Mary Anne Fitzpatrick had been dean of the College of Arts and Sciences for just two years when the country was slammed by the worst economic recession since the Great Depression. In addition, because of various provisions of the state retirement plan, she was facing a massive turnover in faculty.

“It was a challenging time,” she remembers. “We all worked hard to think about what we were doing, and how we could do it better and more efficiently.”

Now observing her 10th year at the helm of the largest college in South Carolina and the largest unit of the University of South Carolina, Fitzpatrick has much to celebrate.

Since 2005, she has increased the size of the faculty by 50 (there is now a faculty base of 505) and has hired more than 300 talented new tenured and tenure-track faculty, changing the face of the college and the university.

Fitzpatrick has presided over the opening of new centers, institutes, and programs (including the Institute for African-American Research, the Center for Digital Humanities, and the Jewish Studies Program) created a new School of the Earth, Ocean and the Environment; stabilized external research grant funding at about $42 million a year; and guided the college through one of the worst economic downturns in the state’s history. In addition, she has led the capital campaign for the college, which, since 2007, has raised more than $95 million in private philanthropic support.

The University of South Carolina’s student population has grown by 25 percent since 2005, the year that Fitzpatrick, a professor of psychology, came to Columbia from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. There she served as a deputy dean, vice provost, and senior associate dean.

“So the College of Arts and Sciences at Carolina is the gateway to the University of South Carolina,” she says, “We have had to manage the curriculum, provide the courses, and do what has been needed to serve this larger number of students in a high-quality but cost-effective, efficient way.”

Nearly all undergraduate students spend about two years taking courses at the College of Arts and Sciences before moving on to other schools or specialties.

Fitzpatrick says perhaps the most important part of her job in the past decade has been figuring out “how to welcome alumni home in a much more open way.” The university is not just faculty and students, she says. “Our alumni are also part of the college, and establishing our reach, our impact and our influence is felt not only in the classroom but far beyond it.”

All great universities strive to educate their students well. The College of Arts and Sciences at the University of South Carolina goes beyond that basic mission. As dean of the college now for more than 10 years, I know that our reach, our impact and our influence is felt not only in the classroom but far beyond it.

Indeed, the range and diversity of our faculty, students, and alumni at the college is impressively on view in this current issue of InFocus. We introduce you to Margaret Palmer, who earned her Ph.D. from the Marine Science Program in 1983 and then went on to become “perhaps the highest profile scientific opponent of coal companies involved in mountaintop mining in the United States. She briefs top government regulators and Congress, helps promote stricter oversight, and, in the words of Science magazine, has emerged “as an influential voice on complex and contentious environ-
As a child, Karen Heid loved art. “I would wake up on Saturday mornings wondering what I could make that day,” she remembers. After high school and college, however, she decided to follow in her dentist father’s footsteps and became a dental hygienist, practicing for more than 10 years.

In the early 1990s, however, Heid returned to her first love. She began teaching local art courses, along with classes at art camps, theater camps, and puppet camps. She opened her own freelance studio in Dalton, Ga., specializing in commissioned works of art and art lessons.

Then in 1997, Heid earned a B.F.A. in painting and drawing at the University of Tennessee, followed in 2001 by a master’s degree in secondary education. She has taught art in local elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as at the University of Georgia, where she earned her Ph.D. in art education in 2004.

“Art is my life,” her website reads today. “Teaching is my existence. Teaching art ... is at the core of my very being.”

Heid accepted a position in 2004 as an assistant professor of art education in the School of Visual Art and Design at the College of Arts and Sciences, University of South Carolina. Now, as an associate professor, she teaches future K-12 teachers how to teach art in the schools. “Teaching art is only one aspect of learning to become an art teacher,” she says. She also deeply believes that teachers who engage in service learning in their classrooms help broaden a sense of empathy. Service learning is a strategy that combines meaningful community service with instruction and reflection as a kind of civic responsibility. “I want them to see how we can use art as a means of learning to care,” Heid explains, acknowledging the philosophy of famed educator Nel Noddings, who believes that empathy and care are central to the cultivation of education.

Heid has received numerous grants over the past 15 years to help hone her own skills and that of her students in integrating art beyond the classroom in a community-based art education artwork. In 2010, she and her students raised some $50,000 to create a wondrous mosaic garden at A.C. Moore Elementary School in downtown Columbia.

She encourages her undergraduate and graduate students to participate in all kinds of civic engagement and service learning projects at schools and other venues. “There is something everyone can do to help others and support communities,” says Heid.

In recognition of her teaching and service learning projects, Heid in 2009 was named Higher Education Art Educator of the Year by the South Carolina Art Education Association. In 2011 she won the South Carolina Literacy Champions Award from the South Carolina Educational Oversight Committee, and later that year she also won an award from the superintendent of Richland School District One for her work in schools.

In addition to her teaching, service projects, and private artwork, Heid has for the first time illustrated a book. Titled “Katie’s Cabbage,” the book tells the true story of Katie Stagliano, then a third grader from Summerville, S.C., who grew a 90-pound cabbage in her backyard and then started a national youth movement “aimed at ending hunger one vegetable garden at a time.” The book was published in December 2014 by the University of South Carolina Press. (See story, back cover.)

“I don’t get a chance to paint very often, and so, when I was asked to be the illustrator for ‘Katie’s Cabbage,’ I jumped at the chance. I saw the book as a vehicle to implement teaching, art making, and service learning. Katie is an amazing young lady and a role model for young people.”

The actual work, says Heid, took a couple of years. “It was a learning process since I had never illustrated a book before. I would absolutely do it again, but it was the hardest thing I have ever done.”

Heid retained the oil paintings used to illustrate the book; they have been framed and matted with the financial help of College of Arts and Sciences Dean Mary Anne Fitzpatrick.

She now plans to invite elementary schools to exhibit the 27 paintings at their schools or in their media centers and libraries. She has been to several schools already to talk about her illustrations. Several museums and galleries that are especially attuned to children have also expressed an interest in procuring the works for exhibition.

Always the teacher, Heid is developing lesson plans to accompany the images that can be used in math, social studies, and art classes to help teach the story of “Katie’s Cabbage.”

In her spare time, Heid helps her husband, Zach Kekeheau, an associate dean in the College of Education, care for the bee hives that grace their backyard in downtown Columbia. The couple sells their raw organic honey under the label “Z’s Bees.”

Curiously, Heid discovered recently that a great-grandmother whom she had never known — and who her family erroneously thought had died in childbirth — was actually an art teacher and accomplished painter in Chicago in the late 19th century. “We recently discovered some of her paintings in Chicago,” says Heid. “The funny thing is, I paint just like her!”

**“I SAW THE BOOK AS A VEHICLE TO IMPLEMENT TEACHING, ART MAKING, AND SERVICE LEARNING.”**
STUDYING THE EVOLUTION OF BIRDS, FEATHERS, AND “JURASSIC PARK”

If the 1993 film “Jurassic Park” were remade today, the cunning and vicious velociraptor, which played such a prominent role in the movie, would have to be depicted with feathers. “We’re learning that many dinosaurs had feathers,” says Matthew J. Greenwold, pointing to recent fossil discoveries in Siberia and China.

Greenwold, a postdoctoral scholar (“postdoc”) in the Department of Biological Sciences, is carrying out research on the evolution of feathers and birds. Birds, according to fossil evidence, descended from dinosaurs.

Greenwold is one of an estimated 89,000 postdocs involved in research in the United States. (A postdoctoral scholar is an individual holding a doctoral degree who is engaged in mentored research and/or scholarly training in order to acquire the professional skills needed to obtain a permanent position in industry or academia.)

A Columbia native, Greenwold as a child spent summers with his grandparents in the country — watching birds, catching snakes, and enjoying nature. After graduating from Chapin High School and completing a stint in the Navy as an aviation machinist, his interest in nature led him back to the classroom. He earned a bachelor’s degree in biology in 2006 from the University of South Carolina and a Ph.D., also in biology, in 2011.

During his undergraduate days, Greenwold attended a lecture about feather evolution given by Dr. Roger Sawyer, professor of biological sciences and now executive dean in the College of Arts and Sciences. Sawyer, professor of biological sciences and now executive dean in the College of Arts and Sciences.

Greenwold was hooked. Since 2011, he has worked with Dr. Joseph Quattro and Professor Sawyer as a postdoctoral scholar.

In December 2014, Greenwold was one of the authors of a paper published in a special issue of “Science” magazine about avian genome evolution and adaptation. “That was two years in the making and the result of a national and international collaboration” of more than 100 scientists and researchers, explains Greenwold. He was also the lead author on a companion paper published in “BMC Evolutionary Biology.”

Greenwold isn’t interested solely in academic questions relating to the evolution of feathers and birds. “He has a real-world goal, as well: figuring out how to use the feather properties of birds (for example, feathers are both stiff and flexible) to make better materials for airplanes and a variety of other objects.”

“We want to use what nature has created over hundreds of millions of years of evolution and see what we can do with that,” he says. Greenwold and other lab partners are working with engineers, mathematicians, and scientists on the project.

“We WANT TO USE WHAT NATURE HAS CREATED OVER HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF YEARS OF EVOLUTION AND SEE WHAT WE CAN DO WITH THAT.”

In addition to his lab work, Greenwold has developed a new undergraduate course — a general biology class for nonmajors — that was offered totally online during the spring 2015 semester. Online courses, he says, “have a lot of advantages. For students, especially nontraditional students who are returning to college at an older age, it gives them the flexibility to continue their jobs and also go to school. And they are able to do the course work on their own time.”

His postdoc in the College of Arts and Sciences has been “really valuable,” Greenwold says, but after more than three years he is ready to try his wings and is applying for full-time academic positions at other institutions. In the meantime, he continues his research and teaching on the Columbia campus (“I love the traditions”), and he ceaselessly supports his beloved Gamecocks.

“I have loved the Gamecocks since I was a little kid,” he says. “I am a longtime USC fan and a very, very devoted Gamecock.”

Jeff Twiss has been recognized as a leader in his field for more than 20 years, continually receiving substantial grant support for his research from organizations such as the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation, and the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson’s Research. We are so pleased to have him and his wife, neurogeneticist Carolyn Schanen, back home.

We also introduce you to Associate Professor Karen Heid, an art educator extraordinary who not only teaches future teachers how to teach art, but also uses her talents to help our local communities. Elementary, middle, and high schools, cities and towns; and our own colleagues at the university level have all been the recipients of her artistic skills.

Heid also encourages her students at Carolina to participate in all kinds of civic engagement and service learning projects at schools and other venues. It is her way of giving back and of helping her students learn the importance of being part of the community and helping others.

Matthew J. Greenwold is the postdoctoral scholar whom we are highlighting this spring. He is one of approximately 89,000 “postdocs” nationwide — individuals with a Ph.D. who are engaged in mentored research and scholarly training to help them acquire the necessary professional skills to obtain a permanent position. Postdocs are extremely important in fueling scientific enterprise, and we are lucky to have a postdoctoral scholar of Matthew Greenwold’s caliber in our research labs.

Finally, you will meet Micah Thomas, a senior from Camden, S.C. After he graduates in December, Thomas plans to enter the Master of Arts in Teaching program at Carolina and then become a high-school teacher, with a special focus on African-American history.

Having young people who want to come to our university to study history and African-American studies, and then become teachers themselves, is very exciting for us. It is exciting because our students are learning from the best: professors such as Val Littlefield and her colleagues who have received national recognition for the work they have done in creating core national standards in African-American history for students in grades K-12.

In a few years, Micah Thomas will be bringing the latest work in this area back to students across the state, and this is core to our mission.
Jeff Twiss was born in Mississippi, grew up “all over the Southeast,” and spent 10 years in Charleston, S.C., earning his undergraduate degree at the College of Charleston and his M.D. and Ph.D. degrees at the Medical University of South Carolina.

Now, after more than two decades on both the West Coast and East Coast, he is back in the Palmetto State as a professor of biological sciences in the College of Arts and Sciences and holder of the SmartState Endowed Chair in Childhood Neurotherapeutics. Developing new strategies for the repair of nerves, the brain and the spinal cord after injuries through accident or disease is the mission of Twiss and his lab team, which consists of postdoctoral fellows, research associates, and graduate and undergraduate students.

“How the nervous system regenerates, and how we can make that better, is what our team focuses on,” explains Twiss. “Our work aims to restore neural function by finding means to improve regeneration of axons.” Axons are nerve fibers that transmit information to different neurons, muscles, and glands.

Twiss, whose research program has centered on understanding the intracellular signaling and molecular mechanisms of neural repair, has always had a special interest in childhood diseases. (Youngsters can repair their nervous systems much better than adults.) He also maintains an interest in neurodegenerative diseases such as Parkinson’s disease and ALS, also known as Lou Gehrig’s disease.

After clinical training in neuropathology and postdoctoral work in neurobiology at Stanford University Medical School, Twiss started his own laboratory in the Department of Pathology at UCLA.

In 2002, he was recruited to head the Neuroscience Research Laboratory of the Nemours Biomedical Research Institute at the Alfred I. DuPont Hospital for Children in Wilmington, Del., where he also held an appointment at the University of Delaware. In 2009, he became head of the Department of Biology at Drexel University in Philadelphia.

In 2013, he and his wife, Carolyn Schanen, a neurogeneticist, came back to the South when he accepted a SmartState endowed chair at the University of South Carolina. (Carolina is one of three research universities in the state that offer endowed chairs to world-class research scientists and engineers who aim to make a difference in economic development and entrepreneurship, education, and the state’s quality of life.)

The funding that accompanies a SmartState chair “gives us some freedom in terms of being able to ask new questions,” says the affable Twiss. It also allows chair holders to recruit additional faculty. Two new faculty: researchers came on board earlier this year: one studies the development of neural connections, and the other studies neural connectivity in autism.

The SmartState funding, says Twiss, “brings together a group of people like this that can really focus on questions and interact. So the group is much more than the sum of its parts.”

Twiss’s lab is always a hive of activity, with eight full-time researchers and several undergraduate students who come and go. “It’s a remarkable opportunity,” says Twiss, for undergraduates to be able to spend 10 to 12 hours a week in the lab for two years, sometimes taking on their own projects.

For more than 20 years, Twiss has continually received substantial grant support for his research from well-known organizations, including the National Institutes of Health, the National Science Foundation, the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation, and the Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinson’s Research.

Coming back to South Carolina, where his wife grew up, has been a happy experience, Twiss says. The couple keeps a sailboat in Charleston and spends their spare time enjoying their two dogs.

“OUR WORK AIMS TO RESTORE NEURAL FUNCTION BY FINDING MEANS TO IMPROVE REGENERATION OF AXONS.”

Developing Strategies to Repair Injured Nerves
CIVIL RIGHTS, DESSEGREGATION, AND PREPARING TO TEACH HIGH SCHOOL HISTORY

Micah Thomas doesn’t watch much television. “It distorts your perception of reality,” he explains. Instead, Thomas reads, and reads, and reads some more. “I love to read,” he says. “To me, reading is fun. When you read a lot, you’re educating yourself and getting a good perspective on life.”

Micah Thomas came to the College of Arts and Sciences from Camden, S.C., nearly four years ago intending to study geography. Instead, he will graduate in December with a B.A. in History and a minor in African-American studies.

After completing the Master of Arts in Teaching program at Carolina that he will enter in 2016, Thomas plans to become a high school history teacher. “My Dad has taught in middle school and high school, and my Mom has taught in middle school,” he says. “I have always been interested in teaching.”

Thomas received a scholarship that was funded by M. Hayes Mizell, the South Carolina education/civil rights/desegregation activist, from the African American Studies Program. Mizell’s papers (dated from 1952 through 2005) are now on campus at the South Carolina Library, and Thomas is studying them as he researches school desegregation issues.

Thomas credits several dedicated faculty members, particularly Melissa L. Cooper and Cynthia Conner, for sparking his interest in African-American history, civil rights, and women’s rights. Sullivan, he says, is “amazing — she’s like a walking textbook.” As for Cooper, a former high school history teacher herself, she “made me want to strive to be smart. Dr. Cooper has given me so much motivation. I was thinking, but I wasn’t completing my thoughts. She has educated me on so many issues.”

“FLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE, AND TELL OUR KIDS TO REPEAT THE SAME STATEMENT, WE HAVE TO LEARN TO LIVE UP TO THOSE STANDARDS. WE HAVE TO LIVE UP TO OUR NAME.”

If we want to be called the United States of America,” says Thomas, “and repeat the Pledge of Allegiance, and tell our kids to repeat the same statement, we have to learn to live up to those standards. We have to live up to our name.”

Alumni News

Dr. Rozanne B. Breland (biology ’75) was recently elected to chair the agency board of the South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation Department, which prepares and assists South Carolinians with disabilities to achieve and maintain competitive employment.

Cathy A. Martin (mathematics ’70) has joined the Metro Atlanta Chamber as vice president of economic development responsible for project development and regional partnerships.

Michael D. DeSantis (history ’66) retired from his position as assistant principal at Harry S. Truman High School in Bronx, N.Y., after 30 years with the New York City Department of Education. He is currently enjoying semi-retirement as a high school football official and baseball umpire in Connecticut.

William K. Witherspoon (biology ’81, J.D. ’91) has been nominated to the position of president-elect of the South Carolina Bar. He currently serves as the treasurer of the bar. In 2014, William received the South Carolina Lawyer’s Weekly Leadership in the Law award for his service to the legal profession.

Cynthia Conner (M.A. anthropology ’86) has retired from the Columbia Museum of Art after 25 years as registrar.

Matthew P. Wardrip (theatre ’81) recently moved to Amsterdam, Netherlands, where he has taken a position with Delta Air Lines as the pricing manager for the German market.

Antonio M. Cooper (experimental psychology ’00) successfully completed his doctoral degree in school psychology from the School of Education at Howard University in December 2014. He has been a certified school psychologist in the District of Columbia Public Schools system since 2012.

Patrick Robert Boyle (marine science ’13) was sworn in as a Peace Corps volunteer. He has been assigned to a project delivering sustainable water supply, sanitation and hygiene services in a mountain town in Peru that has a population of 600. Improved access to clean water and sanitation are high-priority community needs with significant health implications, particularly for children. He will serve a total of 27 months.
Join Us for Alumni and Friends Weekend at the Coast!

If reading InFocus profiles of our outstanding arts and sciences faculty ever makes you wish you could go back to college at Carolina... if you’ve ever wished you knew more about South Carolina’s natural history and cultural traditions... if your idea of the perfect vacation is a weekend of fine dining and stimulating conversation with friends old and new, then you owe it to yourself to join us for this year’s College of Arts and Sciences Alumni and Friends Weekend at the Coast.

Featuring sessions on topics ranging from art and archeology to poetry and ecology, the weekend has become a popular event for alumni who want to reconnect with old friends and make new ones. It is also a unique opportunity to learn about South Carolina’s culture, history, and ecosystems. Popular previous sessions have included Major Trends in Southern Literature, Making Sweetgrass Baskets, Nature Photography, Carolina Shag Dancing, and Beach and Creek Ecology. All classes are taught by renowned members of the USC faculty or by local experts in the field.

All alumni and friends of the college are invited, but with just 45 available spaces, the Weekend at the Coast always fills up quickly, so we encourage you to reserve your space soon. To register or to request more information, contact Ann Cameron at accamer@mailbox.sc.edu or 803-777-9201.

For more information about the Baruch Institute, visit baruch.sc.edu.

Held at the University’s beautiful Belle W. Baruch Institute for Marine and Coastal Sciences in Georgetown, S.C., this year’s alumni weekend will run May 29-30.

The cost for the weekend is $180 per person, which includes meals, course materials, and access to facilities at the Baruch Institute. Accommodations have been reserved at Pawleys Plantation Golf and Country Club.
The plaintiffs for whom Palmer has testified have won virtually every case, slowing down mountaintop removal. “But what I have learned from being an expert witness is that the legal process is set up so there is almost an infinite number of iterations and appeals that can go on.” So the battle continues.

In 2010, she was invited to appear on The Colbert Report to discuss mountaintop removal. It was, she says, lots of fun and an unforgettable experience. “I was a nice, normal guy.” Stephen Colbert is from South Carolina, you know, and he came in to chat with me before the show began.

He told me, ‘Your job is to reveal how much of a fool I’m being.’” (Colbert’s television persona was that of a pompous, right-wing broadcaster.) Colbert, says Palmer, “is really opposed to this kind of mining.”

Her appearance on the show had a striking effect. “It seemed to dramatically increase public interest in the topic and in what the Environmental Protection Agency was doing” to regulate mountaintop mining. It also led to Congressional hearings on the subject and to tougher oversight by government regulators.

Co-author of The Foundations of Restoration Ecology, Palmer has more than 130 scientific publications and multiple ongoing collaborative research grants. Today she spends much of her time at the new SESYNC center in Annapolis, Md., which she has directed since its opening in 2011.

The center is “a giant experiment,” Palmer has said. Science magazine describes SESYNC as a place that “brings together researchers from a broad diversity of disciplines, including economics and political science, to analyze existing data sets that could help solve environmental problems.”

In the meantime, Palmer continues to bring attention to the environmental havoc that results from mountaintop mining. We need something like another Stephen Colbert to remind people that it’s still going on.”
**Ending Hunger One Garden at a Time**

It all began with a cabbage seedling that Katie Stagliano of Summerville, S.C., planted in her backyard seven years ago.

The cabbage grew to an astonishing weight of 40 pounds, and Katie, then nine years old, decided to donate it to help feed 275 people at a local soup kitchen.

Today, Katie is a high school sophomore and the founder of Katie's Krops (katieskrops.com), a nonprofit organization whose mission is to establish vegetable gardens of all sizes across the country. The harvests are donated to feed people in need, as well as to inspire other young people to do the same.

Katie Stagliano has become, in short, the leader of a national youth movement “aimed at ending hunger one vegetable garden at a time.”

A poised and articulate 16-year-old, she has been featured on the NBC Nightly News as well as in numerous magazine and newspaper articles. She is the youngest recipient of the Clinton Global Citizen Award for Leadership in Civil Society, presented to her by the actor Matt Damon in 2012.

Her life, she says, “is a balancing act.” In between school work, sports (she is a competitive swimmer and runs track), and socializing with her fellow teens, Katie tours the country, speaking about her organization and about the power of youth service.

“When young people start a garden, they really enjoy the experience of giving back and knowing that they have helped someone have a meal who otherwise might not have had one. That feeling is so incredible, and it’s just a really fun way to give back to the community.”

Katie’s Krops sponsors a variety of fundraising events throughout the year. The profits go toward financial grants for kids aged 9 to 16 who want to start their own vegetable gardens for people in need in their own communities. Today, there are 80 such gardens in 20 states. Katie’s goal? To have 500 gardens in all 50 states. The bulk of funding for Katie’s Krops comes from sponsors WP Rawl (a grower of greens in Pelion, S.C.), Bi-Lo, Winn-Dixie, Opal Apples, Park Seeds in South Carolina, and others. Katie’s fundraising events are limited due to time constraints on her busy schedule.

Katie has also written a charming children’s book, “Katie’s Cabbage,” published in 2014 by the University of South Carolina Press and illustrated by Karen Heid, associate professor of art education in the College of Arts and Sciences at Carolina. (See story, p. 2.) “It’s really surreal,” Katie says. “Ever since I was little, I’ve wanted to be an author.”

Katie hasn’t decided yet where she wants to attend college, but she is certain that Katie’s Krops will continue to play a major role in her life.

“Before my cabbage,” she says, “I never realized how much one thing could change your life. It has opened my eyes to the issue of hunger all across the country and the world, and it has connected me to so many wonderful people and organizations. I don’t know that I would be doing any of this right now if my cabbage hadn’t grown to 40 pounds.”