

# LIFELONG CONNECTIONS

*A prolific scholar in the field of exercise science, Professor Caroline Ketcham fosters undergraduate research at Elon, mentoring dozens of students pursuing intense research goals.*

## Caroline Ketcham

BY KATHLEEN HUPFELD '16

I had been at Elon less than a week when Dr. Caroline Ketcham invited me for coffee. We had met during my Honors Fellows interview, and she wanted to know how I was adjusting to college life. What I thought would be a quick 20-minute chat turned into an hourlong discussion that set the tone for our long-term mentoring relationship.

From then on, Dr. Ketcham became a constant throughout my years at Elon, a patient sounding board for all of my caffeine-fueled, late-night ideas about research and life. She became my academic adviser in exercise science and my research mentor. I served as TA for her Elon 101 class, and even babysat her son.

Dr. Ketcham avoids taking credit for her students' accomplishments, but I attribute much of my professional success to the foundation she helped me build at Elon and to her willingness to always go above and beyond. She encouraged me to think big and develop an undergraduate research project I was passionate about. She immensely improved my science writing, encouraging patience as we edited and refined dozens of drafts and together published my first three peer-reviewed manuscripts. She also helped me identify and apply to graduate programs, pushing me to apply for multiple awards that propelled my career, including a National Science Foundation fellowship.

I spent countless hours in the famous comfy chairs in her office, talking about everything. But what never ceased to amaze me is that when I'd walk into her office, another student was almost always walking out. She was willing to provide a listening ear and honest advice not only to me but to anyone who sought her mentorship.

Even now, I still turn to Dr. Ketcham for advice. She has become a lifelong mentor, an example of how I can excel professionally while finding life balance. Above all, she has deeply shaped how I think about mentoring my own undergraduate students — meeting them where they are and always remembering that inviting them to an open-ended coffee chat can mean so much. ✨



*An emerging leader in the field of neuroscience, Kathleen Hupfeld '16 is a postdoctoral Fellow at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine.*