Disney Imagineers Visit Hampton University
Department of Architecture

The Hampton University Department of Architecture welcomed representatives from the Walt Disney Imagineering team, to share information with students about their experiences at Disney. Representatives also encouraged students to apply for "Imaginations," a design competition that seeks the next generation of Imagineers.

One of the representatives was Hampton University alumnus, Dexter "Dex" Tanksley (’93). He is the Sr. Project Manager for Walt Disney Imagineering. Imagineering, the combined name of imagination and engineering, is the unique, creative force behind Walt Disney Parks and Resorts that dreams up, designs and builds all Disney theme parks, resorts, attractions, cruise ships, real estate developments and regional entertainment venues worldwide. Building upon the legacy of Walt Disney, Imagineers bring art and science together to turn fantasy into reality and dreams into magic.

Tanksley's daughter, Jordan, accompanied him on his trip to Hampton from California for this lecture. They both had the opportunity to meet with Hampton University's President, Dr. William R. Harvey. "It was a pleasure to see Mr. Dex Tanksley, and to meet his daughter, Jordan. Dex mentioned that Jordan has officially decided to become a Hamptonian in the fall! We are excited to welcome her to her new 'Home by the Sea,'" stated Dr. Harvey.

During his lecture, Tanksley spoke to the crowd of architecture students about being a student at Hampton, and about the design competition that he and his fellow architecture students won that propelled him into Disney. In 1992, Tanksley entered the Walt Disney ImagINations design competition as a student. As a winner of this competition, he was awarded a position with Walt Disney ImagINations. From there, his career took off and he has worked in numerous positions within the company.

"Believe in your dreams, have the courage to take your dream and make it a reality. I can't stress how important it is to have that confidence in yourself, in your university, and just follow your dreams; you will be rewarded things you can't even imagine," said Tanksley.

That design competition that Tanksley won in 1992, is now called Imaginations. The purpose of Imaginations is to seek out and nurture the next generation of diverse Imagineers. This unique competition enables students to showcase their talents and gain practical knowledge in design. Finalists get the opportunity to win an all-expense-paid trip to Walt Disney Imagineering in California, compete for awards and be considered for internship opportunities.

Tanksley had great advice for Hampton students. "Stay grounded with your passion, your love, and the thing that brought you to Hampton University. You're going to get distractions from all over, but that takes you away from the thing that you started with, so if it's your love, spend the time to nurture it, fall in love with it, and follow through with that vision," said Tanksley. "If you love what you do for a living, you'll never work a day in your life."

Hampton University to Endow a $25,000 Scholarship for a Child Affected by the Tragedy at the Virginia Beach Municipal Center

The Hampton University Family was saddened to learn of the horrific shooting incident that occurred at the Virginia Beach Municipal Center on May 31, 2019. To demonstrate our support for the victims’ families, Hampton University has established the Virginia Beach Endowed Scholarship: Educational Fund for Families of the Municipal Center Tragedy in the amount of $25,000. The earnings of the endowment will go towards a scholarship for a dependent of a shooting victim who chooses to attend Hampton University. The initial scholarship will be $10,000 per year for four years. Thereafter, the amount will be determined by the interest that the endowment will produce.

The University would like to invite the public to contribute to this endowment and join us in making a positive difference in the life of a child affected by this tragedy. By contributing, you can ensure that the minimum amount of $10,000 is awarded regularly. Your contribution will be an investment in that child's future.

"Hampton University calls the entire Hampton Roads region our home," said Dr. Harvey. "Hampton University has maintained a strong tie to the City of Virginia Beach since opening the College of Virginia Beach September 2, 2003. Our hope is that others will join us in making a positive difference in the life of a child affected by this tragedy and invest in that child’s future by donating to this scholarship."

Individuals who would like to donate to the Virginia Beach Endowed Scholarship: Educational Fund for Families of the Municipal Center Tragedy can do so by sending contributions to Mrs. Evelyn Graham, Interim Vice President for Development, at 200 William R. Harvey Way, Hampton University, Hampton, Virginia 23668 or by visiting https://givetohamptonu.org/.
Hampton University Inducts Three Into Athletics Hall of Fame

On Saturday, June 1, Hampton University honored three former student-athletes with the highest athletic honor possible in front of a packed Student Center Ballroom – induction into the Hampton University Athletics Hall of Fame.

Walter “Fuzzy” Ward, Thomasina Busch Cunningham and Darryl Skinner joined a prestigious group of inductees as the newest members of the Hall of Fame.

Thomasina Busch Cunningham ran as a senior from Northampton (Va.) High School at the Virginia High School State Championships here at Armstrong Stadium where she caught the attention of then head coach, the late John White. After meeting women’s coach LaVerne Cunningham and Darryl Skinner joined a prestigious group of inductees as the newest members of the Hall of Fame.

Her achievements were vast and include the following titles: CIAA Indoor and Outdoor 100m Hurdles Champion (1981); CIAA Outdoor Long Jump Champion (1981 & 1984); CIAA Outdoor 100m Hurdles Champion (1984); Hampton Institute Rookie of the Year (1981); Hampton Institute Track and Field MVP (1981); NAIA Indoor Long Jump Champion (1982); NAIA Indoor 55m Hurdles Champion (1983 & 1984); NAIA Outdoor 100m Hurdles Champion (1982 – 1984); NAIA Women’s Indoor and Outdoor Track and Field Academic All-American (1981 – 1984); Hampton Institute Outstanding Performer (1981 – 1984); Hampton Institute Outstanding Scholar Athlete (1982 and 1983).

This marks her second Hall of Fame induction this year after joining the CIAA 2019 John B. McLendon Jr. Hall of Fame in March. She currently works in Richmond as an Auditor for the Tobacco Enforcement Unit with the Office of the Attorney General.

Darryl Skinner was born and raised in Virginia Beach and studied Building Construction Technology during his time at then Hampton Institute. He was a two-sport athlete earning All-CIAA honors in both track and field and on the football field. With track, he was All-CIAA each year in the 60 meters and the 100 meters along with the 4x100 relay. His relay team set the school record in the 4x100 at the 1984 National Championships.

On the football field, he set a school record with a 100-yard kickoff return against Norfolk State as he was named CIAA Sports Network Player of the Year.

Post college he recently retired as a Corporal Detective from the Chesterfield County Police Department after a 30-year career where he won four Achievement Awards, a Unit Citation Award, Chief’scommendations and a Governor’s Recognition Award in 1992.

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Hampton University Golfer Jakari Harris Receives George A. Christenberry Award at Big South Hall of Fame Dinner

Jakari Harris, from the women’s golf team, was honored May 30 as one of 10 recipients of the George A. Christenberry Award at The Westin Resort in Hilton Head, S.C., as part of the Big South Conference’s annual Spring Meetings and Hall of Fame Dinner.

It is the most prestigious academic honor by the conference. The award is given to the male and female student-athlete who attain the highest GPA during their undergraduate collegiate careers. “I am so proud of Jakari Harris for being Hampton’s first Christenberry Award winner,” said Hampton University President Dr. William R. Harvey. “These awards are very special in the conference and to have her earn one in our first season shows the type of student-athlete we aim for at Hampton University.”

Harris, a chemical engineering major who carries a 4.06 grade point average, had her best three-round event at the Big South Championships with a 248 three-round total and a season best round of 79. She was tops on the team in scoring average at 83.2 for the 2018-19 season.

“I would also like to extend my congratulations to Jakari Harris for being Hampton’s first George A. Christenberry Award winner,” said Dr. JoAnn W. Haysbert, Chancellor and Provost for Hampton University. “Earning this prestigious award from the conference reinforces the “Standard of Excellence” that has been a motto of Hampton University forever.”

Big South member institutions nominate one male and one female undergraduate student-athlete for the annual Christenberry Award. The honor is named for George A. Christenberry, the former President of Augusta College (now Augusta University) and one of the founders of the Big South Conference. A member of the Big South Hall of Fame, Christenberry served as the league’s first President from 1983-86.

Parenting book edited by Hampton University Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications Professor Butch Maier

“Win with Teens: Christian Parenting Through the Challenging Years,” a book written by Virginia Beach life coach Win Levis and published in early June, was edited by Hampton University Scripps Howard School of Journalism and Communications Assistant Professor Butch Maier.

Maier — whose family comedy “Mother of a Day” was the No. 1 movie with a black lead, per theater, in the United States when it premiered May 4 — has taught journalism classes at HU for two years. Maier has worked as an editor for newspapers, magazines and websites for more than a quarter century. He also shot the cover photo for “Win with Teens.”

Levis is a certified life coach, a longtime Young Life leader with decades of experience and a father of four former teens. Individuals and groups looking to acquire copies of “Win with Teens” can email Sumbadhat Productions, Maier’s production company, at sumbadhat@gmail.com.
Hampton University’s Cancer Research Center Receives $446,000 Grant for Breast Cancer Research

The Hampton University Cancer Research Center (HUCRC) has received a $446,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health. This new grant focuses on improving the characterization of the genetic changes that could potentially be causing breast cancer in African-American women.

“Cancer research and prevention is so incredibly important, especially for African Americans, who have the highest death rate and shortest survival of any racial and ethnic group in the United States for most cancers. Congratulations to Dr. Luisel Ricks-Santi and Dr. John McDonald for securing this important grant. Their efforts do not go unnoticed,” said Hampton University President, Dr. William R. Harvey.

Dr. Ricks-Santi, a Hampton University alumna and cancer geneticist, was formally trained at Georgetown University’s Lombardi Comprehensive Cancer Center. After her PhD, Dr. Ricks-Santi was recruited into the Howard University-Johns Hopkins University Cancer Centers Program where she did research on cancer genomics, cancer genetic epidemiology, public health genomics, and in the clinical-translational sciences.

While at Howard, Dr. Ricks-Santi received a grant to engage women in research regarding breast cancer and family health history. After she came back to Hampton University to work professionally, Dr. Ricks-Santi was able to bring her research to the HUCRC and continue her work. From there, Dr. Ricks-Santi and Dr. John McDonald, assistant professor of physics, wrote this new grant and received the funds to continue the retrospective study. They will recruit women from the Hampton Roads area for a new prospective cohort to look at regional differences and the mutational spectrum by region.

This study looks at family health history of women with breast cancer. If a woman has a family health history of breast cancer or any type of cancer, a doctor may recommend or prescribe a genetic test. The most common test for breast cancer is BRCA 1 and 2. There are also panel tests, which include BRCA 1 and 2, and up to 80 genes.

“We’ve found additional genes that have been associated with breast cancer. However, because those tests are informed by people who don’t look like us, they will generally benefit those who don’t look like us,” said Dr. Luisel Ricks-Santi, Director of the HUCRC. “So what happens with African Americans, is a lot of times, the tests come back inconclusive. What the grant aims to do is to improve the characterization of those inconclusive results.”

The HUCRC’s case includes DNA from 300 breast cancer cases, some of which have family history and some that don’t have family history of cancer. There are also 300 control cases. “What we’re doing is looking for genetic mutations that we only find in those with the family history and those that don’t have family history, and hopefully there won’t be an overlap with those in the population. That gives us a better indication of what the genetic variants might mean,” said Dr. Ricks-Santi.

Hampton University President Dr. William R. Harvey welcomed the thousands in attendance at the 105th Annual Hampton University Ministers’ Conference and 85th Annual Choir Directors’ and Organists’ Guild Workshop at the Hampton University Convocation Center on Monday, June 3, 2019. Prior to Dr. Harvey’s opening address, the large crowd was blessed with sounds of praise and worship from several musicians, followed by a brief welcome from Donnie Tuck, Mayor of the City of Hampton. Always forward-thinking, Dr. Harvey then talked about a new service that Hampton University is evaluating for veterans in Hampton Roads. “Based on my concern, as a veteran, for veterans suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and the high veteran population in the Hampton Roads Region, I established a Task Force on Equine Therapy for PTSD,” said Dr. Harvey. “The charge for the group was to decrease the suffering, symptoms and prevalence of PTSD among active duty and veteran populations in Hampton Roads through the use of Equine-assisted Therapy. This type of therapy appears to be a powerful and effective tool for service-related individuals who struggle with symptoms of PTSD.”

Dr. Harvey also discussed the life saving treatment and research currently transpiring at the Hampton University Proton Therapy Institute. Dr. Harvey humbly recognized the advanced technologies and incredible, passionate staff who continuously work together to bring over 65 patients a day focusing on cancer care. “This institution is easing human misery and saving lives,” said Dr. Harvey. “Treating all cancers such as breast, brain, prostate, lung, pediatric, eye and more.” Dr. Harvey voiced to the women in the audience to encourage their husbands to get checked for prostate cancer, considering that this type of cancer is 100 percent curable.

Turning his focus to the current state of our country, Dr. Harvey expressed just how important this conference and the conversations that will occur are to the future of our community as a whole. “The many social, political and economic issues that face our world today make this year’s theme, ‘A Call to the Church from a Community in Crisis,’ particularly appropriate for such a time like this,” said Dr. Harvey. “The black community is in crisis. We are facing a plethora of issues such as dwindling family values, black on black crime, an increase of police shootings of unarmed victims, high amount of debt, increase in health disparities and low interest among members of society as it relates to what all this means to our community as a whole. Many are looking and trying to find answers, and I tell them to look to the Lord.”

As Dr. Harvey concluded his welcome address, he wished the attendees would take the information they receive this week home and make positive changes in their respective communities. “Finally, I hope all of you will take advantage of all the offerings at this year’s conference,” said Dr. Harvey. “The wisdom and knowledge you receive will prepare you to respond to ‘A Call to the Church.’ It is my hope that by the time you leave these grounds, you be will be prepared to assist every ‘Community in Crisis.’"
Hampton University Marine Science Professor Wins Prestigious 2019 NSF CAREER Award Worth $700,000

Dr. Andrij Horodysky, assistant professor in Hampton University’s Department of Marine and Environmental Science, has been awarded a prestigious five-year, $700,000 National Science Foundation (NSF) Faculty Early Career Development award (NSF CAREER) for his groundbreaking research on the effects of ocean acidification on fish neurosensory biology.

“Congratulations to Dr. Horodysky for receiving this esteemed award. Our faculty continue to lead the way in research and innovation, and their hard work is being recognized all over the world,” said Hampton University President, Dr. William R. Harvey.

Dr. Horodysky is aiming to answer how rapidly changing ocean conditions are affecting the sensory systems of marine life. Since the Industrial Revolution, the ocean has become roughly 30% more acidic due to its absorption of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. While a litany of ocean acidification research has focused on plankton and invertebrates, studies of the effects on fish neurosensory physiology are very recent, and remain an exciting frontier.

Dr. Horodysky’s research investigates the sensory deficits and morphological changes experienced by the auditory systems of sound-producing fishes that face changes in ocean pH and temperature. The research builds on Horodysky’s previous NSF-supported projects and will benefit from his longtime collaborations with faculty and staff at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and Virginia Seafood Agricultural Research and Extension Center.

The highly competitive CAREER Program offers NSF’s most prestigious award to the nation’s most promising young faculty who “exemplify the role of teacher-scholar through outstanding research, excellent education and the integration of education and research.” Dr. Horodysky is the second assistant professor to receive a CAREER Award as a standing member of the Hampton University faculty. His CAREER Award is jointly funded by the NSF Biological Science Directorate’s Division of Integrative Organismal Systems (BIO-IOS) and the Division of Human Resource Development’s Historically Black Colleges and Universities Undergraduate Program (HRD-HBCU-UP).

“The National Science Foundation’s prestigious Career Award is granted to junior faculty who have demonstrated the potential to become research and academic leaders. Dr. Horodysky has trained numerous students while continuing to embark upon cutting-edge research. I congratulate him for receiving this distinguished and coveted award and for exemplifying THE Standard of Excellence at Hampton University,” said Dr. Michelle Penn-Marshall, Vice President for Research, Associate Provost and Dean of the Hampton University Graduate College.

“President Harvey has challenged the Hampton University faculty to dream no small dreams, and to strive for the extraordinary. It is an immense honor to receive a CAREER Award and work towards this vision at a time when the University has transitioned to a Doctoral University, High Research Activity Carnegie Classification. I am very thankful for the wonderful students in my research group, my outstanding colleagues in the Marine and Environmental Science Program, and the mentorship I have received from collaborators and colleagues throughout my career. It takes a village,” said Horodysky.

Hampton University Unites to Fight Against Sexual Assault in Annual Denim Day

For the 7th year in a row, Hampton University faculty, staff and students participated in the national observance of Denim Day on Wednesday, April 24, calling attention to Sexual Assault Awareness. Sponsored by Kelly Harvey-Viney and the HU Title IX Office, the HU Student Health Center, the HU Police Department, the HU Student Counseling Center, the William R. Harvey Leadership Institute and the City of Hampton Victim Services Unit, the HU community wore jeans in support of sexual assault survivors everywhere.

“Hampton University is proud to be part of Denim Day. Every year we show our support for sexual awareness by forming the ribbon, which is a visible sign of protest against the destructive attitudes towards sexual assault,” said Hampton University President, Dr. William R. Harvey.

For 20 years, the California organization, Peace Over Violence (POV), has held its Denim Day campaign on a Wednesday in April (Sexual Assault Awareness Month), to raise awareness about sexual assault. The campaign was originally triggered by a 1998 ruling by the Italian Supreme Court where a rape conviction was overturned because the justices felt that since the victim was wearing tight jeans, she must have helped her rapist remove her jeans, therefore implying consent. The following day, the women in the Italian Parliament came to work wearing jeans in solidarity with the victim. POV developed the Denim Day campaign in response to this case and the activism it generated. Since then, wearing jeans on Denim Day has become a symbol of remonstration against erroneous attitudes and misconceptions about sexual assault.

Students from Young Adults Advocating Change, a volunteer student organization on campus that deals with social injustices, were in the Student Center handing out ribbons and bracelets for Denim Day. “We wear denim to represent sexual assault awareness. We are handing out ribbons, bracelets, candy, pamphlets and offering support to sexual assault survivors,” said Isahal Barlow, junior, marketing major.

At Hampton University, this ongoing education, awareness and prevention campaign is sponsored in the spring by the Title IX Office. It is an event that brings everyone together to form the annual human awareness ribbon. This year, supporters assembled in the Student Center making their presence known by wearing jeans, teal awareness ribbons and bracelets for a show of unity and a steadfast commitment against sexual assault and abuse on campus.

“I am so proud of the engaged and committed faculty and staff members who show up every year to support the ongoing education efforts of the Title IX Office. They are our foot soldiers who help raise awareness about sexual assault and its prevention all over campus,” said Kelly Harvey-Viney, Director of the Hampton University Center for Public Policy and Title IX Coordinator.