The OFFICIAL MAGAZINE of UCLA ATHLETICS

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Spring 2025



2024-25 SCHOLAR-ATHLETES OF THE YEAR

Alexander Hoogmartens & Ana Jih-Schiff

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WRITERS:
JON GOLD

COVER PHOTOS:
ROSS TURTELTAUB

MANAGING EDITOR:
DANNY HARRINGTON
dharrington@athletics.ucla.edu

LAYOUT & DESIGN:
KAREN PLA / GORILLA MARKETING

ADVERTISING:
JMI SPORTS
DAMON DUKAKIS
(310) 825-0328
d.dukakis@jmisports.com
JMI SPORTS



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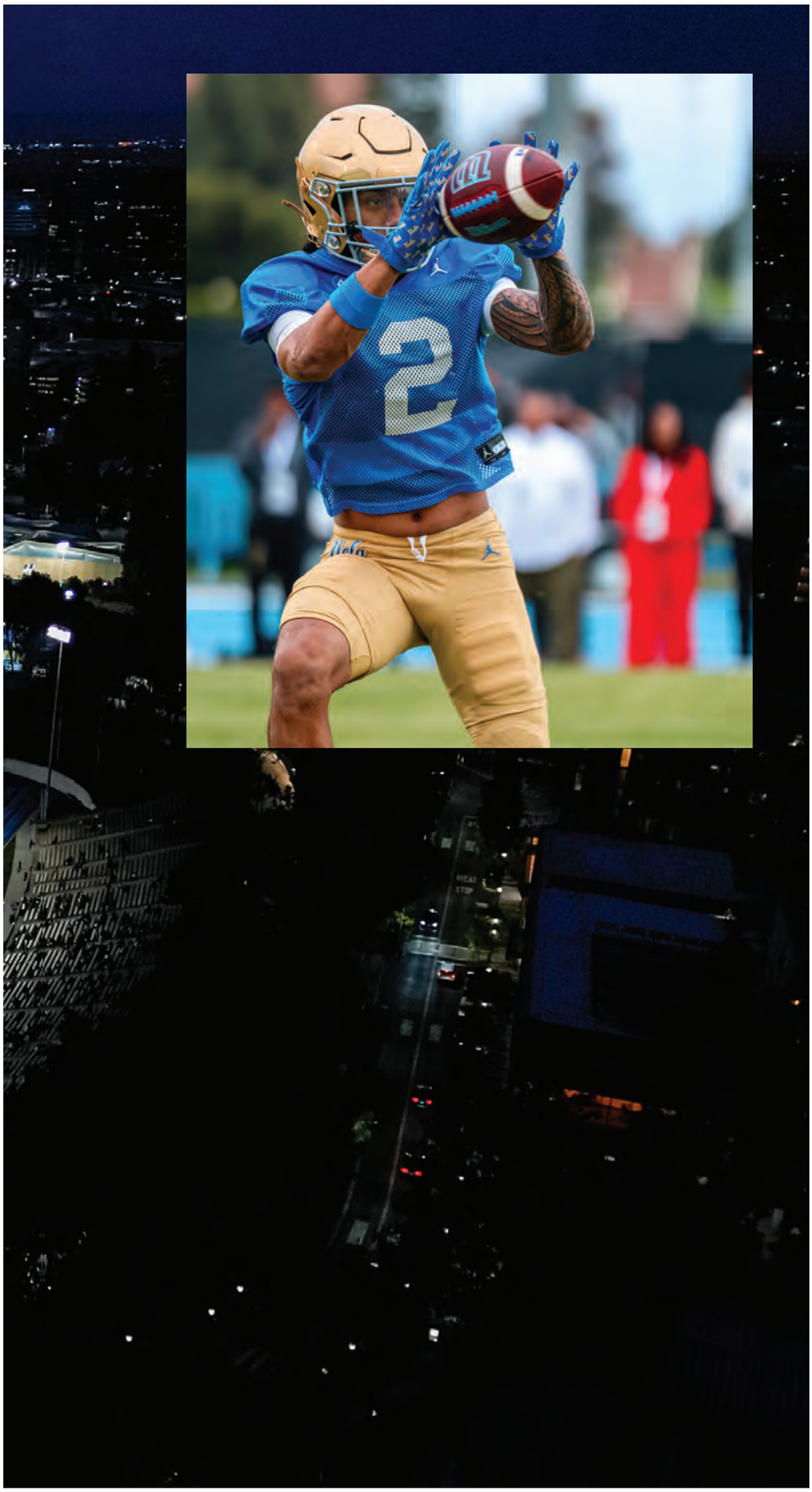
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NIGHTLIFE

The second iteration of UCLA football's Friday Night Lights took place at Drake Stadium on April 18. The fan-friendly event featured a pre-show with former men's basketball player and current podcast host **Matt Barnes** *and broadcaster* **Cari Champion**, *who is also a UCLA alum. (Photo: Jesus Ramirez). INSET: Wide receiver* **Titus Mokiao-Atimalala**. *(Photo: Maclean Brown)*

2025-26 UCLA MEN'S BASKETBALL

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PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Men's water polo player **Ryder Dodd** *(right) poses with entertainer* **Flavor Flav** *after receiving the 2025 Peter J. Cutino Award at the Olympic Club in San Francisco on June 7. The Cutino Award is an iconic honor in NCAA water polo that recognizes the best men's and women's players each year.* **Dodd** *became the first Bruin to claim the prize since attacker Nicolas Saveljic in 2021 (for the 2020 season).* **Dodd** *helped the Bruins (26-2) win the 2024 NCAA Men's Water Polo Championship, earning First-Team All-American honors in the process. (Photo: Jordan River)*

2025-26 UCLA WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

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GRAD NIGHT

Bruin swimmer **Morgan Hawes** *celebrates during the 2025 UCLA Student-Athlete Graduation on June 12 in Pauley Pavilion presented by Wescom Financial. (Photo: Ross Turteltaub)*


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CLEAN SWEEP

Hurdler **Yanla Ndjip-Nyemeck** *of the UCLA women's track and field team celebrates the Bruins' sweep of crosstown rival USC at Drake Stadium on May 4. The women recorded a 92-71 win, while the men notched an 82-81 victory. It was the first sweep for UCLA in the annual series since 2013. It also marked the Bruins' first win on the women's side since 2013. (Photo: Maclean Brown). INSET: Members of both teams celebrate the sweep on their home track. (Photo: Maclean Brown)*



Alexander Hoogmartens

Ana Jih-Schiff



BALANCING ACT

Bruin Scholar-Athlete of the Year Recipients Alexander Hoogmartens and Ana Jih-Schiff

The phrase student-athlete has always been a bit of a misnomer.

No one Bruin can be both at the same time, and rarely is the split 50/50. With the time demands on UCLA players in all sports, it's understandable if some find themselves coasting through a mid-March study hall, or sleepwalking through an early morning training session.

Even the best of student-athletes define themselves more as one or the other. I'm a scorer who studies. I'm a brain who can ball. At the very least, it's 51/49, in either direction.

But for the best and brightest Bruins, it's not about finding an ideal 50/50 split of their time, of their effort, of their energy.

For UCLA's male and female scholar-athletes of the year — tennis senior Alexander Hoogmartens and swimmer Ana Jih-Schiff — the mere idea of 50/50 is laughable.

More accurate? Try 100/100.

They came to UCLA seeking that rarely attainable balance of best-in-class academics and athletics, but Hoogmartens and Jih-Schiff took very different paths.

In fact, Hoogmartens could've been forgiven if he skipped college entirely. One of the top junior tennis players in the world, the Beersel, Belgium, product arrived in Westwood after having just competed in the Australian and French Opens in 2020.

"I played the Australian and French Opens when I was 17 and 18 but I still decided to go to UCLA to go to school and get my degree," he said. "I wasn't just a tennis player."

Watching the 2020 French Open on his computer, long-time men's tennis coach Billy Martin knew he was seeing something special, a tennis player with tremendous promise. The academic side of things? That caught Martin by surprise.

"I would have to say he is a great tennis player who happens to be a great student," Martin said. "He was a top world junior coming from Belgium. I watched him play matches on the internet in the French Open, followed his results, and there were lots of other schools who were after Alex. He was a top commodity. Little did I know what a competitive student he was. I knew his grades were good, but boy, once he got here, he was as committed to his academics as much as he was to tennis. It's something I haven't seen in my years at UCLA, students who are that competitive in the classroom."

BALANCING ACT

ALEXANDER HOOGMARTENS AND ANA JIH-SCHIFF



Despite battling through injuries during his career, **Hoogmartens** *had a standout senior season in 2024-25, beginning with a run to the doubles quarterfinals at the NCAA Championships alongside Aadarsh Tripathi to earn ITA All-America recognition.* **Hoogmartens** *went on to log a team-high 18 dual-match singles wins, earning Big Ten All-Tournament honors. (Photo: Hritika Chaturvedi)*

At times burdened by injuries on the court, Hoogmartens did not let that derail him in the classroom as he pursued an Economics degree with a passion. His accomplishments include 11 Athletic Director's Honor Roll selections, two CSC Academic All-District awards, a pair of ITA Scholar-Athlete recognitions and a CSC Academic All-America first-team honor this year.

And that's in addition to a pair of all-conference honors (first-team All-Pac-12 in 2022, second-team All-Big Ten in 2024), as well as an ITA All-America selection in 2025 (doubles).

"He had some disappointments with injury, but he persevered from those, and the last year and a half has been good for him," Martin said. "He was able to play the entire year injury-free and really contribute to each and every match. In the end, he won some huge matches for us. I felt so good inside, knowing that, doggone, he had been able to do it. This year was so satisfying and rewarding for him. It makes me feel good he's going to go out on a really high note."

When he left his home and crossed an ocean to play for UCLA in the middle of a pandemic, Hoogmartens knew his college career would be interesting. He always had designs on a professional tennis career once his collegiate days were over, but he wasn't about to let this opportunity go to waste.

He quickly found a passion for business, enraptured by classes that dived deep into microeconomics, macroeconomics and statistics. Labor Econ, something he had little interest in, ended up thrilling him. He was always passionate about numbers and mathematics, he said, "But I missed the social part about it, and that's what economics is all about." He found himself raising his hand more than he thought he would. He was into it. Trying to beat the S&P 500 became like trying to figure out Federer with a strong forehand.

He learned early that there was no such thing as balancing academics and athletics. Only a juggler can keep two balls in the air at the same time. What Hoogmartens learned is that when it's time to put the racket down, it's really time to put it down.

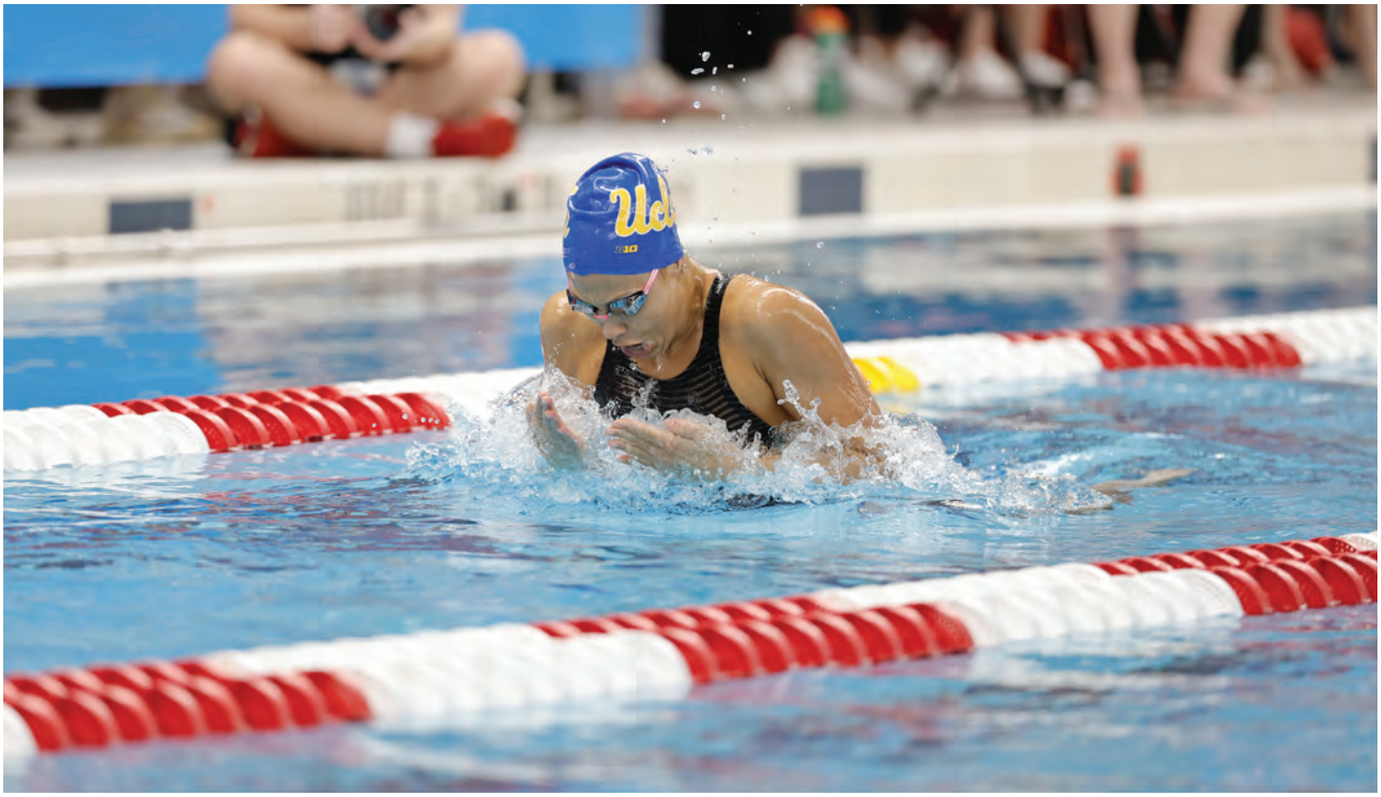
"If you want to perform optimally in tennis you don't have to give 100 percent, you have to give 105 percent," he said. "Same with academics, you have to do the same thing. If you try to do both at the same time, it's impossible mentally. They're very conflicting. It's either you do academics and tennis another time or vice versa. I learned how to prioritize time management and was able to close myself off from the tennis court or from the books."



Compiling an impressive 3.97 GPA during his time in Westwood, **Hoogmartens** *is just the fourth men's tennis player to earn Academic All-America honors and the first since Michael Look in 2009. (Photo: Ross Turteltaub)*

BALANCING ACT

ALEXANDER HOOGMARTENS AND ANA JIH-SCHIFF



Jih-Schiff, *seen here at the Big Ten Championships, was part of a 400 medley relay team to set a new school record (3:31.61) at the NCAA Championships. (Photo: Walt Middleton)*

He approached both with gusto. Sometimes too much gusto.

"The one trait I think Alex has, and I'm not sure it's really good for his tennis — and it's very positive for his academics — is he's a perfectionist," Martin said. "He can hit 19 really good forehands, and if the 20th isn't good, he's upset. In tennis, no one has ever played the perfect match. Federer, Nadal — that's what tennis is, you're going to have off days. That's what drives Alex a little crazy, that he still hasn't perfected it. With his studies, my goodness gracious, he's pretty much perfected it. A 3.97 GPA and I think one teacher gave him an A- and he was not happy. Not just wanting to get As but A-plusses. He's definitely a perfectionist. And that haunts him with tennis."

But as he embarks on his professional tennis career, he credits his maturation at UCLA for preparing him for the next level.

"The level in college is really high," he said. "When I came to UCLA, I had to develop my game even more. It wasn't easy for me to adapt to this level. I saw it as a challenge and tried to improve as much as I could my first years, just to be able to be one of the best in college. I've had times I played a really good match and I said if I can do this in a pro tournament, I'll be able to succeed."

Unlike Hoogmartens, who says he put tremendous academic pressure on himself from an early age, Jih-Schiff almost scoffs at the notion that she's UCLA's top scholar-athlete.

And this is someone who arrived at UCLA after being named a two-time Scholastic All-American, two-time NISCA All-American and four-time Scholar-Athlete at San Ramon Valley High School.

"It was never a goal to receive this award, but I am very excited and happy," she said. "It was definitely a surprise. My work ethic in sports has directly translated to my work ethic in the classroom. And the two go hand in hand. The way I treat my academics also helps me be better athletically."

Jih-Schiff said that growing up, she was never a whiz in the classroom. She was a fish: Being in the water was her natural habitat.

"With sports, it was always easy to say I want to have this big grand goal," she said. "I have not always been the kid who made their bed. If l look back in time, I was breaking records in the pool since I was 5 years old, but I wasn't breaking records in the classroom. In elementary school, to my memory, I struggled a lot. I had ADHD, and I didn't get diagnosed until my junior year in high school. I never was the kid in class who was the best at finishing multiplication tables. I was never reading the most advanced books. I was mediocre at best. I had problems with learning and listening and reading comprehension. That impacted my view of myself when I was younger. Even in college, I never saw myself as someone who was consistently able to succeed in the classroom. I would definitely say it was not effortless."

BALANCING ACT

ALEXANDER HOOGMARTENS AND ANA JIH-SCHIFF



A psychology major, **Jih-Schiff** *was named the top women's graduating scholar-athlete at UCLA this year, posting a 3.94 GPA. (Photo: Ross Turteltaub)*

Jih-Schiff knew that if she were going to excel, it would take extraordinary effort, even when her teammates were trying to find some down time.

"There were a lot of those moments," she said. "If I were to pick one, I think of the Big Ten Championships in February. I had two midterms that I had to take on the road. End of the season, very big meet, very high pressure, high stakes. It's easy to get caught up in that and only say I have a job to be there academically. We were traveling to Ohio. I was already missing class, so on the entire six-hour ride, I watched three lectures at double speed."

Looking back at a career that included more than two dozen individual event wins as well as myriad academic achievements, Jih-Schiff is not about to rest on her laurels.

Like Hoogmartens with economics, she found a passion for psychology that she is eager to pursue.

"I would say it's genuine passion and love for the things I do," she said. "It doesn't seem like such a scary thing to apply myself when it's something I love. I found college and this environment renewed a love for academics I never knew. Psychology, every single day, I loved what I was learning. Yes, I was exhausted and it was mentally hard, but it never felt like a chore or something I had to do. My hard work will also pay off if I put in the effort that I know I hold myself to. Same with swimming. Throughout high school, that journey was tough. Once you're here, you have the choice to choose what you want to make of it.

"You have the power in your hand to choose what to do with your experience."



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(Photo: Ross Turteltaub)

Q&A

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Kiki Rice *(left) and* **Gabriela Jaquez** *walk through the tunnel prior to the team's Final Four showdown with UConn. (Photo: Ross Turteltaub)*

The UCLA women's basketball team recently concluded one of the most successful seasons in program history, culminating with a loss to eventual champion UConn on April 4 in Tampa Bay. Now, with two months to process UCLA's remarkable run, Bruin Blue caught up with Close in early June to talk about the growth of the program, the new standard that has been set and the remember-whens that will last a lifetime.

Bruin Blue: Your amazing season comes to an end in a loss to UConn in the Final Four. What was that next day like?

Cori Close: "The day after we lost, I pretty much stayed up all night. The reality is, it was painful and hard. You do a lot of self-introspection. How did we play so poorly? What led to that? When you fall short of winning, but also not playing the way you're capable of playing, the buck stops with me. We flew back that next morning right away. It was a very quiet bus ride to the plane. It's a weird thing — only one team gets to end the season really, really happy. We're competitors and we wanted to play better. I will tell you now, we will be better next time around."

Bruin Blue: Have you had a chance to look back at this season and appreciate what you've accomplished?

Close: "I only know one way to be, and that's completely candid. Honestly, I felt like since April 5 I've had one evening where I've been able to remember all we accomplished and all that our program was able to do this year. The reality is the transfer portal, fundraising deadlines - this has been maybe the busiest spring of my career, and honestly it's taken its toll. I was talking to my amazing assistant coach, Tasha Brown, how we have not had the time to celebrate or even grieve the loss. I believe really good coaches need to do both. One of the most meaningful things and helps me grow is that deep dive. What was that like? What are our weaknesses? What are our strengths? It was an unbelievable year, but I don't think I have felt that or internalized that yet."

Bruin Blue: Was there a moment when you were able to soak in all that your team was accomplishing?

Close: "It's so funny. My word for the year was 'present.' I wanted to be present in the moments. I did a better job during the season, just stopping and going, 'Take a breath, take this in, this is really special.' When I was out there at the Final Four practice — as a coach coming up in the convention, I'd gone to so many of those practices and tried to learn from those coaches and dreamed about the opportunity I might have to lead a team there. So seeing the people come in for the open section of that was like, 'Oh my God, that was me.' That was a really cool, humbling moment. This really is the fulfillment of a dream. You try not to let yourself get too far down the road at that point. But there was a humility sitting there, like, I'm really fortunate. So many people have poured into me. I've dreamed and planned and here I am. Really just a sense of humility and gratitude."

Q&A

with

CORI CLOSE



Center **Lauren Betts** *takes the tip for UCLA to kick off the team's Final Four showdown with UConn. (Photo: Ross Turteltaub)*

Bruin Blue: How did the players react to the performance in the Final Four?

Close: "There were two sides of it. Ooh, that stings, with some regret there. They also look around the room, and say, 'Oh my God, if we learn from this. I mean, we've got a lot of tools in this room. There was this combination of I've got to own my stuff, because I've got an opportunity few ever get to have. I do think everyone, especially when we got Gianna (Kneepens), too, that's an amazing missing piece who is going to be able to really help us next year. In the midst of this new landscape we're in, we learned something about what are the characteristics of what this team needs to look and feel right. We have really good pieces who fit together with the right work ethic and the right selflessness and the right team orientation. The pain of the loss teaches you about what you have to address. Bottom line is event plus response equals outcome. Event is we got our butts kicked in the Final Four, and the response is how you strengthen your resolve."

Bruin Blue: In some years, it feels like you have to start fresh with concepts and strengths and weaknesses. Coming back with such a strong roster, what was practice like knowing what you have here? Was it more about sharpening tools than trying to find new ones?

Close: "It makes me better as a coach, right? Not only does it sharpen the skills and mindset, it does the same for a coaching staff. Instead of having it be analytical or studying film, you've experienced it, you know where the pitfalls are, where the distractions are coming on. How did you handle the interferences and distractions? That's why many don't do well the first time. The women's side only has three days, and men have five at a minimum. Everyone told me, but until I experienced it, I realized, 'Wow, this is really difficult.' And I was also doing NIL contracts for the following year.

"We are keenly aware of the standard, not just from a distant analytical view, but from an experiential lens. It's just different. There's a different way we can respond now that I think our players are already buying into. I've also tried to realize - we played a long, long season. Part of it is really giving them time off. I've never given a team a whole month off. We said go take a break. I wondered what it'd be like when they returned, and they were hungry. Let's go apply this. Let's figure this out. I believe we're going to have one of the most complete rosters in all of college basketball. To have a roster with these complimentary pieces, that's a pretty cool combination to have."

Bruin Blue: Do you see the ability to mix and match that talent in different ways?

Close: "I'm watching the NBA Finals and the new WNBA season, and I'm saying this fits us. We can do this. It's really fun to have the different talent ways we can attack people. It's really fun. It's like unlocking something. You get to these different levels and now new tools are unlocked. I have guards to relinquish control with. There are some years it really affects you as a play-caller, how deep your playbook can be. I really like to change after every timeout, but do you have the focus from your team to be able to do some of those things? I've already started brainstorming with Kiki and Charlisse. What did you think and feel out there? To have guards who have the work ethic and No. 2 the selflessness — it's not about them and their stat line — and No. 3, the basketball IQ those two have. Every game, it's 'oh did you see that play?' From Kiki, to have that collaboration with your point guard is a dream come true. And it's showing me I can give them the reins in a lot of ways. I try not to box people in. When our team came back, I wanted them to earn the freedom to do what they want. It's not just about putting talent on the floor but it's about putting together the championship puzzle."

Q&A

with

CORI CLOSE



The Alice and Nahum Lainer Family Director of Athletics **Martin Jarmond** *(left) poses with* **Lauren Betts** *(center) and head coach* **Cori Close** *following the Naismith Awards Dinner at the Final Four in Tampa Bay on April 2. Betts was named Women's Defensive Player of the Year, while* **Close** *took home the Werner Ladder's Naismith Women's College Coach of the Year Award. (Photo: Ross Turteltaub)*

Bruin Blue: And a championship is the mission this year...

Close: "Yes, but it'll never be the most important thing. The most important thing is using basketball to become who they want to become and to help them impact the world how they want to. Banners will hang, but who they become will stay with them forever. I don't want outcomes to overcome the true mission of our program. I have to tell myself that. I'm extremely competitive. People talk about me taking the mantle to Wooden, and I'm not going to let outcomes determine success."

Bruin Blue: Do you have any distinct Final Four memories?

Close: "I have a couple different moments. One of which is remembering Lauren (Betts) in a time out. Timeouts are forever long. So the staff met, and I see her standing up over her teammates and letting them have it. I thought that was such an important moment. Lauren is really an empathy person. She struggles to believe her own worthiness sometimes and to see her take ownership, like, I'm a big dawg, rise up to the occasion and call people not out but up, that's a moment I think will carry into next year.

"I remember getting off the plane and having all the hoopla and then walking into the hotel rooms, and for me it was really big because I was on the gender equity task force, after the response of the bubble. To walk in that room and know everything is exactly equal between the men's Final Four and women's Final Four teams, that was a big deal to me. So much work went into that by so many people that my players were getting to enjoy.

"And personally, it's the first time my entire family — and I don't have a big family any more — has all gotten together in over 10 years. The fact that a sport can bring that together, it's a really cool thing you get to share with your family. And at the same time, when everyone thinks they can do better than you. I have a picture framed with my mom, sisters, aunt, cousins, all of us, they were there for every game in the NCAA tournament, culminating in Tampa. What other profession do you do that with your family? For me, all of those moments are about people. It's about growth, executing our mission. I call them remember-whens. We just had an official visit weekend, and I said, 'I would ask yourself two questions. Where do you want to be on those hard days? And which school creates the most powerful remember-whens? When I have pictures in my head from the year, it's the remember-whens. Those are the things that are most meaningful. Even the hard days. Remember the players-only team meeting? Remember when we had to respond to the home loss against USC? Those remember-whens matter."

2025 HALL OF FAME CLASS

UCLA ATHLETICS

UCLA Athletics recently announced that nine new members will be inducted into the UCLA Athletic Hall of Fame this fall. The members of the Class of 2025 are: Tracey Milburn Bailey (women's soccer), Brandon Crawford (baseball), Mike Franks (men's tennis), Cyndi Gallagher (women's swimming & diving), Jason Kapono (men's basketball), Brittani McCullough (women's gymnastics), Kimberly Po (women's tennis), Sheena Johnson Tosta (women's track & field) and Lisa Willis (women's basketball). The new Hall of Fame members combined to win five NCAA Championships and 20 All-America honors. Included in the group are a two-time World Series champion (Crawford), an NBA champion (Kapono), an Olympic medalist (Johnson Tosta) and a Wimbledon champion (Po).

Tracey Milburn Bailey

(Women's Soccer, 1998-2000)

Tracey Milburn Bailey became the first African-American Bruin to earn All-America honors in women's soccer, receiving second-team honors as a forward from the coaches' association in 2000. She was also named the Pac-10 Player of the Year and a Honda Award finalist and finished the year with 13 goals, six assists and 32 points. She helped lead the Bruins to their first-ever College Cup and first national championship game in 2000. Bailey played three seasons at UCLA and earned first-team All-Pac-10 acclaim each year. She led the Bruins in scoring with 11 goals during her sophomore year and ranked second on the team in scoring as a junior with 24 points. Bailey went on to play professionally with the Washington Freedom of the Women's United Soccer Association and is now a color analyst for Big Ten Network and on the radio broadcast team for Angel City FC. She will join her husband Toby Bailey (2017) in the UCLA Athletic Hall of Fame, making them just the second married couple to both be inducted.



Brandon Crawford

(Baseball, 2006-08)

A two-time World Series champion, three-time All-Star and four-time Gold Glove winner with the San Francisco Giants, Brandon Crawford established himself as one of the most accomplished shortstops in Major League Baseball over the last decade. As a Bruin, he helped lead UCLA to three-straight NCAA Regional appearances for the first time in school history and was a NCAA Regional All-Tournament selection in 2008. As a freshman, he earned first-team Freshman All-America honors from Baseball America, and he was an All-Pac-10 selection in 2007. He led the Bruins in hits and stolen bases in 2006 and 2007. He finished his collegiate career with a .319 career batting average, 230 hits, 20 home runs and 136 RBI. He still ranks third in UCLA history with 13 career triples. At the Major League level, Crawford won the Silver Slugger in 2015 and finished fourth in NL MVP voting in 2021 after hitting .298/.373/.522 with 24 home runs and 90 RBI, all career bests. He won gold with the U.S. at the 2017 World Baseball Classic.



Mike Franks

(Men's Tennis, 1956-58)

A two-time All-American in 1957 and 1958 and UCLA's No. 1 singles player throughout his three-year career, Mike Franks helped lead UCLA to the 1956 NCAA team championship. UCLA went 30-3 across his three seasons, earning at least a share of the conference title each year. Franks also had success in the Grand Slam tournaments, reaching the fourth round of the 1958 U.S. Open singles tournament and the third round in 1956, 1957 and 1960. He also advanced to the third round of singles at Wimbledon in 1957 and 1964. Franks was a junior member of the United States' 1956 Davis Cup team and won the doubles championship and was the singles runner-up at the Maccabiah Games in 1961 and 1965. This is the third Hall of Fame induction for Franks. He was inducted into the Southern California Jewish Sports Hall of Fame in 1990 and into the ITA Men's Collegiate Tennis Hall of Fame in 2023.




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UCLA ATHLETICS

Cyndi Gallagher

(Women's Swimming & Diving, Coach 1988-2019, Student-Athlete 1979-83)

Cyndi Gallagher totaled 38 years as a UCLA student-athlete, assistant coach and head coach and ended her 31-year tenure as head coach as the winningest coach in program history with a 202-107-2 overall record in dual meets. Gallagher led UCLA to Pac-10 titles in 2001 and 2003 and steered UCLA to top-10 finishes at the NCAA Championships in nine separate seasons. She was twice named the Pac-10 Coach of the Year, first in 1990 when the Bruins finished fifth at the NCAA Championships and then again in 2003 after UCLA secured its second league championship in three years. Her tenure in Westwood produced a number of internationally renowned swimmers and divers, including 11 Olympians, 21 conference champions, and 91 All-Americans who won a total of 205 All-America awards. She coached UCLA's first-ever NCAA individual swimming champion, Annette Salmeen, who won the 200 Fly in 1996 and went on to win Olympic gold in 1998. Gallagher was an All-American herself as a swimmer and was selected UCLA's Most Outstanding Athlete in women's swimming and diving in 1980-81. She also won a bronze medal in the 800m Free at the 1979 World University Games and competed at two Olympic Trials.



Jason Kapono

(Men's Basketball, 2000-03)

The No. 3 scorer in UCLA men's basketball history and the No. 9 scorer in Pac-12 history, Jason Kapono finished his Bruin career with 2,095 points in 127 games, averaging 16.5 points per game. He is tied on UCLA's all-time scoring list with Reggie Miller (2,095 points) and is one of four standouts to have scored at least 2,000 points in a Bruins' uniform. He was the first Bruin to lead UCLA in scoring and earn first-team All-Pac-10 honors all four years. He also helped UCLA advance to the NCAA Sweet Sixteen in 2000, 2001 and 2002. In 2000, he was named the Pac-10 Freshman of the Year after leading the conference in three-point field goal percentage with a 47.4% shooting average, a percentage that still ranks No. 6 on UCLA's all-time list. Kapono still ranks in UCLA's Top 10 for career three-point percentage (No. 2, 44.6%), three-pointers made (No. 2, 317), three-pointers attempted (No. 2, 710), free throw percentage (No. 6, 83.0%), field goals made (No. 7, 699), minutes played per game (No. 2, 34.0) and points scored per game (No. 7, 16.5). He was selected by the Cleveland Cavaliers in the second round of the 2003 NBA Draft as the No. 31 overall pick and played in 509 NBA games over a nine-year career. Kapono helped the Miami Heat to the 2005-06 NBA title and became the first player ever to lead the NBA in 3-point shooting percentage in back-to-back years. He shot 51.4% from 3-point distance in 2006-07 with Miami and 48.3% in 2007-08 with Toronto. He also won the NBA's Three-Point Contest in each of those years. In 2006-07, he averaged a career-best 10.9 points per game and led the league in three-point field goal percentage (.514).



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2025 HALL OF FAME CLASS

UCLA ATHLETICS

Brittani McCullough

(Women's Gymnastics, 2008-11)

Brittani McCullough was a standout in the gym and in the classroom, winning two NCAA titles and earning Scholastic All-America honors while being the first student-athlete in UCLA's nursing program. Despite suffering two season-ending injuries during her time at UCLA, she earned a total of four first-team All-America honors (2011 on vault and floor, 2010 on floor and 2009 on floor) and four All-Pac-10 honors (2011 in the all-around, 2010 on vault and floor and 2009 on vault). She was named the 2008 Pac-10 Freshman of the Year, won the Pac-10, NCAA Regional and NCAA floor exercise titles in 2010, and was a finalist for the Honda Award in 2011, as well as UCLA's NCAA Woman of the Year nominee. She also helped UCLA win the 2010 NCAA team title and a pair of Pac-10 team titles. McCullough accomplished all of this while juggling nursing school and clinical hours and being unable to train at the same time as her team. Following graduation, she worked as a NICU nurse at UCLA for three years and then returned to school at UCLA to become a pediatric nurse practitioner.



Kimberly Po

(Women's Tennis, 1990-91)

One of the most successful Bruins on the WTA Tour, Kimberly Po held the distinction for over two decades of owning the highest rankings of any UCLA women's tennis player, reaching No. 6 in doubles and No. 14 in singles. She is still the only former UCLA player to reach the Top 15 in the WTA singles and doubles rankings. As a Bruin, Po played No. 1 singles and doubles as a sophomore in 1991 and won the Pac-10 doubles title with Stella Sampras and finished as runner-up at the NCAA Championships. Po earned All-America status in singles and doubles and was a first-team All-Pac-10 selection and Pac-10 All-Academic honoree in 1991. She turned pro after two seasons at UCLA and won the Mixed Doubles title with Donald Johnson at Wimbledon in 2000 a year after finishing as runner-up at the U.S. Open. Po was also runner-up in women's doubles at the 2001 U.S. Open.



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UCLA ATHLETICS

Sheena Johnson Tosta

(Women's Track & Field, 2001-04)

A two-time Olympian, two-time NCAA champion and 10-time All-American, Sheena Johnson Tosta is one of the most accomplished hurdlers in UCLA history. She won a pair of NCAA Outdoor 400m Hurdles titles in 2003 and 2004, with the latter setting a world-best time and collegiate record of 53.54. Additionally, she totaled six Pac-10 titles, including the 400m Hurdles in 2001, 2002 and 2003. After winning the 400m Hurdles at the 2004 Olympic Trials with a personal best and then-World best time of 52.95, Tosta placed fourth at the Olympic Games. She made a return trip to the Olympics in 2008 and captured the silver medal. Tosta also won gold in the 2007 Pan American Games and competed in the World Championships in 2007 and 2009.



Lisa Willis

(Women's Basketball, 2003-06)

The MVP of the 2006 Pac-10 Tournament, Lisa Willis led UCLA to its first-ever conference tournament title, scoring 20 points with six steals, five rebounds and four assists in the championship game after totaling 27 points and six steals in the semifinal and 14 points and seven steals in the quarterfinal. She set a tournament record with 19 steals and tied the record with 11 made three-pointers. Willis was named an honorable mention AP All-American and a third-team All-American by Women's Basketball News Service in 2006. She earned first-team All-Pac-10 honors twice and led the conference in steals in each of her last three seasons, becoming the first player in UCLA history to record three-straight seasons with 100 or more steals. Willis finished her career as UCLA's all-time leader in three-point shots made (256, second all-time in the Pac-10 at the time) and the Pac-10's all-time leader in steals (368). Her 1,677 career points still ranks 15th all-time at UCLA. In 2005, she won gold with Team USA at the World University Games, scoring 13 points in the gold medal match. Willis was selected by the Los Angeles Sparks as the fifth pick overall in the 2006 WNBA Draft and played in the league for four seasons, leading the WNBA in three-pointers in 2008 while playing for the New York Liberty. She moved into coaching following her playing career and served as head coach of Montreat College in 2014. In 2019, she became the first female hired by the New York Knicks in a coaching capacity when she was hired as an assistant for their G League team, the Westchester Knicks.



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TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF AND THE STORY OF HOW THINK CULINARY BECAME WHAT IT IS TODAY.

My name is Svante Johansson, and I own a company called ThinkCulinary where we act as a masterdistributor for meat companies selling to restaurants and other hospitality outlets. During Covid-19, when most restaurants were closed, we started selling directly to consumers online, and it turned into a side business for us. We went ahead and built a new company called Herd & Grace that is geared towards selling high-end meats and other proteins direct to consumers in Southern California and beyond.

TELL US ABOUT H&G'S SERVICES AND THE BENEFITS OF THEM

Herd & Grace connects everyday food lovers with world-class meats that were once exclusive to elite chefs. We've spent years forging relationships with ranchers and producers around the globe—people who care deeply about animal welfare, sustainability, and flavor. Through our website and store, customers can order thoughtfully raised beef, pork, and lamb that are typically reserved for Michelin-level kitchens. It's a way to elevate weeknight dinners and createunforgettable meals at home.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CORE VALUES H&G LIVES BY?

We have three core values. 1: Everything we sell must be top quality. 2: Every brand we represent must tell a story of why their meats are unique. 3. Everything has to be of value. Value in relation to the quality and story.

WHY DID H&G DECIDE TO STRATEGICALLY PARTNER WITH UCLA ATHLETICS?

We've worked with UCLA for years behind the scenes, helping support student dining. Partnering with UCLA Athletics was a natural extension of that relationship. We saw an opportunity to not only deepen our connection but also reach a wider community that shares our values of excellence, performance, and pride.

WHAT EXCITES H&G ABOUT PARTNERING UCLA ATHLETICS?

I have been a huge UCLA Athletics supporter for many years and I am very proud to support the program. UCLA Athletics is deeply rooted in our community and the connections we have made over the last two years have been very valuable.

HOW HAVE YOUR INTERACTIONS WITH UCLA ATHLETICS BEEN?

The team at UCLA Athletics has been professional, collaborative, and supportive throughout our partnership. Their attention to detail and openness to ideas make them ideal partners for a brand like ours that thrives on trust and shared purpose.

DO YOU HAVE A FAVORITE MOMENT OF THE PARTNERSHIP THUS FAR?

I attended the basketball game between UCLA and Michigan State this year and it was great to see UCLA come out ahead against a top-level team. I hope to see more games like this. Go Bruins!!!

WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS FOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP WITH UCLA ATHLETICS? WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO ACCOMPLISH?

First, we want to grow our brand presence and reach more people who care about what they eat and where it comes from. But equally important, we want to support UCLA's continued success—on and off the field. If we can help fuel their growth while building ours, then we know this is a partnership worth investing in.

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$5.2 MILLION
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- 23 Full-Time Staff, Mental Health, Medical Expenses
- $1,200,000 for Mental Health Services
- $30,000 covers therapeutic modalities and rehabilitation equipment

$2.4 MILLION
ACADEMIC SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT

- 50 Full-Time Tutors and Operating Costs
- $6,500 covers books for one student-athlete per academic year

$1.9 MILLION
STUDENT-ATHLETE SERVICES

- 11 Full-Time Staff, Operating Costs
- $15,000 covers costs for student-athlete career development programming for one athletic team

=$21,537,563

Approximate Additional Investment Above Cost of Attendance in the Student-Athlete Experience for All UCLA Student-Athletes

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STEPPING ASIDE

LONGTIME DEVELOPMENT EMPLOYEES GINA GARRETT AND BRIAN SMITH ARE RETIRING

By Jon Gold

It wasn't in the marquee moments, when UCLA legends would flash their Super Bowl rings or Player of the Year trophies. It wasn't hearing about John Wooden's wonderful witticisms, but truth be told, she knew the man himself, and she already misses those.

No, for Gina Garrett, the power of UCLA wasn't found in Westwood at all.

"It doesn't come in those big moments, when you have powerhouses like Kareem and Troy Aikman and Coach Wooden, who is still No. 1," said Garrett, UCLA's Director of Special Events who will retire this summer. "Everyone played him up, and I thought he'd be a disappointment, and he was even better than portrayed to me. But the power of UCLA I felt was very innocuous. I was at Machu Picchu in Peru, and I had on a UCLA shirt, and someone came running at me, and it was a Bruin fan, not even from America, I think from Ireland. And he just loves the Bruins. It was weird. That happens everywhere. If I have my shirt on, or a luggage tag, someone will comment. It never escapes me. I know the power of UCLA."

Garrett arrived at UCLA as a student in the fall of 1984. She started her "career" as a dishwasher in the graduate dorms. Really, it was a job. She had to find something two days before school began. She took what she could find.

Eventually she got a job in the UCLA Performing Arts ticket office. Then a friend got her hired at the UCLA Athletics tickets office, and she thought, "Yes, that beats pots and pans."

Someone in the Bruins' Athletic Department thought she'd be a natural in development. She went over and stayed put.

"I never expected I'd retire here," she said. "If you would've told me that as a student, I would've laughed my head off. I stayed because I was happy."

That's why Brian Smith stuck around, too.

Like Garrett, the UCLA Assistant Athletic Director for Development is retiring this summer, as well.

"My dad was a college basketball player and professor, mom was a school teacher, and education was a rite of passage and sports was my passion," he said. "I found a career that wed the two and I could pursue my passion in both angles."

Both are stepping aside in a time of great change in college athletics. That's part of the reason they're stepping aside.





Smith *(far right) with donors at a UCLA basketball game in Pauley Pavilion. (Photo: Courtesy Brian Smith)*



(Photo: Liza David)

"Our student-athletes have always been our North Star," he said. "But how that has changed over the years is tremendous. More change in the last four years than ever before, maybe since we launched Title IX in 1972. The growth of it, and where we are now with revenue sharing starting July 1, there are so many changes. The transfer portal is another...I'll call it a challenge."

Added Garrett: "That's a big part of why I said I'm going to step out. I'm retiring early, but it's not because I'm not happy. It's time for a new era of development officers to take over. I think changes are always going to happen. Major changes like this. You either embrace it or fight it. That's what I tell donors."

For both, they use the term lightly. Both say that the long relationships they've built with the biggest of Bruin backers has turned them into friends.

"We grew through our lives, and UCLA has been family for me," Smith said. "Ups and downs, but day in and day out, the friendships in the department and externally with donors, to share these experiences is genuinely the most important thing. What am I going to miss the most? The people, the people and the people."

He's ready to become the loudest UCLA fan in the building, though.

"I'm looking forward to being a fan," he said. "It's been part of my life for a lot of years. To be able to enjoy a game and sit through a game and cheer on the Bruins? I'm looking forward to more time with my family and being able to schedule vacations in December and not wait for a bowl game. My wife and I, we're grandparents now, and we're deeply enjoying our 1-year-old grandchild."

Garrett, too, is eager to shift back into the role of fan.

Even if, she admits, she always kind of was.

"I used to have a ton of season tickets as a staff member for football," she said. "We would be in the lowest of the low, and I'm not the kind to sell them. My favorite part was the quiet moments. That's what I'll miss. I would go to my six seats scattered around the Rose Bowl, and I'd sit in a different one and enjoy the game. As a staff member, I can't always be a spectator. But I grew to love football even more. You see it up close and you realize, the struggle is real."



Garrett *(right) with legendary UCLA men's basketball coach John Wooden. (Photo: Courtesty Gina Garrett)*

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