

**Oxford Preparatory School is thrilled to announce the following new faculty/staff for the 2024 – 2025 school year...**

**Manuel Campos – Upper School Spanish/ESL Teacher**

Manuel Campos was born and raised in Cúcuta, Colombia. After compulsory military service, Campos moved to Bucaramanga, Colombia, and attended college at UIS (Universidad Industrial de Santander), where he received a Bachelor's degree in English. Campos started teaching English as a second language when he was in 5th semester, so by the time he graduated from university, he already had almost three years of experience. Mr. Campos has vast experience teaching students of all ages: kids, teenagers, young adults, and adults.

Manuel Campos is now married to his beloved wife Nathalia and is enthusiastic to continue his teaching career at Oxford Preparatory School. Mr. Campos is aware that his role is to provide knowledge and educate and prepare learners to face real life. He is conscious that information is important in life. Nevertheless, he knows that developing patience, humbleness, commitment, and gratitude is what makes a human being, characteristics that align with OPS. In his spare time, Manuel Campos loves playing chess and having barbecues with his family and friends, but he would also like to set aside some time to learn how to play the guitar.

**Will Darden - Upper School World History**

Mr. Darden joins Oxford Preparatory School this fall as a World History teacher. He is recently retired from the Granville County Public Schools, having taught Latin and World History for thirty-seven years at J. F. Webb High School (his career began at the old D.N. Hix School in downtown Oxford). Having lived and worked in Granville County for over three decades, Mr. Darden and his wife, Lynda, consider themselves Granvillians. Mr. Darden holds a B.A. in Classics from Chapel Hill (1986) and an M.Ed. in Education Leadership (1992) from the University of Southern Mississippi. Over the course of his career, Mr. Darden has participated in summer seminars at Duke, Duquesne, and Ohio State under the auspices of the National Endowment for the Humanities. On Saturdays in the fall, Mr. Darden can usually be found in Kenan Stadium, rooting hard for the Tar Heels.

Mr. Darden looks forward to meeting and working with the talented students of Oxford Preparatory School and their parents. Oxford Preparatory has a reputation for producing outstanding students - witness recent Oxford Prep recipients of the Morehead-Cain and Park scholarships- and Mr. Darden embraces the challenge of facilitating this high level of achievement.

### **Judith Pereda – Lower School Spanish Teacher**

Judith Pereda is originally from Lima, Peru. She graduated from San Marcos National University with a Bachelor's in Education. She taught English as a second language in kindergarten and elementary school for over five years. She has recently led the Cambridge YLE (Young Learners English) Preparation Workshop for 5<sup>th</sup> graders, helping them acquire strong communication skills.

She is excited to join the OPS family as the Lower School Spanish teacher. She believes learning a second language prepares students for a global society and is eager to share her culture. She looks forward to working closely with educators in lower school to develop an engaging learning environment.

### **Dr. Lydia Rhine – Upper School Social Studies Teacher**

Dr. Lydia Rhine, an Oxford native, is excited to continue her teaching career at Oxford Preparatory School. Lydia Rhine was raised in Oxford, N.C., and graduated from J.F. Webb High School. She is married with three daughters, Jane (8), Hadley (6), and Hope (3). Her mother is also part of the Oxford Preparatory Team as a part-time teacher. Lydia's education credentials include a Bachelor's of Science in History Education from East Carolina University ('11), a Master's in Digital Teaching from North Carolina State University ('16), and a Doctorate of Education in Secondary Curriculum and Instruction from Liberty University ('23). She is pursuing her Ph.D. in History from Liberty University and her National Board Certification. A certified social studies teacher in North Carolina and Georgia, Lydia has twelve years of teaching experience. She has taught in private and public school settings in addition to seven years entirely online for North Carolina's first virtual charter school.

Lydia is excited to join the Oxford Preparatory School team because she is eager to work for a school that values education and college preparedness. As she continues her educator career at Oxford Prep, Lydia is excited about being part of a team and working to foster a lifelong love of learning within students.

**Amanda Thiede - 6th Grade Math Teacher**

Mrs. Thiede is excited to begin her journey with OPS this year as a sixth-grade Math teacher. In her twenty-two years of teaching experience, her favorite years as an educator were spent in middle school. After graduating from Longwood University, she remained in Virginia and taught her first three years. Following her heart, she moved to Johnston County, NC, where she married her husband and remained an educator for the next twelve years. Most recently, she taught seven years of middle school locally in Henderson, NC.

Being able to choose an amazing school, like Oxford Prep, for herself and her two children is an opportunity that she is beyond grateful to have. She looks forward to challenging her students while having fun and building positive relationships. Outside of school, Mrs. Thiede spends her free time at the lake. She enjoys doing puzzles, spending time with family and friends, playing and watching sports.

**Heather Utley – Upper School EC Teacher (Part-Time)**

Heather Utley, a Durham native and recently retired teacher, joins OPS this year as an Exceptional Children's Teacher. She graduated from Appalachian State University with a BS in Special Education and a minor in Psychology. She spent her entire teaching career at her Alma Mater, Northern High School in Durham, where she was an advisor for many clubs and cheerleading coach. She taught inclusion English and math and study skills and was co-chair of The Learning Center. For the last 5 years, she was a lead teacher for the self-contained IDMO class, where she truly found her passion. She is the mother of two beautiful children, McKenzie and Jacob. Her hobbies include decorating, event planning, and, most of all, spending time with her family and friends. Heather is excited to join the Oxford Prep family and to work for a school that values education and helping all students meet their maximum potential as they prepare for the real world.

### **Stephanie Vierra – Upper School English Teacher**

Stephanie Vierra was born in Durham, NC, and has lived near there all her life. She was self-employed for 17 years, owning multiple businesses. She obtained a Bachelor's degree in University Studies from East Carolina University and obtained a Master's in English, also from ECU. Stephanie began teaching in Person County and was awarded the Delta Kappa Gamma award for beginning teachers. In addition to teaching high school English (including English I, II, III, and IV), Stephanie has also taught classes at three community colleges, including American Literature I and II, British Literature I and II, Writing Across the Disciplines, Writing the Research Paper, and humanities classes.

Stephanie is extremely excited to join the Oxford Preparatory School family and is looking forward to sharing her knowledge of ELA with the students to help prepare them not only for college but also for life outside of school. On a personal note, Stephanie enjoys fishing, traveling, and reading. She has two sons and two grandsons that she visits often.

**We would also like to recognize the following returning OPS employees transitioning into new positions for the 2024 - 2025 school year...**

- **Kevon Grant (K – 8 Reading Interventionist)**
- **Lorie Jamison-Phillips (3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Science/Social Studies Teacher)**
- **Mark Lunsford (3 – 8 Math Interventionist)**
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