

**RADFORD**  
UNIVERSITY  
Department of Sociology

# Sociology Matters



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## GREETINGS FROM THE CHAIR

Happy fall, students! At long last, the days and nights are cooler, leaves are starting to “turn,” and Halloween and Thanksgiving are on the horizon. And, so is the end of the semester! The shortened, Zoomed semester has been a challenge for us all, and I appreciate the flexibility you have shown in continuing your education and powering through your courses in these odd, pandemic times. While COVID-19 has placed a damper on many of our usual activities, we have found ways to connect and engage in our own ways. As you will see in this newsletter, the department has committed itself to racial justice work both off campus and on. We are proud of our students who seek to improve the campus racial climate and are taking the time to educate members of the Radford University community about the importance of taking action against oppression, racism, and discrimination against our fellow human beings. We thank those students for their passion, their dedication, and the good work that they are doing to create a more inclusive community. We are a collective of many wonderful people; let's let that shine!

Wishing you all the best,

Dr. Beth Lyman

## SOCIOLOGY COURSES OFFERED SPRING 2021

### Required Courses:

- SOCY 110** – Introduction to Sociology
- SOCY 250** – Social Inequality
- SOCY 360** – Sociological Theory
- SOCY 365** – Society and the Individual
- SOCY 480** – Survey Research Methods

### Elective Courses:

- SOCY 121** – Understanding Cultures
- SOCY 210** – Social Problems
- SOCY 213** – Social Issues & Healthcare Delivery
- SOCY 331** – Race & Ethnic Relations
- SOCY 342** – Race, Ethnicity, and Healthcare
- SOCY 370** – Environmental Sociology
- SOCY 443** – Deviance
- SOCY 465** – Visual Sociology
- SOCY 495** – Topical Seminar in Sociology: Sociology of Hip Hop

### Courses that Satisfy the Major Applied/Practical Experience Requirement:

- SOCY 499** – Internship

## SOCIOLOGY ADVISING NEWS

### Pre-registration advising for Spring 2021 is under way.

Plan now for pre-registration advising with Dr. Page to decide on courses for this spring, think about upcoming semesters, and target a graduation date. Plan for your advising Zoom by reviewing your Degree Works, the new Spring '21 Sociology courses flyer, and the university-wide schedule for upcoming classes. Then email Dr. Page ([erpage@radford.edu](mailto:erpage@radford.edu)) to set up a Zoom appointment.



Dr. Roby Page,  
Sociology  
Department  
Advisor

If you are thinking about doing an internship in spring, start planning now and get in touch with Dr. Lyman ([elyman@radford.edu](mailto:elyman@radford.edu)) ASAP; don't wait until the end of this semester.

For more advising information and links, visit the Department of Sociology Advising webpage: <https://www.radford.edu/content/chbs/home/sociology/about/SociologyAdvising.html>

#### Notes:

- Graduating in Spring 2021? You should now have your paper application submitted to the CHBS Advising Center, and your online application completed.
- Considering a course withdrawal? Remember that five withdrawals at Radford are permitted. Inform Dr. Page of your withdrawal intentions, or questions.

## CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR SPRING & SUMMER 2020 GRADUATES

Cora Bland	Robert Milby
Ke'Von Brooks	Kayli Mull
Micah Cobbs	Sharmaine Ramirez
LaZhara Dillard	Shennae Spence
Shaylee Hodges	Spencer Thompson
Julian Johnson	Montrell Waters
Claudia Laryea	

To view a video honoring the class of 2020, please go to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ceSFFWjvrlc&feature=youtu.be>

Photo on page 1: The Sociology faculty wishing a Zoom congratulations to the 2020 graduates. (See the video above.)

## STATEMENT OF SOLIDARITY AND ACTION

On May 25, 2020 we witnessed the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Mr. Floyd's killing is the most recent in a long list of Black men, women, and children who have senselessly lost their lives at the hands of federal, state, and local police across the United States. These deaths are not the result of individual racist actions. Rather, they are the effects of a matrix of interlocking systems of oppression, racism, and discrimination that are deeply woven into the fabric of our country, the result of which produces racist policing practices and environments that are conducive to and permit racialized police brutality. Thoughts and prayers are not equal to the moment, the scale of the problem, or the despair felt by our Black students, faculty, and staff.



This country, your country, was founded on the contradictions of equality and the institution of slavery. Despite progress, systems of oppression continue to disadvantage Black people in income and wealth attainment, sentencing in the criminal justice system, housing and homeownership, the education system, and health outcomes, among many other domains of social life. You can't walk, you can't stand, you can't jog, you can't sleep in your own homes... without risk of being killed. Today, you march and protest against these racial injustices, a fight that generations of your families have undertaken, and you do so during a pandemic that has disproportionately sickened and killed people of color. You bravely risk the dual burden of violence and illness because, among other things, you can't breathe.

Radford University and Radford University Carilion, Predominantly White Institutions (PWI), are not immune to these systems of oppression, racism, and discrimination. We know that, while there are safe spaces for students of color on our campuses, there are also unsafe spaces on our campuses. You deserve equitable on- and off-campus environments free from overt and covert racism, discrimination, and violence.

We, the faculty of the Department of Sociology at Radford University and Radford University Carilion, support the Black Lives Matter movement and condemn, in the strongest possible terms, acts of police brutality. We strive to illuminate and dismantle systems of oppression, racism, and discrimination in our classrooms and on our campus. We stand in solidarity with the students, faculty, and staff of color at Radford University and Radford University Carilion.

The Department of Sociology commits to the following actions:

1. hosting formal and informal virtual events during the summer and into the future to support our students, faculty, and staff of color,
2. fostering collaboration with organizations led by students of color, and
3. re-examining our courses, assignments, and policies to ensure that our curriculum and classrooms remain inclusive, safe spaces.

We call upon white students, faculty, and staff to take concrete actions to combat oppression, racism, and discrimination against Black people. In the link below, we offer several actions white students, faculty, and staff can take today, and hope that you will join us in committing to a sustained focus on racial justice and fairness. Please share our statement and declare what you are going to do in your life to be anti-racist.

Here is a list of possible actions you can take today.

1. Get involved with work being done by local organizations such as the [Calfee Training School Project](#) or [The Christiansburg Institute](#).
2. Attend an event sponsored by [The Center for Diversity and Inclusion](#) at Radford University and related events at Radford University Carilion.
3. Educate yourself about [whiteness and white privilege](#).
4. [Take a course](#) that centers African Americans, race, or issues of inequality.
5. Don't be silent about that racist joke. Silence is support.
6. Read Nikole Hannah-Jones' [The 1619 Project](#).
7. Listen to [Stamped from The Beginning - The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America](#) by Ibram X. Kendi.
8. Watch [Just Mercy](#) to learn about systemic racism in the criminal justice system.

More suggestions and resources can be found on [RU's Cultural Competency Resources list](#), compiled by Dr. Sharon Jones, Cultural Competency Project Manager for the University.

## SOCIOLOGY INEQUALITY TALKS

Following George Floyd's murder and the eruption of social unrest in the United States, the Sociology Department wanted to reach out to current and former students for support and in solidarity. The group met via Zoom on a Sunday in August to discuss police brutality, anti-racism efforts, and the COVID-19 pandemic. "Sociology is heavy," one of the group members said, and you can't always turn it off once you've developed that critical lens. It was helpful to reconnect with students over the summer and to create a safe space to talk about current social issues.

To continue these efforts, Sociology will be sponsoring an anti-racism book club in which survey participants selected *White Fragility* as their book of choice.

Stay tuned for book club details! If you're interested, but did not fill out the survey, please reach out to Dr. Bodenhamer ([abodenham3@radford.edu](mailto:abodenham3@radford.edu)).

## A GATHERING SPACE FOR ALLIES

Over the summer, the Center for Diversity and Inclusion (CDI) received multiple requests from faculty and staff to host racial justice ally development sessions. This led to the creation of A Gathering Space for Allies. Co-facilitated by Dr. Stephanie Bradley and Tricia Smith, Associate VP for Student Life, A Gathering Space for Allies was a three-part virtual series wherein faculty and staff came together as a community interested in racial justice.

During the sessions, allies considered how we, individually and collectively, may contribute to or dismantle racism in our organizations and communities. The first session met at the end of July, followed by the second and third sessions occurring during the fall semester. A Gathering Space for Allies garnered approximately 70 registrants committed to racial justice on campus and in our communities.



Future efforts are being considered. Stay tuned!

## THE BIGGER PICTURE RALLY AND MARCH

The Bigger Picture Rally and March (#RUTheBiggerPicture) prompted hundreds of students, faculty, and staff to gather on campus on September 19 in support of racial justice. The student-conceptualized event was co-sponsored by several organizations, most notably the National Pan-Hellenic Council, Diversity Awareness Programming, the RU Chapter of the NAACP, Black Student Alliance, Lady RUs, and R-SPaCE. University COVID-19 guidelines were honored as attendees gathered in front of McConnell Library to hear brief speeches that provided context and served as a rallying cry before the student organizers led attendees on a march across campus to Moffett Lawn. Once at Moffett Lawn, student speakers spoke out against racial injustices.

Many sociology faculty members attended the event, joining other colleagues in wearing yellow shirts as a display of collective action and support. Student organizers invited Dr. Bradley to offer brief remarks at the rally as an ally. She acknowledged the centrality of the students, their efforts, and the fight for racial justice; the need for allies and the numerical majority in the fight to eradicate racism; and she asserted what was known by those attending the event - that black lives matter.

Photo below: The Bigger Picture March and Rally

Photo right: Dr. Bradley and Lex Beard, a sociology and psychology double major, at The Bigger Picture Rally and March on September 19.



## CSCR NEWS

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Center for Social and  
Cultural Research

### CSCR Director's Update

As with most updates these days, the happenings in the CSCR were somewhat diminished due to the COVID pandemic. Despite the interruptions associated with the pandemic, the CSCR completed the annual evaluation of the Peaceline Program provided to middle and high school students in the New River Valley by educators at the Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley.

Through the CSCR, Drs. Lyman, Bradley, and Wisecup continued their comprehensive review of the Peaceline Program supported by an internal seed grant through Sponsored Programs and Grant Management at Radford University. The research team, having delivered an extensive program review to the Director of the WRC, Laura Beth Weaver, will now turn their attention to pursuing an external federal or private grant to support the suggested changes outlined in the program review.

Finally, Dr. Wisecup designed a survey for Dean of Students, Dr. Angela Mitchell, to complete a needs assessment for four of the divisions housed within the Dean of Students office. Dr. Wisecup delivered a student needs assessment report to the Dean of Students. The report explores the extent to which students are aware of and utilize services provided through The Harvey Knowledge Center, Center for Accessibility Services, the Student Health Center, and Student Counseling Services.

## SOCIOLOGY DEPARTMENT RECEIVES WILLIAM JULIUS WILSON AWARD

The Department of Sociology has received the William Julius Wilson Award of the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology, which is presented to individuals and organizations "whose work has been demonstrably effective in breaking the cycle of poverty." Our department has a long history of partnering with key community agencies such as the Women's Resource Center, New River Valley Community Services, Floyd County High School, and Beans and Rice, where we use our sociological expertise and resources to improve the lives of others and give students the chance to carry on this good work through internship experiences.

The Department of Sociology is an accredited Program in Public Sociology, accredited through the Commission on the Accreditation of Programs in Applied and Clinical Sociology. The department will be recognized at the annual meeting of the AACCS, and Dr. Allison Wisecup, who is the Director of our Center for Social and Cultural Research, will be present to receive the award on our behalf.

## 2020 ALUMNI DAY

The Department of Sociology hosted its annual Alumni Day on October 15. Alumni Day invites alumni and other guests to share their experiences and best practices with students facing graduation. This year's event took place virtually and featured graduate school and career panels. Each panel included a moderated discussion followed by breakout groups during which students interacted with panelists more directly.

The graduate school panel brought together three experts with diverse insights on the graduate school experience—Nijeria Jones ('15, MSW '18), Amanda Burroughs ('19), and Dr. Ben Caldwell. After graduating with her undergraduate degree in sociology, Nijeria earned a Master's in Social Work at Radford University. She now has her QMHP-A and LMHP-E and works at Freedom Support Services. Amanda is currently a second-year graduate student at Virginia Tech in the combined Master's/PhD program in sociology. Dr. Caldwell is the Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research at Radford University. Collectively, these panelists shed light on the realities of graduate school and provided guidance on how to prepare for successful as a graduate student.



Nijeria Jones ('15, MSW '18)



Amanda Burroughs ('19)

Dr. Ben Caldwell, Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research at Radford University.

## 2020 ALUMNI DAY, continued



Students in Dr. Bradley's SOCY 497 Senior Seminar participated in two panels Thursday, October 15, which served up valuable advice on graduate school and career paths.

Three alumni served on the career panel—Alexander Williams ('10), Eileen Lagos ('18), and Michelle Robertson ('18). Alex is president of Artisan Analytix, Eileen is a Program Associate in Meeting Services with the American Society of Clinical Oncology, and Michelle is a Justice System Navigator with the Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley. These alumni shared their advice and experiences related to preparing for the job market, networking, interviewing, and applying sociological training to work after graduating from Radford University.



Alexander Williams ('10)

Eileen Lagos ('18)

Michelle Robertson ('18)

Alumni Day complements the *Senior Seminar in Sociology*, a professionalization course that serves as the capstone experience for sociology majors. In the course, students learn to market their skills and prepare for entry into the workplace or graduate school. Alumni interested in participating in future Alumni Day events are encouraged to contact Dr. Bradley at [sbradley20@radford.edu](mailto:sbradley20@radford.edu).

## COVID-19 PANELS

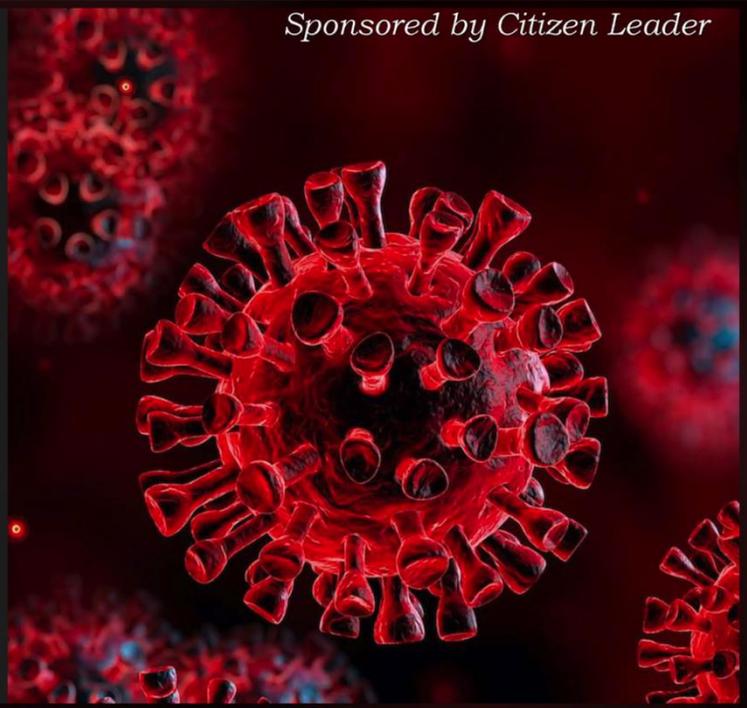
*Sponsored by Citizen Leader*

### **COVID-19 Expert Panel Series Fall 2020**

PANEL I “COVID-19:  
WHAT’S NEW?”

PANEL II COVID-19:  
DEADLY AND UNEQUAL

PANEL III COVID 19:  
POLITICS AND MESSAGES”



Dr. Wisecup collaborated with Dr. Iuliia Hoban, Political Science, and Dr. Pam Frasier, Health and Human Performance, to host a three-part series on COVID. The first installment of the series included Dr. Noelle Bissell, director of the New River Health District, microbiologist and virologist and Chair of the Biology Department at Radford University, Dr. Justin Anderson, and historian Dr. Johnny Moore. The first installment updated the campus community on the current scientific understanding of the virus, how the current pandemic compares to previous pandemics, and how the pandemic is impacting the New River Valley.

The second panel featured Dr. Paula Prince, Department of Sociology, Jenna Nazario, former public health advocate during Covid-19 and New York Human Rights Commission (Public Health), and Brittany Jackson, RN, Radford University Carilion, who served as a frontline nurse in New York City and Texas during the pandemic. The series explored racial, gender, sexuality, and social class inequalities associated with exposure to and mortality from COVID.

The third panel featured Dr. Tanya Corbin, Associate Professor and Chair of Security and Emergency Services Worldwide at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University, Dr. Paige Tan, Professor in Department of Political Science at Radford University, and Dr. Dai Zehui, Assistant Professor, School of Communication at Radford University. The third panel explored the politics and health messaging associated with the pandemic and how these aspects contributed to the spread of and response to the pandemic in the United States and globally.

## NAVIGATING THE PANDEMIC JOB MARKET

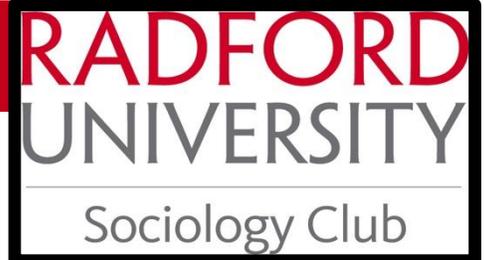
In May, Dr. Stephanie Bradley organized Navigating the Pandemic Job Market, a webinar designed to complement our Senior Seminar in Sociology. This live webinar focused on the current state of the job market broadly, with a focus on some of the career paths common with our graduates. Topics and panelists included:

- Overview of the Current Labor Market
  - Kim Fleming, People Strategy Executive, Truist Financial Corporation
- The State of Employment in Non-Profits
  - Laura Beth Weaver, Executive Director, Women's Resource Center of the New River Valley
  - Val Nelson, Talent Specialist for Retention and Recruitment, New River Valley Community Services
- Career Enhancing Opportunities
  - Anne Patterson, Peace Corps Campus Recruiter for Southwestern Virginia
- Best Practices for Today's Job Market
  - Ellen Taylor, Career Coach, RU Center for Career and Talent Development

The recorded webinar and complementary materials are available on the department website, accessible by scanning the available QR code.



## SOCIOLOGY CLUB NEWS



Guided by President Russel Alvarez and Vice President Brigitte Contreras, the Sociology Club has developed engaging content for its members while ensuring adherence to social distancing protocols. All meetings during the Fall 2020 semester are taking place via Zoom, typically every other Monday night. Sociologically relevant topics include cultural traditions and differences, an exploration of Halloween, and LGBTQ+ history, among others.

For more information, please follow the club on Twitter and Instagram @rusociologyclub, find them on RU Involved, or email Russel Alvarez at [ralvarez5@radford.edu](mailto:ralvarez5@radford.edu). Students from all majors are welcome! We hope to see you soon!

## STUDENTS PARTICIPATE IN THE STUDENT ENGAGEMENT FORUM

Students and faculty participated in the 29<sup>th</sup> Radford University Student Engagement Forum and the first Virtual Student Engagement Forum, hosted by the Office of Undergraduate Research & Scholarship (OURS) in April 2020.

- Shaylee Hodges, graduating senior in Sociology, completed an Independent Study (SOCY 498) with Dr. Bodenhamer. Hodges and Bodenhamer investigated the changing sociocultural experiences of the siblings of disabled individuals:

<https://portfolium.com/entry/sociology-of-siblings-of-disabled-individuals>

- Coleen Maloney, first-year Psychology major, was paired with Dr. Bradley in the Research Rookies program. Maloney and Bradley, motivated to support students' financial well-being, investigated students' awareness and usage of the Financial Aid Office's resources:

<https://portfolium.com/entry/financial-aid-resources-and-communication>

- Bijou Williams, junior Sociology major, describes her internship working with Dr. Wagner in the Roots with Wings oral history program in Floyd County in spring semester (see below):

<https://portfolium.com/entry/highlighting-my-roots-with-wings-internship>

## ROOTS WITH WINGS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT



Photo: Bijou Williams in the Floyd County High School Library.

Roots with Wings is a partnership among the Department of Sociology, the Floyd Story Center at the Old Church Gallery, and Floyd County Public Schools that teaches qualitative research skills used to gather, preserve, and publish oral histories.

When Dr. Melinda Wagner learned that the Spring 2020 Student Engagement Forum would be virtual only, she advised Bijou Williams, Citizen-Leader Sociology Intern for Roots with Wings, that her Forum requirement would be waived. The decision to participate was totally up to Bijou. Bijou immediately learned the new virtual platform and developed an excellent presentation.

The link to her production was delivered to over 400 members of the on-line community of Roots with Wings supporters in Floyd County and beyond. It will be included in an annual report to the Floyd Town Council and other funders. Directors of the Citizen-Leader Program wrote, "This is fantastic! We would love to include this on our CL webpage." You can find it at <https://www.radford.edu/content/citizen-leader/home/ePortfolio/samples.html>

If you are interested in an internship opportunity (SOCY 499) in the Roots with Wings Project with Dr. Wagner and the Floyd Story Center, contact Drs. Lyman and Page. See the Project blog at: <https://floydstorycenter.blogspot.com/>

## FACULTY ACTIVITIES



In addition to activities described in the previous pages, our faculty have been engaged in the following:

- Dr. Bodenhamer published a policy brief with the Carsey School of Public Policy at the University of New Hampshire this summer:  
Bodenhamer, Aysha. 2020. "'Outlaw Operators': Prevention Failures and the Resurgence of Black Lung in Central Appalachia," National Issue Brief. 149. Durham, NH: Carsey School of Public Policy, University of New Hampshire. <https://carsey.unh.edu/publication/black-lung-Central-Appalachia>

She was also interviewed by *With Good Reason* for her research on coal, mountaintop removal, and black lung in central Appalachia. The interview is scheduled to air in late October. In addition, she participated in a webinar to discuss her research:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTwZbr3boxk>.

- Dr. Hulya Dogan published an article in May 2020:  
Dogan, Hulya. "Homeland-Making among Cultural and Ethnic Kin: Ahiska Turks in Turkey." In the journal *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*.  
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/sena.12318>

- Dr. Stephanie Bradley has accepted an invitation to serve the discipline as a member of the editorial board for *Teaching Sociology*, a journal published by the American Sociological Association. *Teaching Sociology* publishes content that supports the scholarship of teaching and learning and high-quality instruction in the discipline. Though she has already started to review journal submissions, Dr. Bradley's three-year appointment formally begins in January 2021.

In May, Dr. Bradley was an invited panelist for a CITL training session titled Silver Linings: Stories of Success from the COVID Semester. This session showcased an interdisciplinary group of faculty members who experienced some degree of pedagogical success, be it expected or surprising, following the quick transition to remote teaching in the second half of the Spring 2020 semester.

- Dr. Melinda Bollar Wagner published a chapter, *Celebrating the Local*, in Brian A. Hoey, *Reinventing and Reinvesting in the Local for Our Common Good*, University of Tennessee Press, 2020. The chapter describes some of the many university-community research partnerships forged by Dr. Wagner and Dr. Mary LaLone and their students, and develops general principles for ethical and fruitful local engagement. The book uses the image of the bridge over the Ohio River at Huntington, West Virginia (pictured right) as an icon for building bridges between academy and community.



## FACULTY ACTIVITIES, continued:

- In coordination with Buffy Ruffin and Brett Gilbert of Radford University's Center for Diversity and Inclusion, Dr. Gabriella Smith has organized three online workshops for student allies for racial justice. The first session in the "Space for Student Allies" series was held on 9/30 and covered "Confronting Whiteness as an Ally." Two more sessions are planned: 10/14 will cover "Race and Policing" and 10/28 will focus on "Working for Racial Change." The goal of these workshops is to bring together like-minded students to network, educate, and inspire each other to take actionable steps for making our community a more just and equitable place. Each online workshop lasts 90 minutes, and includes breakout discussions, short presentations, and question/answer sessions. If anyone is interested in joining, please email Buffy Ruffin at the CDI at [bruffin@radford.edu](mailto:bruffin@radford.edu).

## THE GEORGE HARVEY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

George Harvey Sr., a local celebrity of sorts, is a dedicated businessperson, community partner, and honorary alumnus of Radford University, class of 2017. This summer, Mr. Harvey reached out to Radford University in hopes of finding someone to help him record his oral history. Dean Smith asked Dr. Bodenhamer to conduct these oral history interviews, and as they say, the rest is history! At 92 years old, he has a great deal of wisdom, and fantastic stories to share.

Currently, Bijou Williams, Gabriela Avalos, and Brigitte Contreras are transcribing these interviews as part of their work for the Department of Sociology's Center for Social and Cultural Research. If students would like to participate in research opportunities such as these, please reach out to Dr. Bodenhamer at [abodenham3@radford.edu](mailto:abodenham3@radford.edu).



Photo: Mr. George Harvey, Hazel Hennessy, and Dr. Aysha Bodenhamer strike a pose at Harvey's Chevrolet in Radford, Virginia.

## APPALACHIAN EVENTS COMMITTEE

The Appalachian Events Committee (AEC) has been a student-led organization at Radford University for more than 30 years! The AEC is currently recruiting enthusiastic students with a passion for Appalachia. If you would like to help revamp this organization, feel free to reach out to faculty advisor Dr. Bodenhamer ([abodenham3@radford.edu](mailto:abodenham3@radford.edu)) for more information.