



TRIANGLE Downtowner MAGAZINE

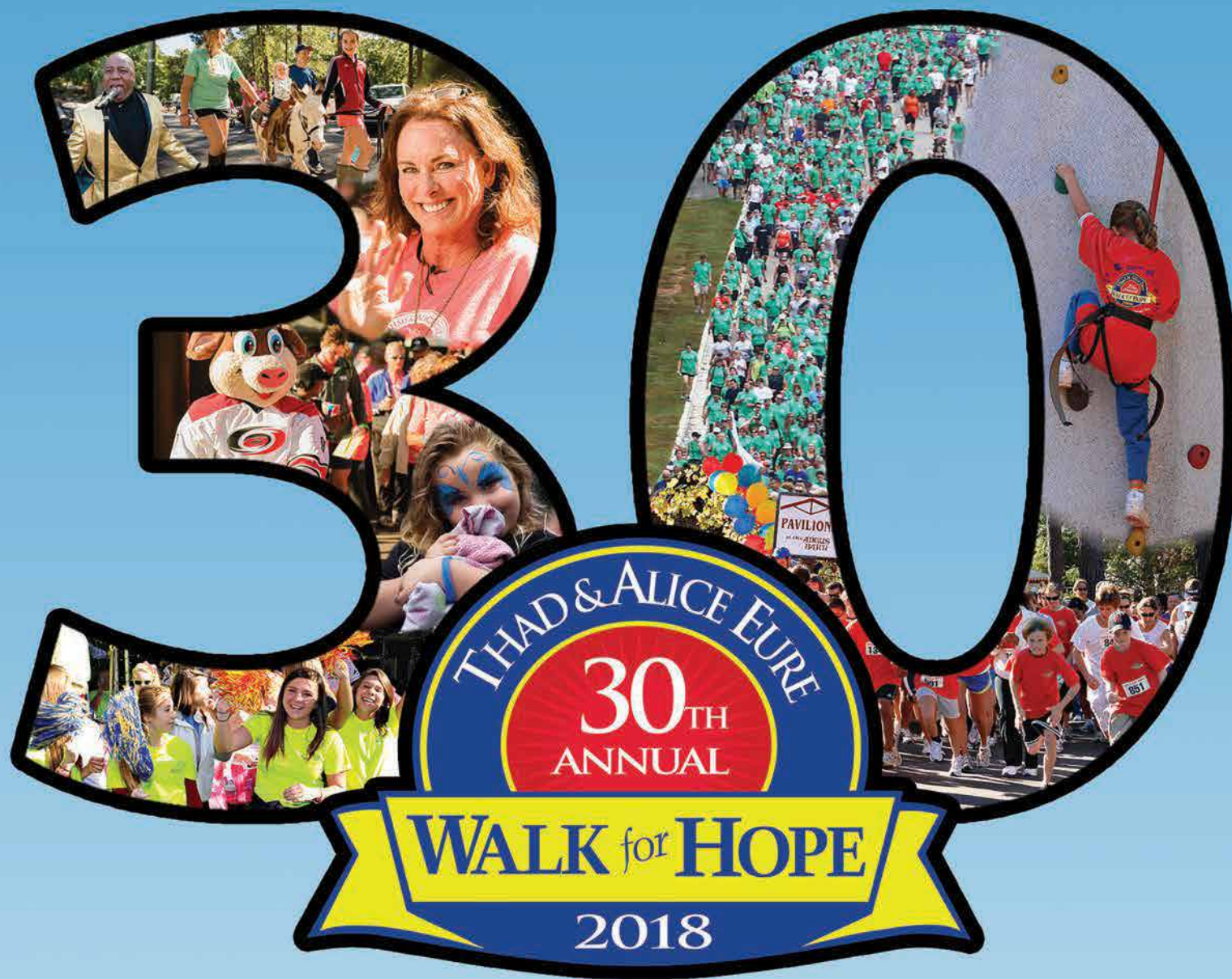
ISSUE 139 • PROMOTING LOCAL SINCE 2005 • 135,000+ MONTHLY READERS • PREVIOUS ISSUES AT WWW.TRIANGLEDOWNTOWNER.COM



Left to right: MOFU owners Sophia Woo and Sunny Lin, Chef Matthew Greiner, Darany Samounry, Amanda Whicker, Maureen Prosser, Danny Hager, Nathan Lambdin

MOFU SHOPPE

After winning The Great Food Truck Race, Sophia & Sunny exchange their wheels for brick and mortar



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ON THE COVER: The winners of the sixth season of The Great Food Truck Race, MOFU owners Sophia Woo and Sunny Lin, with Chef Matthew Greiner and a few of their employees.

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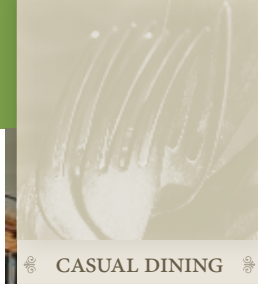
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Saving Grace is a non-profit, 501-C3 organization dedicated to helping homeless animals in our community find permanent, loving homes where they will be treated as family members for the rest of their lives. Adopt! www.savinggracenc.org
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MOFU SHOPPE



BY CHRISTY GRIFFITH • PHOTOS BY CRASH S. GREGG

Food Network may not have been the biggest fans of the name of Sunny Lin and Sophia Woo's first venture – Dump Pho King Truck – but they sure were fans of the food these two entrepreneurs were slinging out of it. “At least we helped people learn the correct pronunciation of pho,” cheekily quips Lin (it's *fah*, by the way). Rechristened Pho Nomenal Dumpling Truck, the ladies went on to win the 6th season of The Great Food Truck Race and put their \$50,000 prize toward renovating an old car dealership into their brick-and-mortar, MOFU Shoppe. Matthew Kenner of Bunch of Fives Hospitality (The Milk Bar, Anchor Bar, Southern Charred, and Dogwood) joined the ownership team and the three might as well ride off into the sunset together because there is absolutely no way MOFU cannot have a happily-ever-after.*

Located in City Market in Downtown Raleigh, MOFU has an effortless elegance; this is no white tablecloth atmosphere brimming with sommeliers, but you'd be charmed to accept an invite to dine here. “Fu” means fortune in Mandarin. MO (more) FU (fortune), or as their online presence playfully reminds us, More food, more fun! Different artists are featured on the walls each month so the space feels fresh and exciting with each visit. The mezzanine overlooking the main dining room is an intimate place from which to gaze down at the airy dining room and is also available to be privately reserved for a few dozen of your closest friends. Natural light is always the best light, and there's tons of it here thanks to the many windows that flank the front – the lighting is most romantic right before dusk as the warm flood of sunset rushes in. When the weather is cooperating, a large garage door opens to turn part of the restaurant into an indoor patio. This place is basically a compilation of everything on Pinterest that I save, but will never have the FU to bring to life.



Executive Chef Matthew Greiner, formerly of such Triangle favorites as Coquette and Vivace, is a jack-of-all-trades. In former lives, he was a master of French and Italian cooking, but at his current role at MOFU,

his hands work magic with Asian cuisine. Chef Greiner has won multiple awards in the Triangle for his culinary prowess and one taste of the offerings at MOFU confirms how much those accolades are deserved. The menu is fantastic and is easily accommodating to those who want to eat meatless or gluten-free.

From the small plates portion of the menu, we sampled the Honey Sriracha Brussels Sprouts (\$10). Nestled on a pool of cracked white pepper crème fraiche, these sweet and spicy blistered sprouts are addictive. Bits of caramelized pork belly are liberally sprinkled on top as if Chef Greiner was a Spinal Tap alum and wanted to turn these vegetables up to eleven. I'm so glad we live in a day and age where Brussels sprouts can be sexy. Future generations may never know the suffering we went through when the only way to cook them was to have the oldest person you know boil them until the house reeked of sulfur and you couldn't have any dessert until you ate every last nasty, soggy, bitter sprout from your plate. Look at us now, Grandma!

Another amazing thing the folks at MOFU can do besides make you want to eat your vegetables is fry some meat. The MOFU Wings (\$12) are 100% the best wings

I've ever eaten in my entire life and I literally have a wardrobe dedicated to stretchy pants for dinners out, so please trust that I know what I'm talking about. You can choose between a Buttery Sriracha and a Nuocmam Lime Glaze. We went with the lime glaze, with the perfect amount of fish sauce in the background, and amazingly these never once got soggy. (Lin tells us the secret is double frying the chicken.) Their cilantro-forward version of Green Goddess dressing goes beautifully with these shatteringly crisp wings, and the accompanying thin, curried cucumbers could be a small plate all on their own. I'm sure my pants would appreciate it if I just made a meal out of cucumbers every now and again.



Lin tells us the secret to their MOFU wings is double frying the chicken.

The Green Curry Mussels (\$13) come sitting in a broth flavored with smoked tomatoes, black garlic oil, and a scattering of those crisped pork belly bits. This complex combination of flavors packs quite the umami punch, and the rich briny sauce is perfect for dipping youtiao into. I can only describe it as a cross between an unsweetened cruller and a churro. It's a fried carb stick, thus, I approve.

The original food truck served pho and dumplings, and while MOFU doesn't have pho on the menu right now, they do still feature their original fan favorite Pork & Chive Dumplings (\$9), which come with two sauces: sweet & spicy and black vinegar-toasted sesame. The beauty is that this time you get to eat them sitting at a dining table.

From the large plates section of the menu, the Fish Tacos (\$18) are also a revered option from the food truck days. Now when I say these guys know how to fry things, I mean THESE GUYS REALLY KNOW HOW TO FRY THINGS. I don't often order fried fish tacos because the breading is thicker than the actual fish and it gets soggy fast. These are different. The buttermilk fried flounder is crisp when it hits your table. It's crisp when you start Instagramming and leave it untouched



The Green Curry Mussels come sitting in a broth flavored with smoked tomatoes, black garlic oil, and a scattering of those crisped pork belly bits.

on the table for a while. It's crisp when you take the leftovers home and eat them cold the next day. Spicy mayo, peppery radish, and refreshing iceberg and cucumber are all these tacos need. The side of kimchi fried rice will do amazing things to your tongue. I do not know what kind of witchcraft is going on in that kitchen but if I ever find out, I'm going to bottle it and then I'll have the funds to move forward with that Pinterest board.

If you want something that smacks you in the face with all things savory, go for the Braised Short Rib (\$28). This is expertly prepared, a giant piece of meat worth

the price atop a mound of the kimchi fried rice (seriously, this rice will make you question everything you thought you knew), so tender that no knife is necessary. The braising liquid is mouthwateringly meaty and with the addition of a housemade peanut dukkah mix there's a nice contrast in texture to the beef and rice, the Middle Eastern flavors serving as an unexpected complement to the fermented flavors of the kimchi.

The addition of Kenner's expertise meant that the list of potent potables is top notch, and this was confirmed with the arrival of a Thai Basil Rickey (\$10). An English gin is the star but the supporting cast of cucumber, lime, and basil really elevate this to one hot weather drink you've got to cool off with before the leaves start changing color. In addition to the incredible selection of spirits, there is quite the collection of wine and local beer to satisfy novices and connoisseurs alike.

We finished off our night with a Vietnamese Coffee Mousse (\$7). It's sweet, not cloying, and comes topped with a thick layer of a chocolate Kahlua pecan crumble. This dessert is a dreamcatcher - once you dig in, all your worries will melt away and you'll only be left with whatever a rainbow feels like inside your whole being. >>>



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The original food truck served pho and dumplings, and while MOFU doesn't have pho on the menu right now, they do still feature their original fan favorite Pork & Chive Dumplings.



The Braised Short Rib is a giant piece of expertly prepared meat worth the price atop a mound of the kimchi fried rice.

You cannot eat this and think of anything negative, only fluffy puppies dancing to James Taylor songs.

If you haven't tried MOFU yet, consider visiting during the upcoming Downtown Raleigh Restaurant Week, August 13-18. Word on the street is that there will be both fan favorites and the debut of some exciting new dishes, so stop by for a \$10 lunch special or a \$30 three-course dinner (vegetarian options also available).

On August 25, MOFU is celebrating their first anniversary with a daylong party including a DJ, drink specials, bubble teas, giveaways, and a Summer Boodle Fight featuring fresh fruit, desserts, and boozy treats. (Do yourself a favor and Google "Boodle Fight." Not on an empty stomach, though – I promise just researching it will leave you hungry.) Ticket information will be released through MOFU's Facebook and Instagram pages and proceeds will benefit Rise Against Hunger.

*Speaking of happily-ever-afters...Right before you step into MOFU, look up and take notice of a few skeletons climbing the walls toward the roof. What looks like leftover Halloween decorations (which, technically, it is) is actually a declaration of love. One day, Woo was perusing pictures of restaurants in other cities and stumbled upon one decorated with skeletons scaling the outside walls. One of her employees, Nathan, was by her side and noticed how much she loved the idea, so he bought a

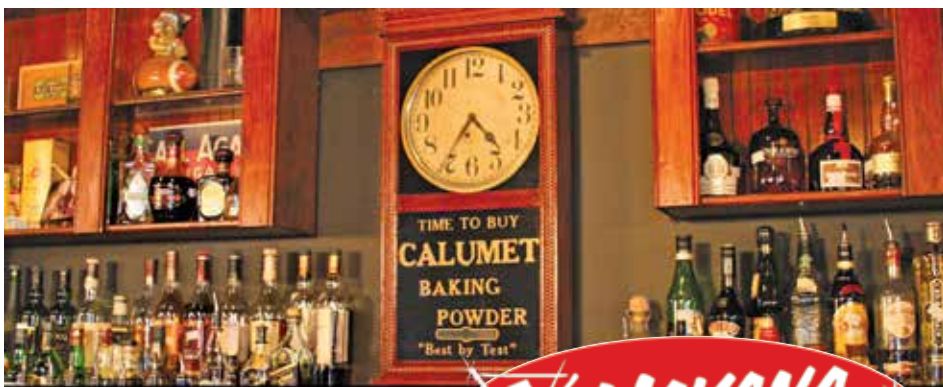
bunch of life-sized skeletons and decorated the building with the boney acrobats. This lovely gesture helped spark something special between Sophia and Nathan and the two are now happily married! 🍷



Spicy mayo, peppery radish, and refreshing iceberg and cucumber are all these super crunchy flounder tacos need.

MOFU SHOPPE

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With our Governor Roy Cooper

From the Publisher

The **State Capitol Foundation** is a private organization made up of dedicated individuals who assist in raising money for the preservation and upkeep of our magnificent State Capitol Building, as well as for the educational programs for our younger citizens. I'm honored to have served on the board for the Foundation for the past five years. The **State Capitol Oyster Roast** is our biggest fundraiser of the year and is coming up on Oct. 8. Tickets are on sale now and we're looking for a few more sponsors who love our Capitol Building and all that it represents. The evening will include The Embers live, a silent auction, all-you-can-eat oysters, shrimp, seafood, desserts, and more, plus local draft beer and superb wines. Our Governor and First Lady were co-chairs last year and spent the evening with us enjoying the music and mingling with guests. Visit <http://bit.ly/2018capitolroast> for tickets or please call me at 919.828.8888 if you're interested in becoming a sponsor for this wonderful event.

A few words about the *Downtowner*. We'd love to help **promote your business!** Do you want to reach over 135,000 potential new customers who live and work all over the Triangle? Give us a call and learn how you can get your business in front of our magazine readers as well as our 91,000+ social media followers. We'd be glad to help. Call anytime to find out what we can do for you. 919.828.8000.

Cheers,

Crash

Crash Gregg

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Around Town News in the Triangle

We love hearing about new local businesses and sharing it with our readers. Please keep us posted on any new locally owned restaurants, bars, retail shops, or business opening in downtown Raleigh, Durham or across the Triangle. Send an email to news@welovedowntown.com and clue us in. To say "Thanks Y'all," we'll pick a random tipster each month to win a free Downtowner t-shirt.

P.S. We're looking for contributing writers who want to help us report on what makes the Triangle a great place to live, work, play, and shop for both our print issue and our new website, www.TriangleDowntowner.com. We have writing opportunities on a wide range of topics: local business, food trucks, art galleries/artist profiles, breweries/local beer, music/bands, tech, startups, charities, personalities, and just about anything else interesting and different. Email us at writers@welovedowntown.com if you're interested. Be sure to include a few writing samples and we'll get back to you asap.

To keep up with news between issues as well as lots of event and food photos, be sure to follow us on all of our social media pages:

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This month's business listings were compiled and written by Esther McCaskill-Baker and Alix Vo.



Owned by Barbara Swavelly, **Brovelli Oil, Vinegar, and Gifts** operates on a pour-it-yourself model and also offers spices and other gifts. They opened August 11th and have over 50 oils and vinegars from Morocco, Italy, Greece, and Turkey in the shop to try and buy in 100ml, 250ml, 500ml, and 750ml bottle sizes. <https://brovellioil.com>

Poyner YMCA is the newest workout location in Raleigh, having opened its doors on June 20th. For those who are looking for a gym right in the center of downtown, look no further than the Poyner Y, offering quite a few amenities in their 26,000 sq/ft facility. From Matt Lilley, Regional Associate Branch Director, "We offer a large variety of cardio equipment, machine weights, and free weights and four different group fitness studios with 40-60 fitness classes a week! In the lobby, there's a Benelux Coffee shop and a community convening space which we'll use to support other non-profits and service projects."

www.ymcatriangle.org/alexander-family-ymca



Bartaco is a taco shack with an atmosphere that will make you feel as if you're hanging out at a snazzy bar on the beach. Gary Browne is the general manager at the North Hills bartaco, which opened in July and offers tacos with toppings varying from Baja fish to roasted duck, plus other items such as pork tamales and blistered shishito peppers. <https://bartaco.com>

In a newly developed space in the Brookside Shopping Center is **Fig**, a coffee shop that offers coffee drinks, wine, cocktails, and coffee cocktails as well as menu items for breakfast and lunch. Fig is owned by Duane Williams who also owns the shopping center and is currently in the middle of renovating all the other spaces around there. The space looks modern yet homey, with a back patio area for those who want to sit outside and enjoy their coffee. <https://figraleigh.com>



Also in the Brookside Shopping Center is the newly opened **Raleigh Tattoo Company**, a five-star review tattoo shop owned by artist Shaun Bushnell. Shaun was a renowned artist at Blue Flame for eight-and-half years, before opening his own shop. Bushnell is dedicated to offering artist services that are comprehensive and fit all client needs. He shows his successful business acumen as he states, "I try to be versatile, which is why I stay really busy." For a free consultation at Raleigh Tattoo Company, call 919-307-4478. Walk-ins are welcome Tuesdays and Sundays. <https://raleightattoo.com>



Petale (pronounced like petal) is a flower shop which recently opened on Hargett Street next to Raw Raleigh and owned by Bearta Alchacar, who used to work in the wedding industry. Guests can buy flower arrangements already prepared in a small, medium, or large vase, or buy by-the-stem and create their own bouquet. Petale also has a few selections of candles and chocolates available. <http://petaleshop.com>



Raleigh Vintage is tucked away at the end of a small, steep driveway on Glenwood Avenue and you would probably only find it if you were really looking. It may not look like much from the outside, but on the inside, it could rival any Brooklyn vintage store with the open space and glass windows. Currently, they only carry women's clothes, but they're adding a men's section soon and they also carry apothecary items. Andi and her partner Isaac own the store and are currently open Thur-Sat 11am-6pm. <https://raleighvintage.com>

Tapworks is a recently opened craft beer bar in the 222 Glenwood Avenue building and is owned by Sagar Amin and Param Patel. Customers can sample and pour their own craft beer by the ounce through the automated draft system. They also offer a small food menu. www.tapworksraleigh.com



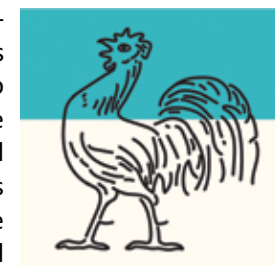
The **Hemp Farmacy** official grand opening took place August 3rd and is one of several locations in North Carolina. It was founded by Justin Hamilton with the flagship store in Wilmington. They offer a variety nutritional supplements derived from organically grown hemp plants. Visit their website at <http://hempfarmacy.us> or give them a call at 919.916.5607.



Tonbo Ramen is a new two-floor restaurant on Fayetteville Street in downtown Raleigh, recognizable by the dragonflies on the front doors. Owned by Tom Mukoyama with Chef Alex Cordova, the restaurant offers a selection of menu items that are specific to each floor, both with a vibe all its own: the Ramen Bar and the Izakaya Bar. The Ramen Bar has a family-friendly feel with tables and a menu of ramen, buns, and mochi doughnuts. The Izakaya Bar, (izakaya means small plate), features buns, ramen, skewers of meats (as simple as pork belly or as uncommon as chicken gizzard), and fried/grilled items. www.tonboramen.com



The second location for **Two Roosters** just opened up at Person Street Plaza. Like their first store on Lead Mine, they keep regular flavors as well as special flavors that change each month. Two Roosters was hatched on the back porch of founder Jared Plummer's grandmother's house. Next came their ice cream truck and camper, and eventually, the brick and mortar store. If you've got a thing for ice cream, check them out this summer while the sun's still burning! <http://www.tworoosters.com>



A Partition-Free Downtown

BY KRISTOPHER LARSON, AICP
PRESIDENT & CEO
DOWNTOWN RALEIGH ALLIANCE



Downtown Raleigh skyline from Salisbury Street (photo by Randy Bryant)

Downtowns across the country (including Raleigh's) have seen a remarkable resurgence of investment over the past twenty years. National trends in population growth have since confirmed that urban areas are now growing faster than their suburban and rural counterparts – a dynamic we haven't seen in more than a century. For the first time since Henry Ford rolled out the Model T, the first “family car” and the initial primary agent of suburbanization, population growth between urban and suburban areas reversed.

When I started my career in the Downtown management field more than fifteen years ago, our marketing strategies and messaging were different than they are today. Other than a pioneering pro-urban contingent, efforts were focused on winning back the denizens who'd turned their backs on Downtown and retreated to the suburbs. Cloaked under the auspices of rediscovery, the thinking at the time was not wholly unlike the intention of Urban Renewal: we sought to make our Downtowns more like the suburbs such that the middle class could be lured back. Like the partitions in benches meant to prevent a person from lying down, our Downtowns needed to be functionally and aesthetically modified so that the rediscovering masses felt as comfortable in Downtown as they did in their suburban neighborhoods. Looking back, communities were redesigning themselves out of fear.

Granted, downtowns were crawling out of differing levels of despair – each compelled to retrofit scars to their built environments delivered courtesy of indiscriminate federal redevelopment subsidies – but generally unprepared and

unwilling to exercise the patience and competency needed to amend decades of classism and redlining. Gentrifying forces were no longer as patient as they were during the artist-driven real estate renaissance in SoHo, due in part to capital pouring in because of immense speculation, a loose lending environment, and social trends that favored cultural urbanity rather than the archetypal American Dream. Reinvestment was on, and prodigal citizens were coming face to face with the realities of the gap between comfortable and poor; for many, the jarring realities produced both discomfort and dismay. We were less concerned with the design of the bench, its orientation, or even comfort. Rather, the focus was a fear of use – and by whom.

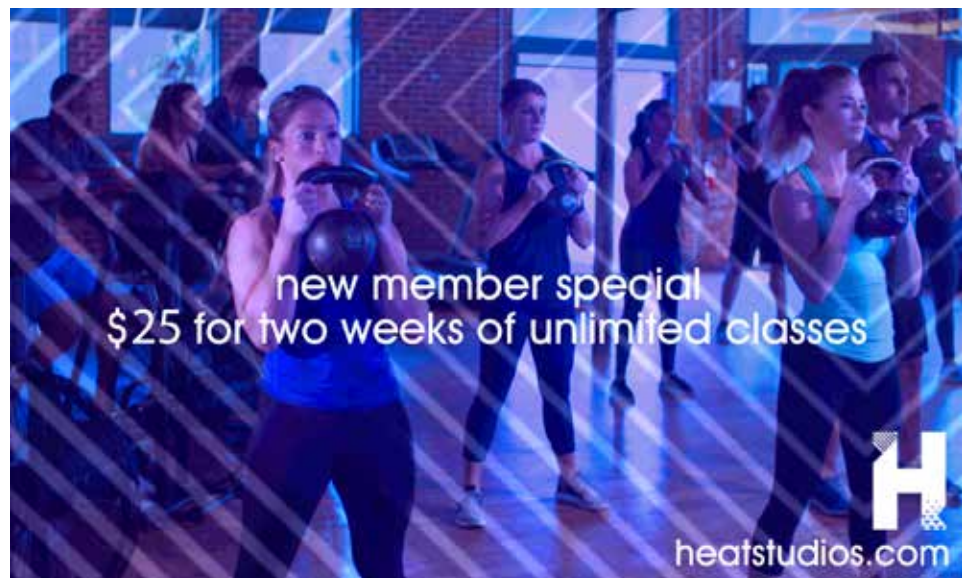
In community-owned spaces (versus privately-owned), people are afforded a set of rights that create opportunity for expression, creativity, growth, and more. We cannot restrict behavior for the sake of commercial activity – rather, we have chosen to permit chance encounters, perspective-altering experiences, and the types of challenges that keep our minds present. These community spaces become congregational loci for civic identity and pride, places where people, ideas, and opinions intersect to help further public discourse and discovery.

I've learned that the process of building a vibrant downtown is not solely about convincing people to come back and recreate a Downtown that exists in revisionist memories. While a subset of empty nesters have helped to fuel the resurgence in Downtown living, a substantial portion of the trend is due to Millennials seeking an urban alternative to the safe, suburban sprawled environments of their

childhoods. Some estimates show that 77% of Millennials would prefer to live in an urban environment – and 53% eschew driving as a primary means of transportation. Fifteen years ago, we had no way of knowing that this generational dynamic would bolster our city building cause.

These young adults have a perspective of their downtowns that those of us of prior generations can only imagine. Many Millennials have never known of their downtowns as unsafe or unattractive places. Even during their formative years, downtowns were winning back places in the hearts of their parents as welcoming waves of investment. This generation is filling downtown apartments, café chairs, and bar stools. Retaining this generation has emerged as a type of sport for employers who cherish their creativity, perspectives, and modern quest for authenticity and purpose.

It's time to change our conversation from designing out of fear and begin designing for us – the collective us. Not just the Millennials, or the Baby Boomers for that matter, but for the entire community at large. We can no longer afford to think about the future of our Downtown for any particular group; instead, we must think about building a Downtown for everyone. Those who will follow us, those who were already here, and all of those whose needs and preferences will be different than our own. Those with the access and resources to shape decisions, and those who have historically been left out of the conversation. Those who look different, think differently, worship and lay differently. Our community is all of these things and more, and our Downtown should be designed to be accessible and beloved by all, whether you've got your feet up or are sitting up straight! 🍷





Saint James Restaurant and Raw Bar

BY BRIAN ADORNETTO, FOOD EDITOR • PHOTOS BY CRASH S. GREGG



The driving force behind Saint James is chef-restaurateur Matt Kelly, whose growing restaurant empire also includes Mateo, Mothers & Sons Trattoria, and Lucky's Delicatessen.

The nearly century-old art deco building housing Saint James Seafood Restaurant and Raw Bar is both modern and nostalgic. The renovated space is bright and lively, with an obvious nautical flair: its bathroom sinks resemble oyster shells, brass porthole windows are set above the bar and in the doors, and a plastic marlin adorns the wall. White-tiled walls, long, blue banquettes, riveted brass-covered tables, and yellow barstools give character to the dining room, while an entire wall of floor-to-ceiling windows bathes the room in lavish natural light. Underfoot is the familiar black-and-white tiled floor of the old Fishmonger's Seafood Market and Oyster House, which occupied the building from 1983 until 2015, and at each place setting, intentionally kitschy placemats instruct diners in "how to eat a fresh lobster", offering a wink and a nod to old school coastal seafood joints.



At night, the floor-to-ceiling front windows offer a perfect view into Saint James.

The driving force behind Saint James is chef-restaurateur Matt Kelly, whose growing restaurant empire also includes Mateo, Mothers & Sons Trattoria, and Lucky's Delicatessen. The presence of all four restaurants in Durham is no coincidence, Kelly says, "Durham is a great community and an exciting place, foodwise. Having Ben [Barker]'s, Scott [Howell]'s, and Giorgio [Bakatsias]'s restaurants here was very influential to me. It showed me that the people here appreciate high-quality food and are open to trying new things. And there are tons of farms and farmers' markets close by, too."

The idea of opening a seafood restaurant had been on Kelly's mind for years, so when he heard that this iconic space was available, the four-time James Beard semifinalist jumped on it. In his words, "This building has a lot of history and is an important part of Durham. Plus, it



The Florida Keys Smoked Fish Dip is served with fried, house-seasoned saltines and pickled cauliflower, onion, and cucumber.



The variety, quality, freshness, and flavor of oysters from the raw bar menu are simply remarkable.

was a seafood place for 32 years and I've always wanted to create a restaurant that helps people understand that seafood is seasonal and that there is a symbiotic relationship between those that live in the ocean and lakes and those who eat from them. So we knew right away that we wanted to continue the legacy of serving seafood in this particular location."

Kelly and his team continuously study the seafood watchlist as they curate Saint James' menu. All the seafood served at Saint James is sustainable, domestic, and sushi-grade. Most of it comes from the southeast, and all the finned fish are wild-caught. Because of Kelly's unrelenting diligence, Saint James' menu changes a few times each week – sometimes even daily – to reflect seafood availability. The themes and most of the accompaniments, however, change seasonally. Menu offerings include appetizers, baked oysters and clams, soups and pan roasts, entrees, Calabash

platters, and sides. A separate raw bar menu features the day's selection of oysters, crab, lobster, clams, crudo, and "Towers" (high-rise raw bar combo platters).

The Florida Keys Smoked Fish Dip (\$9.50), Little Gem Lettuce with fried NC oysters (\$13), "Unagi" (\$15), Roasted Beets (\$9.50), Oysters Ashworth (\$13), and Crudo (\$11) began our journey into the sea. Creamy, smoky, and salty, Kelly's smoked fish dip took me back to the smoked fish salads I used to devour in New York City's best delis. It is served with fried, house-seasoned

saltines and pickled cauliflower, onion, and cucumber. The Little Gem Lettuce, a Caesar salad studded with plump fried oysters and showered with Parmigiano Reggiano, is crunchy, bright, and sharp. Unagi is a Japanese barbecue-style sushi dish traditionally made with eel, but Kelly's adaptation showcases fish – in this case, speckled trout. When eaten together with the avocado cream, house-puffed rice, cucumber, and house-made togarashi spice blend, it tastes very much like a sushi roll. The wonderfully light and refreshing roasted beets >>>

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Loaded with clams, shrimp, oysters, lobster, potatoes, corn, celery, Andouille sausage, and seasoned with Old Bay and whole sprigs of fresh thyme, the Saint James Steam Pot can easily feed two.

are served cold, salad style. The accompanying Honey-crisp apples, pistachios, stracciatella, and salsa verde-like sauce, deliver a crunchy array of earthy, herby, sweet, and tangy flavors. Oysters Ashworth – oysters on the half shell filled with Benton’s bacon and creamed spinach, glazed with hollandaise, and broiled — is named in honor of Kelly’s grandfather and features all of the patriarch’s favorite foods (and some of mine as well). This dish, which combines smoky, briny undertones with sweet creaminess and a slight mineral taste, is a must-have. The crudo – made up of thinly sliced black bass, Calabrian chili sauce, a squeeze of yuzu, and sprinkles of puffed rice, chives, and microgreens – presents a pleasant citrusy-spicy change of pace.

Though they were listed in the appetizers section, we opted to have the Lobster Roll (\$16) as an entrée and Chowder Fries (\$13) as a side, along with the Saint James Steam Pot (\$44), Striped Bass (\$32), and a side of Brussels Sprouts (\$9). The lobster roll, with its bisque-like “lobster dip,” is Kelly’s clever play on a soup and sandwich in which the soup is actually a dip for the sandwich (as in the case of the French Dip sandwich). Large chunks of sweet, succulent lobster are served in a buttery split-top brioche bun and dusted with chives. It is, by far, the best lobster roll I’ve had since moving to the South. The rich, creamy “dip” is also outstanding, but after my first bite of the lobster roll, I chose to savor each separately. Another dish not to be missed is the Chowder Fries, Kelly’s brilliant riff on poutine (or disco fries, depending on where you’re from). Its hand-cut potatoes are fried, seasoned with Old Bay, slathered with New England clam chowder, topped with Benton’s bacon and aged white cheddar, and, finally, broiled. Crisp, brackish, smoky, and cheesy, this is comfort food at its best. The hearty Saint James Steam Pot, served in a large Dutch oven, resembles a low-country boil or clambake. Loaded with clams, shrimp, oysters, lobster, potatoes, corn, celery, and Andouille sausage; and seasoned with Old Bay and whole sprigs of fresh thyme, its bounty can easily feed two, especially after appetizers. Kelly’s presentation of the striped bass is not only well

balanced, but also visually stunning. A ring of ruby-red diced beets is filled with crushed, bright green spring peas and encircled by a blush Sauce Vierge (a nouvelle French sauce made with tomatoes, fresh herbs, garlic, lemon juice, and olive oil). The flawlessly cooked striped bass sits atop this bed of vegetables, crowned with a radish and mint salad. The slightly charred Brussels sprouts have a little bit of every-

thing: crispy shallots, benne seeds, peanuts, cilantro, and nuoc cham (a Vietnamese sauce made with lime juice, garlic, chilies, sugar, and fish sauce). The overall effect of the sweet, sour, salty, bitter, citrusy, herby, nutty, and fishy flavors is kind of funky.

After all that seafood, we were finally ready for dessert. Saint James’ Key Lime Pie (\$9.50), with its saltine cracker crust and coconut whipped cream, is a welcome twist on the ubiquitous treat. It is sweet, salty, not very tart, and slightly tropical. Served in a petite mason jar, the Pecan Custard (\$9) has all the flavors and textures of a traditional pecan pie and then some. The slightly sweet vanilla custard is interspersed with nuggets of pie dough



Kelly’s presentation of the striped bass is not only well balanced, but also visually stunning.

and pecans, topped with bourbon-pecan caramel, and covered with sorghum “popcorn.” Crunchy, buttery, nutty, and creamy; it’s the perfect way to end a meal.

I expect that Saint James will sweep most of next year’s “best of” lists. The seafood is impeccable, the staff well trained and friendly, the cocktails fantastic, and the atmosphere energetic and fun. If you’re a seafood lover, then Saint James is the restaurant of your dreams.

For more food and restaurant photos of Saint James, read the online version of this article at www.triangledowntowner.com. Just enter Saint James in the search bar just below the menu on the right.

Interested in having the Downtowner visit your restaurant for a profile? Click on EAT+DRINK on our website



Saint James Seafood

806 W. Main Street, Durham, NC 27701

984.219.7900

www.saintjamesseafood.com

Hours of Operation

Sunday: 5-9:30pm

Tuesday-Thursday: 5-10pm

Friday-Saturday: 5-11pm

Sunday Brunch: Coming soon

Price: \$\$\$

Cuisine: American Seafood

Service: Knowledgeable, professional, and helpful

Wine List: 25 high quality by-the-glass options including sparkling and fortified wines

Dress: Casual

Noise Level: Moderate to loud

Reservations: Recommended on weekends

Parking: Metered street parking and a parking lot St. James will validate for directly adjacent and across the street

Features: Full bar; Bar dining; Raw bar; Tiki cocktails; Catering; Private dining; Take-out; Major credit cards accepted; No television; No wifi.

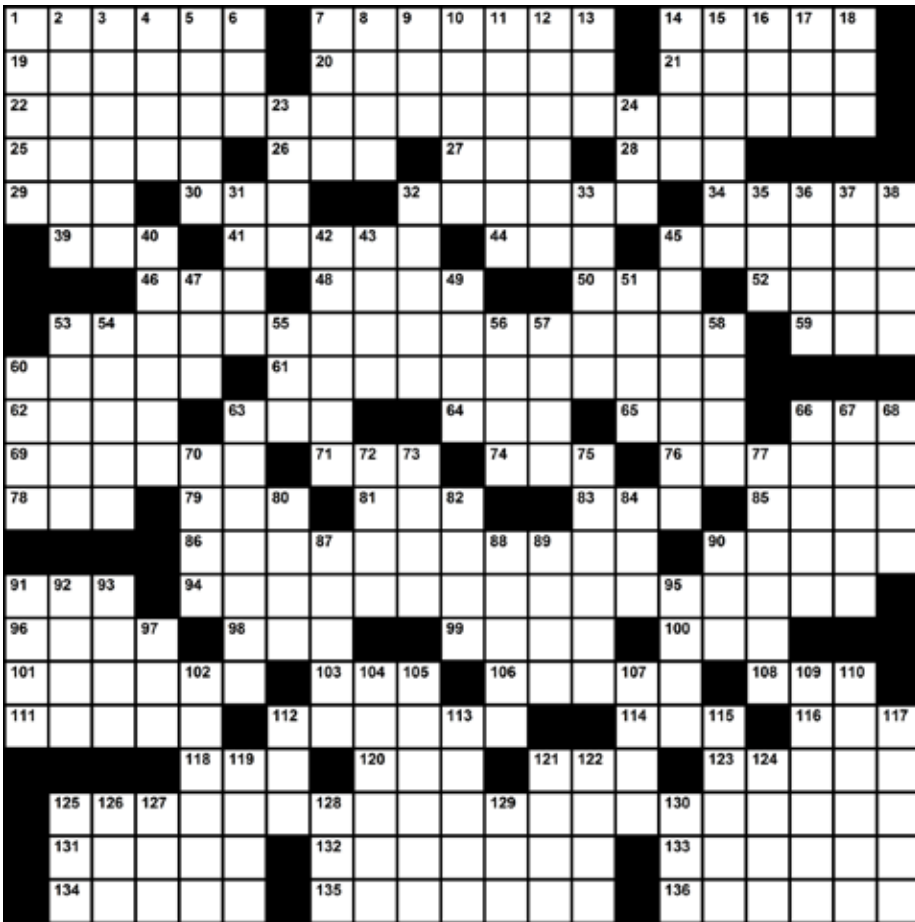
Downtowner Tips: Great for seafood aficionados, but non-seafood options are scarce; Good for date nights; Sitting at the bar is a great option for solo diners; Don’t pass on the homemade oyster crackers with “special house seasoning” – they’re awesome; On Tuesday through Friday nights from 5pm until 6pm, the bar menu is half price; Look for nearby parking lots that are free after 5pm.

menu and click on the “Promote your restaurant” link for more info or give us a call us at 919.828.8000.

Brian Adornetto is a food writer, culinary instructor, and chef. His business, Love at First Bite, specializes in private cooking classes and intimate dinners. For more information, please visit www.loveatfirstbite.net. Contact Brian at brian@welovedowntown.com.



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"Finding the One"

ACROSS

1. Signal-carrying, in a way
7. A bob, shag, pixie, buzz...
14. Military uniform cloth
19. Smoke out
20. Close to land
21. Mathematician
22. Romantic question
25. Like bread for pigeons
26. Later's opposite
27. "___ in black"
28. Untrue
29. Long
30. "___-Pan" (Clavell novel)
32. Features of some fonts
34. Duck and down preceder
39. Infamous insecticide
41. Hat material
44. Kind of cross
45. These hang around on a farm
46. Gobbled up
48. Way out
50. "My boy"
52. Serb or Croat
53. Immediate falling for
59. Special perception, for short
60. Pull over sound
61. Stink
62. Super server, in tennis
63. "Hollywoodland" star, Affleck
64. Jogged
65. .000001 joule
66. Resin
69. Meter feeder's need
71. Term of address in a monastery

74. Legal thing
76. French philosopher
78. "Here's lookin' at you, ___"
79. Now, I see!
81. Common yule color
83. Fleece provider
85. Protection
86. Memorable song
90. Dentist's advice
91. Jedi in Star Wars, first name
94. Romantic Beatles' song
96. Renovate
98. Coloring
99. Equivalent
100. Myanmar monetary unit
101. Bluegills
103. "Andy Capp" cartoonist Smythe
106. Folded manuscript sheet
108. Winter month, for short
111. Mix-up
112. Off the mark
114. Pigs' digs
116. Dictionary abbreviation
118. Alpine gear
120. Holed up
121. Hopper
123. Gut flora
125. Sad love song from Alicia Keys
131. Put together
132. Adult doodlebug, insect-carnivore mix?
133. Cringe
134. Euripides drama
135. Ones taking five
136. Lays to rest

DOWN

1. Full of gossip
2. Split

3. High ground
4. Turn over
5. At this point
6. August baby
7. Great Depression rail rider
8. From the top
9. Philosophy suffix
10. Poet's challenge
11. Like many CIA ops
12. Greek Muse of astronomy
13. No. on a business card
14. Bingo relative
15. Staying in shacks
16. Rope-a-dope boxer
17. Barbie Doll's beau
18. Indignation
23. Condo, perhaps
24. U.S.N. officer
31. Ocean voyage locale
32. Fancy ice cream shape
33. Light musket
35. Licenses, for example
36. "Get rid of it," to a proofreader
37. Generations
38. Are you coming?
40. Bar
42. Dissatisfied customer's demand
43. Angle between the stem and the leaf
45. Dislodge from the saddle
47. Bo Derek film
49. Ruler opposed by the Bolsheviks
51. Eyeball
53. Chinese fruit
54. Greek mountain nymph
55. Best-known
56. Lift
57. Playing w/ a full deck
58. Roman garment
60. Bed
63. Witnesses
66. No. 2 in the statehouse
67. Pop up, as a conversation topic
68. Ex or Ab follower
70. Madly in love
72. After-lunch sandwich
73. Remote control button
75. Glass beer mug
77. Replace bullets
80. Unite
82. Wears
84. Chinese calligrapher ___ Qing
87. Beauty salon workers
88. Full of foliage
89. "Show and tell" for a client
90. Household nuisance
91. Eyeballs
92. Swiss capital
93. "I had no ___!"
95. X marks the ___
97. Blockhead
102. Deltoid
104. Torch type
105. West African storytellers
107. "___ that special?!"
109. Develop gradually
110. More tranquil
112. Cry before firing
113. Not for minors
115. Long (for)
117. Cambodian cash
119. Soda nut
121. Crude dude
122. Taverns
124. Lump
125. "It Must Be ___"
126. Four quarters
127. Walletful
128. Place for a plug
129. Material-forming tool
130. Special effects: (abbr.)

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The NCSU Belltower

After almost a century, the memorial will finally live up to its name

By CHARIS GUERIN
 UPDATED 2018
 BY DOWNTOWNER STAFF



One of the most recognizable symbols for North Carolina State University is the Memorial Belltower. Situated next to Hillsborough Street and across from Pullen Park, the belltower stands as a constant reminder of time, and also of a period in NCSU's past when money was scarce and campus additions were luxuries. History tells us that the Great Depression hit the college hard, just as it did many local businesses and families. State funding decreased, class sizes were reduced and teachers' salaries shrunk. Despite these obstacles, the college, its alumni and its teachers persevered in their support for the tower's construction, a campus feature that upon completion would not satisfy a single academic endeavor nor generate revenue.

The history of the belltower mirrors the turbulence of the 20th century. Work commenced quickly after the cornerstone was laid in 1921 with 10-foot sections added in 1924, 1925, and 1926. But construction was halted for extended periods during the Great Depression and again during World War II. The stonework was finished in 1937 thanks to the federal Works Progress Administration. Student honor societies and the class of 1938 donated the clock, and the class of 1939 purchased a set of floodlights.

Finishing touches, including the chimes, shrine room, and memorial plaque were completed in the late 1940s, with a formal dedication held on Nov. 11, 1949.

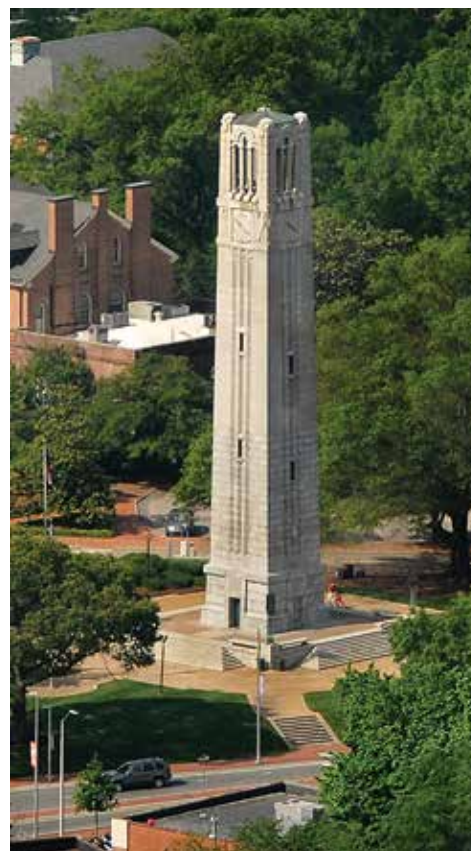
Although 34 alumni died in the war, the memorial plaque contains 35 names. George L. Jeffers, class of 1913, was wrongly reported killed in action and his name was included by mistake. When the error was discovered, the university decided to re-chisel the incorrect name to read George E. Jefferson, which has become a symbol of unknown soldiers from NC State and elsewhere.

Over time, the structure has morphed from a veteran's monument to one of N.C. State's main gathering



The tower in 1930 as it appeared for much of the Great Depression.

(Image Courtesy of Special Collections Research Center, North Carolina State University Libraries)



(Both color belltower photos courtesy NCSU)

spots. The tower is lit for Veterans and Memorial days, but it also glows red for Wolfpack wins, or whenever students or faculty earn major achievements.

The one thing missing from the belltower for all these years are bells inside the tower. Since its dedication in 1949, the bell sounds have come from speakers near the top of the tower, produced by an automated carillon in a nearby building.

A student-initiated movement, started by NCSU alum Matt Robbins and known as "Finish the [Bell] Tower," attempted to raise funds to purchase the 54-bell carillon originally proposed in the 1920 design. While successful, the effort only raised enough funds for five bells because of the tremendous cost.

However, in 2017, Bill Henry, an NC State alumnus from the College of Textiles class of 1981, and his wife Frances Henry agreed to donate a large gift that will complete the set. The donation will not only contribute to the bells, carillon, and interior stairs but also help to renovate and

make repairs to the Bell Tower. Henry's brothers are also graduates of NCSU and the couple's son, William, is a student there studying engineering.

"For the university, I have to believe that it's such a momentous occasion because this tower is on our rings, it's on our stationery, it's on our street signs, it's everywhere," said Robbins. "It literally stands for N.C. State."

"The Belltower is one of the most iconic and unifying sites on the campus of NC State," Henry said. "I have observed through my last several visits to Raleigh just how important this monument is to a wide array of individuals and groups. It is amazing to see how many people gather around the Belltower each time I come to Raleigh. I feel that it is important to finish this work in order to properly recognize the alumni who gave their lives in World War I." 📖

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