

HONORS *Wildcat* NEWSLETTER



Keeping up with Kenton



Welcome to our new UK Honors Alumni Newsletter! As the Director of Philanthropy and Alumni Engagement, I'm excited to connect with you to hear your Honors story and explore opportunities for you to engage with our current students. Reach out to me via email (kenton.sena@uky.edu) or call/text (859-444-1723). If you're coming to Lexington for any reason and have room in your schedule to visit us at Honors, let me know! I'm also excited to announce our new [UK Honors Alumni Group](#) on LinkedIn. This group will build some alumni networking capacity — join the group and start connecting!



The university is abuzz with activity this month as we look to welcome students back to campus. Alongside our incoming first-year students, this dean is both excited and anxious to welcome a new semester and a host of new experiences. I've learned a lot in my first month in this role, including where to access the closest cup of coffee on campus and how to prevent myself from being locked out of my own office.

I've also had the great opportunity to work alongside the incredible faculty and staff of the Lewis Honors College, who have amazed me with the work they are doing to ensure that every Honors student receives the highest quality Honors experience that will help them explore their purpose, develop intellectually and lead with integrity.

As I continue to learn about this great college and university, I am eager to hear from alumni and friends, like yourself, about your experience with Honors at UK. What has Honors meant to you? What enduring values from your Honors experience continue to shape your lives? Please feel free to reach out directly. I would love to connect and learn more about you and your journey. My email is james.buss@uky.edu.

As we prepare for the fall semester, I look forward to meeting some of you on campus, connecting with you virtually or seeing you in the community. Go CATS!

Jim Buss, Ph.D.
T.W. Lewis Dean
Lewis Honors College
University of Kentucky

Upcoming Events

Aug. 27, 2026 | 9 - 10:30 a.m. EDT | Visit with Dean Jim Buss, faculty and students during the first Breakfast with Buss.

Sept. 3-4, 2026 | 10 a.m. - 5 p.m. EDT | Donate blood during the Kentucky Blood Center Drive.

Sept. 15, 2026 | 6 - 7 p.m. EDT | Join the discussion during the first [Honors After Hours: Let's be Blunt about Cannabis](#).

Oct. 7, 2026 | 4 - 5 p.m. EDT | Hear about what your Honors Alumni colleagues are doing! Stop by the [CPD Alumni Career Speaker Panel](#).

College Highlights

We're so excited to introduce our new dean! Jim Buss has a decade of Honors leadership experience; reach out to introduce yourself and share your Honors story! Read Dean Buss's note above and read more about his appointment by clicking the button below.

READ MORE



We reached a new milestone this summer with a record number of Honors students participating in education abroad experiences. Discover how immersive learning opportunities, dedicated

faculty and staff, and generous donor and grant support empowered students to explore their purpose, develop intellectually and lead with integrity by clicking the button below.

LEARN MORE

Student Spotlights

[AJ Hopkins](#), a rising senior, was named a Udall Scholar — the first UK recipient since 2013!

[Trenton Schroering](#), a rising senior, was the first UK student to receive the Key into Public Service Scholar recognition by The Phi Beta Kappa Society.

[Alex Masterson '26](#) produced a fantastic Lewis Honors College [recruitment video](#) that received a Platinum Award at the 2025 Viddy Awards.

Rising juniors **Niki Chen** and **Katie Creamer** received Kate Johnson Scholarships to study abroad. Niki studied healthcare in London as part of the “UK Explore First: Careers, Cultures and Connections” experience for first-generation students, and Katie traveled with Honors Faculty Julie Boutwell-Peterson and Chelsea Brislin to study creative writing in Greece and Italy.

Alumni Updates

[Supriya Challa '22](#) recently graduated from UK's College of Medicine and will be starting her residency in the fall. She is thankful for her mentors, and she looks forward to serving children and families with empathy.

[Colby Kirk '15](#) appreciated his Honors Program experience, including his semester abroad in South Korea. He is putting his business acumen to work close to home in eastern Kentucky at the helm of One East Kentucky.



Professor Richard Wood, J.D., was inducted into the Capital University Professors Hall of Honor on April 9, 2026. He was nominated by the faculty of his college (The Capital University Law School), approved by the University Senate, and confirmed by the Provost. Richard earned a B.A. from UK in 1974, a J.D. from The Ohio State University College of Law in 1977, and an LL.M. in Taxation from Georgetown Law in 1985. Professor Wood was an attorney in the Office of Chief Counsel in the IRS National Office in Washington, D.C., for 10 years before joining the faculty at Capital University Law School, where he taught courses in federal income taxation, corporations and partnerships for 33 years. Congrats, Professor Wood!



[Dr. Ryan Voogt](#) was awarded a 2026 Provost's Outstanding Teaching Award—one of the university's most prestigious recognitions for excellence in teaching.

[Dr. Zada Komara](#), already a recipient of both of the university's highest teaching awards, was recognized for teaching excellence by the Appalachian Studies Association and was also appointed to the Kentucky Oral History Commission by Governor Beshear.



[Dr. Jena Seiler](#) co-directed the documentary film *The Keeping Space* — honoring Ms. Shelia Lackey, long-time keeper of the space in the Honors Quad. Click the video above to watch now.

In Memoriam



Together with Karen Kemper Henson, we honor the memory of her husband, Jan B. Henson, who passed away in January 2026. Jan was born in Lexington, Kentucky, in 1947. He and Karen are descended from generations of Kentucky farmers. Jan's dad, a plant pathologist, was a member of the faculty of UK's College of Agriculture, and his mother taught at UK's K-12 Training School. Jan and Karen met in the UK Honors Program, where they co-chaired an Honors Program student committee. Jan graduated with high honors from UK's Honors Program in 1969 with a degree in political science and married Karen that August. He went on to earn a J.D. in 1972 from Harvard Law School, having provided pro bono services through the Harvard Legal Aid Bureau throughout his time at Harvard. Jan was a corporate lawyer, first in Columbus, Ohio, and then heading the legal department of a high-tech company in Massachusetts. Jan and Karen were married for 56 wonderful years. Together they established, and continue to fund, the endowment that supports the Diachun and Evans Scholar Awards — our most prestigious Honors graduation awards. We are honored to count Jan among the alumni of UK's Honors Program, and he is dearly missed.

Appreciation Station



Thank you to all the friends of Honors who supported us over the past year! Your gifts helped students explore their purpose, develop intellectually and lead with integrity on campus, across the Commonwealth and around the world.

Chelsea Adams, James Albisetti, Nicolette Asselin, Bobby Baldrige, Gregory Boecker, Thomas Bondurant, Ken Boutwell, Julie Boutwell-Peterson, Christian Brady, Laura Bryan, Jeffrey Burch, Valerie Calogero, Carolyn Purcell, Elizabeth Chenault, Rachel Childress, Bryan and Adrienne Clarke, Cynthia Collett, Stephen Congleton, Brad deSilva, Ronald Dixon, Catherine Domek, James Dunne, Christine Elder, Lisa Ernst, Roger Fain, Sally Foster, Jennifer Freese, Ron and Leslie Geoghegan, Mary Gilles, Jerry Goerz, Dewitt Goodman, Laurie Hainley, Libby Hannon, Marci Hicks, Melissa Iglehart, Paul Jett, Patricia Johnson, Emily Jones, Dan Key, Ravyn Ladenburger, Elizabeth Lester, Adrian Magendzo, Joe Martin, Nicholas Mattei, James McGlone, Matthew Merkt, Kelley Miller, Stephen Miller, Kathleen Mulroy, Tina Navis, Richard Neill and Elaine Reed, Cameron Nurick, Joseph Osborne, Angelica Prekopa, Lloyd and Claudia Randolph, Evan Reynolds, Lee Rowe, Terry Samuel, Laura Sauer-Palmer, Sarah Spivey, Mark Turner, Stephen Vogel, Elizabeth Wachtel, Lynn Weak, Pamela Williams, Richard J. Wood, Richard L. Wood, Corey Workman and James Yonts.

Featured Fund

The Kate Johnson Scholarship Fund was established in 2004 by Dr. Jim Albisetti, a longtime Honors Program professor, to support experiential learning for Honors students. In the 2025 – 2026 academic year, the Kate Johnson Fund helped students study in places like London, Greece and Italy, present research at an international conference, participate in an intensive music performance program, and even found a nonprofit!

Interested in giving? Click the button below to give now, or reach out to kenton.sena@uky.edu for more information.

GIVE NOW

Stay in Touch

Do you have an update to share, someone you would like to thank or an Honors alum you'd like us to remember? Click the button below to submit a story.

SUBMIT NOW

Would you like to connect with current students as an alumni mentor? Sign up to serve by clicking the button below.

REGISTER TODAY

If your travel plans are taking you to or through Lexington, stop by and see us! Click the button below to schedule a visit with Kenton Sena.

SCHEDULE NOW
