

FORUM



FALL 2026

HONORING OUR HISTORY, CELEBRATING OUR BONDS



ANNOUNCING OUR

135th

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

CALENDAR OF

EVENTS

2026

- Sept. 5 **Football Tailgate vs. VMI**
- Sept. 12 **Football Tailgate vs. ODU**
- Oct. 2 **Football Tailgate vs. Pitt**
- Oct. 17 **Homecoming Tailgate vs. Georgia Tech**
- Nov. 14 **Football Tailgate vs. Stanford**
- Nov. 28 **Football Tailgate vs. UVA**

2027

- Jan. 20 **Candlelight**
- Feb. 27 **Midwinters**
- Apr. 16 **135th Anniversary Celebration Welcome Reception**
- Apr. 17 **135th Anniversary Celebration Gala**
- TBA **Candlelight**
- May 3 **Senior Banquet**
- May 14 **Commencement**

*Please check vtgc.net to stay up to date



2011 classmates Mike Hohenstein, Douglas Hedges, Stephen Bain, and David Glenn join together for a tailgate.



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

- Chairman **Keith R. Stemple 1995**
- President **David S. Cooper 1983**
- VP of Alumni Relations **Ben T. Nicoll 2019**
- VP of Communications **J. Wacho Slaughter 1984**
- VP of Development **Brian S. Dunch 1993**
- VP of Facilities **R. Craig Balzer 1979**
- VP of Finance & Audit **Robbie Roberts 1995**
- VP of German Club Relations **Charles E. Gordon 2004**
- VP of Nominations & Governance **Colin E. Wright 1992**
- VP of University & Community Relations **Jay M. Tucker 2014**
- Executive Director **Wesley R. Surdam 2024**

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Cover photo—2020's decade celebrates 130th GC anniversary.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

German Club Alumni Foundation

Charles O. Gordon	1969
W. Earle Spruill	1970
George R. Umberger	1970
Edward T. Overton	1971
Charles F. Rowell	1971
L. Calvin Henderson	1972
Alan W. Myers	1972
Michael S. Eggleston	1973
William D. Kiser	1974
Randolph L. Walker	1974
Robert R. Derrick	1977
Mark B. Wigginton	1977
R. Craig Balzer	1979
Andrew M. Scherzer	1981
David S. Cooper	1983
Steven R. Lavinder	1984
J. Wacho Slaughter	1984
Michael T. Foster	1985
Charles L. Watson	1986
Thomas M. Yambrick	1987
Howard M. Watson	1987
Grady B. Baker	1988
Charles T. Long	1988
Stephen G. Upton	1989
Billy P. Donavant	1990
Scott A. Sangrey	1990
Steven P. Wrenn	1991
Michael E. Clark	1992
Colin E. Wright	1992
Brian S. Dunch	1993
Enrique A. Morales	1994
Scott M. Cowan	1995
Fabian O. Roberts	1995
Keith R. Stemple	1995
Edward J. Gill	1999
Andrew D. Lessner	2000
Carlos A. Munoz	2000
Michael R. Munsey	2000
Charles E. Gordon	2004
Demas E. Boudreaux	2006
Jordan R. DeDona	2006
Brian E. Torgersen	2007
Ryan E. Costa	2009
William A. Webb	2009
David K. Glenn	2011
Ashley P. Heatwole	2012
Kyle R. Pryde	2012
Jay M. Tucker	2014
Taylor W. Malbon	2016
Luke J. Boorady	2019
Benjamin T. Nicoll	2019
P. Carter Ward	2020
John W. Proctor	2022
Matthew M. Snuggs	2023
Adam V. Gentile	2024
Wesley R. Surdam	2024



A MESSAGE FROM THE

GCAF PRESIDENT

Dear fellow alumni,

As summer settles in and another fiscal year ends, I reflected on all that we have accomplished together over the past twelve months. Thanks to your continued support, it has been another remarkable year for the Foundation, our Manor, and our alumni community.

I am pleased to report that we concluded the fiscal year with another record-setting Annual Fund campaign. Our fourth annual Giving Day once again exceeded expectations, demonstrating the extraordinary commitment of our alumni to preserving and strengthening the traditions we all cherish. Whether you participated through a gift, by helping spread the word, or by encouraging fellow alumni to get involved, thank you. Your generosity continues to make a meaningful difference.

One of the most visible accomplishments of the year was the completion of the new Manor Annex. What began as a much-needed storage replacement project is now a valuable addition to our facilities and is already being enjoyed by Club members. It is gratifying to see a project move from concept to reality and im-

mediately enhance the experience of those who call the Manor their home away from home.

In addition, we took the first steps toward developing a comprehensive Manor Grounds Master Plan. As many of the trees and landscaping installed decades ago continue to mature, portions of the property have become overgrown and need thoughtful attention. Areas such as the Southgate Drive property line do not reflect the high standards we strive to maintain throughout the Manor grounds. Over the coming year, we will be working to develop a phased plan that will guide landscape improvements and enhancements for years to come, ensuring that the beauty of the Manor grounds matches the quality of the facilities they surround.

This year also marked an important leadership transition. We were delighted to welcome Wesley Surdam as our new Executive Director. Wesley has quickly brought tremendous energy, enthusiasm, and professionalism to the role, and he is already making a significant impact. We are excited about the future under his leadership and look forward to the many opportunities ahead.

2026-27 GERMAN CLUB OFFICERS



Will Forth
President



Rowan Leary
Executive
Vice President



Matthew Chapman
Leader



Rhett Moyer
Vice President
for Membership



Tate Gresham
Alumni Secretary



Looking forward, excitement continues to build for our 135th reunion, scheduled for April 16–18, 2027.

The Alumni Relations Committee has been hard at work planning what promises to be an outstanding weekend filled with fellowship, memories, and celebration.

Looking forward, excitement continues to build for our 135th Reunion, scheduled for April 16–18, 2027. The Alumni Relations Committee has been hard at work planning what promises to be an outstanding weekend filled with fellowship, memories, and celebration. Whether you have attended past reunions or are considering returning for the first time in years, I encourage you to mark your calendars now. We look forward to welcoming alumni from across the country back to the Manor for this milestone event.

As always, one of the highlights of the year was welcoming our newest graduates into the alumni ranks. Congratulations to the Class of 2026. We are proud to welcome you into our alumni family and look forward

to seeing the many ways you will contribute to our organization and to the communities you will serve.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you once again for your continued support, generosity, and dedication. The strength of our Foundation has always come from the commitment of its alumni, and this past year has been another wonderful reminder of what we can

accomplish together.

I wish each of you a safe and enjoyable fall, and I hope to see many of you at the Manor in the coming months. *Go Hokies!* 🐾

*Warm regards,
Dave Cooper, GCAF President*



Thomas Rockecharlie
Senior to the
Executive Committee

Evan Livingstone
Junior to the
Executive Committee

Ethan Knoll
Sophomore to the
Executive Committee

Mason Ramboyong
Secretary

Ben Schmidt
Treasurer

Alex Frank
Historian

A MESSAGE FROM THE

GERMAN CLUB PRESIDENT



My name is Will Forth and I have the distinct pleasure of serving as the German Club President for the 2026 – 2027 academic year. Thanks to generations of alumni who have come before us, the Club continues to thrive. What follows is a summary of our chairmen's initiatives, our annual philanthropy and broader philanthropic efforts across campus, the renovations underway at the Annex, the revamp of our merchandise program, and the work being done to preserve the Club's history.

Leadership Chairman Will Hodge has placed deliberate emphasis on leadership development - both within and beyond Club membership. The concept is to cultivate leadership among all members, ensuring each is prepared to step into responsibility in the Club, their professional careers, and the Virginia Tech community. He has thus encouraged members to take on roles across campus, including the Corps of Cadets, Ring Design, Class Office, campus ministries such as

Ring Dance was a particular highlight of the spring, and informal gatherings throughout the semester gave members the kind of unstructured time together that is, in many ways, the lifeblood of the Club.

Young Life and Cru, and club sports. The desired result will be an active membership once again well-represented in leadership across Virginia Tech. We see this as one of the most important long-term investments we can make in the Club's continuity.

Being true to Ut Prosim, Service Chairman Brooks Morgan organized and led the Club's participation in five signature commitments: The Big Event, where members spent a

Saturday completing service projects for Blacksburg residents; the town's Easter Egg Hunt, Relay for Life, a Blood Drive, and the April 16th Candle Lighting. These efforts represent meaningful hours of service rendered to our alma mater and the community.

Midwinters once again served as the centerpiece of our philanthropic calendar. Held in the Squires Commonwealth Ballroom, this year's concert drew ap-

proximately 600 ticketed attendees and raised roughly \$10,000 through ticket sales and partner contributions. The successful return of this long-standing tradition is a clear demonstration of the convening power the German Club still holds on campus. Beyond Midwinters, the Club excelled at several Greek philanthropy events. Led by Alex Frank, our participation produced first-place finishes in both the Gamma Phi Beta and Alpha Chi Omega philanthropies and second-place finishes in the Sigma Kappa and Kappa Alpha Theta philanthropies. This kind of engagement strengthens the Club's relationships with sororities across campus and reinforces the broader culture of philanthropy for which the German Club is known.

The Fellowship Chairman Evan Livingstone built a calendar that is both lively and substantive. Thursday



German Club members enjoying the Midwinters concert



New member being pinned by his sponsor.

Night Traditions returned as a weekly anchor for the active body, Manor Parties continued to draw members and guests, Ring Dance was a particular highlight of the spring, and informal gatherings throughout the semester gave members the kind of unstructured time together that is, in many ways, the lifeblood of the Club. We also placed greater intention behind our Fellowship Talks, which have become a setting where members speak openly with their brothers about what they are carrying. In a campus environment where it is increasingly clear how much young men benefit from honest conversation, these talks have quietly been one of the most important things the Club has done all semester—deepening bonds within the active body and reminding us that fellowship is not only celebration but also care.

The Annex received meaningful improvements this semester. We installed new shelving and reorganized storage so that supplies, equipment, and Club property are easier to locate and maintain. We added a dedicated set of tools that has already proven its value during member-led upkeep projects. We also installed a new lock box, giving the Club a secure, controlled location for items that should not be openly accessible—a small but real step forward in stewardship of the property the Foundation has entrusted to us. As with the entire Manor, we view the Annex not as a perk but as a responsibility.

Our Secretary, Mason Ramboyong, led a complete revamp of the Club's merchandise program. After identifying inconsistent quality and limited selection of current offerings, Mason transitioned the Club to a supplier that produces apparel for Virginia Tech's club sports programs, yielding

a noticeably higher-quality, more cohesive line—now including sweatshirts, t-shirts, polos, hats, quarter-zips, water bottles, and stickers. The new line has been well received, has strengthened the Club's visible identity on campus, and creates a sustainable foundation for future runs now that the supplier relationship and brand assets are established.

Historian Alex Frank has authored a year-in-review summary capturing this year's events, leadership, and milestones, and has generously offered to produce comparable summaries for the 2024–25 and 2023–24 years that were never formally documented. The intent is to leave behind a continuous, year-by-year record that future actives, alumni, and the Foundation can draw on. Institutional memory does not maintain itself, and we expect the completed summaries to be a useful resource for the Foundation as well.

This has been a productive and meaningful year for the Club. Our chairmen have led with intention, our annual and broader philanthropic efforts have delivered real support to organizations in need, the Annex is in better condition than we found it, our public-facing identity is stronger, and we are taking deliberate steps to preserve the Club's history. None of this happens without the trust, support, and historical investment of the Foundation—something the active body does not take for granted! 🙏

*Germanly,
Will Forth
German Club President*



German Club members serve the community during Big Event.

LOOKING FORWARD TO OUR



135th

ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



PHOTOGRAPHS FROM OUR 130TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

HONORING OUR HISTORY, CELEBRATING OUR BONDS

Greetings German Club Alumni! The past year has been another incredible chapter for our alumni community, filled with opportunities to gather, reminisce, and strengthen the bonds that unite us. From football tailgates at the Manor this past fall to the wonderful turnout at our regional events, it has been deeply rewarding to see so many alumni reconnecting with old friends and making new ones.

**We cannot wait
to welcome you
home to Blacksburg
this fall for game
days, and next
spring for a truly
unforgettable
anniversary
weekend.**



▲ **2010's decade**



**Rocking out to "You Shook
Me All Night Long."**



▲ 1960's decade



As I reflect on our gatherings, I am continuously struck by the way our time in the German Club serves as the foundation of shared experience through which alumni several decades apart can build connections. The opportunity to witness and be a part of this is among my most cherished privileges as Vice President of Alumni Relations. Your continued enthusiasm for fostering relationships and supporting each other is indicative of the lifelong commitment we feel for our Club and Ritual, and is what makes our community so special.

Looking ahead, I am especially excited for what we have in store for the next year. Tailgates at the Manor will be invigorated by our new coach and the spectacular recruiting class he's assembled. Expectations are rightfully high, and I can't wait to gather in Blacksburg again and feel the renewed sense of energy from the Hokie faithful. This excitement on the gridiron builds a perfect runway into next spring for a historic milestone: the German Club Alumni Foundation's 135th Anniversary Celebration, taking place April 16th–18th, 2027, in Blacksburg.

1872 – Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College opened its doors


1892 – Founding of the German Club

1936 – Introduction of the GERMAN Club Ritual written by Melville "Mel" Jeffries '26

1967 – 75th German Club Anniversary Celebration



**Your continued
enthusiasm for
fostering relationships
and supporting each
other is indicative
of the lifelong
commitment we feel
for our Club.**



▼ **1980's decade**



**1972 - German Club
rejected offers from SAE
to join their fraternity**

**1977 – German Club
Alumni Foundation
Charter Granted**



**1981 – The German Club
Manor was dedicated**

**1992 – 100th German
Club Anniversary
Celebration**

135TH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Friday, April 16, 2027

9:00 am
Golf Tournament
Blacksburg Country Club

6:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Welcome Reception (cocktail attire)
The German Club Manor

Saturday, April 17, 2027

6:00 pm - 11:00 pm
Anniversary Gala
The German Club Manor
Complimentary shuttles between the
Manor and official hotels all evening
(The Gala is black tie requested)

Sunday, April 18, 2027

10:30 am - 1:00 pm
See You Next Time Brunch
The German Club Manor
Enjoy a morning of fellowship before
departing Blacksburg

* Exact times are subject to change and will be confirmed in the formal invitations to follow. Book your hotel now! Hotel information is available at www.vtgc.net/135th



This upcoming reunion weekend holds profound significance for us all. As we gather to celebrate 135 years of the German Club, we will also stand together with the broader Virginia Tech community to mark the 20th anniversary of April 16, 2007. As the German Club has always been inseparably linked with Virginia Tech, I look forward to a weekend that honors our shared history and enables our alumni to participate in the university's planned remembrances.

As for our events, we have an incredible lineup planned, including Friday morning golf and an evening Welcome Reception, a Saturday Gala, and a Sunday Brunch. Between our schedule, the university's remembrances, and the anticipated VT Football Spring Game occurring that same weekend, Blacksburg will be vibrant!

Accordingly, demand for hotel rooms will be high, so we strongly recommend booking hotel rooms to guarantee availability. All hotel and other event information can be found on vtgc.net.

Thank you for your enduring commitment to our shared legacy. We cannot wait to welcome you home to Blacksburg this fall for game days, and next spring for a truly unforgettable anniversary weekend. 🏠

Ben Nicoll '19
VP Alumni Relations



**1993 – Gordon Ballroom
was opened**



**2017 – 125th German Club
Anniversary Celebration**

**2027 – 135th German Club
Anniversary Celebration**



GERMAN CLUB MEN CONTINUE TO LEAD THE CAMPUS

We all know one of the defining characteristics of the German Club throughout its long history of service to Virginia Tech has been the leadership its members provided to the University. This leadership has been exhibited in many ways, and currently is proudly on display as evidenced by the Club's active four-year streak of being elected by the student body as Homecoming Royalty.

Unlike traditional beauty pageants of yore, Homecoming Royalty now depends on candidates having a mission – a campaign for an area of service to alma mater and the local community. These four German Club men have all met that criteria in spades.

In his campaign - "Reaching out with Reid," Reid Burton '23, championed mental health awareness.

Mason Stanley '24, based his campaign, "Steering Safe with Stanley," on drunk driving prevention.

Safe driving was also the focus for TJ Brooks '25, as his winning campaign was "Buckle Up With Brooks."

This past academic year, Jonah Middleton's ('26) campaign for mental health awareness was "Mental Health with Middleton."

These men are not only models for the University's motto of *Ut Prosim* but are also shining examples of what it means to be a German Club man as laid out in the Ritual. 

◀ **TJ Brooks '25 and Jonah Middleton '26 at the 2025 homecoming halftime ceremony.**



13 new members were inducted at Candlelight on April 29, 2026

Alumni after the Bridge Run 10k in Charleston, SC (Left to right: Adam Gentile '24, Ethan Leinberger '24, Chris Hall '24, Barrett Stuckey '24)



FACILITIES COMMITTEE

In conjunction with the GCAF's Executive Director and Executive Board, the Facilities Committee completed modernization of the interior of Alumni Hall in Fiscal Year 2024-25. Following several years of very expensive heating and air-conditioning system replacements, along with associated modernized controls, the Facilities Committee was able to turn its attention to more visible projects. Consequently, Alumni Hall has a totally new look, including new flooring, furniture and rugs, lighting and artwork – all resulting in a more contemporary space for events and gatherings. The Club itself has an all-new Annex in the rear parking area, providing them with a larger facility for enhanced storage and more space for assembly of various Club-related event projects. Much-needed repairs to the Manor continued, including repairs to windows and doors, restroom fixture upgrades, and various drywall repairs and paint touch ups.

Over the past fiscal year, 2025-26, members and guests have seen a rather “quiet” year of construction and renovations with only a few small capital projects being completed. The completion of the larger and certainly more expensive projects mentioned above offered the respite needed to focus on smaller and less costly projects and repairs. Old double-entry doors to the basement were

replaced, and the Guest House underwent needed insulation repairs. Projected projects for the next few years include a new floor for the lower-level Clubroom flooring, parking lot improvements, repairs and renovation of the current loading dock, kitchen renovations with added new equipment, new or refurbished banquet tables and chairs, and new Boardroom furnishings.

An exciting new Master Plan is being developed for the entire property at Southgate Drive with attention to new landscaping, improved lighting at entry drives and walkways, new wayfinding signage, additional memorial opportunities, and improvements to the fencing, trees, and shrubbery along property lines. The GCAF has commissioned a very reputable local architectural and engineering group to assist with the development of the Master Plan and a phased approach of recommended improvements. This is a very exciting time for the GCAF and the Club, as the grounds will now get the attention needed to take the property to the next level. The Foundation's Board of Directors remains committed to the stewardship needed to keep the property and Manor in the best condition possible in service to alumni, Club, and alma mater for the years ahead. △

Germanly,
R. Craig Balzer '79
VP for Facilities

An exciting new Master Plan is being developed for the entire property at Southgate Drive with attention to new landscaping, improved lighting at entry drives and walkways, new wayfinding signage, additional memorial opportunities, and improvements to the fencing, trees, and shrubbery along property lines.



FINANCIAL REPORT

REVENUES*

Gifts to GCAF	121,000
Gifts through VTF	303,000
VTF Endowment Income	202,000
Other Income**	234,000
Total Income	\$860,000

EXPENSES*

Foundation Ops	286,000
Manor & Guest House Ops	188,000
Capital Projects	29,000
Club, Alumni & VT Relations	146,000
Total Expenses	\$649,000

*All amounts rounded to nearest thousand

**Includes Manor & Guest House rentals, football parking, etc.

Throughout fiscal year 2025-2026, the Finance Committee provided oversight of the financial activities of the German Club Alumni Foundation and monitored the status of its investment accounts. In the Fall of 2025, the committee was able to reinvest a surplus from the previous fiscal year into the Endowment.

This Spring, the committee prepared a budget proposal for fiscal year 2026-2027 which was approved unanimously at the May Board of Directors Meeting. At the meeting, directors discussed alumni engagement and financial support for the upcoming 135th German Club Reunion planned for Spring 2027.

The Finance Committee works with other standing committees to ensure the programs of the German Club Alumni Foundation are funded. Virginia Tech Gift Accounting remains the primary point of contact for contributions from alumni and friends to the German Club Annual Fund Drive; and our investment funds continue to be managed by the Virginia Tech Foundation. 

Robbie Roberts '95

VP for Finance



Online listing of this
years Annual Fund
contributors during the
fiscal year ending
June 30, 2026.



Our 2026 Graduates

"The moment I read The Ritual, I knew this organization was like no other. And it is because of that ritual and my brothers that I am the man I am today, and the man I will aspire to be. To put it simply: joining the German Club was the best decision of my collegiate career. Although my time in the club was ultimately short, the bonds I created will last a lifetime. It is with the highest honor that I can call myself a man of the German Club."

Ethan Morrow

"The German Club is THE premier organization on campus. It has connected me with some of my best friends and has given me the opportunity to grow in ways that I never knew were possible. The Ritual is something that I will refer back to as a guiding document for my life and the decisions that I make."

Andrew McKinnis



JONAH BRADLEY



ETHAN BROWN



DANIEL CALLANAN



COLEMAN COOK



CHRIS HARPER



JUSTIN KO



LUKE LODGE



TREVOR LUDWIG



ANDREW McKINNIS



IAN McMILLAN



JUDE MEADOWS



JONAH MIDDLETON



ETHAN MORROW



ZACHARY ROSEN



VINCENT RUTA



MATTHEW SCAVELLI



NATE SCOTT



ROAN TOOLE



JUSTIN WARD



An Interview with

THE HOKIEBIRD

On the 13th of May, one day before graduation ceremonies, Forum Magazine sat down for an interview with the HokieBird at an undisclosed off-campus location.

FM: Thanks for agreeing to meet with us. I know with graduation tomorrow and the impending “reveal event,” things are very hectic for you.

HB: No problem – glad to share a little on what it’s like to lead a double life during college.

FM: Let’s start with some background. I understand you were hatched in SW Virginia – Castlewood – to a devout Hokie family, and this ultimately led to you wanting to become the HokieBird.

HB: That’s right. We attended a lot of football games, and by the time I was a senior, I had done a lot of research on how to be a HokieBird, so I applied, tried out before my first semester, and became a HokieBird my freshman year. Not to strut too much, but I am the only HokieBird with a four-year tenure. And as such, I’m the first to be awarded a four-year varsity ring and become a member of the Varsity Club. And to my knowledge, I’m also the only German Club member to serve as a HokieBird.

FM: I see – so you’re a turkey with also some ham in him. You’re at home whether it’s Thanksgiving or Christmas. So, with that tenure, does that make you the leader of the flock?

HB: Well, we do have a coach, so I’d say more of a mentor to the younger birds.

FM: What’s your best memory of being the HokieBird?

HB: I’d say going with some band members and cheerleaders to New York to wish Hoda Kotb (’86) well upon her leaving the *Today Show*. Met all the *Today* celebs, watched the filming from their Green Room, and of course, performed outside in Rockefeller Plaza.

FM: What was the most unusual event you did?

HB: Being with all the other ACC mascots at the ACC Tournament event. We were all in the hotel lobby, strutting our stuff, horse-playing, trying to put our school out there, but at the same time being respectful of them wanting to do the same. We traded a few techniques and learned from each other. I roomed with that church deacon dude from Wake Forest with the top hat and tails and lambchop sideburns. It was a great time.

FM: Did you have any appearances where things didn’t go as planned?

HB: At one game in Lane, I came out on the back of a golf cart and got thrown off in a tight turn – guess the driver thought it was the Sooner Schooner. Anyway, I hit the ground hard, rolled, and popped back up quickly, acting as though nothing had happened. I was in quite a bit of pain – it ruffled my feathers for sure – but the show must go on.

FM: Glad you didn’t break a wing! Tell me about the secrecy thing? Was it hard to maintain? Did people suspect?

HB: Very hard. Especially over four years when you are also involved in many other organizations, such as the German Club. This last year I had to take early alumni status to fit everything else in. But the first year was the hardest, as all fledgling birds have to stay in the coops on campus. It’s not like you could store your plumage in the closet or come walking out of your room down the hall as the Bird. Couldn’t sit with hall mates at the games. I told everyone it was because I was a “cheer manager.” Some may have suspected it, but not even my roommate knew.

FM: Even though you operate in anonymity, is being the HokieBird a chick magnet?

HB: In a word...yes. It has its perks.

FM: So does the HokieBird have a “code of conduct”?

HB: Yes – VT and the community always come first. Put self-interest aside, always uphold VT values, and be consistent with HokieBird responsibilities.

FM: Did anyone who did know ever call you Tom?

HB: No. That's interesting though, because all HokieBirds are toms – not hens. (Editor's note: even when female students are the HokieBird, its declared gender is male).

FM: What was your most challenging performance?

HB: The Vandy game in early September 2024. It was 95 degrees, but inside my plumage was as hot as I imagine an oven is on Thanksgiving Day.

FM: Speaking of Turkey Day, do you ever feel guilty when eating a Thanksgiving meal?

HB: Yes. Survivor's guilt.

FM: After graduation, you plan to roost in the area. As a turkey, your knowledge of nature and the outdoors must come in handy as a Landscape Architecture major. Good luck with your job at Westwood Pro Services in Christiansburg.

HB: Gobble gobble.

Addendum: Now that graduation has passed, it can be revealed that Coleman Cook, GC '26, was the person inside our cherished HokieBird. 🦃



Do you want a paver? Now is the time!

Act now to have your personalized paver installed by the 135th. We will have a BIG install before our 135th Reunion in April! A personalized paver can celebrate your commitment to the German Club; honor another alumnus or group of alumni; or remember a lost alumnus.

FAQs

Where are the pavers located?

The pavers are installed permanently on the Cutchins Terrace, right out on the patio, a prime gathering spot for visitors and alumni alike.

What can I put on my paver?

The pavers will be up to four lines of an inscription of your choice! Each line will hold up to 20 characters (includes spaces and punctuation).

How much are the pavers?

Alumni who have accumulated \$3,000 in donations since April 4, 2016 are eligible for a paver. Young Alumni, those five years since graduation, are eligible if cumulative giving has reached \$1,500. Also, alumni can pool their donations to honor or remember a fellow alumnus or group of alumni (e.g., "In Memory of John .. class of 1970" or "In Honor of the Class of 1970").

When do I need to donate to have my paver installed in time for the 135th?

Donations received by January 1, 2027 will ensure your paver will be installed by the 135th Reunion!

If you have already qualified for a paver or have any questions regarding the paver program, please contact the Executive Director at director@vtgc.net

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

The Foundation's Communications Committee has been actively engaged in several important initiatives over the past year and will continue advancing these efforts in the year ahead.

GC Connections Suite

Have you ever wished you could browse German Club composites or scrapbooks from a particular year online? Reconnect with a fellow German Club member or alumnus to have dinner or reengage based on similar interests? Identify alumni living near you—or in a city you plan to visit for business or pleasure? View Oral History interviews with distinguished alumni? Explore the history of the Club as documented by class members? Post job interests or openings for German Club men?

Soon, you will be able to do all of this and more with our new *GC Connections Suite* coming soon to our German Club website (<https://vtgc.net>). The Suite will consist of two applications: *Remembering Yesterday* and *Connecting Today and Tomorrow*. Both applications will require an Alumni Portal Account to limit access to German Club alumni and members only. See the accompanying article *Online Alumni Portal* for details on creating your Alumni Portal account.

Remembering Yesterday

Over the past year, we have been working closely with the Virginia Tech Special Collections and University Archives, along with the Virginia Tech Computer Science Department, to develop the *GC Connections – Remembering Yesterday* application (previously known as the Digital Archive Solution). This exciting initiative will provide a centralized and interactive way to preserve, explore, and share the rich history of the German Club. Once fully deployed, the application will be accessible through the German Club website, the Museum TV and on tablets located throughout the Manor.



Connecting Today and Tomorrow

For nearly 135 years, the German Club has forged friendships that last a lifetime — yet after graduation, distance and time make those bonds challenging to maintain. *GC Connections – Connecting Today and Tomorrow* is a new, private online community created to change that: a German Club-only space where German Club alumni (and current members) can reconnect with classmates, find others who share their profession and interests, offer and seek career mentorship, join interest groups, and gather for video conversations. Once launched, it will be accessible through the German Club website using your existing Alumni Portal login — no new password required. Watch for your invitation to join and help keep our community thriving across generations. Together with *GC Connections – Remembering Yesterday*, it's part of the German Club Alumni Foundation's growing digital footprint.

German Club Website

In March of this year, we launched the new German Club Alumni Foundation website and continue working to keep the site current with alumni news, Club events, and other important updates that help keep our membership connected.

Recent additions include:

1. Class Notes and In Memoriam Sections

We have added “Class Notes” and “In Memoriam” sections to the website, mirroring those published annually in The Forum. These sections allow us to share updates in real time while continuing the longstanding tradition of annual publication in The Forum. We encourage you to send us your news and updates as they occur so we can help keep our membership informed and connected.

2. Photo Contributions

We need your photos! One of the most important ways we preserve and share our history is through photographs of alumni and Club events. The website is only as strong as the content contributed by our members. Please send us your photos, along with the names and class years of those pictured, and we will gladly include them on the Foundation website.

Oral History Project

We have completed our first four Oral History interviews. Many thanks to Doug C. Petty, Jr. '52, Colonel Tom Dalzell '57, Randy Minix '72 (since deceased), and Dick Arnold '56 for generously sharing their time, memories, and experiences as German Club members.

These interviews provide remarkable insight into the traditions, values, and lifelong impact of the German Club experience. They will be made available through the *GC Connections – Remembering Yesterday* application, and I encourage all members and alumni to take the time to enjoy these conversations once the archive is deployed.

Alumni Communications

The Communications Committee’s overarching goal is to strengthen meaningful connections among all German Club members and alumni. The GC Connections Suite will serve as an important tool in helping members reconnect and engage with one another.

As part of this effort, we have already reached out to many alumni and current club members for assistance in validating historical information, contributing Scrapbooks, and contributing Club History articles to continue the tradition established by The History of the German Club (“*The Purple Book*”), published in 2006.

We will continue these efforts in the coming year and welcome anyone interested in helping us build a comprehensive and enduring digital archive of the Club’s history.

Finally, please feel free to contact me at wslaughter60@gmail.com with any suggestions, ideas, improvements, or concerns. 📧

Wacho Slaughter '84

VP Communications Committee

Online Alumni Portal

Having just been inducted into VT’s Cornerstone Society (previously “The Old Guard”) as a member of the Class of 1976 during this year’s Reunion Weekend, I am flush with remembrance of those days on campus 50 years ago. And those memories were made more special by sharing them with classmates who experienced many of the same events.

In the German Club, we are less than a year away from a very special event which will provide a venue for re-uniting with old and new Gentlemen—the 135th Anniversary Celebration. Of course, many of you may not be able to attend, or may simply not want to wait until next April to reconnect. Fortunately, our Online Alumni Portal allows you to immediately connect electronically with those GC friends who have joined it. Note that the navigation of the Directory portion of the Portal will undergo a refresh via the GC Connections Suite referenced in the accompanying article to make it more user friendly. However, you can continue to use the Directory until the Suite is available.

The Directory and pending GC Connections Suite also allow you to connect with Gentlemen in your area with whom your only connection may be Club membership and shared geography (see the “Heat Map” below). As noted, you must have an Alumni Portal account to access the new GC Connections Suite mentioned in the Communications Committee report in order to allow us to authenticate you as a German Club member and limit access to only German Club alumni and current members. So, if you have not yet availed yourself of this membership benefit, I encourage you to sign up today.

To create an account go to the German Club website (<https://vtgc.net>) and select Alumni - Alumni Portal Access (<https://vtgc.net/alumni/alumni-portal-access>), and follow the steps provided to create an account. After creating your account, you can login via the German Club website (<https://vtgc.net>) and selecting Alumni - Alumni Portal Access and selecting Login to Portal. You will also now have access to all GC Connection Suite applications as they become available. Need help? Email: director@vtgc.net

Doug Anderson '76

German Club Alumni Across the United States



Bravo Zulu Military for “Well Done!”

Bravo Zulu is certainly a fitting congratulations for five German Club young alumni who recently completed US Army Ranger School.

Ranger School is an arduous, physically and mentally demanding 62-day small unit tactics and leadership course that develops functional skills directly related to units whose mission is to engage the enemy in close combat and direct fire battles. The eight-week course is divided into three phases: the initial “Darby” Phase is conducted at Camp Darby, Georgia, the Mountain Phase is conducted in remote Georgia mountains, and the Swamp Phase is conducted in the coastal swamps of the northwestern Florida Panhandle.

Ranger School is hard to get into, and hard to get out of, at least successfully. It has been said it is the most physically and mentally demanding course in the U.S. Army, and thus only about 50 percent of those enrolled attain their Ranger Tab. These five officers, and Gentlemen, have certainly lived up to the tenants found in our Ritual. Again, Bravo Zulu!



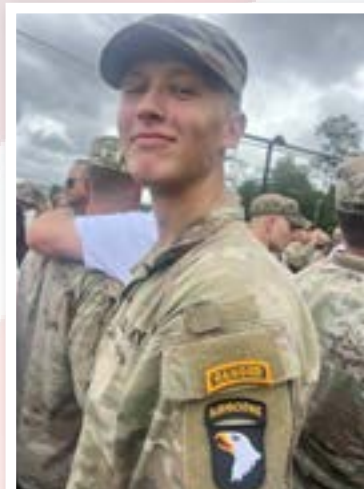
2LT Jack Bonnor '25
Infantry Officer



1LT Matt Owen '24
Infantry Officer



1LT Sean Herndon '23
Infantry Officer



2LT Gabriel Bayle '25
Field Artillery Officer



2LT Mike Wilson '25
Field Artillery



SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2026-27



James E. Walker Jr.
Scholarship
Will Hodge



William T. Miller Scholarship
Thomas Rockecharlie



German Club Award
of Excellence
Camden Smith



Thomas W. Moss Jr.
Scholarship
Evan Livingstone



Samuel E. Bonsack III
Memorial Scholarship
Brooks Morgan



W. Stuart Johnson and Freda
Bullington Johnson Scholarship
Jack Rathgeb



David S. Cooper Jr. And Family
German Club Scholarship
Derek Travis



Douglas C. Petty Jr. And
Family German Club Scholarship
Ethan Knoll



Lee C. Tait Scholarship
Colby Stanley

INNOVATION, EXPERIENCE, & LEADERSHIP

Executive Director Wesley Surdam recently asked John Padgett '91, president of travel company Spaxial Strategy, about his very successful career in the travel industry, and his thoughts on leadership. As background, you should know Padgett was the innovator of many processes introduced during the many years he spent at Disney Corporation - processes which dramatically improved the customer experience at Disney's theme parks. He did the same thing while serving as Chief Experience and Innovation Officer for Carnival Corporation, and President of Princess Cruise Lines. At Princess, he also oversaw the on-time delivery of the Sun Princess - the largest ship ever built in Italy. Additionally, he holds 100 trademarks and 31 patents and has been recognized for his achievements with four Emmy Nominations and 24 Telly Awards, among others. In 2017, he was selected as the keynote speaker of the Consumer Electronics Show.



During your time in the German Club, did you have a favorite memory or something that really stood out?

(My) best memories were probably the weekly Club meetings. We were learning how to make proposals, have real discussion and debate, take votes, build alignment, and follow through on commitments. Those meetings were an early education in leadership, responsibility, and working with people.

Spending time with the Regal Princess Crew Galley Team.

How did your time in the German Club influence your leadership and career?

The Ritual turned out to be the “real deal.” G.E.R.M.A.N. really does say it all: value and appreciate everyone; go all in with purpose; take responsibility; stand with resolve and commitment; have a clear direction; and protect your brand. Two lines have stayed with me throughout my career: “A good name is the result of many actions and lost by one,” and “The only way to have a friend is to be one.” I have thought about both many times in business dealings and tough decisions.

Can you tell us the story behind your career journey — from Virginia Tech to Disney to your current ventures?

The journey has really been about taking risks, being comfortable, being uncomfortable, accepting jobs and challenges that other people might avoid, and setting goals that many people initially thought were impossible. But the real story is not just about career moves. It is about people.

You are the inventor of many products such as Disney's MagicBand, Magical Express, FastPass+, and the Princess Medallion. How did you come up with these ideas, and what did it take to bring them to life?



Spending the day with a master shipbuilder and crew as they build the Sun Princess – the largest cruise ship ever constructed in Italy.



The inventions did not happen because I set out to be an inventor. They happened because we were trying to achieve aspirational business goals that could not be accomplished with conventional methods. Everyone has ideas, but the real work is building belief around it, translating it into a business strategy, aligning huge organizations, solving the operational and technical details, and staying committed when new ideas sound impossible. Big ideas only become real with the unglamorous work of bringing them to life.

What advice would you give a recent graduate who hopes to one day lead organizations or create something that has a lasting impact?

You don't start a career by "throwing bombs." Success is built by showing up every day, staying positive, taking accountability, and, as Hank Stram said, "matriculating the ball down the field." Exceed expectations on the job in front of you. Be dependable. Be durable. Take the assignment others may not want. Learn how to solve problems and make forward momentum.

Very important—relationships matter! The time to make a friend is not when you need one. Build trust early, treat people well, and nurture your brand and reputation.

What separates a good leader from a great and impactful leader?

To me, leadership is not about commanding people or trying to be the smartest person in the room. It is about deeply understanding your customers, your employees, your leadership capabilities, and the problem you are trying to solve. Then create real win-win outcomes. The leader's job is to serve the team and create the conditions that allow them to perform at the

highest level possible. To me, great leadership is about clarity in focus, trust of support, taking accountability for results, and providing service to the customer and team.

You have had many unique experiences throughout your career—as an inventor, producer for television franchises, keynote speaker, and more. How did those experiences transpire? Were they big jumps or a natural progression from what you were already doing?

A disproportionate amount of life is consumed by your profession and time is priceless, so you might as well make it interesting! If someone can do it, you can do it, so just do it! But as Matthew McConaughey says, "if you say you can do it...do it...don't half-ass it." Be open to opportunities, don't think you have it all figured out, take the risk, do the work, and make it count. ☺



John Padgett welcomes the Lord Mayor of Southampton England aboard the Sun Princess.

DR. JOHN “JOHNNY” E. SCOTT



By all measures, Dr. John E. “Johnny” Scott, Jr was an amazing academic and leader. As a teenager he distinguished himself as an Eagle Scout and was the valedictorian of his high school class. As a student at Virginia Polytechnic Institute (Class of ’48), he served on the Regimental Staff and as a Company Commander in the Corps of Cadets, and as President of the Class of 1948. Later, he would earn Master’s and Doctorate degrees from Purdue and Princeton Universities. His expertise was in the fields of rarefied gas dynamics, jet propulsion, nozzle-formed molecular beams, and isotope separation.

But did you know Dr. Scott not only spent most of his life in academia, but that the fruits of those labors benefited that other college up in Charlottesville? The President of UVA asked Dr. Scott to come to UVA and start an Aerospace Engineering Program. In so doing, he recruited prominent students and faculty, creating an engineering, science, and research department of the highest quality. In his four-decade tenure at UVA, Dr. Scott managed to teach every course in the curriculum, but his forte was individual interaction with graduate-level research students. He twice served as chairman of the Department he created and directed three major research programs and was named the Associate Provost for Research.

But did you know that despite his tremendous success in Charlottesville, John Scott remained loyal

to his alma mater? As an alumnus, he would serve Virginia Tech as a Director and Vice President of the Alumni Association, as well as Class of 1948 Chairman for the VTCC Alumni.

By now you know, in an ironic twist, that the man who was so instrumental in the establishment of UVA’s Aerospace Engineering Program, and who made it excel, was a Hokie. And now you know this Hokie also served Virginia Tech alumni so well. But did you know this outstanding leader was also a German Club man? Well, of course he was! And not *just* a German Club member, but one who first served as Leader, and then as President of the Club? And did you know as an alum he was a founding member of the German Club Alumni Foundation, serving as Director, and Chairman, and Director Emeritus? Now you do. ☺





J.O. Hoge Award winners across generations.
left to right: Mark Wiggington '77, David Glenn '11,
Adam Gentile '24, Ian McMillan '26, Charlie Watson '86.

J. O. Hoge Award Recipient: **Ian McMillan**

After realizing a need existed to recognize those members of the German Club who have shown outstanding dedication and service to the club, the J. O. Hoge Award was established in the spring of 1975. This award is unique and distinct from the Bev Parrish Award. The recipient of the award is selected by six club officers to recognize a graduating senior for his hard work above and beyond the ordinary duties of membership. This year's J. O. Hoge Award recipient is Ian McMillan. Ian hails from Cromwell, CT and received a degree in Mechanical Engineering. He is now working for FENN as an engineer. While in the German Club, Ian served as Alumni Secretary, Privates Co-Chair, and Senior Banquet Co-Chair. When not serving the German Club, Ian was also serving Virginia Tech in organizations such as Big Event Operations and Programming, Relay for Life Team Relations, and Senior Class Gift Committee.



Nominations and Governance Committee

Over the last year the Nominations and Governance Committee has nominated three new Board members, two new Director Emeritus nominations, and completed a review of the bylaws for the Foundation.

For the 2025/2026 Foundation year, three new Board members have been confirmed all at the 2025 Fall Meeting. Ryan Costa '09, Jack Proctor '22, and Matthew Snuggs '23 were all welcomed to the board in the fall of 2025. The Board is now at 58 members.

Our two new Director Emeritus members are Colonel Tom Dalzell '57 and Craig Nesbit '81. Both were confirmed to emeritus status at the 2026 Spring Meeting. Tom served 24 years on the Board and developed the 'Dalzell Report', which plans out the life cycles for the Manor and equipment. This report is still used today by the Facilities committee to forecast costs for our future budgeting. Craig spent 20 years on the Board and served time as both the VP of Communications and VP of University and Community Relations. We thank both of them for their service to the German Club Alumni Foundation and congratulate them on earning their emeritus status.

Over the past year the Foundation Bylaws have been reviewed and updated to clean up language and add in more detail on our voting procedures. This was completed and presented at the spring meeting where the board approved the new version of the bylaws.

Going into the fall, the committee will be reviewing at least two new nominations for Board membership and presenting the board class of 2029 for board approval.

Colin Wright '92
VP Nomination & Governance

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



It has been an incredible privilege to step into the role of Executive Director this past February and return to Blacksburg in service of an organization that has shaped so many of us. In these first several months, I've had the opportunity to get to know alumni and current Club members, learn the rhythms of the Foundation, and see firsthand the strength of the network that continues to support the German Club across generations.

This past year has been marked by meaningful progress across several areas of the Foundation's work. We again have significantly exceeded our annual giving goal, a reflection of the continued generosity and commitment of our alumni network. These resources have allowed us to continue strengthening the long-term health of the organization.

One of the most exciting initiatives currently underway is the development of the GC Connections Suite. This effort will preserve and organize decades of German Club history, providing alumni with a deeper connection to their time in Blacksburg while ensuring the traditions, stories, and experiences of the Club are accessible for generations to come. It represents an important step forward in strengthening the shared identity of the German Club and its alumni.

One of the most exciting initiatives currently underway is the development of the GC Connections Suite. This effort will preserve and organize decades of German Club history.

Every project we undertake whether digital or physical, reflects a broader commitment to stewardship—ensuring that what was built before us is not only preserved but enhanced for those who will follow.

The Club has also had a strong year. It welcomed several new members into the organization, and Mid-winters was especially memorable as its long-awaited return to Squires produced the highest level of student participation I have ever seen. It was a powerful reminder of the energy and tradition that continues to

define the Club experience. The Club also supported a highly successful Giving Day campaign, which enabled us to pursue another project for their benefit - resurfacing the Manor basement floor to provide a safer and more enjoyable experience for Club events.

On a personal note, it has been incredibly meaningful to reconnect with the campus and the Foundation and begin building relationships with so many alumni. I am grateful for the conversations, hospitality, and support I have already experienced, and I look forward to continuing to meet more of you in the months ahead. A special shout-out goes to Tommy Yambrick '87, who generously came out of retirement for a few months to teach me the ropes.

Looking forward, there is much to be excited about. Football season is just around the corner, and there is already a tremendous amount of energy building around tailgates this Fall. I hope to see many of you back in Blacksburg as we fill the lawn and enjoy a strong season together. We have also begun to turn our attention toward one of the most important milestones in our organization's history—the 135th Annual Reunion next April. This will be a defining moment for the Foundation and the Club, and I encourage all alumni to return for what promises to be a truly special celebration.

As we continue this work, I remain deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve you and help carry forward the legacy of German Club. I look forward to what we will continue to build together. △

*Germanly,
Wesley Surdam '24
Executive Director*



Robert "Robby" D. Moser, Jr. '97, was appointed to the Virginia Tech Board of Visitors July 1, 2025, by Governor Youngkin. As Chief Executive Officer of Clark Construction, Robby provides executive direction for the company's national construction operations and asset solutions, which range from real estate development and technology integration to facility operations and maintenance, and oversees more than 4,500 team members.

Class Notes

Matt Flemer '87 and his wife, Kathy, completed construction on their permanent home on September 30, 2025, in Southern Shores, NC.

Dr. Kord Wissman '87 was presented with the 2025 Deep Foundations Institute Distinguished Service Award for significant contributions to foundation design, marine structures, and ground improvement solutions.

Brad Hobbs '90 has been named Chair of Hokie Ventures, a new initiative designed to help position Virginia Tech Athletics for long term success in a rapidly evolving landscape of college athletics.

Ben Long '02 and his wife, Laura, welcomed their son, Miller James Long, on Oct 17, 2025.

Jamie Garst '03 was named the new principal at Salem High School starting July 1, 2026.

Kyle Pryde '12 and his wife welcomed their second son, Edward 'Ned' Partridge Ewing Pryde on March 11, 2026.

Thomas Arruda '17 and his wife welcomed their second son, Beckett James Arruda on October 20th, 2025.



Carter Ward '20 married Caitlin Pyne on May 16, 2026, in Warrenton, VA.

Andrew McCaffrey '21 graduated from the University of South Carolina School of Medicine and has started his residency in Orthopedic Surgery at VCU.

Will Tawney '21 married Haylee on October 5, 2025, in New Hill, NC.

Chris Caron '22 married Vivian on February 15, 2025, in Amelia Island, FL.

Trenton Whitfield '22 married Haley Hirth on November 15, 2025, in Atkinson Farms, VA.

Matthew Gentile '22 married Lea Holevas on June 27, 2026, in Charlotte, NC.

Carson Pugh '23 married Kaitlin Walker on August 30, 2025, in Charlotte, NC.

Timmy Bryan '24 married Maggie Lyons on April 12, 2025, in Red Banks, MS.

Vincent Favazzo '25 was chosen as 1 of 30 cadets in the country to attend Euro NATO Joint Jet Pilot Training.



Gabe Wiggins '25 married Elizabeth Ann on June 14, 2025, in Vico Equense, Italy.



TJ Brooks '25 earned his MPA from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs at Syracuse University in May 2026.

In Memoriam

LEWIS I. "BUD" JEFFRIES '64



This past year we lost a legendary alumnus, Lewis "Bud" Jeffries '64. The first thing most GC alums will think of when we hear Bud's name is that he was the son of Mel Jeffries, and rightly so given Mel's place in the annals of GC history. Others who go a little deeper into local history will recall that he is a descendant of Mary Draper Ingles, who was kidnapped by a Shawnee raiding party in the vicinity of the Duck Pond in 1755, and famously escaped and followed the rivers from Ohio territory all the way home. His famous lineage underscores what a great man Bud Jeffries was in his own right.



He saw combat action in Vietnam, serving in the Field Artillery Battalion of the First Cavalry Division in 1967-1968. He was awarded the Bronze Star for Meritorious Service and a Silver Star for Gallantry in Action during the Tet Offensive.

As a student at VPI, Bud stood out in the Corps of Cadets, where he served as Regimental Executive Officer, and was named the distinguished Military Graduate of V.P.I. Class of 1964. He was also an outstanding member of the German Club, serving as Leader.

As an Army officer, Bud not only passed the extremely tough Ranger School, but later came back as an instructor. He saw combat action in Vietnam, serving in the Field Artillery Battalion of the First Cavalry Division in 1967-1968. He was awarded the Bronze Star for Meritorious Service and a Silver Star for Gallantry in Action during the Tet Offensive.

After retirement, Colonel Jeffries came back home and continued a lifetime of leadership. Having grown up in Radford, he served as Executive

At his alma mater, he served on the boards of both the Virginia Tech Corp of Cadets and German Club Alumni Association.

Director of the Radford Main Street Program for over four years, and helped found the Radford Heritage Foundation, and served as its first chairman. At his alma mater, he served on the boards of both the Virginia Tech Corp of Cadets and German Club Alumni Association. Colonel Jeffries

was also on the vestry of Grace Episcopal Church as Senior Warden and Trustee, and a member of the VFW (Post 776) in Radford, VA.

Fascinated by trains in his youth, in retirement Bud wrote two books on the Norfolk and Western's steam locomotive design, engineering and tractive power. Bud also served as chairman of the N&W Historical Society and was named "The official historian for the Norfolk and Western Class J 611 Steam Passenger Locomotive" by The Virginia Museum of Transportation.

There can be no doubt that this outstanding leader was the embodiment of the grit and determination of his great (x5) grandmother, and the Ritual that his father authored. △

In Memoriam

Donald W. Huffman '49, as a member of the Board of Visitors, was instrumental in the policy that any new structure built on campus must contain Hokie Stone. He thus came to be affectionally known as "Mr. Hokie Stone." December 5, 2025. Age 98

George B. Field Jr. '50, served in the Coast Guard as a teenager during WWII and the Air Force during Korea. He was then self-employed as an engineer. February 8, 2026, age 98.

Robert M. Pinkham '51, was a Korean War Veteran in the US Army Corps of Engineers. His civilian career was as an engineer with Western Electric/Nokia. November 18, 2025, age 95.

Thomas A. Hanson '54, served in the Army Corps of Engineers, and worked as an Architect/Structural Engineer for 60+ years. He counted the engineering design of Richmond's Diamond Stadium as his most noteworthy project. April 3, 2026, age 94.

Colonel Johnny C. Fender '55, logged 560 combat hours in fighter jets over Vietnam, receiving a Silver Star for Valor, Bronze Star, and Distinguished Flying Cross. July 26, 2020, age 86.

Dr. Wayne C. Richard '56, played on VPI's golf team. His career started as an engineer, then in the medical field, and finally his own psychology practice. December 16, 2025, age 91.

Colonel Hugh D. Ebert Jr. '56, played football for the Gobblers. He

was a 30-year Air Force veteran, receiving the Vietnam Service Medal and Distinguished Flying Cross. October 27, 2025, age 92.

Eugene M. Grizzard '56, served in the US Army/Reserves, but spent most of his career in the Virginia Department of Corrections, and was a farmer, raising peanuts, corn, soybeans, hogs and cattle. February 23, 2026, age 91.

Carlisle R. Davis Jr '58, "Cardy" enjoyed a 37-year career with General Motors, and was most proud of leading the design of the ZR1 Corvette. He was a member of the VT Committee of 100 Distinguished Engineering Graduates. April 24, 2026, age 90.

John J. Mayfield Jr. '62, was a sales professional and business owner in the print and direct mail industry, and was an avid outdoorsman. August 7, 2025, age 84.

Lewis "Bud" I. Jeffries '64. Deceased January 20, 2026, age 83. (see article page 28)

Thomas "Tory" A. Rockecharlie Jr. '64, was a Professional Engineer and active in seven local civic organizations. Somehow he also managed to play golf on over 100 different courses and take 47 cruises. June 13, 2026, age 83.

Frank "Gray" Sloop Jr. '68, received a Bronze Star with Valor and a Purple Heart from action in Vietnam with the Army. Then he was both a cattleman and golf course superintendent. October 29, 2025, age 79.

Bev Parrish Award Recipient: Justin Ward

The most distinguished award a German Club man dreams of is the Bev Parrish Award. This award is given to a man who not only upholds the Ritual by living his life with honor, dignity and integrity, but who also demonstrates the true character which was found in the life of Lt. Beverly S. Parrish Jr. The current club membership selects the graduating senior whom they believe best exemplifies these qualities. The recipient is recognized for dedicated work for alma mater, the German Club, and his classmates. This year's Bev Parrish Award recipient is Justin Ward. Justin grew up in Henrico, VA and received a degree in Finance. While in the German Club, Justin served as Fundraising Chair, Service Chair, Midwinters Co-Chair, Privates Co-Chair, and finally Leader. When not serving the German Club, Justin was also serving Virginia Tech in organizations such as Finance Club, "If You're Reading This", as well as Senior Class Gift Committee. He plans to pursue Air Force Officer Training School with the hope of becoming an Air Force Acquisition Officer.



James "Jim" W. Hopper '69, As a lawyer, Jim conducted oral arguments before the Supreme Court, and served Virginia as Deputy Attorney General, and then Secretary of Veterans Affairs and Homeland Security. As a Colonel in the US Army Reserve, he headed the Baghdad Provincial Reconstruction Team. March 9, 2026, age 78.

Randy S. Minix '72, for an in depth biography, please reference the article "A German Club Man For All Seasons" in the Fall 2025 Forum. May 8, 2026, age 76.

John R. Brittingham '72, was a Food Science major whose Master's (VT'77) thesis advanced colon cancer research. An avid spelunker, he spent 3,000 hours below ground. Jun 3, 2023, age 73.

J. Keith Sinclair Jr. '75, a civil engineer, was part of the team that rebuilt the Pentagon after 9/11. November 20, 2025, age 73.

Dr. Daniel "Dan" T. Goulson '85, an ME grad, became an anesthesiologist, and later transitioned to hospital administration. December 18, 2025, age 63.

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Leadership Service Fellowship



The German Club Class of 2027 shows off their rings before Ring Premiere.

