

IMPACT UNC

Summer 2021 | UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO





The Impact of Steadfast and Farsighted Support

As we prepare to return to a comprehensive, on-campus experience for the Fall 2021 semester, I can't help but pause and reflect on the past year and a half. The entire community worked together to preserve the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff, and community, and the Bear family was there every step of the way, serving as a source of comfort and consistency during a time of incredible uncertainty.

Our return to campus is marked by excitement and enthusiasm even as we recognize that for many, it's a return to a changed campus, community, and world. Yet, through it all, many things have remained unchanged — including our collective commitment to deliver on our mission to *put students first*. Our generous donors are also clearly focused on the commitment to student success. Programs like the Reisher Scholars Program continue to provide critical scholarship support so students can achieve their dreams of a college education right here in Colorado. Steadfast members of the Bear family, like Dean of Students Emerita Jean Morrell, continue a legacy of philanthropy as they invest in UNC's future by making provisions for the

university through their estates. Projects that we have long anticipated, like the new Empower Center for UNC Athletics, are becoming a reality as well, helping student athletes train, succeed, and meet their athletic potential. All of this is made possible thanks to the unwavering commitment and generosity of our donors.

In this issue of *Impact*, we feature your philanthropy's long-term and compounding impact at the University of Northern Colorado. From committed and loyal giving to the far-sighted impact of a planned gift; our community of donors continues to invest in the current and long-term success of our students which ensures UNC's ability to provide an exceptional education now and for generations to come. Thank you for your continued belief in our university!



Allie Steg Haskett

Allie Steg Haskett '03
Vice President for
University Advancement

UNC's 10-year vision plan, *Rowing Not Drifting*, focuses on the following five elements. Look for these icons throughout this publication for stories that reflect these elements.



Students First



Empower Inclusivity



Enhance & Invest



Innovate & Create



Connect & Celebrate

Impact UNC is published by the University of Northern Colorado, University Advancement, Campus Box 20, Greeley, CO 80639. Please send change of address notices to donor.relations@unco.edu or mail to University Advancement, Campus Box 20, Greeley, CO 80639. *Opinions expressed in these pages are those of the individuals and do not necessarily reflect official positions of the university.*

Ground Broken for Empower Center

This spring, the university broke ground on the Empower Center, UNC's first-ever 100% donor-funded campus building. The \$4 million sports performance building will give UNC's student athletes a state-of-the-art strength and training facility. With more than 10,000 square feet, the new building will more than double the space of the current building, allowing teams and staff to better schedule workouts and fine-tune training, which will help student athletes reach their goals athletically and academically. Following the spring COVID-19 guidelines for gatherings, student athletes, coaches, athletic department staff and others celebrated the groundbreaking on a brisk April morning, coinciding with the 13th annual Women's Walk that generates support for UNC's female student-athletes.

Dani Young, a junior on the softball team majoring in Sports Administration, was one of several speakers to share what the new center would mean for student-athletes at UNC. Following is Young's speech about the Empower Center:

The construction of the new training center will be a turning point for UNC athletics. This new facility is a chance for current athletes to build a culture. We have the opportunity to create an atmosphere where discipline and dedication are the expectation.

Cutting reps and the saying 'I'll just do abs at home' will be a thing of the past. Incoming athletes will quickly learn how high the bar is set and how frequently it will be adjusted to be even more challenging.

UNC athletes have accomplished many things because of the hard work and effort put in every morning in the weight room. And as I'm sure your coaches remind you, games aren't won on the field, but in practice and in the weight room.

We have yet to put in the work that a new weight room will demand. There haven't been max days yet or the dreaded metabolic, but when it's time for us to put in the work necessary to succeed, we will. Not only will we take what we've learned in the old facility, but there will be better, faster and stronger athletes because of this facility.

As difficult as the last two years have been with cancelled seasons and weekly testing, this weight room will serve as a clean slate. The only way this was possible was through the diligent work of our athletic training staff and administrators, and the commitment of our generous donors.

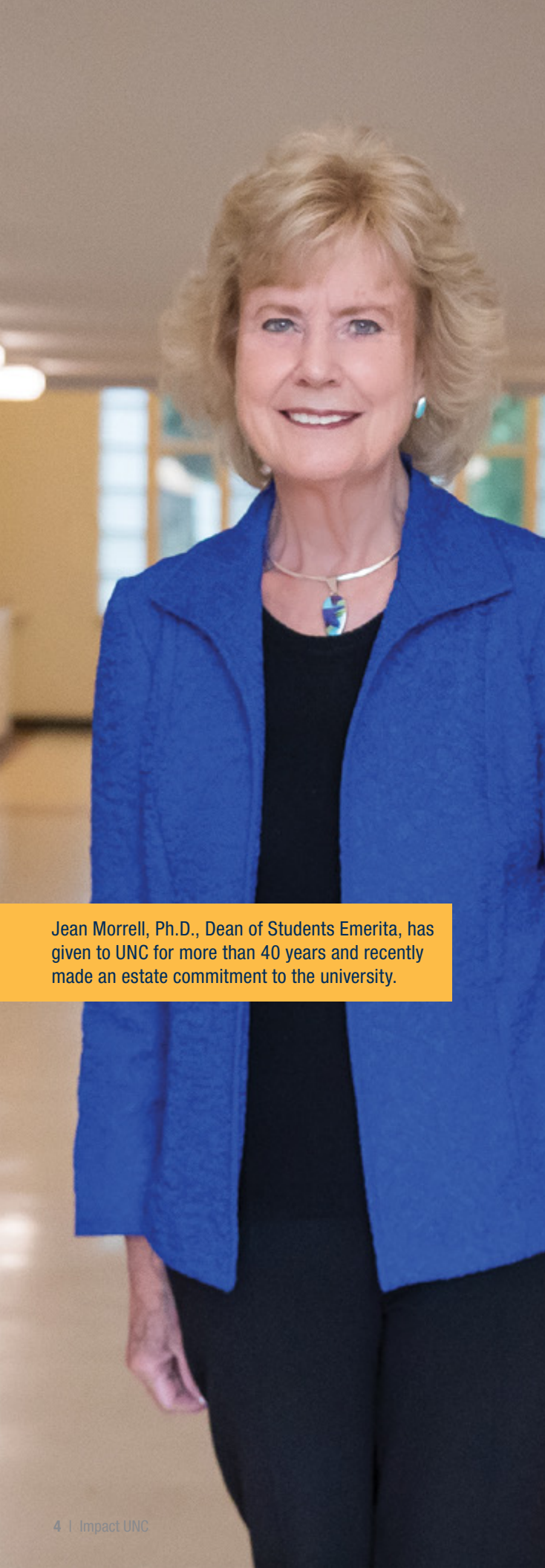
We are extremely grateful to the athletic administrators and donors for making it possible for us to raise the bar, and it all starts with this new facility.



Softball team member Dani Young, a junior majoring in Sports Administration, spoke about the impact the new Empower Center will have on UNC's student athletes.



➤ To learn more about the new facility, go to unco.edu/give/empower-center



Jean Morrell, Ph.D., Dean of Students Emerita, has given to UNC for more than 40 years and recently made an estate commitment to the university.

Helping Students Grow

Jean Schober Morrell, Ph.D. '94, came to the University of Northern Colorado in fall 1974 as the assistant dean of students, and became UNC's first female dean of students six years later — a position she held until she retired in 2006. Along the way, she helped thousands of Bears thrive and succeed.

"What I was doing was helping students. Helping students grow, helping students develop. And I loved doing that, just loved it," she says.

Making a difference for students is something she still does — and will do for generations to come — through her long-standing support of funds that provide student scholarships and resources.

Starting with monthly \$25 payroll deductions while working at UNC, Morrell's contributions now total over \$53,000 spanning more than 40 years.

"Giving back — it's important to do. I learned that from my parents years ago," she says. "Before I even retired, I started a scholarship because I knew how difficult it was to pay for college."

She has chosen to help future generations of Bears through her estate plan, as well.

"When you give through estate planning, you can give more than you've been able to give while you're living. And I think, therefore, you can help even more. And it's important to be able to give to entities that you have a strong affiliation with and that you know will make a difference to somebody. I know that the university and higher education can have a major impact on people," she says.

“

I am so grateful for the support this scholarship has provided me. It means so much to my family and I that I was chosen to receive this generous scholarship. The loss of my father to cancer has put financial strain on my entire family. Thanks to your support I can focus fully on excelling in my schoolwork and preparing for my future career.”

—RHIANNON PARENT

2020-2021 Jean Schober Morrell Dean of Students
Distinguished Service Scholarship recipient

She chooses funds with special meaning to her, giving to the UNC Cancer Rehabilitation Institute, the cultural centers, UNC's Theatre Department, athletics, and the Jerry Tanner Leadership Scholarship Fund Endowment (which she helped establish in the name of her former supervisor). She established and contributes annually to the Jean Schober Morrell Dean of Students Distinguished Services Scholarship Fund Endowment for a rising senior who is a student leader, and she has seen the impact of those gifts as students receive support annually.

When Jean retired, UNC's Higher Education Student Affairs Leadership program community created the Jean Schober Morrell Award for Outstanding Leadership/Service in Student Affairs Fund in her honor, to be given annually to a UNC administrator who demonstrates outstanding leadership to students, staff, and the university community at large.

The award is reflective of Jean's work at UNC and is awarded to a recipient who "demonstrates strong leadership in creating community and an inclusive environment which promotes social justice, makes creative contributions to student learning and campus collaboration, and infuses student development theory and other relevant concepts into their daily practice."

Jean added funding for the award to provide financial recognition, and she contributes to it annually.

Some of her former students honor her work at UNC by contributing to her scholarship fund or the HESAL award as well.

Her understanding of the challenges students face grew not only from her work at UNC as dean of students, but from her time as an undergraduate student at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. There, she was active in many campus organizations while working her way through school.

"My senior year, I was president of my sorority and president of Mortar Board," she says, adding that as president of her sorority she wasn't able to continue working as a resident assistant in the residence halls. She took out a loan and had help from her family, but it wasn't quite enough.

"The only job I could find to fit my schedule senior year was cleaning bathrooms in the sorority house on the weekends to make it through school," she says.

She earned her bachelor's degree in elementary education in 1969, taught school in Michigan, and earned a master's in teaching at Oakland University 1970 in Rochester, Michigan. She returned to Bowling Green in 1973 for a second master's, this time in College Student Personnel Administration (similar to the HESAL program at UNC).

Support Future Bears

Interested in learning more about how you can make a difference for students through your estate plan?

Email donor.relations@unco.edu or call 970-351-2551.

After receiving her master's at Bowling Green, she moved to Colorado in fall, 1974, to become UNC's assistant dean of students. It was during her tenure at UNC that she was given a nickname.

"One day at a student government meeting, one of the students started calling me Dean Jean. And I thought, 'Oh, that's fun. It rhymes.' Then more students started calling me that, and when the president called me that I thought, 'I guess it's going to stick.'"

And it did. Many alumni still call her Dean Jean with great affection.

"It's my 47th year in Greeley. It doesn't seem like I've been here that long at all. I just love UNC. And I love Greeley," she says.

While she was at UNC she met her husband, Pete Morrell, who was Greeley's city manager for 14 years and later started his own leadership company, Morrell and Associates.

She and Pete married the summer of 1989. It was, she says, a "summer never to be forgotten." She was diagnosed with breast cancer that spring, with surgery and began chemotherapy in May; in June she completed four days of written comprehensive exams for her Ph.D. followed by her oral exam in mid-July; and, in between chemotherapy treatments, she capped it all off with her wedding in mid-August.

She and Pete regularly enjoyed UNC theatre performances and athletic events, which inspires her to support both areas. She also has a deep commitment to supporting cancer research. In addition to her own battle with cancer, Pete passed away after battling cancer in 2020. She supports the UNC Cancer Rehabilitation Center and is an active volunteer for the American Cancer Society and the chair of this year's ACS's Cattle Baron's Ball in Northern Colorado. She also remains connected to UNC as Dean of Students Emerita and the chair of the Emeritus Faculty Association.

Over the years, she has had opportunities to meet students who've been impacted by her support, and she's appreciated their interest in "paying it forward."

"It's wonderful," she says. "Many of them say, 'When I graduate, I'm going to do this, too.'"





Team UNC Supports Day of Giving

On April 14, through UNC's "Bears Give Back" day of giving, more than 111 members of "Team UNC" (faculty and staff at UNC) participated, making a difference for students, programs and academic areas. Their support contributed to a giving day that saw more than 600 members of the UNC community contribute over \$118,000 to more than 80 funds across campus.

Staff member Tracey Clay, who supported the Disaster Relief Fund, wrote, "I give to help support those who are trying to gain a great education/college experience while also dealing with challenges in other areas of life. Keep going, you got this!"

And Nancy Matchett, associate provost, gave to the Summer Enrichment Program (SEP), saying, "I've seen SEP work as both an alumna and a faculty member. This opportunity should be accessible to every student who wants to participate."

Amy Graefe, Ph.D., assistant professor of Gifted Education and director of SEP, was the Bears Give Back project leader for SEP, and says she chose to give because of the opportunities SEP provides and the impact it has had in the community.



- For more information about Bears Give Back and a sampling of the funds supported, go to unco.edu/bears-give-back

UNC'S DAY OF GIVING: BEARS GAVE BACK

Total dollars raised: \$118,011

Dollars matched by anonymous Team UNC donors:

\$14,055

Total # of donors:

621

Total # of Team UNC donors:

111

First time donors:

107

Reisher Scholars Program

*Helping Strong Students Finish Strong
for 20 Years*

They say it takes a village.

Typically, this phrase refers to raising a child, but Reisher scholars at UNC know that it applies to earning an undergraduate degree as well. The Reisher Scholarship founded at The Denver Foundation in 2001 by the Reisher family is part of the village of support many students need to complete their degrees. Roger and Margaret Reisher came from modest means and were first in their families to attend and graduate college. They established the Reisher Scholars program to help other students earn an undergraduate degree like the ones they cherished.

Reisher Scholar Muniratu (Muni) Tanko is entering her junior year at UNC, pursuing a degree in criminal justice. After moving from Sunyani, Ghana as a 12-year-old, Muni has developed a passion for helping her community and transforming systems of structural power from the inside.

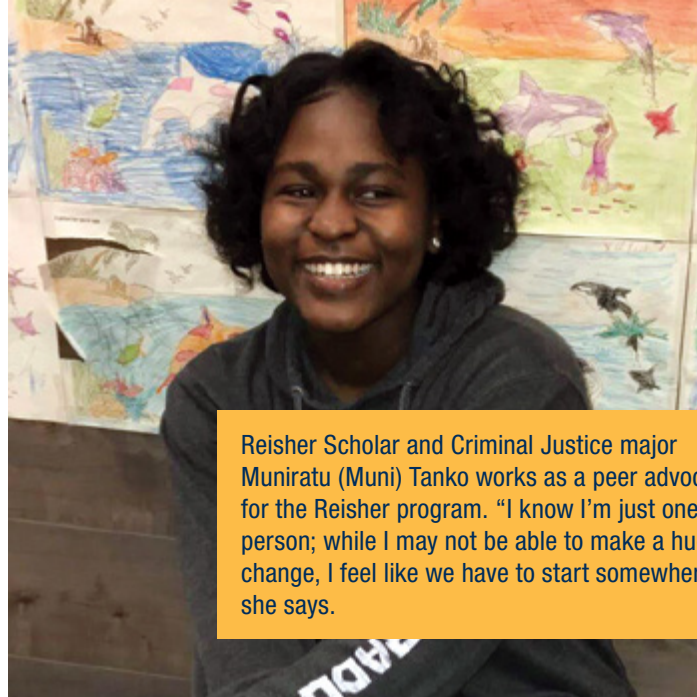
"I feel like me choosing this path will be a way to help my community feel more comfortable and have more diversity and representation in the field of criminal justice," says Muni. "I know I'm just one person; while I may not be able to make a huge change, I feel like we have to start somewhere."

To pay her way through freshman year, Muni worked at Burger King and took out student loans. Before hearing about the Reisher scholarship, she was unsure of how she could afford another year of tuition and academic expenses.

"I honestly didn't know how I would pay for school — I was out on my own with no backup plan," says Muni. Without a scholarship, she would have had to take out student loans, which she wanted to avoid. "I took a few student loans my freshman year and then paid out of pocket with money from my fast-food job," she adds. "I made \$2,000 and school took it all."

After hearing about the Reisher program through a UNC Stryker Institute for Leadership Development workshop, Muni applied and crossed her fingers—and became a Reisher Scholar.

The Reisher program emphasizes community involvement as part of its mission in supporting future community leaders. Students admitted to the Reisher program must already demonstrate a commitment to their community and their intentions to continue serving it. Sherri Frye, head of the Reisher Program at UNC, encourages students in their service to "be where their feet are."



Reisher Scholar and Criminal Justice major Muniratu (Muni) Tanko works as a peer advocate for the Reisher program. "I know I'm just one person; while I may not be able to make a huge change, I feel like we have to start somewhere," she says.

REISHER SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Financial support to students
midway through college

Award range per year

\$4,000-\$11,000

Students join a cohort of seven to 15 students
from their graduating class

With two cohorts each year, the program annually contributes
roughly **\$500,000**

456 Reisher Scholars at UNC since 2001

Muni works as a peer advocate for the Reisher Scholars program, coordinating programmatic events. Peer advocates plan the activities scholars are required to participate in (including six required events, plus five hours with their cohort per semester and two hours of community service per year). Muni's cohort regularly works at the Avery Center, which provides services for adults experiencing commercial sex trafficking in Northern Colorado and the greater United States.

Muni relies on other students in her cohort for support, especially those within her major. "We really support and love each other," says Muni. "We ask each other for help on homework and for advice."

—Laura Veith

➤ To learn more about the Reisher Scholars program, visit unco.edu/honors-scholars-leadership/connect/reisher.aspx





University Advancement

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UNC HOME- COMING 2021

**UNC Homecoming is back and
this time we are in-person!**

We are excited to invite alumni back to campus to participate in this year's Homecoming festivities. So mark your calendar **October 8-9** and get ready for a fun filled weekend packed with all of your favorite UNC traditions.

PLAN YOUR WEEKEND BY VISITING: **[UNCO.EDU/HOMECOMING](https://unco.edu/homecoming)**