3-2017

Monarch Extra, Vol. 1

Philip Walzer (Editor)

Old Dominion University

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Welcome to the first issue of Old Dominion University’s newest e-publication, Monarch Extra.

We publish two print issues of Monarch magazine every year. We realized that wasn’t nearly enough after roughly half of the respondents to our e-readership survey last year said they wanted more news about campus developments and alumni success stories. So we’ve launched Monarch Extra, which will appear twice a year, now and in the fall.

(When I announced the new e-zine in our fall 2016 print issue, I called it Mini-Monarch. We subsequently switched the name to Monarch Extra. Sounded better, and it didn’t conjure any images of the evil Mini-Me from the “Austin Powers” movies.)

You can read Monarch Extra on your phone or laptop but not on paper. It differs from Monarch magazine in other ways, too. Our art director, Karen Smallets, has created a sleek and attractive look for Monarch Extra, with a unique interactive format that will provide a stimulating visual experience for readers.

The stories also differ – in subject matter and form – from those in Monarch magazine. For instance, our first Monarch Extra recounts the health struggles of two alumni: Joe Porfert ’11, who battled heroin addiction, and Molly Kate Brown ’97, who lost the ability to walk after contracting dysentery during a trip to India. Both won writing awards, and their prose and poetry are featured in the articles.

Of course, the first issue allows you to relive the big news of the winter: The football team’s sweet 24-20 defeat of Eastern Michigan at the Popeyes Bahamas Bowl. See more photos of the big game on Pages 10-11.

Let me know what you think. Email me at pwalzer@odu.edu or call me at 757-683-3692. We want to keep getting better and better. And look for your spring 2017 issue of Monarch magazine in the mail and online in May.

Phil Walzer
Monarch Magazine and University Editor

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Drones to the rescue!

For the third consecutive semester, Thomas Alberts is co-teaching a class on drones in collaboration with two other universities.

About a dozen Old Dominion University students are in the course, along with counterparts from George Mason and James Madison universities, said Alberts, a professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering at ODU. The classes are taught in real time via videoconferencing technology.

The course this semester, Drone Technology, teaches students how they work, how to fly them safely and how to modify them. Last semester, students teamed with the Fire Department in Carova, N.C., an northeastern community in the Outer Banks with no paved roads, to create prototypes for two drones — one to spot fires and the other to locate people fighting rip currents in the water. Students this spring will continue to work in Carova, Alberts said.

Brian Duvall, now a doctoral student in aerospace engineering, took the course last year. He’s been dabbling with drones for about seven years. “It helped broaden my perspective on how to solve problems, and it educated some people on how to safely operate them and avoid hurting themselves and other people that are around them.” He plans to continue volunteering in Carova this year.

Alberts is also a drone enthusiast who introduced them to students even before the joint project. “It’s something new that you can do a lot with,” he said. “You can take about any business, find some application and make a drone for it, and do a better job.”

Glass expert to lead museum

An internationally acclaimed glass curator recently was named executive director of the Barry Art Museum at Old Dominion University, which is expected to open in 2018.

Jutta-Annette Page, senior curator of glass and decorative arts at the Toledo Museum of Art in Ohio, will begin her job this month. Her former boss, Brian Kennedy, president and CEO of the Toledo museum, said Page has “outstanding knowledge of glass, jewelry and decorative arts” and is “a foremost expert in her field.” Page won the 2016 Lifetime Membership Award from the Glass Art Society. She is a past president of the society.

The Barry Museum will be on Hampton Boulevard and 43rd Street near the Ted Constant Convocation Center. It will feature more than 200 glass sculptures, paintings and other works, as well as revolving exhibits. Richard Barry, a former rector of Old Dominion’s Board of Visitors, and his wife, Carolyn, last year provided the largest gift in the University’s history — valued at more than $35 million — to establish the museum.

Old Dominion President John R. Broderick said:

“With the Barry Art Museum, Old Dominion is adding an important cultural destination for our students, faculty and staff,” he said. “Dr. Page is a world-renowned expert in the field of glass art and we are excited to have her lead the museum.”

Page won the 2016 Lifetime Member Award from the Glass Art Society. She is a past president of the Glass Art Society.

For the third consecutive year, Old Dominion was recently named to the “Tree Campus USA” list of universities for the fifth consecutive year. Old Dominion was recently named to the “Tree Campus USA” list of universities for the fifth consecutive year.
Hailstork’s fanfare celebrates museum

How sweet the sound.

One of Adolphus Hailstork’s compositions, “Fanfare on Amazing Grace,” (click link for audio) was performed by the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington last fall to celebrate the opening of the National Museum of African American History and Culture.

Hailstork, an eminent scholar and professor of music, has been at Old Dominion since 2000. He estimates that he’s completed about 250 compositions, including symphonies and operas, during his career.

As Hailstork described it, the piece, which is about 3 ½ minutes long, wraps the fanfare around the famous Christian hymn. Hailstork composed the original version of “Fanfare” in 2005.

He called the composition “uplifting and positive. It worked nicely.”

Hailstork’s honors include the Virginia Cultural Laureate Award, the state Outstanding Faculty Award and the Governor’s Award for the Arts.

Folk music legend donates collection

To his surprise, Bob Zentz got a fan letter in the mid-’70s from a musical superstar, praising a series of songs he’d written about a Hampton Boulevard regular. It was from Johnny Cash.

A copy of that letter will soon be housed at Old Dominion University.

Zentz, a local folk music presence for more than five decades, got a fan letter in the mid-’70s from a musical superstar, praising a series of songs he’d written about a Hampton Boulevard regular. It was from Johnny Cash.

A copy of that letter will soon be housed at Old Dominion University.

Broderick wins two awards

Old Dominion University President John R. Broderick recently received two awards.

He was an Impacting Lives Award last fall from The New Journal & Guide, Virginia’s oldest African-American weekly newspaper. The New Journal & Guide cited Broderick for his “leadership in forging progress at Old Dominion, solving real-world problems and building on the region’s strengths, as well as his commitment to diversity and inclusion.”

Broderick also received the Dr. Hugo A. Owens Sr. Humanitarian Award in January from the Epsilon Nu Lambda chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity. Owens, a dentist active in the local civil rights movement, was the first African-American rector of Old Dominion’s Board of Visitors.

Adolphus Hailstork and Bob Zentz both received stars on Norfolk’s Legends of Music Walk of Fame in February.

Calling All Tailgaters

Monarch magazine wants to spotlight the best tailgates in its winter 2017 issue. If you think you’re among them, send us a photo and tell us what makes yours special. Email pwalzer@odu.edu or tag @odupics on Instagram.

NOMINATIONS ARE BEING ACCEPTED for the Alumni Association board of directors. For more information, contact the Office of Alumni Relations at odualumni@odu.edu.

The deadline is March 30.

Celebrate 40 years

THE EBONY IMPACT GOSPEL CHOIR

The student music group gave a concert last month in honor of its 40th anniversary.
Crushed by heroin, but His Words Live On

Joe Porfert ‘11 died in Norfolk on May 5, 2015, after taking heroin, a drug he had wrestled with for more than a dozen years.

Heroin sent him to jail for 2 ½ years and ultimately brought him down. But Porfert was more than an addict. He was a writer with a clever mind and an intolerance for half-truths. He cast a luminous glow on everyone he met and invested himself in scores of friendships.

At Old Dominion, Porfert was a 3.98 student, dazzling his professors and winning second place in an English department essay contest in 2012.

“I really do think he would have been an outstanding professor,” said Sarah Appleton, a senior lecturer in the English department. “It wasn’t just that he knew the language; he knew the heart. He looked into the heart of things. He asked the best questions.”

In his last years, he worked in restaurants, engaging customers and fellow employees. “He wasn’t one of those ‘I’m smarter than you’ guys,” said Joshua Christy, head chef at Andrea’s La Bella Italia in Ghent. “But when you had a conversation with him, you realized how deep his intelligence was and how passionate he was about the things he was involved in.”

He continued writing essays, letters and poems, even in jail. His friends and family collected excerpts in “I’ll Be All Right: The Life and Writing of Joe Porfert,” published last fall. This is the story of Joe Porfert, including his own words.
I've been awake for an hour
Just standing in the shower
Awake but not aware
Open eyes but vacant stare
Wandering the backroads of my brain
In a quaint, old fashioned train
Gentle ride, cloud of steam
Open eyes but vacant stare

From "Awake, but not Aware"

You think I was going to make people never want to come back, yet unfortunately it is the more immediate effect of making people never want to come back that will rub off on them, that will take root. A way of life from which, I'm sure, they've been removed in that, uh, when released, they run right back toward senseless gratification.

From jail journals, Nov. 24, 2012

For the Porferts, "I’ll Be All Right" has been therapeutic. "In the book, he’s still writing; he’s still talking," his mother said. "He said that it was everywhere." The title of the book, "I’ll Be All Right," was Porfert’s standard response when he was helping other people.

When he was helping out at a women’s shelter: “He’d say, ‘You know, this is the worst that’s happened to me, and I’m just a nobody.’" Joe Jackson, a friend of the Porferts who holds the Darden Chair of Creative Writing at Old Dominion and helped edit the collection of Porfert’s poems and essays, was more flinching from the ugliness surrounding him: "He loved that place; it changed his whole life." It’s helped me put aside a lot of the hurt and bitterness. This book has made me return to the good in Joey."

Illustrations by Kristin Mehaffey reprinted from "I’ll Be All Right: The Life and Writing of Joe Porfert," published by QbyQ Press.

To buy a copy of “I’ll Be All Right,” go to www.QbyQpress.com. The proceeds will be donated to a local drug-prevention program.

Ups and downs in an endless chain
Like the clouds watching the rain
Or a broken soul escaping the pain
Of cravings it can’t contain
Ravings it can’t restrain

It just wants one more fix
To feel the needle’s kiss
It just needs one more fix
To reach that peaceful bliss
Who ever thought it would come to this?

From "Untitled"
‘A GREAT HANGOUT’ WITH FIRST-CLASS SERVICE

By James R. Sweeney

On Nov. 29, the ODU community lost an old friend. Gray’s Pharmacy, which opened in 1918, a dozen years before the Norfolk Division of the College of William & Mary admitted its first students, passed into history.

When William F. Gray and his son Duryea established the pharmacy, it looked out on a cornfield, not a college. Yet the two-story wood-frame building occupied a strategic location. The Naval Base streetcar line ran behind Gray’s and proceeded up what is now Hampton Boulevard. The pharmacy was just two blocks from the Norfolk County line and four miles from downtown. Looking north, the Grays could see the expanding suburban neighborhood of Larchmont.

The pharmacy, with its inviting soda fountain and luncheonette, was a “great hangout” for students, recalled Linwood Leavitt, himself a pharmacist, who attended the division in the mid-’30s. The magazine racks never lacked readers. D.D. Gray Jr., a graduate of the Medical College of Virginia like his father, Duryea, joined the business in 1939. As the years went by, the pharmacy flourished. It was the first in Norfolk to provide home deliveries by car. After World War II, it was evident that the store required more space. In 1951, the Grays demolished the old building and built a structure (with air-conditioning!) that would accommodate five stores in addition to the pharmacy. By constructing the building in stages, they kept Gray’s open, not missing a day.

The store’s heyday ran from the 1950s to the 1980s. As Larry Maddry wrote in The Virginian-Pilot in 1983, Gray’s was “a social center, pharmacy and can-

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The store’s heyday ran from the 1950s to the 1980s. As Larry Maddry wrote in The Virginian-Pilot in 1983, Gray’s was “a social center, pharmacy and candy-teen for Old Dominion University students and faculty.” The “regulars” would congregate at tables at the front of the store. Many were ODU professors, such as Peter Stewart of the history department and Franklin Ross Jones, the dean of the School of Education.

Stewart quipped to an interviewer in 1989, “I first came here in 1964, and I’ve been sitting here ever since. I start my day off here faithfully.” Stewart recently recalled that he met many people at Gray’s who became lifelong friends.

Jimmy Boyles and Arliss “Boots” Culler bought the business from the Grays in 1969. “We tried not to change the image of Gray’s Pharmacy any more than we had to,” Boyles said. The soda fountain, presided over by Helen McCullough in the 1970s and ’80s, continued to dispense freshly squeezed limeades and legendary milkshakes made “from scratch. No prepared mix. Fresh syrup, milk, and ice cream.”

Mindful of students’ habits, McCullough posted a sign behind the tables: “During Lunch Rush, 11:30-1:30 Tables Are For Meals Only. Study Hall Will Resume At 1:30. Thanx. Your Loving Den Mother.” She also had a rule of thumb for young romantics: Courting students were allowed two kisses at the tables before she would yell, “You kids cut that out.”

With a Gray’s check-cashing card, students could cash one check per day with a $10 limit. Clerk Martha Buck was known to make small loans and give advice to students. Another clerk, Willie Walters, who started at Gray’s in 1950, kept a drawer of items left by absent-minded faculty. Gray’s also had a small post office, Norfolk’s Substation No. 1, used primarily by students and professors.

“This place has become a kind of a human institution,” John Patterson, an industrial arts professor who frequented the store for 21 years, told The Pilot in 1986. “You can relax here, meet your friends. Just be with the crowd. I would be very sorry if anything happened to Gray’s Pharmacy. I’d almost grieve.”

Changes in the industry, including the proliferation of drugstore chains, ended the halcyon days of Gray’s. In 1989, Boyles and Culler sold the business to pharmacist Dave Halla, who faced some grim realities. The soda fountain, which occupied one-quarter of Gray’s, was no longer profitable and had been cited by the city because there was no sprinkler system. On Aug. 4, 1989, the fountain served its last meal. “We didn’t find another place to meet at,” Stewart said. “So that whole business ended. Kind of a traumatic development.”

Competition from chain stores intensified, overhead costs went up and insurance reimbursements for prescriptions declined. Nevertheless, working 70 hours per week, Halla maintained the pharmacy’s reputation for providing first-class service to its customers. “My greatest love is filling prescriptions and waiting on customers,” he said in 1989.

He continued to do so for 27 years, earning the affection of many, including Judy St. George, who was a nurse practitioner at ODU’s Student Health Services. When a student could not afford a prescription, she would call Gray’s and Halla would say, “Just send them over and I’ll take care of it.”

Gray’s Pharmacy provided just short of a century of service to its customers, among them ODU students and faculty. Now it is part of our history.

James Sweeney, an associate professor emeritus of history, joined Old Dominion University in 1970. A specialist in 20th century Virginia history, he is the author of numerous articles and two books and served as university archivist from 1974 to 1981. Although not a Grey’s “regular,” he fondly recalls the friendly people at the fountain and the cash register in front of the store.
Molly Kate Brown ’97 experienced a frightening descent into immobility not in her later years, but as a 32-year-old. And it occurred not in the United States, but in India, one month into an extended honeymoon/vacation.

For 11 days in 2007, she was hospitalized in Mumbai, sometimes sinking into doubt that she would ever walk again—or even survive. “Around me is despair so great it threatens to envelop me entirely,” Brown writes in her recent book, “Learning to Walk in India: A Love Story.” “I sense its presence hiding in the shadows of my room. … I wonder if I am going to die here.”

In an interview, Brown, a nurse practitioner in a hospital emergency room in Boulder, Colo., explained what happened to her in plain terms: She contracted dysentery after eating uncooked vegetables in India. “Basically, because of my genetic makeup, that kicked off my immune system. I developed reactive arthritis. In different people, that affects different parts of the body. My knees became enormous, and I couldn’t bear weight on them.”

It took a year for her to walk comfortably without crutches. She still suffers occasional bouts of inflammation and has stopped running, but “good enough is the new perfect,” Brown said. “If I can just go for a walk or a hike, that’s elation.”

And that attitude, honed from a lifetime of meditation and weeklong silent retreats, permeates the book, chasing away even her darkest thoughts. Even as she contemplated the 10-year anniversary of her travails in India, Brown said: “I’m incredibly grateful. … We go through life not remembering on a daily basis how fortunate we are to have received the gift of the human body and how it functions.”

Brown grew up in Lynchburg and began college at what was then Mary Washington College but transferred to Old Dominion in 1994, when she decided she wanted to major in nursing. “ODU was a fantastic university,” Brown, 42, said. “It’s got a huge, diverse population. There is so much going on there. It opened my eyes to a lot, and the nursing school was excellent.”

After she graduated, she moved to Colorado. “I felt called to check out the West,” Brown said. “That’s how I do things. I don’t tend to analyze.”

She felt a similar calling to visit India. Her book, reflecting her “glass-half-full” attitude, doesn’t stint on the pleasant moments during her trip:

“...A mouthwateringly delicious...large fried crepe made from lentil flour that comes filled with a savory potato-onion-curry leaf creation.”

“...the whisper of the breeze in the leaves and the back-and-forth call of the mysterious birds.”

“...Petting an elephant and getting a slimy bonk on the head.”

Her encounter with masala dosa, “a mouthwateringly delicious...large fried crepe made from lentil flour that comes filled with a savory potato-onion-curry leaf creation.”

Sitting with her new husband against a massive magnolia tree, “listening to the whisper of the breeze in the leaves and the back-and-forth call of the mysterious birds.”

“...Petting an elephant and getting a slimy bonk on the head.”

“...Pressing on them someone is active arthritis. In different people, that affects different parts of the body. My knees have begun to resemble ruby red grapefruits.”

She bounced back from depression during her recovery to reaffirm the value of surrender and acceptance, which she had cultivated through the silent retreats, yoga and Vipassana meditation. “If we truly surrender to life...,” Brown writes, “we hold the key to the secret of deep peace and happiness and all that underlies it.”

Brown described the quality of care in India as “excellent,” though she winced at the subservient treatment of nurses. “I found myself in the best hospital in the biggest city in India where Bollywood stars go.” Her book offers vivid portraits of her caretakers, such as a nurse, whom she nicknames Mother Teresa, who envelops Brown in a tight hug when she cries, and Mr. Gailward, an attendant who brings her meals with a mile-wide grin and the assurance that “God is great.”

The book’s subtitle, “A Love Story,” refers partly to “the community of people who took care of me in the hospital when I couldn’t take care of myself.”

It also refers to her husband, Dan Conser. “I feel like he and I had to go places quickly that most people don’t get to in 20 years of marriage. As a newlywed, he’s literally changing my diaper, and all of a sudden I can’t even walk.”

But most important, Brown said, is self-love. “A lot of the time, we’re so hard on ourselves. We’ve forgotten the essence of who and what we are.”

Kirkus Reviews called the book “a touching chronicle” and “an evocative travelogue.” Self-published under Diamond Sky Press and available on Amazon, the book last year received two awards from the Colorado Independent Publishers Association: first place for travel and second place for autobiography.

The experience hasn’t soured her on India. Brown plans to return to visit the doctors and nurses who helped her learn to walk again.

“...Pressing on them...active arthritis. In different people, that affects different parts of the body. My knees have begun to resemble ruby red grapefruits. It feels like someone is pressing on them with the flat metal head of a large hammer...My ability to walk is diminishing by the hour...”

See scenes of Molly Kate Brown’s experience and recovery in India.
March 2017

By Philip Walzer

Alumnus ignites new business, with sister’s help

Mike Beyrodt at his “office,” formerly his sister’s playhouse.

When Mike Beyrodt ’15 was snowboarding in West Virginia in subzero temps a few winters ago, he longed for one thing: “I wished I could start a fire with the push of a button.”

After several tries in an unlikely lab space, he achieved his dream, with one significant difference: You pull it.

Pull Start Fire is a 5-by-2-inch package with simple ingredients including sawdust and wax that can ignite with the pull of a string. The fire lasts for up to 40 minutes and, Beyrodt said, can withstand winds of up to 200 mph.

“It’s an experience,” said Beyrodt, 23, who lives in Norfolk.

“People like to pull the string, hear the pop and watch the fire grow.”

Beyrodt’s invention and growing business won the best in show award, with a $6,000 prize, at Old Dominion University’s first Lion’s Lair entrepreneurial competition last fall. The prize was donated by Hillier Ignite, a foundation run by Luke Hillier ’94.

“Mike is a remarkable ‘left brain and right brain’ person with both technical and artistic/visionary skills,” said Nancy Grden, executive director of ODU’s Strome Entrepreneurial Center. “I was impressed by his clarity of thought about the product and problems he wanted to solve, as well as his homework about the market and draft provisional patent. He is an entrepreneur who reaches out for advice from others to help him chart his own way.”

Even as an alumnus, Beyrodt still seeks help from Old Dominion. “It’s kind of like my GPS,” he said.

One of the early lessons: A push mechanism wouldn’t be ideal. Trouble is, an accident during delivery could set it off. With a pull string, “you could smash it with a sledgehammer and nothing will happen.”

Beyrodt’s product, which he said is made of 89 percent recycled materials, is designed for outdoor use. “You don’t have to worry about newspapers or wet wood,” he said. “Pull Start Fire takes care of all of that.”

A three-pack sells for $13.98. Beyrodt estimates he’s manufactured about 1,500 so far. They can be bought from his website, www.pullstartfire.com, as well as a handful of stores. Dick’s Sporting Goods has also expressed interest, he said.

It’s been a busy year for Beyrodt.

He got married. (His wife, Alyssa, will graduate this year with a degree in human services.) And while he’s expanding Pull Start Fire, he works full time as an automation specialist for APC Automation.

He’s made the most of Old Dominion’s entrepreneurial services. As an undergraduate, Beyrodt was a regular at the Strome Entrepreneurial Center, which helps students and faculty members launch and expand their businesses.

Now, as an alumnus, he frequents the ODU Innovation Center-Norfolk, a partnership with the city that provides collaborative space and services in downtown Norfolk to budding entrepreneurs.

“It can be daunting to just stay with something,” Beyrodt said. “Having this support system encourages me to keep doing it.”

Photo by Roberto Westbrook
The Monarchs broke a fourth-quarter tie to beat Eastern Michigan, 24-20, at the Popeyes Bahamas Bowl on Dec. 23 in their first bowl appearance. The game was the fifth-most-watched cable program that day, with more than 3 million viewers, and it attracted 88,435 page views on ODUSports.com. It was the perfect end to a near-perfect season: Old Dominion became the youngest program to win 10 games since the founding of Division I in 1978.

Right-hand photos from top: Wide receiver Jonathan Duhart, who ended up scoring the game-winning touchdown, clears the way for wide receiver Isaiah Harper. Fans celebrate and so does head coach Bobby Wilder. After the game, WAVY-TV sportscaster Bruce Rader interviews wide receiver Zach Pascal, who scored the Monarchs’ first touchdown.
On left-hand side from top: Zach Pascal, who caught a record 233 passes for ODU, was the first Monarch to be invited to the NFL Combine, where prospective players practice in front of scouts. Tim Seibles, professor of English and faculty athletic representative, with Jennifer Fish, professor and chair of women's studies. Bruce Stewart, senior associate athletics director, shared the day with his family – wife, Trina, and son, Quincy.

On right-hand side: Carlton Bennett ’72, rector of Old Dominion’s Board of Visitors, and his wife, Beth. Old Dominion President John R. Broderick and First Lady Kate Broderick, with Dennis Ellmer, founder of Priority Automotive, and Lex Selig, son of Old Dominion’s athletics director, Wood Selig.
Kent Bazemore: His ‘engaging personality’ and competitive drive bring home honors

By Brendan O’Hallarn (M.S. Ed. ’12, Ph.D. ’16)

(Five two seasons, Brendan O’Hallarn was the official blogger for the Old Dominion University men’s basketball team. Kent Bazemore ’12 was one of the stars of the team, which played in consecutive NCAA tournaments. O’Hallarn brought back the blog for Bazemore’s Ring of Honor induction ceremony on Dec. 10.)

The roar of the crowd at the Constant Center drowned out the last part of the introduction. Kent Bazemore, former Monarch basketball star now starting for the NBA’s Atlanta Hawks in his fifth NBA season, returned to his alma mater, where his No. 24 jersey was added to Old Dominion’s Ring of Honor.

“To be up on the Ring of Honor with those legends like Leo Anthony, Odell Hodge, Nancy Lieberman—I can’t tell you what it means to me,” Bazemore said at the halftime ceremony during a game against Virginia Commonwealth.

The crowd chanted “O-D-U!” and, for one night, it felt as if Bazemore were back in the Monarch lineup. The memories he created for Monarch fans haven’t faded.

Jim Corrigan, an assistant coach under Karen Barefoot for the Lady Monarchs, was associate head coach for men’s basketball under Blaine Taylor during Bazemore’s time.

Corrigan said Bazemore is scarcely recognizable from the 155-pound freshman who joined the team. “But two things haven’t changed: the engaging personality with the infectious smile that is contagious, and the tremendous competitive desire that has fueled his journey from unknown recruit to NBA starter,” Corrigan said.

Bazemore made an indelible impact, with steals and breakaway dunks that thrilled a packed Constant Center. That on-court success, Corrigan said, was fueled by his desire to get better every day.

“He worked on the court, he worked in the weight room, and he worked in the classroom, smiling every step of the way,” he said. “Spring, summer and fall, outside of the season, I will always remember how hard he worked. And know that it is no accident that he is where he is.”

Ask an ODU fan for a favorite Bazemore memory, and then take a seat. You’ll be listening for a while.

Longtime Virginian-Pilot sportswriter Ed Miller took over the ODU men’s basketball beat in time for Bazemore’s sophomore season. The personable Monarch soon made an impression on the veteran journalist.

“Kent was always such an earnest striving,” Miller said. “He got better each season, and no one outworked him. He had a clear idea of where he wanted to go and how to get there.”

Several teammates from his 2010-11 team, which won the Colonial Athletic Association tournament and lost to Butler at the buzzer in the first round of the NCAA tournament, attended the ceremony. Good friend Darius James, now working for the Old Dominion Athletic Foundation, recalled the time Coach Taylor criticized Bazemore for not being tough enough to play through an injury.

“That made him mad,” James said. “He was in street clothes, and he went and got changed. First possession, he stole the ball and dunked on somebody. Then he did it again. He just wanted to show Coach.”

Rick Hetten, a longtime member of the scoring crew who sits on the sidelines during home games, recalled that Bazemore made a habit of going down the row and fist-bumping courtside officials before the VCU game.

“He’s one of those guys who always had time for everyone,” said Marco Harrison, who started in game operations at the Constant Center when Bazemore began his career here. “He’d know your name, shake your hand. He was always so personable.”

At a news conference before the game, Bazemore said, “I can’t think of when this school has done anything for me, even at 17 years old, and I did my best to give it back.”

Bazemore by the numbers

- 140 GAMES FOR ODU
- 1,416 CAREER POINTS
- 250 STEALS
- 1096 CAREER REBOUNDS
- 443 ASSISTS
- 250 BLOCKS

March 2017
From struggling student to top engineering graduate

Derek Davis was the honor graduate in December from the Frank Batten College of Engineering and Technology, with a grade point average of 3.93 and a dual degree in electrical and computer engineering.

Davis enrolled at Old Dominion after working as a forklift operator. If not for a faculty member’s encouragement and persistence, he might never have graduated.

At the senior honor banquet, he acknowledged his debt to Lee Land, a senior lecturer in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics:

“I chose to attend ODU at the age of 26, and by the end of my first day I was convinced that I was so far behind that I was never going to succeed. During my last class, Calculus I, I had decided that I was withdrawing from all my classes when I got home.

I told Professor Land this, and she immediately wrote down all of her office hours. I spent the next year and a half going to her office two to three times per week learning not only the math, but also developing the study habits that would see me through the rest of my time in school.

“I don’t think that anyone graduating with honors in an engineering program can do so without having a team of inspirational professors behind them. However, if it weren’t for Professor Land’s efforts my first year, I would have quit before I ever got the chance to meet any of them.”

Land had some thoughts of her own about Davis: “I was the lucky one,” she said in an interview. “He was the student every teacher wants to have.”

When Davis voiced concern about calculus as a freshman, Land suggested that he sit in on her pre-calculus course, an invitation she’d given to other struggling students.

“They’ll come to one class, and you’ll never see them again. Derek was persistent. He showed up for every class. … He’s someone who really understands the value of education and where it will take him.”

Davis, who conducted research at NASA Langley Research Center, returned to Old Dominion in January to begin a master’s program in electrical and computer engineering.

A record 1,693 students received undergraduate and graduate degrees in December.

MVP, First Team … and graduate

Monarch magazine published a full-page photo of TJ Ricks in the fall 2016 issue. He’s tackled many more accomplishments since then.

The linebacker from Hampton, who started his career as a walk-on, was the only Monarch named to the First Team All-Conference USA team in December. In Old Dominion University’s 24-20 victory against Eastern Michigan in the Popeyes Bahamas Bowl, Ricks chalked up nine tackles and was named the game’s defensive MVP.

Ricks became the first Old Dominion football player to record two 100-tackle seasons. He had a career-total 323 tackles, just 17 behind all-time ODU leader Craig Wilkins.

At the team’s sendoff to the Bahamas, ODU President John R. Broderick acknowledged Ricks’ success off the field, noting that he had just graduated with a degree in electrical engineering.
LOOK FOR OUR NEXT MONARCH EXTRA IN THE FALL, when we’ll get you in the spirit for Homecoming.

In the meantime, look for our spring Monarch print issue, which will feature alumni in the entertainment industry, ESPN anchor Jay Harris ’87 and NFL long snapper Rick Lovato ’15.