



## TOWN-N-GOWN | APRIL NEWSLETTER – 2026

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AVO, Community Engagement

### UPCOMING EVENTS / DATES TO REMEMBER

- April 7, 9:30 am - Board meeting at Webb Center or join by Zoom  
Guest speaker at 11:00am – Dr. Vinod Arguwal, Professor of Economics
- April 16-19 – Virginia International Tattoo at the Norfolk Scope
- April 17, 6:00 pm – ODU Baseball vs. Georgia Southern - **Championship Effort**
- May 5, 9:30 am – Board meeting at Webb Center or join by Zoom  
Guest speaker at 11:00am – Dr. Barbara Blake, Executive Director of Internships and Co-Ops.
- May 15 & 16 – ODU Commencement Ceremonies Spring 2026
- May 19, 5:30-7:30 pm – Annual “dinner” meeting at ODU’s Ellmer Health Science Building
- Retrain the Brain: Learn to Play Bridge – Reschedule Date TBD

“WE ARE FOREVER MONARCH STRONG”

# Paying Tribute to Lt. Col. Brandon A. Shah '07: A Dedicated Monarch, Public Servant, and True Hero

Following the horrific tragedy and senseless act of violence that occurred in Constant Hall on the morning of March 12, 2026, we pay tribute to one of our very own, Lt. Col. Brandon A. Shah '07, a dedicated Monarch, public servant, and true hero.

Above all else, Lt. Col. Shah embodied what it means to be a devoted family man, a revered leader, and heroic protector even in his final moments. He was a shining example for his students and all Monarchs.

Lt. Col. Shah was a beloved and respected leader at Old Dominion University. He personally guided students in the Army ROTC Monarch Battalion through his caring spirit and combat experience.



After enlisting in the Army in 2003, Lt. Col. Shah enrolled at Old Dominion University in 2005. He received his Army commission and graduated in 2007 with a bachelor's degree in sociology. He fulfilled his dream to be an Army pilot, flying an AH64 Apache over Iraq, Afghanistan, and Eastern Europe during Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, and Atlantic Resolve.

Lt. Col. Shah logged more than 1,200 hours, 600 of them on combat missions, in three aircraft. In his last position before joining Old Dominion University, he served as Director of Operations for the 3rd Combat Aviation Brigade in Savannah, Georgia, where he oversaw day-to-day operations, training, modernization and long-range plans.

In 2022, Lt. Col. Shah returned to Old Dominion University to lead the Army ROTC Monarch Battalion. As Professor of Military Science and Department Chair, he took immense pride in his students, particularly seeing the transformation they made “when they turn from being a student into being a soldier-leader.”

In 2023, Lt. Col. Shah was named to the Old Dominion University Alumni Association's 40 Under 40 Class.

Together, as Monarchs, we mourn the devastating loss of Lt. Col. Shah as we honor his life, which was marked by significant service and countless contributions. We express our deepest sympathy and heartfelt condolences to his immediate family, loved ones, dear friends, trusted colleagues, and all of those impacted by this horrific tragedy.

With Deepest Sympathy

Brian O. Hemphill, Ph.D.

President

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“WE ARE FOREVER MONARCH STRONG”



All Students, Faculty, Staff, and General Public  
are Invited to the

## **Monarch Battalion Unit Memorial**

Honoring the Life and Legacy of  
Lieutenant Colonel Brandon A. Shah '07



**Thursday, April 2, 2026**

12:30 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

*Kornblau Field at S.B. Ballard Stadium*

Gates will open at 11:30 a.m.

Attendees should enter through the West Gate of  
S.B. Ballard Stadium, located off Bluestone Avenue.

***Be advised that the program will include the  
highest military honor—a 21-gun salute—as well as cannon fire.***

Please refer to the map below for all parking locations.

Shuttle service will be provided from the overflow parking areas.

**“WE ARE FOREVER MONARCH STRONG”**



For questions or special accommodation requests,  
please contact the Division of Student and Campus Life at 757-683-6072 or [scl@odu.edu](mailto:scl@odu.edu).

“WE ARE FOREVER MONARCH STRONG”

## Memorial for Lt. Col. Shah at Dominion Rock

As students returned to campus after Spring Break, they have been greeted by messages of Monarch Strong, counsellors, and therapy dogs. On March 23 and 24, Dominion Rock was turned into a memorial to Lt. Col. Brandon A. Shah (B.S. '07), who courageously defended his students on March 12. Students surrounded the rock with American flags, while also placing painted handprints and written personalized messages on the rock's surface.

Dominion Rock is located between the Engineering Systems Building and the future Biological Sciences Buildings.



Photo credit: Chuck Thomas/ODU – [Full article available here.](#)



“WE ARE FOREVER MONARCH STRONG”

## Army ROTC Cadets Awarded Medals

Army ROTC cadets attending Old Dominion University were awarded eight meritorious service medals and two Purple Hearts for their actions during a shooting incident that occurred in their classroom late last month.

In a private ceremony Sunday, March 22, Army Secretary Dan Driscoll and Sergeant Major of the Army Michael Weimer granted the cadets the honors for their “bravery and sacrifice” during the March 12 shooting on campus.

The medals recognize the cadets’ courage and sacrifice during the incident, which university leaders described as heroic.

Lt. Col. Shah’s medals include a Bronze Star. He was posthumously awarded a *Purple Heart* and the *Legion of Merit*.

By Christian Stassis: [Read the full article at ArmyTimes](#)



*Sergeant Major of the Army Michael Weimer and Army Secretary Dan Driscoll awarded medals to Army ROTC cadets.*

*Credit: U.S. Army Cadet Command (ROTC)*

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“WE ARE FOREVER MONARCH STRONG”

# AROUND CAMPUS

## The Patricia W. and J. Douglas Perry Library Celebrates 50 Years

For 50 years, the Patricia W. and J. Douglas Perry Library has served as a central hub for learning and research at Old Dominion University.

Initially opened in 1976 as The New Library Building, the first expansion of the building was completed in 1999, featuring a 76,000-square-foot addition that included the building's iconic tower. The then-newly renovated library was dedicated in honor of Patricia Perry '89 and her husband Douglas Perry, generous benefactors of the University. A second expansion in 2011 created the Perry Library Learning Commons to offer students a collaborative workspace and enhanced technological resources.



*"It is a massive creative space for thousands of Old Dominion University students. It's a community for great thinkers."*

Today, Perry Library holds a vast collection of print, media and electronic materials supporting research, including a [Special Collections and University Archives](#) department with essential resources on University, state and regional history.

For students, Perry Library is where they enjoy study spaces, computer labs and more.

*"It's not just a library,"*

said Roland Davis, a double major in History and English from Richmond, who interned with and is now a student worker in Special Collections and University Archives. "It is a massive creative space for thousands of Old Dominion University students. It's a community for great thinkers."

Roland said his favorite part of the experience is interacting with patrons of the archives to learn about their projects and the passion they have for their work.

"It's really exciting to see the students coming in using and engaging the Libraries for not only their academic pursuits, but also more of that collaborative space, giving them a place for belonging," said Elizabeth Burns, interim dean for University Libraries. "And that, I think, is something that we can really be proud of. Everyone can find their space and place here at the Perry."



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Perry Library is also a valuable resource for the Hampton Roads community. In 2024, it welcomed [Naro Video @ ODU Libraries](#), restoring access to over 43,000 videos from the cherished Norfolk video store. Linda McGreevy, a retired Old Dominion University art history professor, ran the video store from 1996 to 2019 with her husband Tim Cooper.



University Libraries, of which Perry Library is a part, has launched a [campaign](#) to celebrate this golden anniversary and raise awareness of the myriad ways the Libraries inspire and empower the University community to learn, grow and create.

In addition to Perry Library, University Libraries includes the Elise N. Hofheimer Art Library with new acquisitions of art books and other resources; the F. Ludwig Diehn Composers Room within the F. Ludwig Diehn Center for the Performing Arts, which features a music library and a reading room for viewing composers' manuscripts and other music special collections; and the Edward E. Brickell Medical Sciences Library on Old Dominion University's medical campus, which brings new opportunities to grow research across disciplines.

Visit the University Libraries' [50 & Forward website](#) for more information about this year's celebration of Perry Library.

Story By Jonah Grinkewitz, Asst Dir News & Media Relations



## Retrain the Brain: Learn to Play Bridge

### Postponed - Reschedule Date TBD

The **Retrain the Brain: Learn to Play Bridge** seminar has been postponed due to the tragedy on campus earlier this month. Town-N-Gown will reschedule the event at a later date, and fortunately, the bridge seminar will still be held at the Perry Library as part of the Library's 50th Anniversary Celebration. Monitor your email for notification of the new date for **Retrain the Brain: Learn to Play Bridge** seminar. Thank you for your support. See you at the bridge table!

Please continue to check the Town-N-Gown website for more information.

## **Dog Day Hike**

April 12, 9:00am – 4:00pm

Hike First Landing State Park with certified therapy dogs from the Alliance of Therapy Dogs, perfect for de-stressing and good vibes. Easy-moderate paths, shady breaks, and furry friends to pet along the way. No experience needed, just a love for dogs and nature. Trip fee includes transportation, gear, and knowledgeable trip leaders. Personal pets prohibited. Register on the ODU Rec Well Portal for \$10 by April 1!

[Register Online](#)

## **ODU Symphony Orchestra and Chorus: Mozart's Requiem**

April 11, 7:00 – 8:00pm

Location: Thalia Lynn Baptist Church, Virginia Beach, VA The ODU Symphony Orchestra and Chorus will present a concert featuring Mozart's Requiem.

## **Pedals & Scoops Norfolk Bike Ride Adventure**

April 23, 5:00 – 7:00pm

Join us for an evening bike ride on the Elizabeth River Trail, right in ODU's backyard! We'll bike towards downtown Norfolk and stop for ice cream along the way. The ODU Outdoor Adventure Program will provide all equipment. Bike riding experience is required. Register on the ODU Rec Well Portal for \$10 by April 8!

[Register Online](#)



*Website:*  
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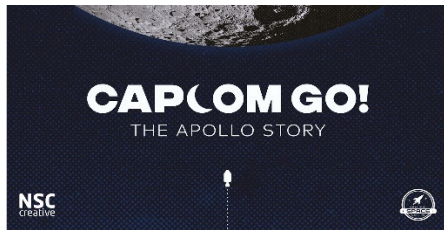


*Contact:*  
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# @ THE LÊ PLANETARIUM



## Capcom, Go!

April 1  
7:00 pm

## Bad Movie Night: "The Core"

April 3  
6:30 pm – Trivia  
7:00 pm – Movie

## Tour of the Spring Sky

April 8  
7:00 pm

## Satellites

April 15  
7:00 pm

***\$5 per person***

***Free with an ODU ID for the remainder of the spring semester.***

**Tickets are available at the door 30-minutes before the show.**

**[www.odu.edu/planetarium](http://www.odu.edu/planetarium)**

**Credit: Justin Mason, Planetarium Director & Town-N-Gown Board Member**



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## Class of 2025: May Salama Becomes Old Dominion University's First Public Health Ph.D. Graduate



When May Salama (M.P.H '21) — born and raised in Cairo, Egypt —to the United States in 2016, her path was uncertain. “For me, leaving Egypt wasn’t easy. I left my family, my house, my job and my friends — everything. And I started from scratch here,” she said.

Now, nearly a decade later, she will graduate on December 13 with her doctoral degree in health services research with a focus in health policy and management. She will cross the stage as the very first Ph.D. graduate of Old Dominion University’s Joint School of Public Health, in partnership with Norfolk State University.

May dedicated her Ph.D. research to uncovering links between poor oral health during pregnancy and an increased risk of preterm birth and low birth weight in infants. But her journey and passion for helping mothers and children began more than a decade ago.

By Kenya Godette: [Read the full story here.](#)

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## Monarch Pillar of Innovation and Excellence Award Recognizes Outstanding Student, Faculty and Staff Recipients

Collaboration, excellence, innovation and professional service define four outstanding Monarchs celebrated during Old Dominion University’s second annual Forward-Focused event on February 26. Reflecting the spirit of community and resilience within the Monarch Nation, these individuals were each awarded a Monarch Pillar of Innovation and Excellence Award, which included \$10,000 in honor of their commitment to the University.



This year, the recipients are **Omotomilola “Lola” Jegede**, a Ph.D. candidate in the Joint School of Public Health; **Andrew Cohen**, master lecturer in the Department of Finance in the Strome College of Business; **Carrie John**, vice provost and University registrar; and **Lauren Larese** (B.S. '12), operations manager for Macon & Joan Brock Virginia Health Sciences Ellmer College of Health Sciences at Old Dominion University.

By Kelsey Kendall: [Read the full story here.](#)

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## **ODU Football Home Schedule**

*Fall 2026 schedule just announced!*

**\*\*Home Games**

**\*\*Foreman Field at S.B. Ballard Stadium**

\*\*September 5 vs. Norfolk State

September 12 at Virginia Tech

\*\*September 19 vs. East Carolina

\*\*September 26 vs James Madison

October 3 at Georgia State

October 10 at Appalachian State University

\*\*October 15 vs. Georgia Southern

October 24 at Louisiana Tech

\*\*October 31 vs. Marshall

November 11 at Coastal Carolina

November 21 at UConn

\*\*November 28 vs. Southern Miss

## **ODU Baseball Home Schedule**

at *Ellmer Family Baseball Complex*

April 2 (Thu) vs. Southern Miss 6:00 PM

April 3 (Fri) vs. Southern Miss 3:00 PM

April 4 (Sat) vs. Southern Miss 12:00 PM  
**Teacher Appreciation / Youth Day**

April 15 (Wed) vs. Richmond 6:00 PM

April 17 (Fri) vs. Georgia Southern 6:00 PM  
**Championship Effort**

April 18 (Sat) vs. Georgia Southern 3:00 PM

April 19 (Sun) vs. Georgia Southern 1:00 PM  
**BBKC Day**

April 21 (Tue) vs. East Carolina 6:00 PM

April 28 (Tue) vs. VCU 6:00 PM



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# AROUND TOWN



## *VIRGINIA MOCA GRAND OPENING AND INAUGURAL EXHIBITION CELEBRATION*

Virginia MOCA is CLOSED and will reopen in their brand-new museum on the campus of Virginia Wesleyan University. The new building will expand our education and exhibition space by 20%, bringing engagement and education experiences to the forefront. *Join them for an opening night celebration.*



**FRIDAY, APRIL 17: 6:00-10:00 PM**

***NINA CHANEL ABNEY: THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS AND SEAMLESS: ART AND DESIGN***

*AN EVENING THAT BRINGS TOGETHER ART, MUSIC, AND COMMUNITY TO MARK A NEW CHAPTER FOR THE MUSEUM.*

***MEMBERS \$25; NONMEMBERS \$50***

[Get Tickets](#)



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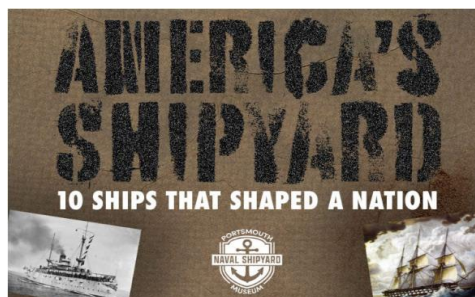
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***AMERICA'S SHIPYARD:***

***10 SHIPS THAT SHAPED A NATION EXHIBIT***

When: 10:00 am, April 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16

Where: Portsmouth Welcome Center



***GOLDEN EGG HUNT***

Every Saturday and Sunday throughout April the Virginia Zoo will hide 10 large golden eggs throughout the Zoo. All eggs will have a Virginia Zoo prize pack, but 2 eggs will have larger prizes. This year will also include prizes from partner organizations included in the large eggs. They will also be hiding 30 small golden eggs each day with a Virginia Zoo trading card prize!



**THE CHESAPEAKE SPRING ART FESTIVAL**

Presented by: Chesapeake Rotary and Chesapeake Fine Arts Commission

Saturday, April 25 from 11-6pm

Sunday, April 26 from 11-5pm

Located at the Chesapeake City Park with Free Admission

Immerse yourself in a day of exquisite art, live music, and culinary delights. Discover the magic of glassblowing, wood turning, and more. Join us for an unforgettable celebration of arts, crafts, craft beer, and fine wines, all set against the backdrop of Chesapeake's beautiful spring scenery. Don't miss the premier art, beer, and food festival that's perfect for families and art lovers alike.



Popular entertainment groups are scheduled to perform all weekend. The wildly popular '80s cover band, The Deloreans, will play on Saturday from 12:00 pm-3:30 pm.

**17<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL TASTE OF INDIA**

Saturday, April 18 at 11:00am

Chartway Arena

Celebrate India's timeless traditions and inspiring innovations with a vibrant experience of food, culture, and shopping. Enjoy Bollywood and classical dance performances, savor delicious Indian cuisine, explore vendor booths offering Indian clothes and handicrafts, and have fun with kids' carnival games and henna hand painting.



**5TH ANNUAL CHESAPEAKE  
BATAAN DEATH MARCH MEMORIAL WALK**

April 18, 2026

16.6 mile walk 7:00 AM start  
5 mile walk 10:00 AM  
1 mile family walk 11:00 AM  
Closing Ceremony 12:00 PM



The event will take place at the Dismal Swamp in Chesapeake, VA. Registration fee of \$30 fee. This is about more than just honoring the Filipinos and Americans who fought and died during the Bataan and Corregidor Campaign it is about teaching our youth about the history of those who sacrificed for their country.

More Information: <https://walkchesapeake.wixsite.com/chesapeakebataan/register> Funds raised go to VFW Post 2894's Veteran Outreach Programs

**April 21, 2026 Special Election**  
Proposed Constitutional Amendment - Statewide



*For an explanation of the proposed constitutional amendment, see the Virginia Department of Election web site [HERE](#)*

- **March 6, 2026:** In-person early voting at your [local registrar's office](#) began.
- **Friday, April 10, 2026:** Deadline to apply for a ballot to be mailed to you. Your request must be received by your [local voter registration office](#) by 5:00 p.m.
- **Tuesday, April 14, 2026:** Deadline to [register to vote, or update an existing registration](#). *(Voters may register after this date, through Election Day, and vote using a provisional ballot).*
- **Saturday, April 11 & April 18, 2026:** Voter registration offices and Satellite Sites open for early voting.
- **Saturday, April 18, 2026:** The last day of in-person early voting at your [local voter registration office](#). Ends at 5:00pm



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## Virginia International Tattoo - April 16-19

Although the ceremonial bands and military demonstrations begin at 7pm, there will be NATO speakers and VIP introductions starting at 4pm. There are plenty of vendors for food and NATO related gifts.

NATO's headquarters has been in Norfolk, Virginia, since 1952, when Allied Command Atlantic was established. The current command, Allied Command Transformation, was formed in 2003, and Joint Force Command Norfolk was established in 2018.

Norfolk will be host to the 32 member states including the latest  
Finland in April 2023  
Sweden in March 2024

A special **THANK YOU** goes to Elizabeth(Bet) Cake - President of Town-N-Gown 2011-2013 and 2015-2017



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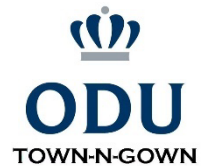


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# TOWN-N-GOWN NOTES



*Town-N-Gown members* are always welcome at the board meetings as well as attending any associated scheduled tours. The next board meetings will be Tuesday, April 7 and Tuesday May 5, 2026 at Webb Center or join via Zoom.

## Town-N-Gown Rita M. Costello Community Service Award

Each year, Town-N-Gown recognizes an individual from our larger community who exemplifies community service and demonstrates extraordinary concern for, and commitment to, serving others. To nominate a member of the community or request additional information, contact Jo Hayden at [townngownodu@yahoo.com](mailto:townngownodu@yahoo.com). The 2026 Recipient will be recognized at the Town-N-Gown Annual meeting on May 19, 2025.

**Town-N-Gown website is live!** If you have not yet seen our website, take a minute to visit! The site has all the essential information about Town-N-Gown as well as history, photos of past events, upcoming events, and the previous issues of the TNG newsletter. Have a look at [www.ODUTNG.com](http://www.ODUTNG.com).

## ***WE ARE FOREVER MONARCH STRONG!***



Our sincerest thanks to *Colley Avenue Copies & Graphics* for their ongoing support of Town-N-Gown. As a gift to our organization, Colley Avenue Copies & Graphics has generously printed and processed our flyers, programs, posters, banners, stationery, and business cards for many, many years. We are most grateful for the generous donation of their time, talent, and treasure!

*It's Time to Renew!*

Dues for 2025-2026 membership are due now!

**TOWN-N-GOWN MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

**Membership dues are \$25.00 and include a spouse/partner (single address).**

Type of Membership: (Check One) New \_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_ *(All members must renew!)*

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(List both names if a dual membership)

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: (Home) \_\_\_\_\_ (Work) \_\_\_\_\_

(Cell) \_\_\_\_\_ *(Please indicate your contact preference!)*

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

(Email addresses are very important for sending updates and special messages - please update TNG when you change addresses! Town-N-Gown does not share your contact information with any organizations other than the ODU Events Office to use for invitations.)

Make checks payable to **Town-N-Gown** and mail to:

Lawrence Owes

P.O. Box 51

Portsmouth, VA 23705

For questions, contact Mary Lou Speckheuer at (757) 285-2722 | [marylou110@cox.net](mailto:marylou110@cox.net)

***Thank you for your continuing support of Town-N-Gown and ODU!!***