



COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING  
THE CHARLES E. VIA, JR. DEPARTMENT OF  
CIVIL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ENGINEERING  
VIRGINIA TECH™

# CEE Alumni News 2020



In the midst of truly unusual of times, the Charles E. Via, Jr. Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering continues our instructional and research missions. We know that our alumni are equally challenged by the COVID-19 crisis, and we are inspired by the Hokie spirit of Ut Prosim throughout Virginia and the world. Please allow us to take this opportunity to share with you the activities, achievements, and research productivity of the students and faculty of the department. Our faculty continue to attract national awards and attention and our students have been engaging in research that will have a positive impact on their individual futures, as well as improving society as a whole. We have a tradition of delivering outstanding experiential learning opportunities for our students year after year through field trips and hands-on learning experiences. While this semester has been unique as classes were moved online due to COVID-19, our department was still able to do great things to advance our society through their research and work and is looking forward to graduating a class of students that will be some of the best leaders in society. I hope you enjoy reading about these updates, awards, and news of the alumni of our department. Please take a few minutes to browse these features. I think you will understand why we know our alumni are the best in the nation!



Mark A. Widdowson  
Professor and Interim Department Head

## Civil and Environmental Engineering Alumni Board



**Brad  
Chewning**



**David  
Clarke**



**David  
Cocke**



**Bernie  
Deneke**



**Betsy  
Dulin**



**Martha  
Gross**



**Francis  
Homer**



**Charles  
Kilpatrick**



**Vernon  
Kirby**



**Jeffrey  
Lighthiser**



**Herbert  
Morgan**



**Robert  
Notte**



**Maysill  
Pascal**



**James  
Patteson**



**Melinda  
Peters**



**Michael  
Pietrzyk**



**Katherine  
Plasket**



**Jessie  
Ponce de Leon**



**Beth  
Turner**



**Edward  
Westerman**

# Alumni Achievement Awards Program

## The Academy of Distinguished Alumni



John J. Angle  
B.S. 1991



Courtney A.  
Beamon  
B.S. 1995, M.S. 1996



Brad Coffey  
M.S. 1990



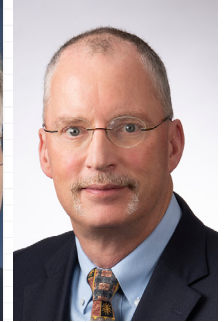
Govindan  
Kannan  
Ph.D. 1999



Andrew Kissell  
B.S. 1978



Vernon R.  
Schaefer  
Ph.D. 1987



Allen L. Sehn  
Ph.D. 1990

## Outstanding Young Alumni



William Collins  
B.S. 2006, M.S. 2010, Ph.D.  
2014



Jeremy Guest  
M.S. 2007



Lashun K. Massey  
Ph.D. 2011

These awards come from nominations submitted by our alumni. Alumni may be selected for induction into the Academy of Distinguished Alumni based upon a review of their overall career accomplishments and contributions to the profession, their community, and service to Virginia Tech. Younger alumni (within 15 years of graduation with their B.S. degree) may be selected to receive an Outstanding Young Alumni award. Over the past years, 136 alumni have been recognized with this distinct honor.

### Nomination Form

Nominator Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominator Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Nominee Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Degrees from VT CEE Department: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Degrees: \_\_\_\_\_

Please include a letter of nomination and a copy of the nominee's resume or CV. These and any other supporting documents can be emailed to Courtney Sakry at [csakry@vt.edu](mailto:csakry@vt.edu) or mailed to:

**Virginia Tech Civil and Environmental Engineering**  
**200 Patton Hall, MC 0105**  
**Blacksburg, VA 24061**

# Matthew H. Hebdon receives Alumni Teaching Excellence Award



“Dr. Hebdon is inspiring, motivating, and helpful teacher,” said Michelle Helsel ('17). “He provided the most excellent learning environment and basis for steel structural design.”

Many of Matthew Hebdon’s students have similar comments about his inspirational and motivational teaching techniques. Hebdon teaches classes such as Design of Steel Structures and Steel Bridge Design. He is active in activities outside of the classroom which inspires many of his students to pursue hands-on experience. Among these, he serves as the advisor for the Virginia Tech Steel Bridge Team, travels each summer to Europe as part of the Bridges in Switzerland, Germany, and Italy trip, and also hosts elementary, middle and high school students frequently in the lab to teach them about structural engineering.

He received his B.S. and M.S. in Civil and Environmental Engineering from Utah State University and earned a doctorate in Civil Engineering from Purdue University before joining the faculty at Virginia Tech in 2015. His areas of research focus on redundancy of structural systems, bridge monitoring and testing, fatigue and fracture testing, historic fabrication

methods and materials, and large scale testing of structures.

The Alumni Teaching Excellence Award is chosen from a survey of alumni that have graduated within the last five years.

# Bill Knocke receives G.V. Loganathan Award



Bill Knocke joined the Virginia Tech faculty in 1979 and served as the department head of the Charles E. Via, Jr. Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering from 1995-2009. He currently serves as a Professor and Associate Department head in the department.

Knocke has been recognized with many professional honors and awards including the Walter Huber National Research Prize from the American Society of Civil Engineering (ASCE) and Outstanding Faculty Award Recipient from the Virginia State Council for Higher Education. He is often recognized as a favorite professor in the department. “Dr. Knocke goes above and beyond to meet with our design teams weekly to guide and assist with our projects,” said student Jamie Timmer. “When the project was graded, he also went above and beyond to give us helpful critiques relevant to the water and wastewater field.”

Knocke’s area of expertise is in physical-chemical treatment of water and wastewater, chemistry of aquatic systems, sludge treatment and disposal, and hazardous waste assessment and treatment. He teaches courses such as Water and Wastewater Treatment Design, Advanced Environmental Chemistry, and Environmental Engineering Design II.

Knocke received his B.S. in civil engineering and his M.S. and Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering from the University of Missouri before joining the faculty at Virginia Tech.

The G.V. Loganathan award is determined by a poll of current CEE students who feel that faculty affected their education in a positive way through teaching, research, advising, involvement with student organizations or in other ways. The award was formerly known as the CEE Faculty Achievement Award, but the name was changed with unanimous support from the department in memory of Dr. G.V. Loganathan who received the award five times during his tenure at Virginia Tech.

# Senior Spotlights

## Senior Spotlight



### Alexie Jean Jacques

Hometown: Saint Lucia

Alexie Jean Jacques has moved a lot in her life. She is originally from the Caribbean island of Saint Lucia and moved to the United States at age 13 in pursuit of a better education. She attended four different high schools in four different states so she had a goal to make her college experience somewhere that felt like home. “Virginia Tech has school pride like no other which fosters what I would consider home: a sense of unity,” she said.

Civil engineering grabbed her interest because she enjoys mathematics and problem solving, while also having the opportunity to help others. “Meeting the needs of others and improving the quality of life by designing and constructing infrastructure is a combination of my two interests in problem solving and helping others,” she noted.

Alexie serves as a student ambassador for the civil and environmental engineering department, which allows her the opportunity to engage in outreach with prospective students and serve as a representative of the department. She was also a Virginia Tech Global Citizen and traveled to Rwanda, Africa for a study abroad trip involving the design and implementation of a water sanitation system involving a bio-sand filter. She wants to continue that humanitarian work by working on construction projects in underprivileged communities, including the school buildings in her hometown of Saint Lucia.

## Senior Spotlight



### Kase Poling

Hometown: Beckley, West Virginia

Kase Poling chose Virginia Tech because he “wanted to attend a university that would allow me to reach my fullest potential.” Originally, his plan was to get a degree in biomedical engineering and go to medical school like his dad and sister. However, he chose civil engineering to fulfill his passion for public service and to bring a knowledge of infrastructure and construction back to his home state of West Virginia. “With the knowledge I have gained, and continue to gain at Virginia Tech, I believe I can help to change West Virginia for the better,” he said. Next year, Kase will be staying at Virginia Tech to earn a master’s degree in the Vecellio Construction Engineering and Management Program. He is also currently running for the West Virginia House of Delegates, District 31.

While at Virginia Tech, Kase has been very involved on campus serving in roles such as the student representative to the Commission on Equal Opportunity and Diversity and serving in several different roles on the Student Government Association. He is an undergraduate teaching assistant for CEE 4804: Professional and Legal Issues.

When Kase is not studying, teaching, and serving, he enjoys doing anything outdoors such as playing tennis, golf, hiking, rock climbing and skiing.