## CORNERSTONES Spring/Summer 2024

CELEBRATING OUR SHARED IMPACT

TLA

REINVENTING ENGAGEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

HONORING THE LEGACY OF ROCKET PHILANTHROPISTS



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The University of Toledo continues to innovate and invest in our future. The UToledo Board of Trustees approved a resolution that would reinvigorate the core of Main Campus around Centennial Mall and invest in both clinical and student spaces on the Health Science Campus over the next five years. **Read more: tol-edo.org/CMP24** 





## CORNERSTONES

© 2024 as a joint publication of The University of Toledo Foundation and The University of Toledo Alumni Association. **Cornerstones** is published twice yearly. Question or story idea? Email cornerstones@utoledo.edu.



## WILLIAM L. PIERCE '99, '09

Associate Vice President of Alumni Engagement and Annual Giving

The University of Toledo Foundation

## **Reflecting On This Year's Wins**

Throughout my career in higher education, I have found great value in setting aside time for reflection. This dedicated time of contemplation helps create context and perspective on how far you've come and where you are or hope to be heading. It also identifies opportunities for improvement and celebrating accomplishments.

As the fiscal year comes to a close, there are many moments to take note of and share pride for what our community has accomplished:

- The U.S. News & World Report Ranked UToledo among best online degree programs in 2024
- The U.S. News Rankings Placed UToledo amongst the country's best graduate programs
- UToledo researchers earned a \$2.5 million federal grant to explore a new drug delivery method for pancreatic cancer
- The UToledo Medical Center celebrated its 3,000th kidney transplant
- The nation-leading UToledo Human Trafficking Conference celebrated its 20th anniversary
- Rocket Athletics was recognized as the Mid-American Conference's top women's and men's athletic programs during the 2023-24 academic year
- UToledo won the inaugural Battle of I-75 Giving Challenge against archrival Bowling Green State University
- The UToledo Foundation was a recipient of the 2024 Top Workplace Award, presented by The Blade, based on positive employee feedback

It is through the dedication of our team, along with the incredible passion and support from our alumni, donors, corporate partners and friends that we are able to continue moving forward. The path ahead for UToledo is bright and though there will be challenges we must overcome, many are not unique to our University, but widespread across higher education. However, the resilience of our campus community and the strength of our alumni network continue to prove that The University of Toledo is a transformative institution that changes lives and improves the world around us.

We are grateful for the ongoing support from each of you who give time, talent and treasure to ensure our success and provide a future for our students. Together, we ensure the success and legacy of UToledo. We look forward to strengthening our relationship with you for years to come and promise to continue seeking out new opportunities for collaboration.

Thank you and Go Rockets! Я

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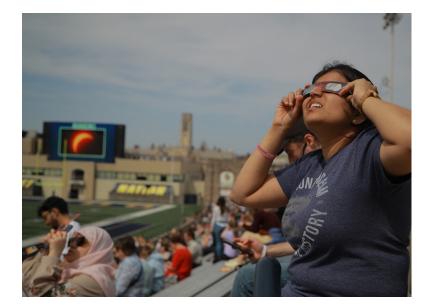
WILLIAM L. PIERCE '99, '09

## **P.S.** Join Us This Homecoming

Join us for **Homecoming 2024**, which will feature a full week of traditions and festivities including the Homecoming Gala, Edward C. and Helen G. Schmakel parade, pregame party and more before the Rockets take on the Miami University Redhawks in the Glass Bowl on Oct. 5. Full details are at: **toledoalumni.org** 







## A SOLAR SPECTACLE

On April 8, members of the Rocket Community and visitors gathered on Main Campus to witness the total solar eclipse.

There were a variety of activities for all ages to enjoy before the main event, including inflatable games and food trucks.

The next total solar eclipse will not take place on campus until September 14, 2099.

SCAN TO VIEW THE RECAP VIDEO





Hundreds of Rockets and visitors gathered in Centennial Mall for food, fun and fellowship



The Glass Bowl offered prime viewing of the eclipse, along with NASA's official live stream



The historic moment brought amateur and professional astronomers alike to campus

## ROCKET FORWARD DAY OF GIVING

The University of Toledo Foundation thanks all our UToledo supporters who made the seventhannual Rocket Forward Day of Giving campaign a success. The 36-hour crowdfunding effort generated \$1,713,122 in donations from 2,460 gifts through online donations and overall participation.

Day of Giving advocates were crucial to the overall success of the campaign, encouraging others to donate within their own networks and on their own individual social media channels.

This year, advocates generated more than 26% of all gifts, totaling more than \$530,000, using their unique donation links.



## UTOLEDO ATHLETICS INTRODUCES NEW VARSITY SPORT

The University of Toledo announced that it will add women's rowing as a varsity sport beginning in the 2025-26 school year.

Women's rowing, which will compete at the NCAA Division I level, will be the 17th varsity sport at Toledo and the first new addition to Rocket Athletics since women's soccer was added in 1995. A head coach is expected to be hired later this year, with a full year of acclimation leading into regular season competition in the fall of 2025. The full squad will feature approximately 50-60 student-athletes on its roster.

Vice President and Director of Athletics Bryan B. Blair shared that no resources would be reallocated from any of UToledo's current varsity sports, and infrastructure and other start-up costs will be relatively low. The team will practice and compete on the Maumee River and will utilize the Philip LeBoutillier, Jr. Memorial Boathouse in International Park in downtown Toledo. The boathouse is owned by Metroparks Toledo and is operated by the Toledo Rowing Foundation.

"I would like to thank Metroparks Toledo and the Toledo Rowing Foundation for their collaboration in bringing NCAA women's rowing to Toledo," Blair said. "This is a perfect example of what can happen when we work together with a #TeamToledo spirit to create an outcome that benefits our entire community."



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## ROCKET WOMEN'S BASKETBALL LEGACY CONTINUES

Ginny Boggess was officially introduced as the head women's basketball coach at The University of Toledo on April 16 in a press conference on Bob Nichols Court at Savage Arena.

Boggess, who has 21 years of coaching experience, comes to Toledo with an impressive resume that includes stops as an assistant coach at Marquette and Penn State, as well as a highly successful stint over the past three years as the head coach at Monmouth University.

"Every level, every move in my career was never to prepare a shiny resume or to get the next job," said Boggess, who led Monmouth to an NCAA Tournament appearance in just her second year at the helm. "It was always to prepare me for this moment. Every decision was not based on a salary or a title or a conference. For me it was where I could go to use my gift to empower young women to reach for greatness."



From left, Vice President and Director of Athletics Bryan B. Blair, Ginny Boggess, new UToledo head women's basketball coach, and former UToledo President Dr. Gregory Postel.

## 2024 SPRING COMMENCEMENT



There are more than 173,000 living alumni across the world achieving their personal and professional goals with their UToledo degrees.



More than 200 students received doctor of medicine, doctor of philosophy or master's degrees at UToledo College of Medicine and Life Sciences graduation ceremony.



Thank you to the families, friends and advocates that support our Rocket graduates through their UToledo education.



University of Toledo student-athletes earned a record grade-point average of 3.388 in the 2024 spring semester.



During the undergraduate ceremonies on May 4, 1,507 bachelor's and 83 associate's degrees were conferred.



189 doctoral, 558 master's and 112 juris doctors were conferred during the Graduate and Doctoral Hooding Ceremony on May 3, 2024.

## Successful Senior Rockets Prepare for Careers and Life Off Campus

## Interdisciplinary Studies Senior Makes Change With Her Own Businesses

Robin Green first came to UToledo to learn more about business. Now at the age of 49, Green graduated this spring with her bachelor of arts degree in interdisciplinary studies.



Robin Green

"My BA in Business provided the practical skills needed to run a company and the inspiration and vision to use those skills for a greater purpose," she said. "It set the path to co-owning a community behavioral health agency, blending my business expertise with a commitment to serve and make a difference in my community."

The health agency, One Me to Be, seeks to help young adults in minority communities receive the care they need, advocating for equitable access to resources and promoting holistic well-being in the community.

"I wanted to do more because I saw a need for African American therapists in our community," Green said. "I partnered with three other ladies who also shared the same passion. We wanted to build an agency that caters to not only minorities but all young adults suffering from mental and drug addiction."

With the help of UToledo, Green will be able to take her passion for helping

## READ MORE GRAD STORIES



Visit: **tol-edo.org/24grads** for more stories and testimonials from inspiring, driven graduating Rockets. others further and continue to support her community through her business expertise.

## Graduating Biology Student Follows Sister's Footsteps in Dentistry

Peter Tsatalis and his sister, Dr. Andrea Tsatalis '17, '17 have a close bond; so close, in fact, that he is pursuing her career in dentistry nearly a decade apart. Andrea graduated with honors from UToledo with a bachelor of arts degree in biology in 2017. Peter finished his bachelor of arts degree in biology in spring semester.

His sister was not the only inspiration that led him to UToledo. During the application process, Tsatalis said he "was very impressed with the ample opportunities provided for research opportunities both on Main Campus and at UTMC, as well as the UToledo/ Case Western Pipeline dental program and a diverse array of clubs."

"The excellence of education present at UToledo, the challenging material and the instruction by quality professors enabled me to grow as a student," he said. "I am confident that my academic pursuits at The University of Toledo have laid a strong foundation for future academic success in dental school and beyond."



Peter Tsatalis and his older sister, Andrea

Following graduation, Tsatalis will pursue his doctorate of dental surgery degree at the Ohio State University College of Dentistry, just like his sister did almost a decade ago. Perhaps he'll even join her in Tampa, Florida, where she works as an endodontist and lecturer.

## Nursing Senior Discovers Her Career Path as a Rocket

Dema Herzallah's dream was to impact her community by bettering healthcare. After graduating with her bachelor of science degree in nursing this May, Herzallah intends to do just that.

"I am the type of person who absolutely gives what I can to my patients and even the people around me in my personal life," Herzallah said. "I believe that having good health is a big blessing, and to be able to help improve



Dema Herzallah

one's health status through my abilities as a nurse is why I chose healthcare."

Born in Palestine and raised in Toledo, Herzallah came to UToledo to pursue a career in healthcare, as well as opportunities she found through programs and involvement.

Through the Levis Leadership program, Herzallah became more involved. She is part of the Blue Key National and Mortar Board Honor Societies, Middle Eastern and North African Association and UToledo's Student Nursing Association. She also assisted with events such as homecoming and Songfest.

"After becoming involved through many opportunities now at this point in my career, I realized how vital it was to my personal growth," Herzallah said. "These opportunities shaped me into a stronger individual and leader, and helped me develop qualities that I want to carry on as a nurse."

## RECOGNIZING DONOR MPAC

## The University of Toledo Foundation Hosts an Evening of Connection and Celebration for Donors

On April 18, The University of Toledo Foundation welcomed more than 100 donors, faculty and staff to the Center for Alumni and Donor Engagement for the first official donor celebration since the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Hosting events where stewardship is at the forefront has been a top priority for my team," said Samantha Marchal, director of Advancement Events at the UToledo Foundation. "It is important to us to provide UToledo supporters with opportunities to connect with one another and the institution – and be recognized for the impact they are making on our campuses, community and the lives of our students."

UToledo Presidential Ambassadors, a select group of exceptional students who represent the University and its president throughout campus, greeted guests as they arrived. One ambassador, Isabel Nester, presented her undergraduate research on effects of Parkinson's disease treatments and answered questions that guests had. Current students studying music were also present, playing instruments throughout the building. UToledo Foundation President, Brenda Lee, kicked off the program with the official welcome and shared some of the University's top accomplishments of 2024. UToledo Foundation Vice President for Advancement, Floyd Akins Jr., provided some insight on the next University fundraising campaign.

The event was a night for celebration – UToledo would not be the same without passionate philanthropists fueling us forward. For that, the University is sincerely grateful. **\$** 



From left: Tom and Constance Zouhary with Al Tomlinson, deputy athletic director/external



UToledo Foundation President Brenda Lee addressing the attendees



Dr. Fatemeh Karbaschi and Dr. Mohammad Elahina

## <complex-block><complex-block>

## **Empowering Community and Healthcare Leaders** with New Symposium

The University of Toledo launched the inaugural UToledo Healthcare Symposium on Friday, April 12 at Glass City Center in downtown Toledo.

The event drew a crowd of nearly 200 participants and offered several panels on improving health through compassionate care, innovative thinking and community collaboration.

The symposium presented an impressive lineup of healthcare and community leaders, including leading experts from across the University's academic and clinical operations, in addition to other prominent alumni and guests.

The day-long program provided unique viewpoints and engaging discussion on the latest advancements as well as challenges impacting the field of health and medicine. Key topics covered during the symposium included leadingedge advancements in healthcare technology, breakthroughs in medical research and treatment modalities, strategies for enhancing patient care and outcomes, addressing health disparities, promoting health equity and the role of interdisciplinary collaboration in driving healthcare innovation.

"This new UToledo Healthcare Symposium is a great opportunity for our University to bring together healthcare professionals and community leaders to engage in important learning and discussion about the latest advancements in medicine," former UToledo president, Gregory Postel said.

"We are excited we could help launch the 2024 Healthcare Symposium. The event brings together experts and thought leaders from diverse backgrounds dedicated to exploring ways to further advance health and well-being," said Steven Glass, president and chief executive officer at Medical Mutual. "The symposium provided a unique platform for sharing knowledge, exchanging ideas and building partnerships that will ultimately benefit individuals throughout our communities."

Attendee and speaker feedback shared resounding support for the event and an eagerness to participate annually.

The positive impact that follows from connecting our community with the innovators and compassionate healthcare professionals who are finding innovative solutions to current challenges is something The University of Toledo is proud to be part of.

This event would not have been possible without the generous support of our community and sponsors, including presenting sponsor Medical Mutual. The support from across the region helped illustrate the collaborative nature of healthcare and the lessons instilled during the presentations.

### SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS

Presenting Sponsor: Medical Mutual Breakfast Sponsor: Superior Ambulance Lunch Sponsor: UToledo Women and Philanthropy

Platinum Sponsors: Anthem Blue Cross Blue Shield, NAMI of Greater Toledo, UTMC, The UToledo Alumni Association Partner Sponsor: The University of Michigan

Medical School, Department of Learning Health Sciences

Community Sponsor: Midwest Centers

## Congratulations to 2024 Distinguished Alumni Award Honorees

The UToledo Alumni Association will recognize distinguished Rockets at the **Homecoming Gala** on Oct. 4. from individual colleges as well as the prestigious honors: The Gold T, Daniel Saevig Blue T and Edward H. Schmidt Outstanding Young Alum awards.

GOLD T AWARD Jeffrey Traudt '79

DANIEL J. SAEVIG BLUE T AWARD Carol Thomas '94

EDWARD H. SCHMIDT OUTSTANDING YOUNG ALUM **Dr. Gabriella Pardee '11** 

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND LETTERS Nicholas Conrad '74, '76

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING Kenneth Lovejoy '76, '80

COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES **Dr. Amy Thompson '99, '04** 

COLLEGE OF LAW Richard Walinski '65, '69 JD

COLLEGE OF MEDICINE AND LIFE SCIENCES **Dr. Lisa Lattanza '93** 

COLLEGE OF NATURAL SCIENCES AND MATHEMATICS **Dr. James Hatfield '72, '78** 

COLLEGE OF NURSING Dr. Judith Anderson '83

COLLEGE OF PHARMACY AND PHARMACEUTICAL SCIENCES **Dr. Mamoun Alhamadsheh '04** 

JESUP SCOTT HONORS COLLEGE Nicholas Wittenberg '07, '07, '11 JD

JUDITH HERB COLLEGE OF EDUCATION Nina Hashim-Corder '08, '11, Ed.D.

NEFF COLLEGE OF BUSINESS AND INNOVATION Amy E. Kellogg '83

UNIVERSITY COLLEGE Diana Patton '89, '90, '96 JD

THE UNIVERSITY OF TOLEDO MEDICAL CENTER **Dr. Puneet Sindhwani '01, '01** 

## ALUMNI ASSOCIATION AWARDS

The UToledo Alumni Association awarded the Affiliate of the Year, Chapter of the Year and Volunteer of the Year during their annual meeting in May.

The affiliate and chapter of the year awards are based on the groups' efforts to engage their audiences, support scholarships and host events. The recipients are selected by the awards committee, comprised of alumni board members and alumni volunteers.



The College of Engineering Alumni Affiliate was named Affiliate of the Year by hosting a wide range of events, programs and fundraising efforts.



**The Columbus Chapter** was selected as a two-time Chapter of the Year ('23 and '24) for its innovative and strategic event planning and chapter recruitment efforts.



**Dr. Patricia Metting '75, '80** was named the Volunteer of the Year for her dedicated service on multiple boards and advisory committees, volunteering in several Alumni Association and University initiatives, and her philanthropic support.

## IMPACTING FUTURE GENERATIONS

**Toledo Native Finds Newfound Love for Hometown at The University of Toledo** 

"I initially had no plans on attending The University of Toledo," began David Young '88. "I wanted to go away for college. However, my parents convinced me to attend UToledo for one year and then explore other places. I never left!"

"I am definitely an example of a student that fell in love with the midnight blue and gold. I became so involved with student life I couldn't see myself anywhere else."

Young's involvement with UToledo did not stop after graduation – he has served as a staff member for 31 years. Throughout his career and involvement in UToledo's Upward Bound, Toledo Excel and Student Affairs, he has directly impacted more than 1,200 students in their pursuit of college degrees and secured approximately \$2.2 million dollars of grants and gifts for underrepresented students.

He has also led special projects for the Office of Multicultural Student Success, which include providing strategic direction to African American initiatives as well as providing leadership for Brothers on the Rise, a group of African-American and LatinX faculty and staff who mentor current students. Young is also the current director of the University's Toledo Excel Program.

Toledo Excel is designed to prepare students for success in college by providing them with academic enrichment services and activities throughout their high school years. The program is also dedicated to developing students into conscientious and active members of the community. If Toledo Excel students successfully complete the high school portion of the program, they will receive a tuition and general fee scholarship as well as a book stipend for college. In addition to the scholarship, the program continues to support its college students with academic and personal advising, internship opportunities and other resources.

Young states that the most rewarding part of his current role is the "impact I have been able to make on students. Small victories and great ones."



Pictured: David Young '88

David Young with Toledo Excel graduates

"I see former Excel students coming back as college graduates, successful professionals, incredible spouses and loving parents, and knowing I played a small role in that is the real reward." said Young. "I have always thought relationships and a sense of belonging are key to student success and so the relationships with students and colleagues are incredibly important to me." **\$** 

## SUPPORT TOLEDO EXCEL



Inspired by Young's work? Visit **tol-edo.org/excel** to support the program's mission of preparing students for success.

## TURNING VISION

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## The Extraordinary Legacy of Drs. Mary R. Smith and Hollis Merrick

Dr. Mary R. Smith, professor emerita for The University of Toledo Department of Medicine, and her late husband, Dr. Hollis Merrick, professor emeritus in the UToledo Department of Surgery, dedicated themselves, and their careers, to making UToledo and the surrounding region a better place. Through their work, and continuing generosity, they have impacted countless lives and touched thousands more by establishing programs for future generations of healthcare leaders.



Dr. Hollis Merrick and Dr. Mary R. Smith

Smith and Merrick relocated to Toledo, Ohio from Canada in the late 1970's. At that time only a few buildings stood on the now Health Science Campus, along with an empty field that would eventually become The University of Toledo Medical Center, a vision they were instrumental in bringing to life.

The couple interviewed for positions with the former Medical College of Ohio (MCO) and the rest was history. For decades, Dr. Smith has educated and coached students in practices of medical education and compassionate care.

As one of the first faculty members on the Health Science Campus, Dr. Smith not only taught students clinically, but brought the then Medical College of Ohio motto to life – "Enter to Learn. Go Forth to Serve."

"The impact of Drs. Smith and Merrick extends far beyond their professional achievements. Their commitment to excellence in surgical training has left an indelible mark on our institution and provided guidance shaping many future careers of UToledo students," shared Dr. Christopher Cooper, Distinguished University Professor.

Throughout their careers, the couple continued to pursue ways to improve training and build resources for future generations.

In 2011, the couple helped establish a surgery training simulation room within the Interprofessional Immersive Simulation Center on the Health Science Campus. The new laboratory provided a unique and vital educational resource enhancing experiences for thousands of students as a result of their efforts.

Most recently, Dr. Smith is ensuring the continuation of their legacy with the permanent endowment of the Hollis Merrick Surgical Skills Course through a \$1 million gift to the UToledo Foundation. The gift will allow for advanced trauma learning on operative procedures. The course will provide hands-on experience for advanced trauma learning on operative procedures through review of key operative anatomy and basic techniques. Additionally, students will have opportunities to explore laparoscopic procedure methods.

"The Hollis Merrick Surgical Skills Course will revolutionize the way we train future surgeons. Dr. Smith's generosity ensures that their legacy of excellence will continue for generations to come," Cooper added.

A labor of love that led to millions of students, faculty members and patients being impacted by their shared vision.

"This extraordinary generosity will have a profound and lasting impact, benefiting every surgical resident in our program for generations to come," expressed Cristina Alvarado, director of immersive and simulation-based learning. "By providing access to highlevel surgical training, Drs. Smith and Merrick's gift not only enhances the quality of education for our residents but also significantly elevates the standard of patient care we deliver in our community."



Dr. Mary R. Smith on rounds at the former MCO

"Their commitment to excellence in medical education positions UToledo as a leader in surgical education both locally and nationally. Moreover, the enhanced training made possible by this gift will extend beyond our institution, as our well-trained surgeons go on to practice in various communities, bringing advanced surgical care to a wider population. Having worked side by side with Dr. Merrick in the past, he would be incredibly proud of this work!"

Dr. Smith and Dr. Merrick have dedicated their lives to research and treating conditions that improved both the quality and longevity of life for their patients and many others – a legacy worth their compassion, empathy and determination that continues to impact and change lives.



A glimpse into the Hollis Merrick Surgical Skills lab on the UToledo Health Science Campus





## HERE TO HELP YOU MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Since 1872, The University of Toledo has been empowering and preparing driven individuals to make an impact on the world. The University of Toledo Foundation and The University of Toledo Alumni Association are committed to supporting the global Rocket alumni network and ensuring the University's future through prudent asset management and philanthropy.

We provide financial and strategic support for The University of Toledo's vision to improve the human condition.

## ABOUT CORNERSTONES

## Your support and generosity are fueling tomorrows for UToledo students, educators, researchers and caregivers.

As stewards of that generosity, **Cornerstones** is how we demonstrate the returns on the investments made in us by stakeholders in the state of Ohio and beyond including parents, taxpayers and neighbors in surrounding communities.

In addition to this twice-yearly publication, we share stories each day about how your support is empowering Rockets to enact change as the coming generation of leaders, critical thinkers and problem solvers. Read more at:

utfoundation.org | toledoalumni.org

## HOW TO SHARE STORY IDEAS

Is there a recent accomplishment or story you're eager to share with the Rocket community? In addition to Cornerstones, the Alumni Association publishes most alumni news and success stories in its **quarterly eMagazine**.

Send us your story idea by visiting:

alumninews.utoledo.edu

## POINTS OF PRIDE



The University of Toledo once again **ranked among the best in the nation by U.S. News and World Report**. The UToledo graduate programs ranked in the **2024 Best Graduate Schools rankings**, released in April 2024, include education, part- and full-time law, part-time M.B.A., nursing masters, occupational therapy, pharmacy, physical therapy, public health, social work and speech language pathology.





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## 2025 Rocket Retreat is Feb 21-23

Join the UToledo Foundation and Alumni Association in the tropical state of Florida this winter for a number of engagement opportunities across the state. Meet with fellow Rockets and UToledo leaders who will provide updates on the University and other items. Full details are at: **utevents.org/2025-rocket-retreat** 









## Art on the Mall Returns July 28

Join us Sunday, July 28 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. for our free, one-of-a-kind public art show that offers an eclectic mix of work from more than 100 artists each year in Centennial Mall on The University of Toledo Main Campus. Visit **artonthemall.org** for more event information.

