

nonfiction and memoirs, was inducted into Audible's Narrator Hall of Fame. Audible is a seller and producer of spoken audio entertainment, information and educational programming on the internet. The honor recognizes Arndt's reputation as one of the most popular and beloved narrators working today. She has narrated more than 230 books since 2010. She has also taught acting and voice for the stage at JMU.

00 Seth Dymond was awarded the Gold Medal at the 2017 International Book Awards in the Children-Social Issues category after publishing his first children's book, *Can We Watch?*, written with his daughter.

01 Bettina Ring was appointed secretary of

agriculture and forestry by Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam.

03 Carrie Caumont has been appointed director of scheduling for Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam. ♦ Laura Wolfe and her husband, Bobby, are the new owners of Keezletown's Evergreen Christmas Tree Farm, renamed Every Soul Acres.

04 Lauren Arbogast joined Farm Credit of the Virginia's Knowledge Center as a relations specialist. ♦ Amy Kubler joined the team at Sentara RMH Medical Center. ♦ Sergey Primbetov is the new director of member relations for Park View Federal Credit Union's four branches.

05 Jessica Killeen has joined Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam's administra-



In September 2017, 11 women from Northern Virginia, including five JMU alumnae, biked about 200 miles through the Bordeaux region of France. (L-R): Brenda Young ('82), Lisa Paine Whetzel ('88), Deb Tonkin Werrlein ('89), Laura Tonkin Vaughn ('86) and Katie Baxter Gagen ('95) took a break for a photo at the Abbey of La Sauve-Majeure.

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Former JMU Dukes football player Anderson Braswell ('06) draws from his college experience in his current role as a U.S. Coast Guard commander.

Lessons learned from JMU

BY RENÉE ROCCO

Anderson Braswell ('06) is commander of Flotilla 59 of Smithfield, Virginia, which was selected as national flotilla of the year for 2017 from among the 1,500 U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary flotillas.

A double major in accounting and computer information systems at JMU, Braswell was a member of the 2004 championship-winning Dukes football team, as well as the 2003 team, which had a disappointing season. He believes lessons learned as a student-athlete – overcoming differences, hard work, preparation and time management – prepared him well for his Coast Guard responsibilities. "Taking lessons from my time at JMU, the first thing my leadership team had to do was change the attitude," Braswell says. "The unit didn't believe that a small unit in a town of only 8,000 could ever compete with units from Tampa Bay, Miami or Los Angeles."

Changes on the Dukes football team between 2003 and 2004 helped him realize that "everyone is good at something, so you have to identify your players and put them in positions that play to their strengths," he says. "Just like in 2004, we changed up the way we did things in the unit and, over time, we changed the attitude from 'hoping' for success to expecting success."

Braswell credits accounting professor Alexander Gabbin for helping him face challenges head on. "He showed me that I was capable of much more than I gave myself credit for if I worked (very) hard and remained disciplined," Braswell says. "That single lesson has paid off in my career multiple times, as my teams have regularly accomplished things people said were 'unrealistic.'"

For Braswell, that discipline has meant that he and his unit have been well prepared as they conducted rescues during and after Superstorm Sandy and Hurricanes Irene, Harvey and Irma, as well as search-and-rescue missions in Virginia's Hampton Roads region. He believes his story has applications for today's students.

"Live for a higher purpose," he says. "Life is about more than just yourself, and the sooner you realize this, the more fulfilling your life will be. JMU is unique in that it provides the balance to get a top-rate education, have a social life and get involved in your community at the same time. Take advantage of that and put yourself out there. ... Be the change."

To read the full interview with Braswell, visit j.mu/braswell.

