published by Penn State University Press. The impetus for this article stemmed from his doctoral dissertation research, though much additional work was done this past Spring 2024 semester. He gave a presentation on his findings in an Oct. 4, 2024, faculty forum.

He has also been awarded a 2025 Excel grant through the Office of the Vice President for Research for his work, titled “Establishing the Lancaster Performance Series.”



**Majdouline Aziz**, associate dean for academic and student affairs at USC Union, was promoted to full professor of

sociology.



**Rodney Barr**, a USC Salkehatchie alumnus, [has been named](#) athletic director for the campus, effective Sept. 1, 2024. He comes

to USC Salkehatchie from Jasper County School District where he served as an athletic director and head football coach.

The Florence, S.C., native was a three-sport athlete at Wilson High School, where he ultimately started his coaching career. Barr is a certified athletic administrator through the National Interscholastic Athletic Administrators Association (NIAAA) and has been involved in coaching for multiple all-star games. He has been recognized as coach of the year seven times. Barr attended USC Salkehatchie from 2000 to 2001 where he played baseball. He holds a bachelor’s degree in interdisciplinary studies from the New York Institute of Technology and a master’s degree in interdisciplinary studies from Liberty University.



**Shannon Belangia**, English instructor at USC Salkehatchie, was recognized by students through the [Thank-A-Teacher](#)

[Program](#) awarded through the USC Center for Teaching Excellence.



**Marybeth Lee Berry**, associate professor of theatre and speech at USC Lancaster, studied in Bordeaux,

France, with renowned teacher and actor Jude Alderson on her new version of Phaedra. The workshop developed the piece in-depth and will move to the next stage of performance in England in 2025. While in France, USCL THEA 200 (“Understanding and Appreciation of Theatre”) students were able to view a part of the workshop via Zoom.

Berry directed the Town Theatre (Columbia, S.C.) musical “Something’s Afoot,” which ran from Oct. 25 to Nov. 10, 2024, and featured two USCL alumni.

Berry’s “On the Spectrum” was also workshopped at the FringeLab in Dublin Fringe Festival in May for the opportunity to be part of a future Dublin Fringe Festival. As a result, the USC Lancaster Players have been invited to perform in Ireland at Ardgillan Castle with two performances: “Waiting for Godot” and “On the Spectrum.”

Her play, “The Puzzle,” has been selected for an international premiere at La MaMa Umbria after a successful staged reading at Coastal Carolina University’s New Works Festival.

Berry spent a week in summer 2024 in New York working with the Tectonic Theatre Project and Moises Kaufmann (creator of “The Laramie Project”) where she completed Levels 1 and 2 of “Moment Work” as well as “Moment Work for the Actor” with Moises directly.

She has also been awarded a 2025 Excel grant through the Office of the Vice President for Research for her work, titled “The Puzzle: A New Musical.”

**Tyler Boulware** has joined USC Sumter as instructor of history.

**Eric Bultman** has joined USC Sumter as instructor of theatre.



**Francis Burns**, assistant professor of chemistry at USC Salkehatchie, has been selected as the winner of the S.C.

Academy of Science (SCAS) Two-Year Institution Faculty of the Year Award. The award honors examples of outstanding teaching at two-year institutions of higher education in South Carolina.



**Li Cai**, professor of chemistry at USC Lancaster, and his student Charis Grabbe published an article, titled “Regioselective

Deacetylation in Nucleosides and Derivatives,” in the journal ChemBioChem.

Cai and Sahar Aghasafari, assistant professor of art and graphic design at USC Lancaster, had two abstracts accepted for presentation in October 2024, including: “ChemArtistry: Integrating Media Arts into the Study of Fundamental Chemistry in the Age of AI” at the 2024 Southeastern Regional Meeting of the American Chemical Society in October 2024, and “ChemArtistry: Integrating Media Arts into the Study of Fundamental Chemistry” at Science and Sensibility: Method Meets Art - A Transdisciplinary Conference in October 2024.



**Andrea Campbell**, Opportunity Scholars Program project coordinator at USC Lancaster, is the 2025

recipient of the Servant Heart Award at USC Lancaster.



**Sarah Carter** has been hired as assistant professor of English at USC Union.

She was also selected as the 2024-25 USC Union Distinguished Teacher of the Year.



**Jill Castiglia**, senior instructor of chemistry at USC Lancaster; Fernanda Burke, chair of the Division of Math, Science,

Nursing and Public Health, and associate professor of biology and chemistry at USC Lancaster; and Bettie Obi Johnson, professor of chemistry at USC Lancaster, attended the Workshop on Assessment in Chemistry Courses in Atlanta in June 2024, funded by the National Science Foundation in conjunction with the American Chemical Society. The two-day workshop “explored developing learning objectives, creating assessment plans, articulating a test specifications document, creating quality assessment items and using assessment data to inform teaching practice.” These faculty will continue to collaborate with each of the teams formed during the workshop in monthly virtual meetings through this year.



**Courtney Catledge**, interim USC Lancaster campus dean and senior nursing instructor at USC Lancaster, has been selected as

the new campus dean, effective May 12, 2025.

She also published: Horton-Dias, C., Catledge, C., & Dawson, R.M. (2024). "A Theory-guided Qualitative Exploration of Occupational Influences on Firefighters' Dietary Behaviors." *Workplace Health and Safety*.



**Logan Cocklin** has joined USC Lancaster as director of archives.



**Sherr Chhetri**, assistant professor of mathematics at USC Sumter, is the 2023-24 recipient of the Jean-Luc Grosso

Award presented by the Sumter Partnership of the USC Educational Foundation and the USC Sumter Faculty Organization in recognition of Outstanding Faculty Scholarship.

He also received a 2025 RISE grant through the USC Office of the Vice President for Research for his summer research proposal, titled "The Kumaraswamy New Hyperbolic Tangent-G Distribution with Applications to COVID-19 Data Sets."



**Abby Collins** has been hired as a financial aid specialist at USC Union.

**Carolyn Conley** has joined USC Union as an education coordinator.



**Susan Cruise**, associate professor of sociology at USC Lancaster, is the 2025 recipient of the John J. Duffy Excellence

in Teaching Award for Palmetto College Campuses.



**Jason Darby**, director of marketing and communications for USC Palmetto College, successfully defended his

dissertation to earn his Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration from the University of South Carolina in March 2025. The title of his dissertation is "Transparency and Trust in Crisis Communications: A Case Study of Two Pandemic Era HBCUs in North Carolina."



**Chris Defossez**, assistant professor of psychology at USC Sumter, is the 2023-24 recipient of the USC Sumter

Student Government Association Teacher of the Year Award.

He also received a 2025 RISE grant through the USC Office of the Vice President for Research for his summer research proposal, titled for his summer research, "Performers

Try Harder: Psychotherapy Reexamined."



**Julia Elliott**, professor of English and women's and gender studies at Palmetto College Columbia, published her

latest book, [Hellions: Stories](#), a collection of folklore, fairy tales, Southern Gothic and horror, reveling in the collision of the familiar with the surreal. The book was released on April 15, 2025, from Tin House Books. *Time* magazine spotlighted *Hellions* as one of its "[15 Books to Read in April \(2025\)](#)." An official book launch and signing will be held on May 1, 2025, at the [Columbia Museum of Art](#).



**Stan Emanuel**, senior business instructor at USC Lancaster, was featured in a WalletHub article about "Best Car Insurance in

South Carolina."



**Pearl Fernandes**, professor of biology at USC Sumter, and

**Dan Kiernan**, senior instructor of biology at USC Sumter, presented a poster – "Enhancing Student Engagement in Biology Courses Using a Real-World Case



Study" – at the 68th Annual Meeting of the Association of College and University Biology Educators (ACUBE), Marquette University, Milwaukee, Wis., Oct. 18-19, 2024.

**Frances Fowler** has joined USC Salkehatchie as an instructor of anatomy and physiology.



**Rebecca Freeman**, director of Medford Library at USC Lancaster, **Zack Broughton**, staff librarian Logan Cocklin, digital strategies and systems librarian at Winthrop University; McKenzie Lemhouse Ashley Schryer,

director of student success and retention at USC Lancaster,

Rebecca Freeman, McKenzie Lemhouse, and Zach Broughton presented “Whole Person Staffing” at the Metrolina Library Association Conference in June.

McKenzie and Rebecca presented two posters at the Metrolina Library Association Conference in June. We presented “Making It Work” and “Battling Period Poverty on a Small, Rural Academic Campus.” “Making It Work” discussed how we have made continuous improvements to the library space to meet student and staff needs.

McKenzie, Asheley Schryer, and Rebecca were accepted to present “Creating the Celebration of Lancer Excellence – An Interdisciplinary Student Showcase” at the South Carolina Library Association Conference in October.

Freeman and Lisa Gieskes, Richland County Public Library were accepted to present “Cooking in Libraries” at the South Carolina Library Association Conference in October. We will be presenting on how libraries have shifted towards nutrition and cooking programming and how one local library has implemented cooking programming.



**Vincent Frontero**, instructor of English at USC Sumter, is the 2023-24 recipient of the Hugh T. Stoddard Award

presented by the Mid-Carolina Commission for Higher Education and the Sumter Partnership of the USC Educational Foundation in recognition as Outstanding Faculty Member at USC Sumter.

**Jackie Gallagher** has joined USC Salkehatchie as director of educational partnerships.

**Susan Goebel** has joined USC Sumter as instructor of biology.



**Annette Golonka**, professor of biology at USC Lancaster, has been honored by the University of South Carolina

Office of Research as a recipient of the [2025 Distinguished Research Service Award](#) for her exceptional commitment to USC’s research community through consistent service as a reviewer and committee member for internal funding and awards programs.



**Jessica Goodwin**, librarian at USC Salkehatchie’s Walterboro campus, was inducted to the Colleton County High School

Athletic Hall of Fame on Oct. 11, 2024, for her outstanding soccer career (2001-2004) at the school.



**Carla Gottesman**, associate professor of psychology at USC Salkehatchie, is the recipient

of the 2025 Salkehatchie Faculty Organization Award for Service.



**Twaina Harris** has been named the assistant dean for student success and enrollment management at USC Sumter.

She previously served as director of student success coaching at Claflin University.



**Tania Hazra**, assistant professor of mathematics at USC Sumter, received a 2025 RISE grant through the

USC Office of the Vice President for Research for her summer research proposal, titled “Developing an Unconditionally Stable Poisson-Boltzmann Equation Solver using Energy Functional and Super-Gaussian Dielectric Distribution.”



**Sarah Heuss** has joined USC Union as an instructor of mathematics.



**Erin Houser** has joined USC Salkehatchie as head women's basketball coach.



**Eddie J. Howard Jr.** has been appointed assistant dean for enrollment management and student success at

USC Salkehatchie. He brings over two decades of student-centered experience to the position, including previous roles at Fort Valley State University, Northern Kentucky University and Youngstown University.



**Kirsten Iden**, associate professor of English at USC Salkehatchie has been selected as the 2025 recipient of the

USC Salkehatchie Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award.



**Jeffrey Irwin**, adjunct instructor of business in Palmetto College Columbia, was recognized by students through

the [Thank-A-Teacher Program](#) awarded through the USC Center for Teaching Excellence.



**Randall Ivey**, Senior Instructor English at USC Union, published a new book, *The Gift of Gab and Other Stories* (Green

Altar Books), in October 2024. He also had five poems published in *The Brussels Review*, a European literary journal, and three others in *Chronicles: A Magazine of American Culture*, a Milwaukee, Wis.-based publication.



**Ernest Jenkins**, associate professor of history at USC Lancaster, has graduated from the S.C. Diversity Leaders

Initiative's (DLI) 16th Midlands Class. DLI is hosted by The Richard W. Riley Institute of Government, Politics and Public Leadership at Furman University and has been promoting the power of diversity for over 20 years to help teams, organizations, and communities in South Carolina thrive. The five-month curriculum explored a wide array of topics from bias and discrimination to the role of context, and it openly engaged with sensitive issues related to diversity and inclusion. It concluded with a community action project aimed at identifying and addressing a concern in the Upstate and implementing an enduring solution. As a Riley Institute Diversity Fellow, Jenkins joins a community of over 2,800 fellows statewide.



**Allison Jobe** has joined USC Lancaster as assistant professor of history and African American studies.



**Bettie Obi Johnson**, professor of chemistry at USC Lancaster, is the 2025 recipient of the Chris P. Plyler Excellence in

Service Award for Palmetto College Campuses.

She was also selected to be both the 2025 USC Lancaster Distinguished Teacher of the Year and the 2025 Mathematics, Science, Nursing and Public Health Teacher of the Year at USC Lancaster.



**Tekla Johnson**, assistant professor of African American studies at USC Union, received two funded grants, a PURE

Grant for "Origins of the Human Family" and a grant for a digital exhibit for the Summer Faculty Fellowship Archives at Johnson C. Smith University's Duke Memorial Library. She also made a quarterly presentation on the Black Power Archive Collective. Johnson also contributed a chapter in a book project – *African American (Urban) Removal* (forthcoming, USC Press, 2025).



**Shelley A.J. Jones**, associate professor of English at Palmetto College Columbia, received a 2025 RISE

grant through the USC Office of the Vice President for Research for her summer research proposal, titled "Revising for Genre: Mary Robinson's Poetry from Newspaper Verse to Lyrical Tales - Book Proposal and Chapter."



**Lachean Kimbrough** has joined USC Sumter as instructor of nursing.



**Katie Klik** was promoted to associate professor of sociology at USC Union.



**Andrew J. Kunka**, professor of English at USC Sumter, has been awarded a 2025 Excel grant through the Office of the Vice

President for Research for his work, titled “Good Comics: Dell, Gold Key, and the History of Comic Books in the U.S.”



**Dana Lawrence**, was promoted to full professor of English at USC Lancaster. She also presented her paper, “Postcolonial

Gothic and the Specter of Literary History in Helen Oyeyemi’s *The Icarus Girl*,” at the South Central MLA conference (Sept. 19-21, 2024).

She also received a 2025 RISE grant through the USC Office of the Vice President for Research for her summer research proposal, titled “Revising for Genre: Mary Robinson’s Poetry from Newspaper Verse to Lyrical Tales - Book Proposal and Chapter.”



**Nick Lawrence**, professor of humanities at USC Lancaster, presented a conference paper, titled “Southern Gothic

Hauntings and Feminist Marxism in Sharyn McCrumb’s *The Ballad of Frankie Silver*,” at the September 2024 South Central Modern Language Association (SCMLA) conference in New Orleans, La. Also at the conference, he gave the *South Central Review* editor’s report to the SCMLA Executive Committee; served as a roundtable panelist for “Strategies for Getting Published”; served as a panelist, “Pulp Fiction Turns 30; served as Secretary for a panel on Film Studies; and he served as chair for a Panel on Film Studies.



**Patrick Lawrence**, professor of English at USC Lancaster, is co-editor of a new book, *Out of the Gutters: Obscenity*

*Censorship and Transgression in American Comics*, that will be published by University of Texas Press in June 2025.



**McKenzie Lemhouse**, assistant librarian at USC Lancaster’s Medford Library, received the “New Librarian

Award” from the South Carolina Library Association at its October 2024 conference.

McKenzie and Rebecca received a Pads in Schools grant for \$1000 to provide period supplies to the campus through the all gender restrooms.

McKenzie sent in the final edits for a chapter on information

behavior in online endometriosis support communities in a collection titled “Information, Power, and Reproductive Health” by Litwin Books & Library Juice Press.

McKenzie and Logan Cocklin had a chapter proposal preliminarily accepted for inclusion in a collection titled “Shelf Life: Libraries, Archives, and Collective Grief” this summer.



**Steve Lownes**, associate professor of world languages at USC Union, received two funded grants, including a

PURE Grant for “Live Translations of Languages in Multiplayer Games” and a Latin American Film Festival grant to show five Latin American films during Hispanic Heritage Month.



**Ashley Lowrimore**, public relations coordinator for the Native American Studies Center at USC Lancaster, was

awarded first place in the Arts and Entertainment category for her work with *The Lancaster News* at the 2024 S.C. Press Association Awards in April 2025.



**Matt Lynch**, USC Salkehatchie men’s basketball coach, was honored as the national JUCO Coach of the Week for the

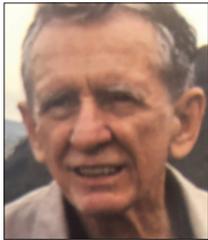
week of Feb. 3, 2025, by Hoopdirt.com for his team’s outstanding performance.

This spring, he was named 2025 NJCAA Region X Coach of the Year.



**Sarah Miller**, professor of history at USC Salkehatchie, was promoted to associate dean for academic and student affairs.

She joined the USC Salkehatchie faculty in 2006.



**Arthur Herbert Mitchell**, Distinguished Professor Emeritus at USC Salkehatchie, died on Oct. 18, 2024, after an

extended illness. He was 88.

The Boston, Mass., native ran track in high school and later completed the 1956 and 1958 Boston Marathons. Mitchell attended Boston College before serving two years in the U.S. Army. He completed his undergraduate education at Boston University and a doctorate in Irish history from Trinity College in Dublin, Ireland.

He taught history at USC Salkehatchie from 1976 to 2006, retiring as a full professor. He continued teach as an adjunct professor for an additional 10 years.

Early in life, Mitchell developed a passion for Ireland and Irish history, including the Irish diaspora. He was the author of many books on the Irish, in addition to books about the Korean War and Berchtesgaden, Germany, during World War II. Mitchell was the 2010 recipient of the Irish Carolinian award by three Irish societies in Charleston.

His books include: [\*Labour in Irish politics, 1890-1930\*](#) (1974, Harper & Row); [\*The history of the Hibernian Society of Charleston, South Carolina, 1799-1981\*](#) (1982); [\*JK and his Irish heritage\*](#) (1993, Moytura Press); [\*Revolutionary government in Ireland: Dáil Éireann, 1919-22\*](#) (1995, Gill & MacMillian); [\*Hitler's mountain: The Führer, Obersalzberg\*](#)

[\*and the American occupation of Berchtesgaden\*](#) (2007, McFarland & Co); [\*South Carolina Irish\*](#) (2010, The History Press); and [\*Understanding the Korean War: The participants, the tactics, and the course of conflict\*](#) (2013, McFarland).



**Lee Morris**, assistant professor of biology at USC Union, distributed scoring leader for Advanced

Placement Biology Exam, and developed and taught a one-day elective class, "Native Plants for Pollinators," for the Certificate in Native Plant Studies at Clemson University.



**Caleb Lee Morrison**, the longtime director of purchasing and assistant business manager at USC Lancaster, died

on Oct. 19, 2024. He was 64. He received his education in the Lancaster County School System and graduated third in his class from Indian Land High School, where he also played baseball and basketball. He went on to continue his education at USC Lancaster then transferred to USC Columbia, graduating in just three years with a bachelor's degree in finance.

Morrison served USC Lancaster for 35 years as the director of purchasing and assistant business manager until his retirement on Sept. 10, 2024. He was the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions throughout his life, including the Applied Professional Sciences and BADM Award, and also in appreciation for his loyal and dedicated service to USC Lancaster.



**Fidele Ngwane**, professor of mathematics at USC Salkehatchie, completed a Master of Science in Business

Analytics in October 2024 from the Darla Moore School of Business at USC Columbia.

He previously earned a Ph.D. in Mathematics from Auburn University, a MBA from USC Aiken, a Master of Applied Statistics from the Moore School, and a M.S. in Mathematics from Clemson University.



**F. Evan Nooe**, assistant professor of history at USC Lancaster, is th 2025 recipient of the Denise R. Shaw Excellence

in Scholarship Award for Palmetto College Campuses.

He has been selected as the winner of both the 2024 Best First Book Award from Phi Alpha Theta National History Honor Society and the 2022 Anne B. & James B. McMillan Prize in Southern History for his book [\*Aggression & Sufferings: Settler Violence, Native Resistance, and the Coalescence of the Old South\*](#).

Nooe presented a paper at the Disney, Culture, and Society Research Network Second Annual International Conference titled "Florida, History, and Architecture at Disney Springs's Town Center Neighborhood."

In July, he presented a paper at the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic annual conference in Philadelphia, Penn., titled "Remembering Solomon Wood's Fort: Georgia's Landscapes of Indigenous Erasure."

Nooe was an invited speaker to discuss my book *Aggression and Sufferings: Settler Violence, Native*

Resistance, and the Coalescence of the Old South at: York County Public Library (Rock Hill, S.C.) in June 2024; Eastern Lincoln County Historical Society (Denver, N.C.) in July 2024, Clemson University Historic Properties in July 2024, USC Lancaster's Native American Studies Center in August 2024, and to the Charleston Library Society, among others.

He served on the Georgia Historical Society's Annual award committee for the Bell Award (best book on Georgia history) and the Inscoe Award (best GHQ article for the year).

Nooe served as an invited outside reader for a MA Thesis in History at Valdosta State University.

Nooe served as a commentator for the panel titled "Gods, Guns, and Gender: The Unexpected and the Unexplained in the Native South During the 17th, 18th, and early 19th Centuries" at the American Society for Ethnohistory annual meeting in Fargo, N.D.

He has also been awarded a 2025 Excel grant through the Office of the Vice President for Research for his work, titled "Touring Florida's Past: Portrayals of Florida History through Tourism."



**Robert Overton** has been hired as student activities/student success center coordinator at USC Union.



**Phillip Parker**, Instructor-Accounting, Finance, and Insurance at USC Lancaster, is the 2025 recipient of the Business, Behavioral Sciences, Criminal Justice, Education and Library Science Teacher of the Year Award

at USC Lancaster.

He was also elected vice-chair of the South Carolina Association of CPAs-Catawba Chapter.



Columbia baseball home games during the 2025 season.

**Macy Petty**, public relations and development assistant at USC Union, sang the National Anthem at several USC



**Damien Picariello** was promoted to full professor of political science at USC Sumter.



**Ashley Rabanal** has been hired as an instructor of art at USC Union.



**Salvatore "Sal" Rao**, a part-time security officer at USC Lancaster, and his wife Lois Rao were each presented with the Order of the Palmetto, the State of South Carolina's highest civilian honor, in recognition of a lifetime of extraordinary achievement, service and contributions on a national or statewide scale, on Friday, Nov. 8, at the S.C. Department of Public Safety headquarters in Blythewood, S.C.



**Elliott Reeves**, director of online learning and support at USC Aiken (Palmetto College Online) and noted AI strategist, co-

authored an article, "[Three Ways to Help Close the AI Confidence Gap](#)," published in Inside Higher Ed. They also delve further into the topic in a [recent episode](#) of the DigitalEDU Dialogues Podcast.



**Dan Richards** has been hired as a new Palmetto College recruitment coordinator based at USC Lancaster.



**Kim Richardson**, associate professor of history at USC Lancaster, was recognized by students through the Thank-A-Teacher Program awarded through the USC Center for Teaching Excellence.



**Carley Robertson** has joined USC Salkehatchie as an assistant professor of English.



**Maximiliano "Maxi" Rocco** has been hired as the head men's soccer coach at USC Sumter.



**Lisa Rosof**, psychology instructor at USC Salkehatchie, was recognized by students through the Thank-A-Teacher

Program awarded through the USC Center for Teaching Excellence.



**Tyrie Rowell**, Financial Aid Counselor and Loan Coordinator Adjunct Instructor of Technical

Theatre | Technical Director at USC Lancaster, was invited to teach “The Inner Mastery through Movement” at the 20th International Festival of Making Theater (In.F.o.Ma.T.) for the Theatre of Changes School in Athens, Greece. Rowell has been invited back to teach at 21st International Festival in 2025, continuing to bring a wealth of knowledge to students from around the world.

Rowell also traveled to Dublin, Ireland, with Marybeth Berry and a student to work with the Dublin Fringe Lab to adjust their show “On The Spectrum.” While there, Rowell also worked on his one-man show, which is now hopeful of being accepted the Dublin Fringe Festival.

Rowell became the President of the South Carolina Speech and Theatre Association (SCSTA) on July 1. This professional organization promotes the study of all areas of performance and oral communication. It serves both public and private schools, as well as colleges and universities in South Carolina, through three spring competitions.



**Emily Schafer**, associate professor of psychology at USC Union, published “[A Review of the Impact of](#)

[Childhood Trauma and Assessment of Potential Intervention](#)” in OBM Integrative and Contemporary Medicine in May 2024. The special issue was named ‘Stress, Burnout and Trauma in Schools: Coping Strategies for Teachers, Staff and Students.

She also presented “Predictive Factors of Traditional and Cyberbullying” at the International Academic Forum in London, England, in July 2024.

Schafer and **Katie Klik**, assistant professor of psychology at USC Union, presented “[An exploration of Faculty Welfare and Student Success: The Impact of Campus Social and Work Environment](#)” In July 2024. They also received a funded grant – PC summer funding to work on aligning Faculty Welfare data with PC strategic plan and subsequently incorporating specific measurable goals and suggested initiatives.

Schafer co-presented “University of South Carolina Palmetto College: Improving Faculty Welfare as a Bridge to Student Success” alongside Klik, Palmetto College Chancellor Susan Elkins and Palmetto College Executive Vice Chancellor Walt Collins at the 86th annual conference of the Association of Continuing Higher Education in Palm Springs, Calif., in October 2024.

She was awarded a grant to be a Visiting Assessment Fellow for the College Board in which she will be assessing revisions and updates to the Advanced Placement Psychology coursework and exam.

Schafer has also been awarded a second grant via the Fulbright organization, the Community College Residency Program of the Hubert Humphrey Fellowship

Program, which allowed USC Union to host an international scholar in the Spring 2025 semester.



**Kendra Scott**, ‘24 (Liberal Studies), has been hired as a new Palmetto College recruitment coordinator based at USC Union.



**Lauren Thomas**, Adjunct professor of Health Promotion Education and Behavior at USC Lancaster, and



**Sarah Sellhorst**, director of Dual Enrollment Faculty Relations and Curricula and professor of exercise Science at USC

Lancaster, will partner with the Upper Midlands Rural Health Network to facilitate a two-year Strategic Workforce & Training grant with the SC Center for Rural and Primary Healthcare to develop and accredit a Health & Wellbeing Coach Training Program through the USC Lancaster. The training program will equip students interested in a future health profession with the preventive health knowledge and patient-centered communication skills to increase their likelihood of sustaining self-directed health-promoting behaviors. The grant will also offer tuition funding for select students who fully participate in the pilot year of the 100% online training program.



**Margaret Smith** has joined USC Sumter as instructor of accounting.



**Daniel Stanforth** has joined USC Sumter as instructor of Spanish.



**Amy Stanley**, business office manager/fiscal analyst at USC Salkehatchie, graduated with a Master of Business

Administration degree from the Darla Moore School of Business at USC Columbia.



**Nahid Swails**, Assistant Professor of Physics at USC Lancaster, has been awarded a Faculty Travel Grant

(NSF-funded) to participate in the American Geophysical Union 2024 Annual Meeting (AGU24), which will be held in December 2024 in Washington, D.C.



**Brittany Taylor-Driggers**, Associate Professor of Art and Art History Director of Campus Collections

and Galleries at USC Lancaster has artwork entitled "Fixing My Broken Pieces" was selected for publication

in Kakalak 2024. Out of a total of 170 only 35 artworks were selected.

She also received a 2025 RISE grant through the USC Office of the Vice President for Research for her proposal, titled "Indigenous Art South Carolina: Redefining the Permanent Exhibition at the Native American Studies Center USC Lancaster."

**Irina Tedrick** has joined USC Sumter as assistant professor of Spanish.



**Andrew Thompson** has been hired as director of information technology at USC Salkehatchie.



**Jennifer Triplett** has been hired as an assistant professor of sociology at USC Union.



**Paige Wallace** has joined USC Sumter as assistant professor of English.



**Bernard Washington** has been selected as the new Palmetto College recruitment coordinator based at USC

Salkehatchie.

He previously served in the same role based at USC Sumter.



**Cynthia White**, building and grounds specialist at USC Sumter, is the 2023-24 recipient of H.D. Barnett Sr.

Award, presented in recognition as Outstanding Staff Member of the Year by the Mid-Carolina Commission for Higher Education and the Sumter Partnership of the USC Educational Foundation.

# New books highlight scholarship from Palmetto College faculty

The faculty from the regional Palmetto College campuses and Palmetto College Columbia produce all manner of scholarship to contribute to academia, society and public discourse and consumption, including artwork in different media, screenplays and film production, stage plays, photography, sculpture and, of course, books in a variety of genres.



**Julia Elliott**

*Hellions*  
Tin House, 2025

- *Time Magazine's* "[15 Books to Read in April](#)"



**David Decker**

*A History of the Modern Middle East*. Cognella, 2023.



**Damien L. Picariello**, editor

*The Western and Political Thought: A Fistful of Politics The Western and Political Thought: A Fistful of Politics*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2023.



**Andrew Kunka**

*The Routledge Introduction to American Comics*. Routledge, 2024



**F. Evan Nooe**

*Aggression & Sufferings: Settler Violence, Native Resistance, and the Coalescence of the Old South*. University of Alabama Press, 2023.

- 2024 Best First Book Award, Phi Alpha Theta National Honor Society
- 2022 Annie B. & James B. McMillan Prize in Southern History



**Justin Mogilski**, editor

*The Oxford handbook of evolutionary psychology and romantic relationships*. Oxford Publishing, 2023.



**Ray McManus**

*The Last Saturday in America*. Hub City Press, 2024.

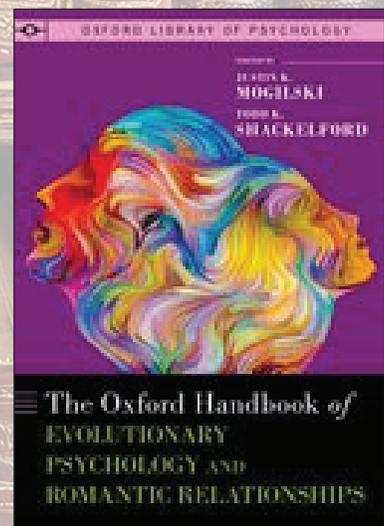
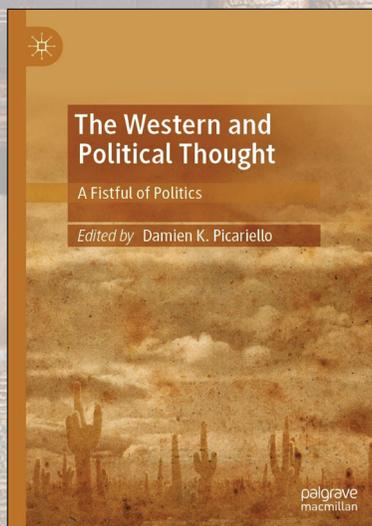
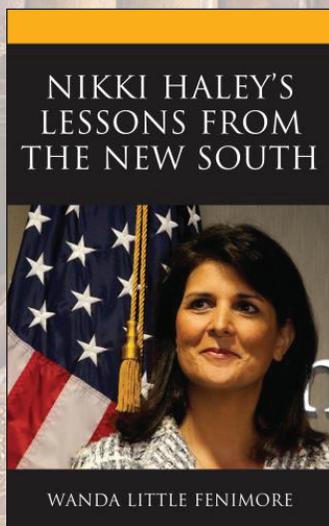
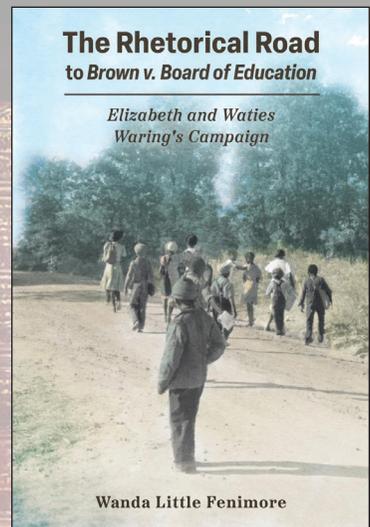
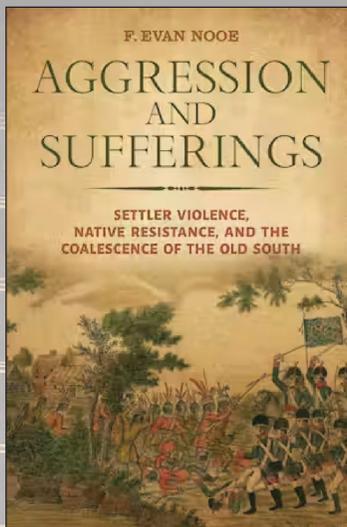
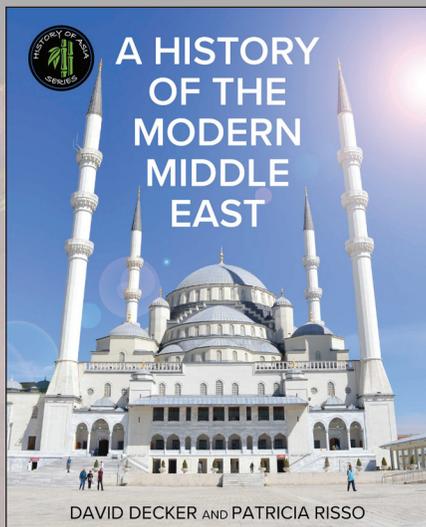
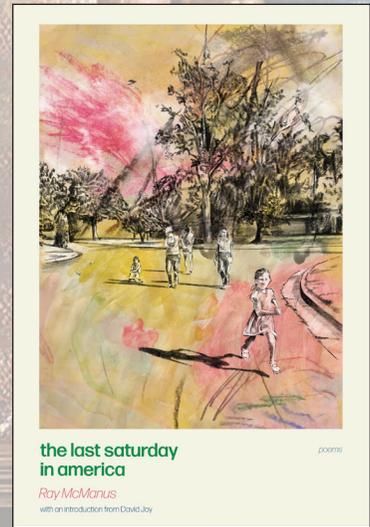
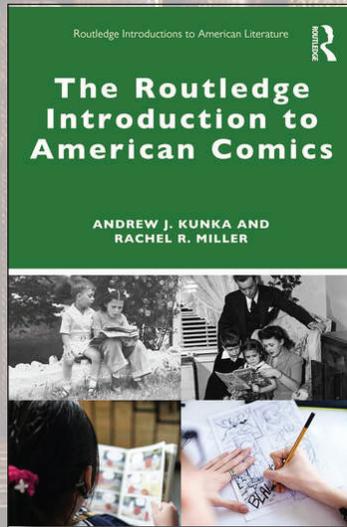
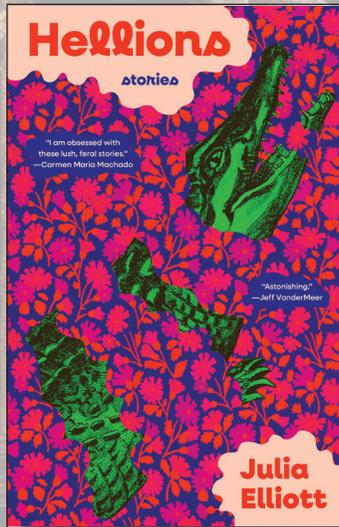


**Wanda Little Fenimore**

*The Rhetorical Road to Brown v. Board of Education: Elizabeth*

*and Waties Waring's Campaign*. University Press of Mississippi, 2023.

*Nikki Haley's Lessons from the New South*. Lexington Books, 2023.



Listed herein is an updated abridged bibliography of books from Palmetto College faculty that cover short stories, novels, poetry, nonfiction essays, history, sociology, social science, political science, popular culture and textbooks – among other topics.

Bellanca, Mary E. [\*Daybooks of Discovery: Nature Diaries in Britain, 1770-1870\*](#). University of Virginia Press, 2007.

Bucker, Park, compiler. [\*The Matthew J. and Arlyn Bruccoli Collection of F. Scott Fitzgerald at the University of South Carolina: An Illustrated Catalogue\*](#). University of South Carolina Press, 2004.

Collins, Walter P. [\*Emerging African Voices: A Study of Contemporary African Literature\*](#). Cambria, 2010.

Collins, Walter P. [\*Tracing Personal Expansion: Reading Selected Novels as Modern African Bildungsromane\*](#). University Press of America, 2006.

Elliott, Julia. [\*Hellions\*](#). Tin House Books, 2025.

Elliott, Julia. [\*The New and Improved Romie Futch\*](#). Tin House Books, 2015.

Elliott, Julia. [\*The Wilds\*](#). Tin House Books, 2014.

Evans, Dianne. [\*Saving Remnants\*](#). Eber & Wein Publishing, 2020.

Fenimore, Wanda Little. [\*Nikki Haley's Lessons from the New South\*](#). Lexington Books, 2023.

Fenimore, Wanda Little. [\*The Rhetorical Road to Brown v. Board of Education: Elizabeth and Waties Waring's Campaign\*](#). University Press of Mississippi, 2023.

Garane, Garane. [\*Il latte è buono\*](#). Cosmo Iannone Editore, 2005.

Grob, Kristina, and Nathan Nobis. [\*Penser l'avortement\*](#). Elliot Editions France, 2023.

Hammond, Lisa. [\*Lily Watch\*](#). Seven Kitchens Press, 2021.

Hammond, Lisa. [\*Goddess Suite\*](#). Small Fires Press, 2018.

Hammond, Lisa. [\*Moving House\*](#). Texas A&M University Press, 2007.

- 2006 Robert Phillips Chapbook Prize

Ivey, Randall K. [\*The Mutilation Gypsy: And Other Stories\*](#). iUniverse, 2003.

Ivey, Randall K. [\*The Shape of a Man: A Novella and Five Stories\*](#). iUniverse, 2002.

Ivey, Randall K. [\*Where the Streets Are Paved with Gold: A Novel in the Compton Cycle\*](#), 2015.

Johnson, Daniel M. [\*Blood on the Marsh: The adventures of Brigadier William Mackintosh, John Mackintosh Mor, Captain Aeneas Mackintosh, Colonel Anne Mackintosh, General Lachlan McIntosh, Roderick McIntosh, Colonel John McIntosh, Flora MacDonald, Sergeant Allen McDonald and Alexander McDonald of Darien, Georgia\*](#), 2014.

Johnson, Daniel M. [\*Brier Creek Battleground: A Revolutionary War Site Beside the Savannah River\*](#). 2017 ed., 2017.

Johnson, Daniel M. [\*Fort Morris Battleground: An Illustrated Guide to a Revolutionary War Site at Sunbury, Georgia\*](#), 2015.

Johnson, Daniel M. [\*Mr. McIntosh's Family: The Mackintosh Clan and the McIntosh Family in the Jacobite risings, the settlement of Darien, Georgia, and the struggle for the Colonial American southern frontier\*](#), 2022.

Johnson, Daniel M. [\*Savannah, Augusta & Brier Creek: Samuel Elbert and His Resistance Against the Conquest of Georgia\*](#), 2018.

Johnson, Daniel M. [\*The 71st Highlanders in the American Revolution\*](#), 2022.

Johnson, Daniel M. [\*This Cursed War: Lachlan McIntosh in the American Revolution\*](#), 2018.

Johnson, Daniel M. [\*This Cursed War: Lachlan McIntosh of Georgia and the Tribulations of His Family During the American Revolution\*](#), 2019.

Johnson, Tekla A. [\*Free Radical: Ernest Chambers, Black Power and the Politics of Race\*](#). Texas Tech University Press, 2012.

Jones, R. Mac, and Ray McManus, editors. [\*Found Anew: Poetry and Prose Inspired by the South Caroliniana Library Digital Collections\*](#). University of South Carolina Press, 2015.

Kettler, Andrew. [\*The Smell of Slavery: Olfactory Racism and the Atlantic World\*](#). Cambridge University Press, 2020.



**Kingkade, Howard.** *Man from the Dying Planet.* Mad Scary Films, 2010.

**Kingkade, Howard.** *The Mark.* Del Valle Productions / Mad Scary Films, 2016.

**Kingkade, Howard, Jim Gottier & Taryn Kosviner.** *Saint Dee Dee,* 2014.

**Kingkade, Howard** and Helen Baldwin. *Songbird.* (Screenplay). La Luz Productions, 2018.

- Best Original Screenplay of a Short Film, Nice International Film Festival, 2018
- Jury Prize for Best Original Story, Things 2 Fear Film Fest, 2018

**Kunka, Andrew J.,** and Michele K. Troy, editors. *May Sinclair: Moving Towards the Modern.* Ashgate Press, 2006.

**Kunka, Andrew J.** *Autobiographical Comics.* Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017.

**Kunka, Andrew J.** *The Life and Comics of Howard Cruse: Taking Risks in the Service of Truth.* Rutgers University Press, 2021.

**Kunka, Andrew J. & Rachel R. Miller.** *The Routledge Introduction to American Comics.* Routledge, 2024.

**Lawrence, Patrick.** *Obscene Gestures: Counter-Narratives of Sex and Race in the Twentieth Century.* Fordham University Press, 2022.

**Lowe, Stephen H.** *The Slow Undoing: The Federal Courts and the Long Struggle for Civil Rights in South Carolina.* University of South Carolina Press, 2021.

- 2022 George C. Rogers Jr. Award for best book of South Carolina history

**McManus, Ray.** *The Last Saturday in America.* Hub City Press, 2024.

**McManus, Ray.** *Driving Through the Country Before You are Born.* University of South Carolina Press, 2007.

- 2006 South Carolina First Book Prize in Poetry, USC Press

**McManus, Ray.** *Left Behind.* Stepping Stones Press, 2008.

- South Carolina Poetry Initiative Chapbook Prize, Stepping Stones Press.

**McManus, Ray.** *Punch.* Hub City Press, 2014.

- 2015 Independent Publishers Book Award, best book of poetry in North America

**McManus, Ray.** *Red Dirt Jesus.* Marick Press, 2011.

- 2011 Marick Press Poetry Prize

**Mogiliski, Justin K.,** and Todd K. Shackelford (editors). *The Oxford Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology and Romantic Relationships.* Oxford University Press, 2023.

**Nobis, Nathan,** and **Kristina Grob.** *Thinking Critically About Abortion: Why Most Abortions Aren't Wrong & Why All Abortions Should Be Legal.* Open Philosophy Press, 2019.

**Nooe, F. Evan.** *Aggression and Sufferings: Settler Violence, Native Resistance, and the Coalescence of the Old South.* University of Alabama Press, 2023.

- 2024 Best First Book Award, Phi Alpha Theta National Honor Society
- 2022 Annie B. & James B. McMillan Prize in Southern History

**Picariello, Damien K.,** editor. *The Western and Political Thought: A Fistful of Policies.* Palgrave MacMillan, 2023.

**Rinehart, Christine S.** *Drones and Targeted Killing in the Middle East and Africa: An Appraisal of American Counterterrorism Policies.* Rowman & Littlefield, 2016.

**Rinehart, Christine S.** *Sexual Jihad: The Role of Islam in Female Terrorism.* Rowman & Littlefield, 2019.

**Rinehart, Christine S.** *Volatile Social Movements and the Origins of Terrorism: The Radicalization of Change.* Rowman & Littlefield, 2013.

**Steward, Rodney.** *David Schenck and the Contours of Confederate Identity.* University of Tennessee Press, 2012.

# From Fire Ant to Fulbright

USC Sumter alum Denzyl Josh Lastimoso awarded lucrative Fulbright Scholarship

By Alethia Hummel, USC Sumter

**D**enzyl Josh Lastimoso, 2021 USC Sumter alumni, was recently awarded a Fulbright Scholarship to study Master of Research in Cardiovascular Sciences at Newcastle University, UK.

Lastimoso was born in the Philippines, but his family immigrated to the United States when he was four years old and settled in Sumter. He attended Sumter public schools and graduated from Sumter High School in 2019.

At first, Lastimoso wasn't sure where he wanted to go to college or what he wanted to study, but scholarships and his proximity to USC Sumter helped sway him to become a Fire Ant. Once enrolled, he began taking general education courses, but that all changed when he took Introduction to Statistical Reasoning.

In that class, he met USC Sumter Assistant Professor of Mathematics Dr. Sher Chhetri, who encouraged him to participate in a student research project. The project was a statistical analysis, and the findings were later applied to analyze data relating to bladder cancer patients.

"Josh showed an interest in medical research when I first met him in my statistics class in Fall 2019. He exhibited an extensive background in mathematics and statistics, enthusiasm, and dedication. Because of this, it better prepared him to work with a new probability distribution model and later the model was applied to cancer patients' data," said Dr. Chhetri.

That research experience started Lastimoso down the path to his future goal of becoming a physician-researcher.

"At USC Sumter, I found a passion for research through the guidance of Dr. Chhetri. There, I formed a strong interest in discovery for the biological sciences. Because of that opportunity, I've grown as an individual and have been taking steps to develop my career as a physician-researcher," said Lastimoso.

While Lastimoso was at USC Sumter, he and Dr. Chhetri completed two research projects, "Mathematical Characterization of Lomax Distribution," which was presented and published in the Proceedings of the 16th Annual SC Upstate Research Symposium, and "Extended Lomax Distribution with an Application to Cancer Patient Data," which was published in the Future of Information and Communication Conference. They also presented their findings at the 2021 South Carolina Academy of Sciences Meetings.

Due to his hard work and dedication, Lastimoso was named the Mathematics, Science and Engineering Outstanding Student in 2021. He graduated USC Sumter with an Associate in Science degree, and he went on

earn a Bachelor of Science degree from USC Columbia in 2022. Once Josh graduated, he was hired at Lexington Medical Center in Columbia as a pathology support technician.

After working nearly two years, Lastimoso decided it was time to take the next step in his educational career. He began to look for Master degree programs that would nurture and expand his passion for medical research. The Fulbright Scholarship program was the perfect fit for Lastimoso's goals, but it would be a challenge to land the lucrative scholarship.

According to their website, "The Fulbright Program, the United States government's flagship program of international educational and cultural exchange, offers passionate and accomplished students and scholars in more than 160 countries the opportunity to study, teach, conduct research, exchange ideas, and contribute to mutual understanding. These talented Fulbrighters from all backgrounds inspire, innovate, and contribute to finding solutions to challenges facing our communities and our world."

Lastimoso completed the extensive application and interview process and in mid-2024 he learned he had been awarded the scholarship and would have the opportunity to study in the United Kingdom at Newcastle University and work towards a Master of Research in Cardiovascular Sciences.

"I was thrilled to hear Josh received a Fulbright scholarship to study in the UK. It is an honor to be a part of his success story. For a teacher/educator, it is a great joy to help others and see them succeed," said Dr. Chhetri.

Lastimoso finished his first semester at Newcastle this Fall (2024) and has enjoyed his experience thus far. "I've had a wonderful experience. I've met lots of great people from different backgrounds and it's been fascinating to talk directly with people from around the world. Despite the weather, I've warmed up to Newcastle, and I would happily call it a new home. From the local shops to the variety of food, my time in Newcastle has been nothing short of fantastic," said Lastimoso.

Lastimoso added, "I want to thank Dr. Chhetri for introducing me to the world of research in statistics throughout my undergraduate education at USC Sumter. Without this experience, I'm not sure if I would've pursued a research-oriented career. I'm also grateful to USC Sumter for having a welcoming environment and for giving me support as I advanced through my later years of undergrad."



# Bantams celebrate the new “U”

USC Union unveils new athletic branding

By Annie Smith, USC Union

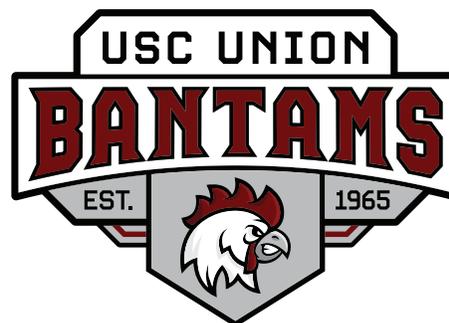
USC Union has a new look! On August 28, 2024, the university unveiled their new athletic logo, a fresh rendition of their mascot Blaze the Bantam created by Arrowhead Design Group in Spartanburg, replacing the image that had been in place since 2013. Blaze's facelift was celebrated on campus with the Fuddruckers Food Truck, Front Porch Churn Ice Cream, games, music and giveaways in Patron's Park.

"This logo incorporates the school's colors and updated mascot, giving it a modern yet timeless appeal. The new logo will help in creating a consistent and stronger brand image and will enhance marketability across various platforms to help in recruiting," said Annie Smith, director of marketing and development at USC Union. "My team and I worked with Arrowhead Design out of Spartanburg and applaud them for doing a dynamic job of recreating Blaze the Bantam. Working with Arrowhead was a fun collaboration, and their design perfectly aligned with our brand's vision and values."

"The updated logo is something that I have been waiting a long time for," said Athletic Director Zach Simmons. "The college needs something new and fresh looking because of all the updates and new projects we have going on every year."

"We're thrilled to have been selected to design the new logo for the USC Union Bantams, featuring Blaze in a sleek, modern, and aggressive design," said Lanie Carter, president of Arrowhead Design Group. "While our team stayed true to the classic color palette of the University, we brought in custom illustration and fresh fonts to give the overall look a bold, updated feel. This logo isn't just about energizing the athletes and organization; we hope it also sparks new sponsorships and community engagement to fuel the program's future success."

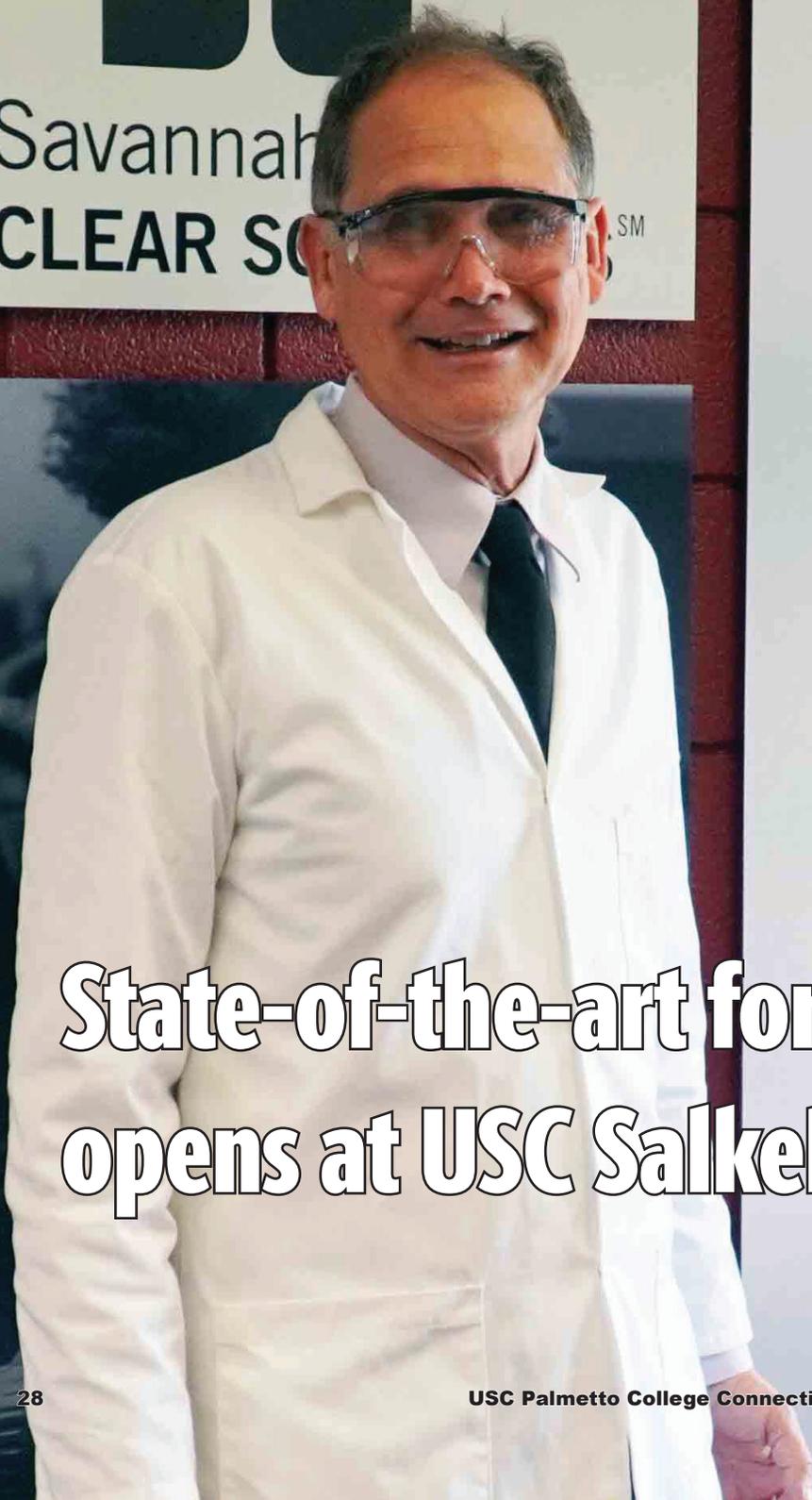
"The new logo brings excitement to the campus and to the athletic department," said Head Softball Coach William Royce. "Annie Smith and the design firm did a great job! We are thrilled to be a part of the 'New U'."



Dr. Francis Burns, chemistry professor at USC Salkehatchie, initially proposed the idea of the Allendale campus forensic science lab.



Savannah  
NUCLEAR SECURITY CENTER



UNIVERSITY OF  
**South Carolina**

SALKEHATCHIE

**FORENSIC  
SCIENCE  
LABORATORY**

# State-of-the-art forensic lab opens at USC Salkehatchie

With deep gratitude,  
we recognize the  
generous support  
of businesses,

**By Stephanie Gruber, USC Salkehatchie**

**U**SC Salkehatchie celebrated the opening of a new forensic science lab at its Allendale campus, marking a significant advancement in criminal justice education in the Lowcountry. The state-of-the-art facility will provide students with hands-on experience in fingerprinting, drug testing, DNA analysis, and other crucial forensic techniques. The lab, a culmination of years of planning and collaboration, is poised to enhance the education of current students, attract future students to the criminal justice program, and further the university's mission of providing higher education and intellectual leadership to the region.

"This lab represents a significant milestone for our criminal justice program," said Dr. Francis Burns, a chemistry professor at Salkehatchie, who initially proposed the lab. "By offering students real-world experience in forensic science, we hope to inspire and prepare them for successful careers in law enforcement and the criminal justice system. We've already seen the impact in our classrooms, with students inspired to pursue careers in forensics and criminal justice."

The lab's creation was a collaborative effort.

"This project would not have come to fruition without the work of so many people," said April Cone, dean at USC Salkehatchie. "Dr. Francis Burns was instrumental in developing the concept of a forensic chemistry lab on our campus. He worked closely with John Peek, instructor of criminal justice, as well as Chris DeWolf, our Palmetto College senior director of development, and many others to research the possibilities, develop a plan, secure funding, and implement the installation of

the equipment. It truly has been a team effort which has resulted in an impressive final product. We are deeply grateful for the support of community partners, our local law enforcement agencies, and the South Carolina Law Enforcement Division (SLED)."

Funding for the project was secured by USDA grants, along with matching funds from community partners including Savannah River Nuclear Solutions, Enterprise Bank, The Parker Group, the SC Bar Association, Southern Carolina Alliance, SRS Community Reuse Organization, and the Harvin Law Firm.

The lab will not only enhance USC Salkehatchie's academic programs, but it will also provide opportunities for the community.

"USC Salkehatchie is committed to improving our region," Burns said. "This lab will be a valuable resource in those efforts, allowing us to provide opportunities for the public to learn more about forensic science."

The event was attended by donors, government officials, law enforcement representatives, faculty, staff, and students. SLED was recognized for its support of the program, including providing opportunities for students to visit SLED facilities and learn about crime scene documentation and evidence collection.

"USC Salkehatchie's focus is on serving our students, our community, and the state. We truly appreciate your support of this continuous effort," Cone said. "Your presence today illustrates your belief in the future of this institution and our students."



**Midfielder Pien Coppoolse  
easily transitions from  
The Netherlands to USCL**

Reprinted from The Lancaster News

Netherlands soccer player Pien Coppoolse had never set foot in the United States – before she headed to the USC Lancaster in July 2024 to join its women’s soccer team.

Now, the freshman Dutch midfielder is making her mark on and off the soccer field in Lancaster.

She’s already delivered in big moments, helping the team to achieve its best-ever season record – 14-3-1 – and the Region X title for the second consecutive year.

Assistant coach Joseph Calbreath remembers a key moment in the season that solidified Coppoolse’s pivotal place in the midfield.

“Her goal from outside the box against Southwest Virginia was a huge boost to her confidence,” he said. “It let her showcase exactly what she’s capable of.”

Assistant coach Michael Smith recalled another dramatic moment. This one came during a 2-1 win over Johnson & Wales, where Coppoolse calmly converted a last-minute penalty.

“That’s just the kind of player she is,” Smith said.

Head coach Kenny Halas recruited Coppoolse through Kings Talent — an agency he trusts for recruiting international players. For Halas, recruiting international players is vital for the team’s success.

“American players tend to play soccer, while international players live it,” Halas said. “They see soccer as a lifestyle, not just a sport.”

Coppoolse’s highlight video captured this intensity.

“She celebrated like she’d won the World Cup after a corner kick,” Halas said. “That moment showcased her competitive spirit and commitment.”

Born in Amsterdam and raised in Breda, Coppoolse started playing soccer at age 7, inspired by her younger brother. But her journey was not without challenges. Coppoolse faced sexism as she played against local boys teams.

“Playing against boys was a huge learning experience,” she said. “Most didn’t believe girls could play football (soccer).”

But her technical ability allowed her to silence critics.

“There was a boy who was especially rude about playing against a team of girls,” Coppoolse said. “After I scored three goals against him, he was quiet.”

Dutch soccer emphasizes technical skill over raw athleticism, and Coppoolse credits this style for shaping her game. Her left foot style, her vision and her precise passing have made her a key playmaker in USCL’s attack, with seven goals and seven assists in just 17 games.

Smith noticed her ability to make an impact on the program the day she arrived in Lancaster.

“She’s a creative and talented player,” he said. “She’s relentless and dedicated in practice, consistently showing up, not only for herself but also for the team.”

On the field, she plays with a European style — calm, technical and composed. Sophomore defender Malaya Fuller has found inspiration in Coppoolse’s style of play and work ethic.

“She’s an extremely technical player who can hold the ball longer and pick out the perfect pass,” Fuller said. “She’s inspired me to work on my shot.”

Team captain and fellow Dutch midfielder Julie Eskes praised Coppoolse for her versatility.

“Being left-footed, but also able to shoot exceptionally with her right foot makes her unique,” Eskes said.

Her leadership extends beyond the field. With a 3.85 GPA, Coppoolse balances academics and athletics, aiming to graduate early with a liberal arts degree.

“My dad always told me, ‘Chase your dreams, no matter where they take you,’” Coppoolse said. “Their support from across the world keeps me going.”

As the team looks ahead to the spring season, Coppoolse’s goal remains clear — to help lead USCL to new heights.

“We achieved so much this season, but we’re not done yet.” Coppoolse said. “I want the team to be nationally ranked, and I’ll give everything to help achieve this!”

Palmetto College Columbia Dean Ron Cox, Pharoh Cooper, '22 (Liberal Studies), Palmetto College Chancellor Susan Elkins, Mandy Moses, '25 (Organizational Leadership) and Palmetto College Board of Visitors Chairperson Melinda Carr.



# Alumni Spotlight

Pharoh Cooper, '22, and Mandy Moses, '25

Within Palmetto College Columbia, the stories of our alumni are a testament to the power of perseverance, dedication and the transformative impact of education. The remarkable journeys of two alumni – Mandy Moses and Pharoh Cooper – and their experiences reflect the diverse paths our students take and the profound influence of Palmetto College on their lives.

### **Mandy Moses: A Journey of Resilience and Transformation**

Mandy Moses graduated high school in 1997, intending to take a gap year. That gap year extended to 23 years, during which Mandy faced numerous challenges, including becoming a single mother and working full-time in the medical field. It wasn't until the spring of 2021, at the age of 41, that Moses enrolled in her first college course at Cleveland Community College in Shelby, N.C.

Initially aiming for a nursing career, Moses' plans shifted due to the stress and changes in the healthcare profession during the COVID-19 pandemic. She decided to pursue a business-oriented role within the medical field, driven by her passion for oncology and improving healthcare systems. Mandy completed her associate's degree in 2022 and continued her education at Palmetto College, enrolling in the Organizational Leadership program in 2023.

Her Palmetto College experience has been transformative, with significant influences from professors like Dr. Andrew Kettler (USC Union), Dr. Deborah Hudson (USC Union), Dr. R. Mac Jones (Palmetto College Columbia), and Dr. Melissa Rack (USC Salkehatchie). Moses engaged in research projects and service learning, contributing to her growth and development. Supported by her husband and the Harriet Hurt Endowed Scholarship, Mandy's journey has been marked by resilience and a commitment

to making meaningful changes in healthcare.

"She (Harriet Hurt ) started at age 47," said Moses. "She got her bachelor's degree, her master's degree. And she became a key figure in the Palmetto program. I felt this deep connection to Harriet at that point. Because even though I wasn't dealing with students, I'm dealing with patients. And I'm attempting to do the same thing, to give people opportunities where they feel like those opportunities don't exist."

Moses will graduate from the University of South Carolina on May 10, 2025. Looking ahead, she plans to pursue the Master of Studies in Law degree in health systems law from the Joseph F. Rice School of Law at the USC to more effectively advocate for patients.

"It just has, year after year, went down. And it's become less focused on patient care and more about the bureaucracies within health care systems and organizations. And I just don't like that," said Moses. "My goal when I'm done with this is to try to make changes within those systems. If I'm a powerful enough person to do that, to be sure that patients can focus on their disease processes and not have to worry about all this junk behind the scenes. 'Can I pay for my chemo? Do we have food at home? Can I get a ride to my chemo?' Things like that. I just feel like we can do better."

She believes her education has been the best investment in her personal growth and encourages other adult learners to pursue their educational goals.

### **Pharoh Cooper: Balancing Football and Academics**

Pharoh Cooper grew up in Havelock, N.C. Success as a high school athlete led him to commit to the USC in his junior year of high school, enrolling in 2013. Under Coach Steve Spurrier, Pharoh had a successful freshman year and gained attention from the NFL during his sophomore year.

As his football career progressed, Cooper began dropping classes to focus on training and eventually left college early when he was drafted to play for the Los Angeles Rams. Despite his success in the NFL, injuries prompted him to reconsider his education. In 2018, Pharoh reached out to Maria Hickman, his advisor, and decided to return to USC through Palmetto College, which offered online classes.

"I always made a promise to my dad. I said, I'll go back and get my degree. And he was always saying, it's better to have it. It's better to have it than to need it than to not have it."

Balancing football and academics was challenging, but Cooper persevered with the help of tutors and support from Palmetto College. He changed his major to Liberal Studies, with a minor in Criminal Justice, and steadily worked towards completing his degree.

"It was tough, it was very tough trying to balance football, meetings, traveling, doing work, [and] assignments due at midnight," said Cooper.

Walking across the stage at Colonial Life Arena in 2022 and receiving his Liberal Studies degree was one of the best feelings he ever experienced. Cooper emphasizes the importance of education and the support he received from Palmetto College, encouraging others to pursue their degrees despite challenges. He is proud to be a Gamecock alumnus and appreciates the opportunities provided by USC.

The stories of Mandy Moses and Pharoh Cooper highlight the diverse paths our students take and the profound impact of Palmetto College on their lives. Their journeys are a testament to the power of perseverance, dedication, and the transformative impact of education. Celebrating their accomplishments is a reminder of the importance of supporting and encouraging students to pursue their dreams, no matter the obstacles they may face.



# Palmetto College Mace debuts

Sculptor Bob Doster designed new symbol of authority for formal academic occasions

Officially adopted in May 2025, the Palmetto College Mace was designed and fashioned by [Bob Doster](#), an award-winning, nationally acclaimed artist based in Lancaster, S.C.

The steel mace is nearly four feet long. Its head features four gold medallions that display a stylized University of South Carolina Palmetto College logo, a list of the Palmetto College campuses with founding dates, the Seal of the State of South Carolina and the University of South Carolina seal surrounded by a laurel wreath. In academia, the laurel wreath symbolizes victory, triumph and achievement, particularly in intellectual pursuits.

The mace is topped by a palmetto tree (Sabal palmetto), which holds great significance in South Carolina history as the official state tree and which symbolizes the state's resilience and victory during the American War of Independence. Three of the medallions include the palmetto tree in their design, and the fourth features an outline of South Carolina, which has been nicknamed the "Palmetto State." Like the palmetto logs that absorbed cannon fire at Fort Moultrie in 1776, Palmetto College students are resilient, and the durable steel mace design honors their academic accomplishments.

The Palmetto College Mace is carried in procession during formal academic occasions, such as commencements and convocations, signifying the authority of the university. The placement of the mace on its stand signals that the proceedings are about to come to order. The retirement of the mace indicates the conclusion of the exercises. When University of South Carolina President Michael Amiridis is present at a formal Palmetto College academic event, the University of South Carolina Mace takes the place of the Palmetto College Mace.

The University of South Carolina Mace was officially adopted in 1967, and new maces for the four-year comprehensive USC System institutions at USC Aiken, USC Beaufort and USC Upstate were adopted in 2024.



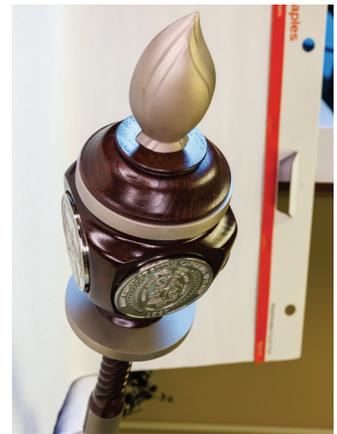
The USC Mace, officially adopted in 1967, was designed and fashioned by distinguished London silversmith Leslie Durbin.



The USC Aiken Mace was officially adopted in 2024.



The USC Beaufort Mace, designed by woodworker and artist David Lunin, was officially adopted in 2024.



The USC Upstate Mace was officially adopted in 2024.



The USC Palmetto College Mace was designed and fashioned by acclaimed sculptor Bob Doster and adopted in 2025.

UNIVERSITY OF  
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USC Palmetto College Board of Visitors, November 2024