

2019 Distinguished Alumna and Alumnus Award Recipients  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

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**James E. Delany**

UNC-CHAPEL HILL DEGREES: B.A. 1970, J.D. 1973

After three decades as Commissioner of the Big Ten Conference, James Delaney is a widely respected leader in the world of college sports. He oversees a conference that has 14 member institutions and administers more than \$200 million in direct financial aid to some 9,600 student athletes.

In 2014 Delany received the Torch of Liberty Award from the Anti-Defamation League in recognition of the conference's commitment to diversity, equality and opportunity. In 2016 he was honored with the John W. Bunn Lifetime Achievement Award by the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame.

While a student at Carolina, Delany played varsity basketball, serving as tri-captain and twice participating in the NCAA Final Four. After graduation, he remained engaged with his alma mater through work with the School of Law, the Kenan-Flagler Business School, and the Hussman School of Journalism and Media. He has also served the university as a member of the General Alumni Association's Board of Directors, most recently as its chair. In 2012 he received a Distinguished Alumni Award from the School of Law.

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**Nikole Hannah-Jones**

UNC-CHAPEL HILL DEGREE: M.A. 2003

Nikole Hannah-Jones is an award-winning investigative reporter covering segregation and racial injustice for The New York Times Magazine. A passionate advocate for equality and truth telling, Hannah-Jones began her career as a reporter for The News & Observer, where she covered issues of race, class, school segregation and equity. In 2017, she received a MacArthur Foundation Fellowship for her work on educational inequality. She has also won a Peabody Award, Polk Award, National Magazine Award and the John Chancellor Award, which is presented annually by the Columbia Journalism School to a reporter with courage and integrity for cumulative professional accomplishments.

In 2016 Hannah-Jones co-founded the Ida B. Wells Society for Investigative Reporting, a training and mentorship organization geared toward increasing the numbers of investigative reporters of color. Earlier this year the society announced its affiliation with the UNC's Hussman School of Journalism and Media, where Hannah-Jones was a Park Fellow.

Hannah-Jones holds a Bachelor of Arts in history and African American studies from the University of Notre Dame.

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## **Jill C. McCorkle**

UNC-CHAPEL HILL DEGREE: B.A. 1980

Jill McCorkle has the distinction of having published her first two novels on the same day in 1984, and soon after she was described in the *The New York Times Book Review* as a “born novelist.” Since then she has published four novels and four collections of short stories; five of her works have been named *New York Times* notable books. Several of her stories have appeared in *Best American Short Stories* and *New Stories from the South*.

McCorkle has taught at UNC-Chapel Hill, Harvard, Tufts and Brandeis. She currently teaches creative writing at North Carolina State University and the Bennington College Writing Seminars, and is also a frequent instructor at the Sewanee Summer Writers Program. McCorkle has been recognized with the New England Book Award, John Dos Passos Prize for Literature, North Carolina Award for Literature and Thomas Wolfe Prize. She was inducted into the North Carolina Literary Hall of Fame in 2018 and has been described as “a North Carolina treasure.”

McCorkle holds a Master of Arts in writing from Hollins University.

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## **Robert D. Newman**

UNC-CHAPEL HILL DEGREE: PH.D. 1983

Robert Newman is president and director of the National Humanities Center, a leading institute for advanced study in the humanities. He was previously a professor and administrator at the University of Utah, where he established a new humanities building and led the creation of the Taft/Nicholson Center for Environmental Humanities. He has received numerous awards for his teaching and institutional leadership.

Newman has written six books and many articles on twentieth-century English literature and culture and narrative theory. He has long been general editor of the “Cultural Frames, Framing Culture” series published by University of Virginia Press.

Since assuming leadership of the National Humanities Center in 2015, Newman has broadened its scholarly mission and encouraged public engagement with the humanities. One nominator stated that, “In a moment when STEM holds sway, Robert Newman’s plea for the importance of the humanities is one of the most powerful in the United States today.”

Newman holds a Bachelor of Arts in English from Pennsylvania State University and a Master of Arts in literature and aesthetics from Goddard College.