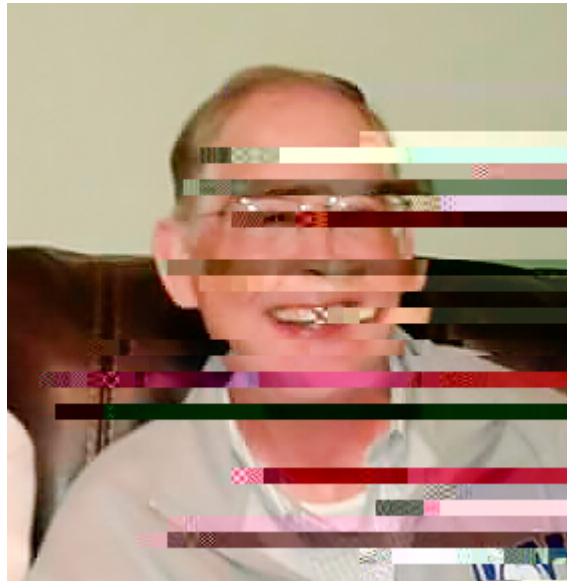




Class notes and in memoriam

Submissions received June-October 2021

Above: [redacted], left, UAF Alumni Association president, and Theresa Bakker, UAFAA executive director, show their UAF pride with Nook at the Golden Days parade in July 2021 during the Nanook Rendezvous reunion (read more about reunion near the bottom of this article). UAF photo by JR Ancheta. Photos below were provided by alumni unless otherwise noted.



Eric Miller

Eric E. Miller '77 retired on May 29, 2021. Miller served as an audit and logistics services manager for NTA Inc. He later received his master's certificate from Villanova University in church administration. He continued as parish administrator and accountant for 12 years at St. Stephen the Martyr in Renton, Washington, until his

has worked for DOTPF for two decades, most recently as Northern Region director.



Laura Wallace Burleson '97 — “After graduating from UAF, I took a job in a genetics lab at Yale University while working on a genetic epidemiology project that I found fascinating. I discovered that I was far too clumsy for lab work. I then pursued further education, first with a master’s in public health and then further training in



UAF photo by JR Ancheta.

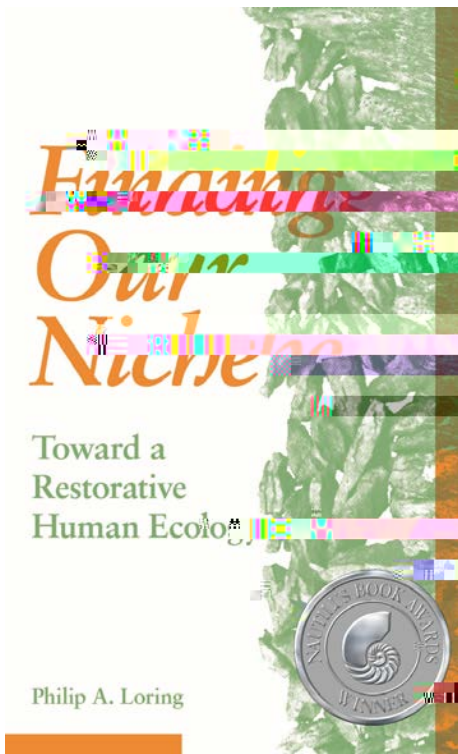
Forrest Kuiper '99, '00, '12 is acting fire chief of the University Fire Department. He also currently holds Seat 3 on the UAF Alumni Association board, representing the Fairbanks area. He previously held the position of board treasurer. His spouse, **Buffy Kuiper '03, '11**, works for UA Scholars and Alaska 529.

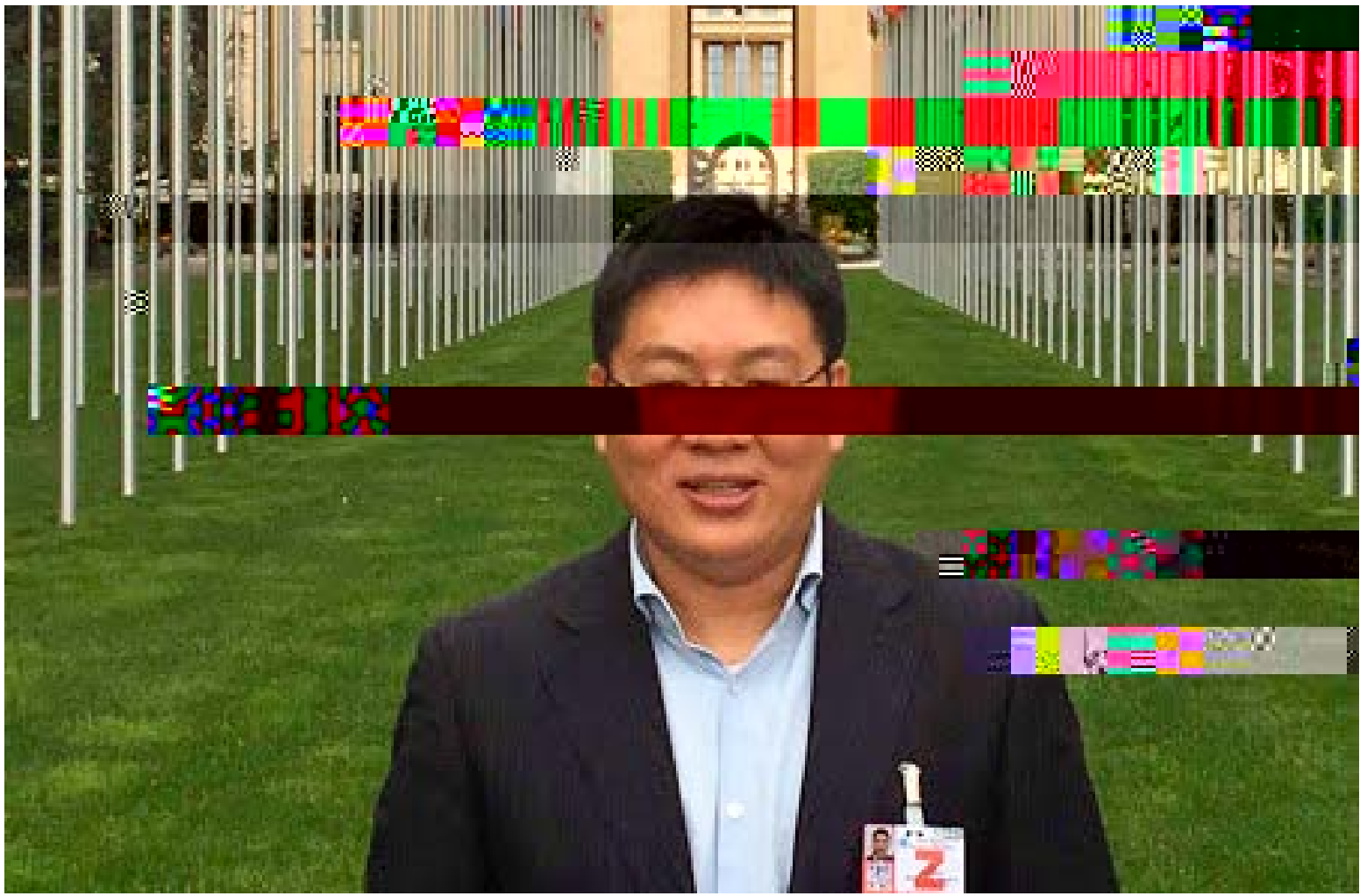




<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-ut3x-wGyuQ>

I received two advanced degrees from UAF, an M.A. in anthropology in 2007 and Ph.D. in Indigenous studies in 2010. I have a new book, 'Finding Our Niche.' The book tells many stories of my time in rural Alaska for my research and won two awards — a Nautilus Book Awards silver medal (in ecology and environment) and an Independent Publisher Book Awards 'Ippy' gold medal (in regional non-fiction)."







Charu Uppal '10, '14 passed the CFRE International examination to become a certified fundraising executive. Uppal, who holds master's degrees in professional communication and in business administration from UAF, serves as the associate director of individual giving at the Portland Art Museum.

Before the museum, she managed the annual giving program at the Oregon Zoo Foundation for over four years. At the onset of COVID-19, in March 2022, she led the Emergency Recovery Fund campaign to mitigate revenue loss caused by closures. The campaign exceeded the \$1 million goal in 21 days.



Clockwise from top: Charu and her family paddle at Cascade Lakes near Mount Bachelor in central Oregon; Charu celebrates at Commencement 2014. UAF photo by JR Ancheta; Charu takes a photo of herself with her husband, Ross Imbler, and kids Sitara, left, and Adler.

Nathan Johnson '17 — "I graduated in 2017 with a

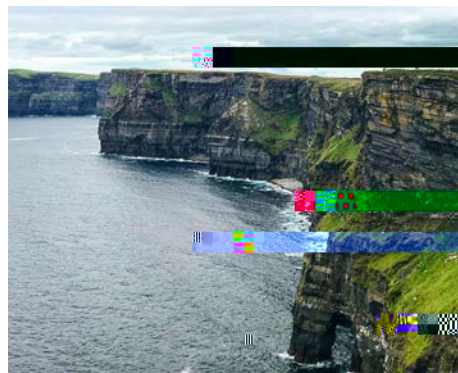
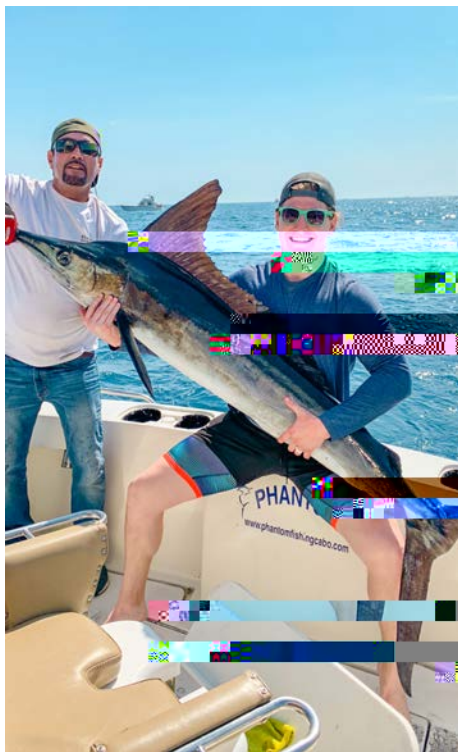
position has allowed me to put my education into practice and build public health emergency preparedness systems within Yakima County.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, I served as the incident commander for the county's response to the pandemic. This provided me with opportunities to coordinate between local, state and federal partners closely as we navigated the response. My education from UAF gave me the tools necessary as I worked with colleagues to build low-barrier, accessible and equitable systems to provide resources to a historically underserved and vulnerable community. This included personal protective equipment distribution, community-based testing and community-based vaccine distribution.

I thank UAF for having such a robust emergency management program to provide students with the foundation to excel within the field."

Kyle Evans '18, '19, '20

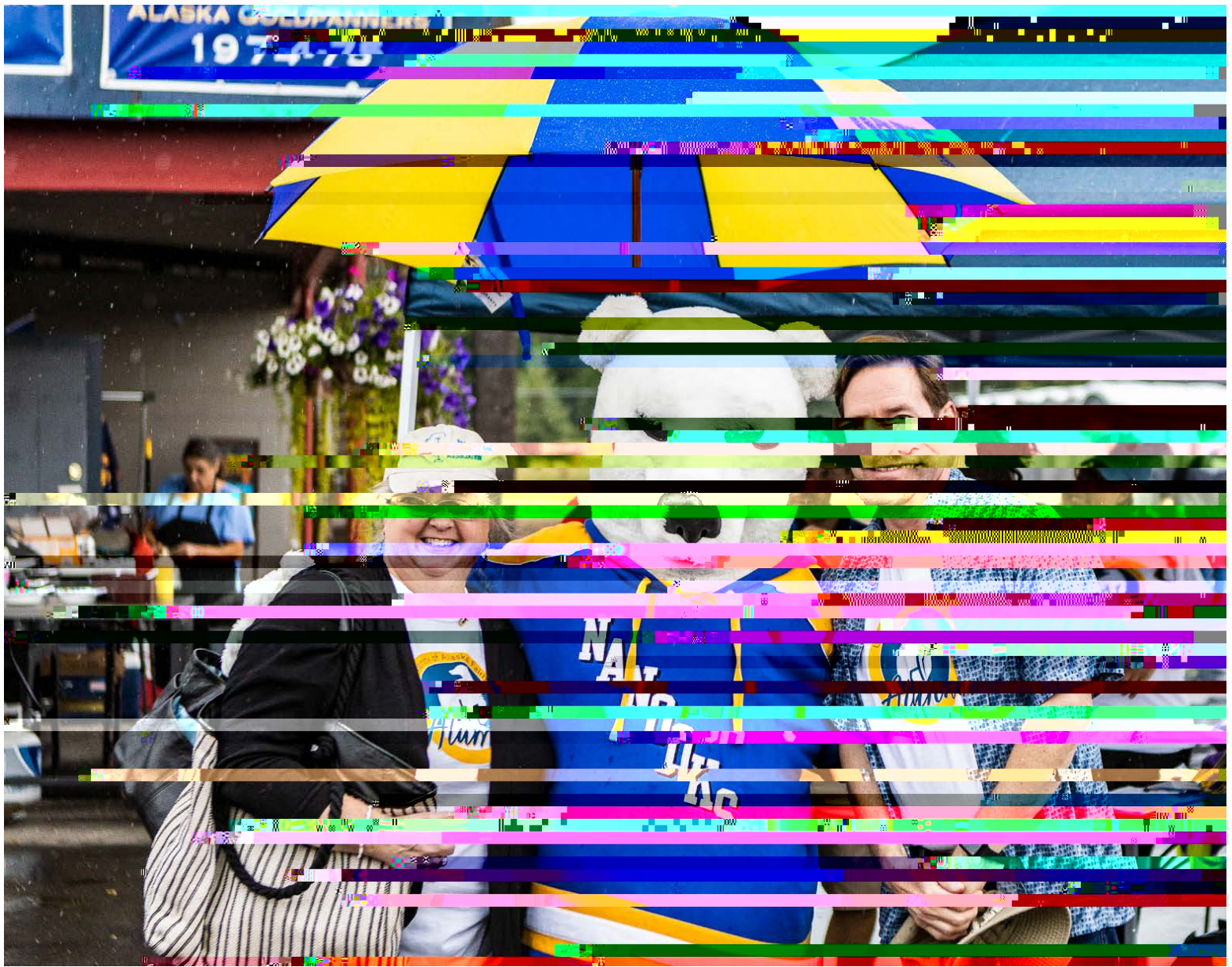
for years. After some thought, it was decided: time to reconnect with the outdoors. Fortunately, I work in a career field that allows me to travel the world. Some of the neater experiences over the past couple years have been swimming with sharks in Belize, catching blue marlin in Mexico, dining at a restaurant near the Burj Khalifa in Dubai, demolishing baguettes and wine with my wife at the Eiffel Tower in Paris, walking along the Cliffs of Moher in Ireland, and gazing out over downtown from the London Eye Ferris wheel.





Hailey Baker '21 — "I graduated from UAF with my B.S. in biology with the class of 2021. I recently started my medical degree at the University of Minnesota on the Duluth campus, which specializes in rural and American Indian/Alaska Native health care (a perfect fit for my future patient population!). I was raised in Fairbanks and am so happy and thankful to have attended UAF for my undergraduate degree.

If there are any pre-med students who would like to reach out with questions about the process or my journey here, I encourage them to email me at bake1547@d.umn.edu. I always like to help others however I can."



Nanook Rendezvous reunion hosted virtual and in-person alumni

Thank you to all who joined us for this year's Nanook Rendezvous alumni reunion, July 22-24. The UAF Alumni Association kicked off the

celebration with a virtual tour of recent additions to campus, including the new bowhead whale exhibit at the UA Museum of the North and the Alaska Esports Center. More than 600 viewers joined us on Facebook and YouTube to learn about these innovations.

After the tour, alumni joined an online game hosted by the Alaska Esports Center crew. Teams of players shared their punniest answers, while the rest of us voted for our favorites. Later, the alumni association hosted an Outdoor Open House in front of Constitution Hall. Guests picked up new UAF alumni T-shirts and other blue and gold goodies while catching up with fellow alums and posing for pictures with Nook.

Photo caption: Cindy and Bill Wright join Nook at the Alaska Goldpanners' Nanook Night during the 2021 Nanook Rendezvous UAF photo by JR Ancheta.

Fairbanks Friday continued our tradition of bringing the celebration to local alumni-owned and UAF-supporting businesses. Hoodoo Brewing Co., Ursa Major Distilling, The Roaming Root Cellar and Cafe de Stir It Up each offered special Nanook-themed menu items and goodies. That evening, we were excited to be back in the ballpark for the traditional Nanook Night with the Alaska Goldpanners. Even though we got rained out, alumni were invited to attend any other game during the remainder of the season.

We hope you were able to connect with your fellow alumni and make some new memories. Campus photographer **JR Ancheta '15** took a great selection of photos at our reunion events, which you can explore in our [online photo gallery](#).

Save the date for next year's reunion in July 2022 during Golden Days.



Chancellor Dan White, center left, visits with UAF alumni and Nook during the 2021 Nanook Rendezvous UAF photo by JR Ancheta.



In memoriam

[View a list of alumni and friends whose passage has been shared with us since the previous issue of Aurora.](#)

