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Photo by Beau Rogers '11 M.A.
Nevada Alumni Council

For 2016, the Nevada Alumni Council will be led by Nick Butler and six executive committee officers. We also welcomed three new board members this year.

Executive Committee

Nick Butler ’02, ’06 M.Acc.
President

Mary-Ann (Merlo) Brown ’85, ’96 M.S.
President-elect/Treasurer

Joe Nannini ’00, ’10 Ed.S.
Vice President for Student Involvement

Kris (Perkins) Layman ’93
Vice President for Membership & Marketing

Amy (Stechman) Ozuna ’08
Vice President for Community Outreach

Mike McDowell ’03
Vice President for Chapter Development

Board Members

Gary Aldax ’92
Derek Beenfeldt ’93, ’11 M.D.
John K. Carothers* (Vice President, Development & Alumni Relations)
Delores (Bercellos) Clewe ’69
Peter Costa ’84, ’88 M.D.
Caden Fabbii (ASUN President)
Matthew Forman ’06
Michael Hix ’89
Doug Knuth* (Director, Intercollegiate Athletics)
Trevor Macaluso ’11
Megan May ’05, ’07, ’13 MBA
Chrissy Menicucci ’86
Deb Pierce ’86
Brad Platt ’00
David Pressler ’72 MPA, ’82 M.A.
Tyler Ross (GSA President)
Jerry Smith* (Chair, Foundation Board of Trustees)
Tim Suller ’91
Jack Sutton ’70
Paul Thomsen ’01, ’10 MPA
Jocelyn Weart ’90
Katie Weigel ’96
Victor Wowo ’11
Chul Yim ’04

Staff Members

John K. Carothers
Vice President, Development & Alumni Relations

Bruce Mack
Associate Vice President, Development & Alumni Relations

Amy J. (Zurek) Carothers ’01 M.A.
Director, Alumni Relations

Christy (Upchurch) Jerz ’97
Assistant Director, Alumni Relations

Carrie Henderson Bushá ’06
Coordinator, Alumni Relations

Kevin Price
Coordinator, Alumni Relations

Courtney (Bonnici) Wadhams
Coordinator, Alumni Relations

Hope (Hepner) Robinson
Administrative Assistant II

* ex-officio member

Nevada Alumni Council

Executive Committee

Nick Butler ’02, ’06 M.Acc.
President

Matt Clafton ’93
Past President

Mary-Ann (Merlo) Brown ’85, ’96 M.S.
President-elect/Treasurer

Joe Nannini ’00, ’10 Ed.S.
Vice President for Student Involvement

Kris (Perkins) Layman ’93
Vice President for Membership & Marketing

Amy (Stechman) Ozuna ’08
Vice President for Community Outreach

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Class Chat

Ben Echeverria ’61 (chemistry), ’64 M.A. (counseling and educational psychology) submitted a proposal to The Colorado Lawyer, the official publication of the Colorado Bar Association, for a special issue on education law. His proposal was accepted and published in October 2015. Ben was a coordinating editor of the special issue and author of an article entitled “Gun Violence on Campus.”

Sandor L. “Mark” Vincze ’72 (accounting) is a corporate financial consultant. His prior professional experience includes 25 years in leadership positions with Fortune 500 companies, including large insurance and healthcare companies in California and Nevada. He was previously a certified financial examiner for the State of Nevada, Insurance Division. Before that Mark held CFO positions with Hometown Health Plan, Humana Corporation, Tenet HealthCare and Sutter Health. Mark lends his time to various non-profit community service organizations and enjoys snow skiing and golf.

Ray Hagar ’75 (journalism) has retired from the Reno Gazette-Journal (RGJ) after a 38-year career in journalism. He recently wrote an article for the RGJ discussing the people who influenced his life the most.

Al Saibini ’76 (criminal justice) has published an article, “Supply and Demand: Drug Smuggling in 2015,” in the inaugural issue of The Norwich Review of International and Transnational Crime, a review of policy and enforcement measures published by the Institute for the Study of Culture and Language, Norwich University. Al was a deputy sheriff with the Washoe County Sheriff’s Office from 1977 to 1989 and a special agent and supervisory special agent with the Drug Enforcement Administration from 1989 to 2010. Following his retirement, he was an embedded law enforcement professional in Iraq and Afghanistan and the senior law enforcement advisor on the Commander, International Security Assistance Force Advisory and Assistance Team in Kabul, Afghanistan. He resides in Virginia.

Lynne Cockrum-Murphy ’80 (special education) is an intuitive consultant specializing in helping those who seek assistance with their spiritual path, physical healing and emotional growth as well as removing blocks to a life of joy, meaning and purpose. She teaches at Northern Arizona University and maintains a private practice in Phoenix, Ariz. where she lives. She has published several books that are available on Amazon.

Steven R. Ranson ’80 M.Ed. is a veteran newspaperman with more than 30 years of experience in journalism and education. He has been selected for a one-year post as the new president of the Nevada Press Association’s (NPA) Board of Directors. Steve is editor of the Lahontan Valley News in Fallon for the past seven years. In addition to serving on the NPA board, Steven is also a member of the International Society of Weekly Newspaper Editors, an organization that assists those involved in the weekly press to improve standards of editorial writing and news reporting and to encourage strong, independent editorial voices.

Bertha M. Mullins ’83 (child development) has been named one of Church of God in Christ’s 150 Influential Women of 2015. Bertha was influential in making Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday a state holiday in Nevada. She has received numerous federal, state, and local awards honoring her service. Bertha attended a reception for all honorees Nov. 5 in St. Louis.

Donald Craig Houk ’85 (criminal justice) was recently promoted to senior manager of safety and security for eBay. He resides in Gilbert, Ariz. with his wife, Bren, and their dog, Sammy.

Zachary Doser ’86 (geography) was pinned as a brigadier general during a ceremony in Carson City Aug. 18, when he also became the Nevada Army National Guard’s assistant adjutant general. A 30-year veteran of the U.S. Army and a 16-year veteran of the Nevada Army National Guard, he has been with the Reno Police Department since 1998 and became a detective in 2005.

Linda (Ward) Lee ’87 (elementary education) has coauthored a book, 101 Ways to Rock Your World in the Classroom, with nationally known speaker and author Dayna Steele.
Linda draws from over 30 years of experience to provide tips in assisting educators to connect with students and manage the classroom. She is lead special education team leader at Clear Creek Independent School District in the Houston area assisting 46 facilitators and managing the district’s special education software program.

**’90s**

**Stephanie Kruse ’91 MBA**, president, chief strategist and founder of KPS3, will be recognized with the Sierra Nevada Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America’s third Lifetime Achievement Award. Prior to opening KPS3, Stephanie was director of marketing for Saint Mary’s Health Network for nine years. She spent time this past year coaching students and judging marketing competitions at the University. Stephanie also participates regularly on expert panels and gives presentations to local organizations.

**Alison Gaulden ’92** (journalism) is a lecturer and internship coordinator at the Reynolds School of Journalism. Alison received the Public Relations Student Society of America Dr. Frederick Teahan Awards Competition for Outstanding Faculty Adviser 2015 at the recent international conference in Atlanta, Ga.

**Cecilia (Warpinski) Stuopis ’96 M.D.**, vice president and executive medical director for accountable care at the Dartmouth-Hitchcock health system in New Hampshire, will join MIT later this year as director of MIT Medical. Cecilia became vice president of Dartmouth-Hitchcock earlier this year, adding to her role as the health system’s executive medical director for accountable care since 2012. She will be completing a master’s degree in health care delivery science at Dartmouth in 2016.

**Robert D. Hoadley ’97** (economics), U.S. Air Force lieutenant colonel, has been named the Air National Guard Readiness Center’s Field Grade Officer of the Quarter. He is serving as space and cyberspace branch chief and panel chair with the National Guard Bureau, Joint Base Andrews, Md.

**Howard Cunningham ’99 MBA** is investment partner, co-founder and CIO for Cunningham Investment Management, LLC (CIM) and one of the driving forces behind D.B. Root and Co.’s advanced technology and investment process. Howard developed an investment approach called Dynamic Asset Allocation, which helps to reduce portfolio risk without sacrificing long term performance.

**’00s**

**Paul Thomsen ’01, ’10 MPA** has been appointed chairman of the Nevada Public Utilities Commission. Considered a leading expert in Nevada’s dynamic energy industry, Paul previously served as director of the Governor’s Office of Energy. He is also a new member of the Nevada Alumni Council.
Jake Wiskerchen '01 (journalism), '08 M.A. (educational leadership), '11 M.A. (counseling and educational psychology) recently co-founded a new mental health practice, Zephyr Wellness, with a mission to provide excellent clinical care to both urban and rural northern Nevada. In 2011, Jake married Heather Bossert, a South Dakota native who moved to Reno to work as a nurse. An award-winning homebrewer in his free time, Jake also teaches psychological seminars at his fraternity, Sigma Phi Epsilon, and participates in several community organizations including his church, Hillside Foursquare. He also hosts a weekly radio show called Mental Matters on 1180 AM.

Lisa H. Crampton '04 Ph.D. (ecology, evolution and conversation biology) has been selected as the “local female leader” for November 2015 by the Islands Society, a nonprofit that seeks to mobilize individuals and organizations in island communities to participate in foreign affairs and overseas engagements. Lisa received the award for her long-standing commitment to conserving endangered birds in Kaua‘i, Hawai‘i. In her current role as project leader for the Kaua‘i Forest Bird Recovery Project, Lisa leads research, conservation and outreach efforts to protect the fast declining population of indigenous birds on the island.

Natalie Savidge '04 (journalism) is senior communications specialist for the University of Nevada, Reno’s Marketing and Communications Department. She has been honored with the Mark Curtis Sr. Professional of the Year Award by the Sierra Nevada Chapter of the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA). Natalie has been an active member of the Sierra Nevada PRSA Chapter holding various board positions since 2004, including her current role as vice president of recognition.

Krysta Jackson '07 (French) recently opened Sugar Love Chocolates in the basement of the
old U.S. Post Office in downtown Reno. After living in Europe and experiencing the European chocolate culture, Krysta is proud to be the owner and chocolatier of her own store.

Christopher Harvey ’08 (anthropology) recently graduated from the Colangelo College of Business at Grand Canyon University with an MBA. He has been accepted to their doctor of business administration program and will begin classes January.

Amanda (Ferguson) Kludasch ’08 (marketing) studied model community-based efforts to preserve Bornean species along the Kinabatangan River in Sabah (East Malaysia) on the island of Borneo during the summer of 2015 as part of Miami University’s Earth Expeditions global field course. Amanda is an education outreach logistics specialist at Denver Zoo in Denver, Colo.

Maria Urbina ’08 (political science) is a senior staff member with Senator Harry Reid (D-Nev.). She was recently featured in LATINO Magazine as a member of the Congressional Hispanic Staff Association (HSA), an organization that was founded to increase the number of Latino staffers in Congress.

Zanny Marsh ’09 MJM has joined the American Red Cross of Northern Nevada as executive director. She is responsible for more than 230 volunteers and four offices over more than 85,000 square miles of northern and north-eastern Nevada.

Adam Varahachaikol ’09 (journalism) is now special events coordinator at the Nugget Casino Resort, where he helps plan property events and assists with public relations. Before that, Adam spent several years with KTVN Channel 2 as a reporter. He just celebrated his one-year wedding anniversary with his wife, Kelsey.

Taylor R. Anderson ’10 (political science) has recently accepted a position as an associate attorney at Garrett Hemann Robertson P.C. in
Salem, Ore. In his practice, Taylor represents healthcare providers, lawyers, school districts and business owners throughout Oregon.

Jonathan O. Pluvinet ’11 (management) is the owner of Rosallie Le French Café in Las Vegas. His business has been great since he hosted his grand opening in early September. In addition to crafting a menu filled with dishes inspired by his childhood home in southern France, Jonathan constructed almost everything in the café—a former 7-Eleven—himself. He grew up in the restaurant industry, helping in the family business from pretty much the time he could walk. His café is named for the restaurant his parents ran in France.

Rachel Wright ’11 (journalism) recently became the public relations account executive for The Ferraro Group, a regional public relations and public affairs firm. Based in the Reno office, she’ll be responsible for public relations and social media on behalf of local and statewide clients. Prior to joining The Ferraro Group, Rachel spent five years in sports public relations and most recently worked for The Animal Foundation, Nevada’s largest open-admission animal shelter.

Connie Anderson ’14 (journalism), account manager for The Abbi Agency, will receive the Outstanding New Practitioner Award by the Sierra Nevada Public Relations Society of America Chapter. The award recognizes someone who has been working in the profession for less than five years and has not only demonstrated a high-level of commitment to the profession and the chapter, but a sincere desire to make our community a better place to live. Connie has also been a “Big” for Big Brothers Big Sisters since 2012.

Submissions are due Feb. 19 and can be sent to: chatter@unr.edu. We edit all submissions for style, clarity and length.
Shelley Ferguson-Kelly ‘11 M.A. (counseling and educational psychology) and Michael Kelly announce the birth of their daughter, Madigan Marie Kelly, on July 1, 2015. She joins her big sister McCartney. The attending pediatrician at her birth was her aunt, Amanda Casey ’99 (biology), ’06 M.D.

Elizabeth (Gaydon) Greenfield ’06 (criminal justice), ’10 M.A. and Stuart D. Greenfield ’10 (economics) are very happy to announce the birth of their baby boy, David Charles Greenfield, on Sept. 15, 2015.

Andrea and Casey Kasten ’08 (journalism) welcome the birth of their second child, Maverick Kasten, born Aug. 29, 2014. Maverick joins his big sister, Maxine.

Justin Meckley ’01 (management) and Mackenzie Meckley ’13 (art) welcomed Jack “Wolf” Kingston Meckley on Sept. 13, 2015.

Brittany Wood ’06 (chemical engineering) ’09 MBA and Joshua Wood ’06 (biotechnology), ’09 MBA, ’09 Ph.D. (cellular and molecular biology) are happy to announce the birth of their son, Everett Tahoe Wood, on July 5, 2015.

Heather and Jake Wiskerchen ’01 B.A. (journalism), ’08 M.A. (educational leadership), ’11 M.A. (counseling and educational psychology) welcomed their first child, Elijah, in May 2015.

Kaylie Tucker ’03 (interior design) and Jeremy Tucker ’04 (computer science) announce the birth of Carson Oliver Tucker on May 13, 2015.
Alumni Profile: **Nick Butler**  
’02 (economics), ’06 M. Acc.  
Occupation: Commercial Relationship Manager, Umpqua Bank

**What has your life been like since graduation?**  
I stayed in Reno to pursue a career in banking, a door that was opened to me by a campus internship at the Nevada Small Business Development Center during my junior and senior years. I remembered my days at the University so fondly that I chose to return and earn my master’s in accoutancy. I enjoy being active in the community as a banker and seeing the amazing quality of locally-owned businesses. I also love that I get to work with people who are improving the image of the area and the quality of life for everyone. In my spare time (of which I wish I had more!), I pursue the activities that caused me to fall in love with northern Nevada in the first place: skiing, biking, hiking and hunting. And of course, my wife and three kids are at the center of it all.

**What are your fondest memories from Nevada?**  
Wow, where do I start – there are so many! I met my wife and many of my closest friends at Nevada. Really, though, it’s not a specific instance, but rather a feeling or an atmosphere. The energy on campus was intoxicating. Even when I attended, the University was growing and getting recognized nationally for its quality education and the work of its students and graduates. When I walked across campus under the towering trees by the Quad or into Getchell Library, there was feeling of hope, empowerment and excitement – it was contagious. That same energy and atmosphere is still present today. In fact, it has increased tenfold. When I have a long week or simply need to recharge, I will go up to the University, park at Morrill Hall and walk to the Joe Crowley Student Union.

**What have you done that you are most proud of?**  
Professionally, I am most proud of the relationships I’ve developed with my customers and the fact that in a very small way I’m helping to shape the future of northern Nevada by supporting business owners as they achieve their dreams. I assist them in operating and growing their businesses, and this has a multiplier effect through job creation and economic growth.

**What advice would you give someone just starting out after college?**  
Warren Buffett spoke to business students and faculty at the University in early 2006, and I had the opportunity to meet with him for a few minutes afterward. He gave me a great piece of advice: Always be looking to meet and develop relationships with people, and treat all people with respect. You never know when your paths will cross again and how they may be able to help you or how you may be able to help them. He said that human capital – who you know and how you treat them – is the capital of the 21st century. Financial capital will always be important, but we are seeing a shift in importance to human capital.

My own piece of advice is similar: Always be looking for and be open to opportunities, you never know where they will lead. I didn’t know what commercial banking was when I graduated. But here I am, 13 years since graduation, with a very fulfilling career, a great network of friends and colleagues and a bright future. I was willing to pursue an opportunity all those years ago – even though it was 180 degrees from where I thought I wanted to be – because it intersected with great people here in northern Nevada.