

GARDNER-WEBB

Volume 55, 2020

THE MAGAZINE



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- HEALTH, SCIENCES AND EDUCATION LEAD EFFORTS THROUGH PANDEMIC
- ALUMNUS CLAYTON KING MAKES HISTORY IN AFRICA
- TAKING A STAND AGAINST RACISM
- TRE LAMB NAMED AS NEW FOOTBALL COACH
- NATE EVANS NAMED AS VP FOR ADVANCEMENT

GARDNER-WEBB UNIVERSITY

The mission of Gardner-Webb University is to prepare graduates for leadership and service in their professional careers and in their personal lives.

Rigorous and innovative degree programs, combined with distinctive experiential learning opportunities, shape students into thinkers, doers, and world-changers. Forged within a supportive and diverse Christian community, our students emerge ready to impact their chosen professions, equipped with the skills to advance the frontiers of knowledge, and inspired to make a positive and lasting difference in the lives of others.

2020 BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chair
Jennifer Marion Mills

Vice Chair
Susan Briggs

Secretary
Christopher L. Welch

Treasurer
David W. Royster III

Immediate Past Chair
Ronald R. Beane

Rodney Allison
Bill Bell
Thomas Bell
Ralph Bentley
Mark Collins
Ed Cooke
Verhonda Crawford
Bill Ellis
O. Max Gardner III
Chris Gash
George R. Gilliam
Kitty Hoyle
Teresa Huggins
David Keim
Dr. Lamont Littlejohn
Dr. Ashely Lowery
Dr. Randy Marion
Bobby Morrow III
Tony Robbins

Dr. Carole Roberts
Steve Simpson
Delaina Smith
Gary H. Smith III
Jesse Sprinkle IV
John Teeter
Lisa Tucker
Dr. Jenson Turner
Dr. Phillip Turner
Thomas H. Watson
Archie Wood
Maurice York

Trustees Emeriti
Dr. Rance Henderson
Sam McMahon
James Robbins
Dr. Bob Shepherd

PRESIDENT'S CABINET

Dr. William Downs
President

Dr. Ben Leslie
Provost and Executive Vice President

Chuck Burch
Vice President for Athletics

Brian Arnold, Interim
Vice President of Student Development

Nate Evans
Vice President for External Affairs/Advancement

Mike Hardin
Senior Vice President for Administration

Tracy Jessup
Vice President for Christian Life and Services, Senior Minister to the University

Richard McDevitt
Vice President Marketing

Steve Serck
University Counsel

Stephanie Stearns
Executive Assistant to the President

Kristen Setzer,
Vice President for Enrollment Management

Jeff Tubbs
Vice President for Planning and Institutional Effectiveness

ACADEMIC COUNCIL

Dr. William Downs
President

Dr. Ben Leslie
Provost and Executive Vice President

Tracy Arnold
Dean, School of Nursing

Bruce Boyles
Associate Provost for Professional and Graduate Studies

Sydney Brown
Dean, Graduate School

Prince Bull
Dean, School of Education

Carmen Butler
Associate Provost and Dean of Student Success

Robert Canoy
Dean, School of Divinity

David Carscaddon
Dean, School of Psychology and Counseling

Pam Dennis
Dean of the Library

Cheryl Duffus
Faculty Chair

Elizabeth Pack
Dean, Adult and Distance Education

Stephanie Stearns
Executive Assistant to the President

Mischia Taylor
Dean, Godbold School of Business

Nicole Waters
Interim Associate Provost, College of Health Sciences

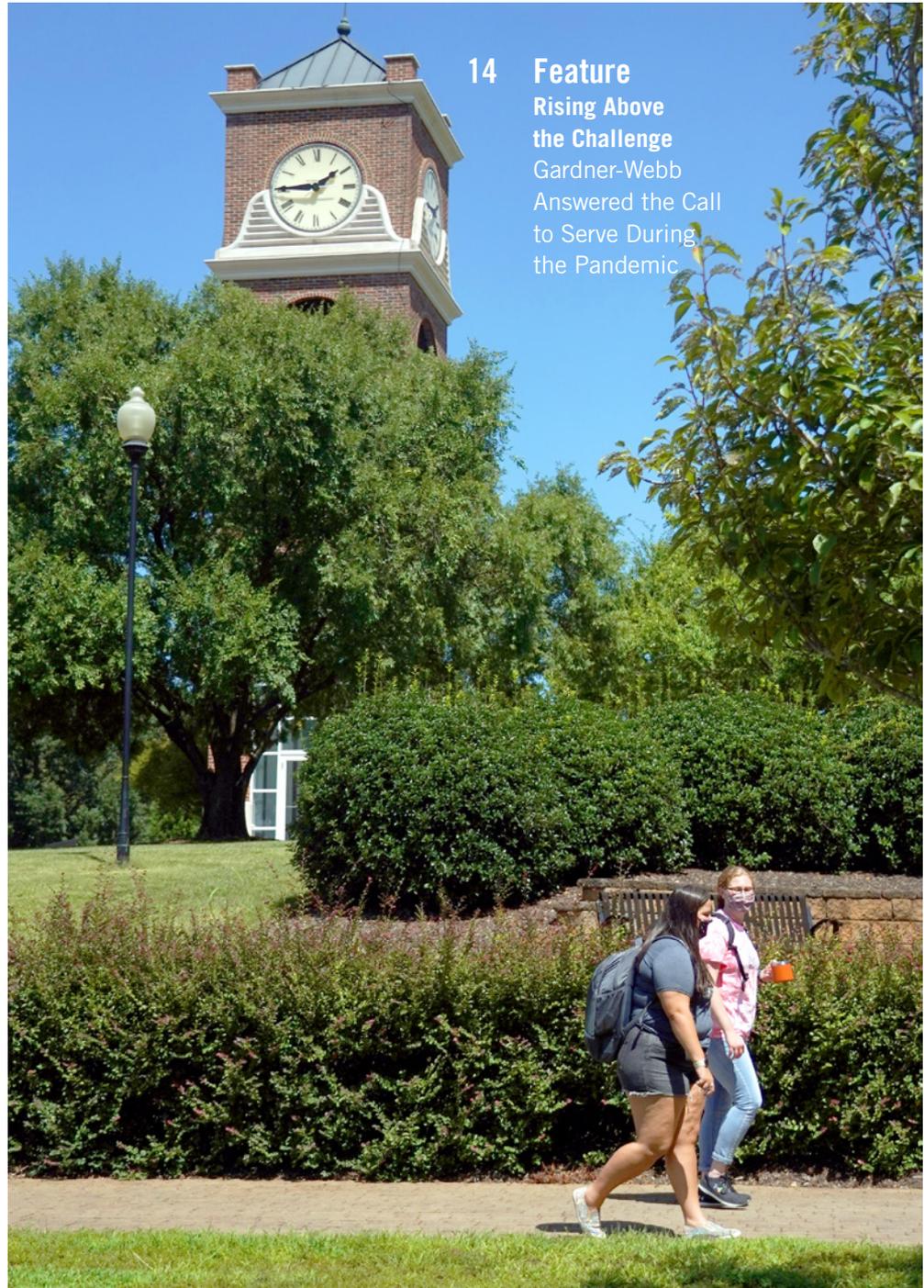
David Yelton
Associate Provost, Arts and Sciences

SGA OFFICERS (2020-21)

Carlee Winstead, President
Jillian Sward, Vice President
Grace Nance, Secretary

Blake Elizalde, Treasurer
Paige Butler, Parliamentarian

CONTENTS



14 Feature
Rising Above the Challenge
Gardner-Webb Answered the Call to Serve During the Pandemic

Departments

4 From the President's Desk
5 News & Notes
14 Feature
32 Students
40 Bulldog Nation

44 Alumni Features
48 Military Spotlight
50 Advancement
51 Class Acts
59 In Memoriam



32 Students
More than 300 stand 'Together as One' against racial injustice and inequality



40 Bulldog Nation
Head football coach Tre Lamb has bold vision for Gardner-Webb



44 Alumni
Clayton King, '95, has shared life-changing power of Jesus with people all over the world



48 Military Spotlight
Larri Robinson, '20, discovers Army ROTC gives her structure to excel



50 Advancement
Nate Evans selected as new Vice President for Advancement

GARDNER-WEBB • THE MAGAZINE

Volume 55, 2020

The Gardner-Webb Magazine is the official magazine of Gardner-Webb University, and it is published by the Division of University Marketing and Communications.

Gardner-Webb President
Dr. William Downs

Editorial Assistance
Julian Ajello
Shelley M. Stockton

Vice President for Marketing
Richard McDevitt

Design
SPARK Publications

Managing Editor
Noel T. Manning II

Digital Design Editor
Phillip Lewis

Assistant Editor
Jackie Bridges

Contributing Writers
Jackie Bridges
Ryan Bridges
William M. Downs

Noel T. Manning II
Marc Rabb
Shelley M. Stockton

Contributing Photographers

Austin Billiot
Joe Bolado
Bob Carey
Elizabeth Covington
Anya Flöge
Alexis Fonville
Sarah Garrison
Edin Hernandez
Robin Jackson
Jeff P. Janowski
Kim Kreuzman

Blanton Leigh
Lindy Lynch
Lisa Martinat
Joy Smith
Benjamin Pruitt
Brittany Randolph
Abbey Sprinkle
Ely Thompson
Sarah Tudor
Adam Willis
Mylana Wolff



Submissions and Feedback

By mail: The Gardner-Webb Magazine
Office of University Communications
P.O. Box 7315
Boiling Springs, N.C. 28017

By email: ntmanning@gardner-webb.edu

Gardner-webb.edu/magazine

Address and Name Change Submissions

Contact: Becky Robbins
By phone: 704.406.4251
By email: robbins@gardner-webb.edu

Social Outreach

- [Twitter.com/gardnerwebb](https://twitter.com/gardnerwebb)
- [Facebook.com/gardnerwebb](https://facebook.com/gardnerwebb)
- [Instagram.com/gardnerwebb](https://instagram.com/gardnerwebb)

Upon request, this publication can be made available in an alternate format. Please make a request by calling 704.406.4631 or emailing ntmanning@gardner-webb.edu.

Gardner-Webb University's publications, including, but not limited to, its policies, procedures, website, guidelines, communications, and social media posts, do not constitute a contract between the University and any person or entity. The University reserves the right to modify all such publications and/or modify its operating practices without prior notice.

*Unless otherwise noted, all stories credited to Jackie Bridges

Continuing to Power Through

Wow, what a year it has been! 2020 will not likely go down in the annals of history as one of humanity's favorites, but considering all we've been through, Gardner-Webb stands remarkably strong and resilient. Despite a protracted global pandemic, enrollments are up, world-class instruction continues without interruption, and our distinctive mission of servant-leadership plays out each and every day with renewed vigor. We are living up to the image of our beloved bulldog mascot...courageous, fierce, and determined.

Personally, I could never have envisioned a more fascinating start to my presidency. Fall 2019 was a blur of activity and a revving up of amazing energy and momentum. Spring 2020 started the same way. Then the infamous month of March arrived, when most of American higher education made an unprecedented pivot to online instruction. Unlike many colleges and universities, Gardner-Webb never closed. We maintained an active student presence on campus throughout the remainder of spring, and our second summer session was taught face-to-face. Students continued to live in university housing. Dining services continued to keep everyone well fed. Chief Barry Johnson and the University Police continued to keep everyone safe. When the dust settled from the pandemic's first phase, the University allocated more than \$2.1 million in COVID-19 relief funds back to students and their families in recognition of the disruptions caused by the move to online instruction.

Nobody sat on their hands waiting for the storm to pass. Instead, Gardner-Webb got busy ... real busy. Our admissions team took their recruitment efforts to a new level, and now, after years of decline, Gardner-Webb has engineered a 17 percent increase in the size of its entering freshman class for Fall 2020. Pause and read that one again ... a 17

percent increase achieved during one of the most inhospitable recruiting seasons in anyone's memory. This is cause for celebration!

In April, Gardner-Webb's faculty approved a new General Education Curriculum, making GWU that much more appealing to prospective new students and to transfers. In June, Gardner-Webb's Board of Trustees unanimously approved *GWU 2020-2025: A Strategic Plan for Growth and Excellence*, which will guide our priorities moving forward. In July, we opened a new Student Health Clinic on campus. In August, we launched the University's new website, which provides a brilliantly updated platform from which to tell our institutional story.

Throughout the summer and the fall, the campus landscape saw important changes in the form of facilities renovations and upgrades. The 72-year-old Decker Residence Hall received a comprehensive internal transformation. The Dover Campus Center's façade had an impressive facelift. The venerable Bost Pool earned an entirely new structure to house our men's and women's swimming programs. Thanks to the generosity of Dr. Randy Marion and Board of Trustees Chair Jennifer Marion Mills, Spangler Stadium is now home to a much needed new video scoreboard. Other projects are presently underway or in the pipeline. Always moving forward... always trying to realize a culture of continuous improvement.

To learn more about what's been going on at GWU, I invite you to read through the pages of this latest issue of *Gardner-Webb Magazine*. In the features that follow, you will see why we are all so very proud of our high-ability, socially engaged students. You will see why we are all so thankful to have faculty and staff who commit themselves each day to the success and growth of our students. You will see why we are so eager to



stay connected with our accomplished alumni who live out our institutional commitment "For God and Humanity" (*Pro Deo et Humanitate*). You will see that an important number of our students are also preparing for service to our country through ROTC, and as an institution we will be looking to do more in the future to serve veterans, active military and their spouses. In short, by the time you complete your reading of this present issue you will see why we are all so excited to be Runnin' Bulldogs!

I want to close this letter by asking all those who love Gardner-Webb to consider doing three things: (1) Let us hear from you. We'd love to know where you are and what you're doing in your professional pursuits and personal life; (2) Visit us. We'd love to host you on campus at any time; (3) Support us. We are grateful for the passion and generosity of our alumni and friends who partner with us to grow Gardner-Webb University into North Carolina's recognized leader in Christian higher education.

Thank you for all you do for GWU!

Dr. William M. Downs
President

NEWS & NOTES



The Inauguration of the 13th President of Gardner-Webb University, Dr. William M. Downs, was held on Aug. 6, 2020.

Dr. William M. Downs Officially Inaugurated as Gardner-Webb University's 13th President

The inauguration of Gardner-Webb University's 13th president, originally scheduled as a week-long celebration in March 2020, was one of the many events cancelled because of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Instead of the traditional ceremony with a large gathering, Dr. William M. Downs was sworn in as Gardner-Webb's president on Aug. 6, 2020, in a small service attended by family, friends and GWU officials.

Downs officially took office at Gardner-Webb on July 1, 2019, after a rigorous yearlong search. Reflecting on Downs' first year with the University, Jennifer Marion Mills, chair of the GWU Board of Trustees and member of the Presidential Search Committee, commented, "A leader is often measured by the times they live in. This year, 2020, has certainly been a challenging time for many people, businesses, and organizations. Gardner-Webb has faced many challenges as well."

Although unable to invite a large number of family, friends,

and colleagues to acknowledge this next major chapter in GWU's history, Downs said he was grateful for the small, solemn occasion to take the oath of office and pledge his full commitment to Gardner-Webb and to its mission.

Mills, who presided over the inauguration service, presented Downs with the President's Medallion to wear around his neck at commencements and other important ceremonial occasions. "Its weight is a reminder of the heavy responsibilities that must be willingly carried out by all who occupy this position of leadership," Mills stated during the presentation. "The design is a reproduction of the university seal, a representation of the large community he serves. By accepting the President's Medallion, you accept the charge to serve with diligence, dedication, energy, vision and integrity as you carry out the duties of President of Gardner-Webb University, for God and humanity."

Honors Students Clean 23 Miles of River; Advisor Honored for Years of Service

New and returning members of the Gardner-Webb University Honors Student Association participated in a GWU 18-year tradition in the fall of 2019. Faculty sponsor Dr. Tom Jones, 27 GWU students and eight guests traveled to West Jefferson, N.C., to join New River Conservancy's cleanup event: Mud, Sweat, and Volunteers.

Chelsea Blount, restoration director of New River Conservancy, said the GWU students were among a group of more than 100 volunteers who covered approximately 23 river miles. "Volunteers pulled 204 tires and 3,860 pounds of trash out of the river," Blount added. "The biggest tire haul of the day went to the group that floated from Cox Road to Zaloo's Canoes. The group included



In September 2019, Gardner-Webb University Honors Student Association traveled to West Jefferson, N.C. for Big Sweep. Big Sweep is a national conservation effort where participants canoe down a river and pick up trash. The group canoed the New River where they found items including tires, metal, and even a recliner.

GWU volunteers and collected 61 tires along the two-and-a-half mile section."

Jones received the Wallace and Peggy Carroll Vigilance Award from the New River Conservancy for his efforts in maintaining a commitment to environmental cleanup. "Though the award is for me, it actually should be about

the great students who get involved each year," said Jones, who also serves as the associate dean of the honors program.

Blount noted the Conservancy's desire to honor Jones was prompted by "the continued love and support that he has shown the New River over these many years."

GWU School of Divinity and The Center for Healthy Churches Announce Partnership

The Gardner-Webb University School of Divinity and The Center for Healthy Churches (CHC) established a partnership to address the needs and opportunities faced by churches, clergy and organizations. The two organizations will share resources, personnel and facilities while seeking ways to engage those involved in ministry.

"I am delighted at the natural, organic relationship that now culminates in a formal partnership between the School of Divinity and The Center for Healthy Churches," noted Dr. Danny West, GWU Director of Ministry Leadership and Professor of Preaching and Pastoral Studies. "We both share a passion for God's church and seek meaningful and significant ways to serve it. It is a privilege to serve alongside (Director) Bill Wilson and his impressive staff at The Center for Healthy Churches."



Bill Wilson, Center for Healthy Churches (CHC) director, led the first training event hosted by the GWU School of Divinity and CHC after announcing their partnership.

"The Center for Healthy Churches is thrilled to be able to partner with the Gardner-Webb School of Divinity as we seek to engage and encourage the churches and ministers of the 21st century," said Wilson, who also founded

CHC. "The challenges and opportunities before us are both daunting and exhilarating, and we look forward to the many ways we will find to provide resources for those who are engaged in this high calling."

GWU Student Photographers Win Top Awards at Annual Competitions



Photo by Abbey Sprinkle

Three students in the Department of Communication and New Media at Gardner-Webb University received recognition for their work in photojournalism. Abbey Sprinkle, a communication studies major from Inman, S.C., won the student photography award at the Southeastern Photojournalism Conference (SEPJC). Lindy Lynch and Lisa Martinat both submitted entries to the 56th Annual Baptist Communicators Association (BCA) Awards Competition and received honors.

Sprinkle created her winning photographs during the student workshop sponsored by the SEPJC and held in Nashville, Tenn., in February. Each year, the SEPJC provides the opportunity for visual storytellers all around the world to interact and engage with other professional visual storytellers. The students have an opportunity to share their portfolios and receive feedback from these professionals.



Photo by Lisa Martinat



Photo by Lindy Lynch

Gardner-Webb Expands Church-Matching and Minister's Dependent Scholarships for Traditional Undergraduate Students

Gardner-Webb University values its partnerships with churches to prepare graduates for lives of service to God and humanity. To enhance this relationship, GWU announced a substantial expansion of its Church-Matching and Minister's Dependent scholarship programs. Gardner-Webb now offers matching scholarships to traditional undergraduate students who receive

a scholarship from any Christian church. In addition to expanding the program to church members, GWU increased the amount of the matching scholarship. Gardner-Webb commits to matching scholarships from Christian churches—dollar for dollar—up to the full cost of tuition. The Church-Matching Scholarship stacks on top of other institutional aid.

The University also increased scholarships offered to minister's dependents. The Minister's Dependent Scholarship is available to any dependent traditional undergraduate student of a full-time minister of a Christian church or an ordained, full-time employee of a Christian church or church-related agency.



The Student Health Clinic provides a valuable resource for GWU.

New Student Health Clinic Provides Access to Students' Needs

Gardner-Webb and Atrium Health entered into a new partnership to enhance the University's commitment to students. Launched in July, Atrium Health began operation of a Student Health Clinic on campus.

Gardner-Webb President Dr. William Downs noted the campus was long overdue for this service. "We have a non-negotiable institutional obligation to do what we can to enhance the health and well-being of our student population, and this clinic's launch helps us take a great leap forward toward that goal. We are especially fortunate to be partnering with such a well-known and reputable provider as Atrium Health.

Dr. Jill Houser is the provider for the clinic. While teaching full time for the past five years at Gardner-Webb, Houser has maintained her Family Nurse Practitioner national certification by practicing in a clinical setting on a regular basis. In that capacity, she has worked for more than seven years for Atrium Health Employer Solutions in Cleveland County, N.C. "I have a deep love for this institution and community and see this as part of my calling as a nurse practitioner. I would love to see the clinic be a safe place for students to interact with the healthcare system," said Houser.

Gardner-Webb University Announces Expanded Partnership with CaroMont Health

The Gardner-Webb University College of Health Sciences and CaroMont Health announced an expanded educational partnership. Students in the Physician Assistant (PA) Studies program stand to benefit from the CaroMont Health Clinical Hub partnership for practice rotations. The GWU Nurse Practitioner (NP) Program will also see an expansion of a long-standing relationship with CaroMont. Under the guidance of CaroMont Health medical providers, Gardner-Webb PA and NP students will participate in clinical rotations offering direct patient care and hands-on learning experiences.

"As Gardner-Webb University continues to strengthen and project outward our signature degree programs in the health sciences, this formalized partnership with CaroMont Health is a huge boost," affirms GWU President Dr. William M. Downs. "Together we share a common commitment to delivering practitioners who offer high-quality, highly compassionate health care to the communities we serve, and together this affiliation will produce lasting benefits to the people of our region."



Gardner-Webb University nursing and physician assistant students worked together to give children free check-ups during an event held at the College of Health Sciences.



Gardner-Webb's Hunt School of Nursing Launches Accelerated RN to BSN Option

Gardner-Webb University's Hunt School of Nursing, a leader in nursing education, launched the accelerated RN to BSN program to qualified students. The Davis RN-BSN program started in 1982 offering BSN courses over 15-weeks and will continue to offer the traditional format along with the accelerated option. The new accredited program is offered fully online in eight-week sessions.

"Through the accelerated option, students have the opportunity to complete the nursing core, as well as, required general education courses in as little as one year (three semesters)," said Dr. Candice Rome, associate professor of nursing and chair of digital learning programs.

Additionally, full-time students have the benefit of taking the eight-week classes as a cohort. This option allows students to build peer relationships and network



throughout the program. Students have the option to take courses on a part-time basis as well.



Dr. Tracy Arnold

Gardner-Webb Announces New Dean for the Hunt School of Nursing

Officials at Gardner-Webb University named Dr. Tracy Arnold, a four-time nursing alumna, as the new dean of the Hunt School of Nursing (HSN). She replaces Dr. Nicole Waters, who continues to serve GWU as the associate provost of the College of Health Sciences.

Arnold received her associate degree in nursing in 2002, Bachelor of Science in nursing in 2004, Master of Science in nursing in nursing administration in 2006 and Doctor of Nursing Practice in 2012. She worked eight years at CaroMont Health in Gastonia, N.C., in a variety of departments, including medical-surgical, progressive coronary care and performance improvement. For three years, she was the clinical nurse manager on a medical-surgical unit. She began as full-time faculty in HSN in 2010.

Arnold is grateful for the HSN's rich history of strong female leadership. "I have had the privilege of being a student or faculty member under every former dean of the HSN," Arnold shared. "Drs. (Shirley) Toney, (Rebecca) Beck-Little, (Sharon) Starr, and Waters made significant contributions to the HSN and have each individually invested time in helping me grow personally and professionally."

Celebrating Four Decades of Direct Service to Those with Disabilities

The Noel Center for Disability Resources at Gardner-Webb University celebrated the 40th anniversary of the University’s program for the blind and visually impaired in October 2019. The Noel Center had its beginnings in 1977 with one program offered for the deaf. Two years later, college officials expanded services to students who were blind and visually impaired. The Noel Center introduced the services several years before colleges were mandated to provide them, noted Sharon Jennings, director from 1986 to 2003. “Gardner-Webb wasn’t forced to do it, and that made it a good place to be,” Jennings affirmed.

A group of 14 deaf and hard of hearing students from Cleveland County (N.C.) Schools—ranging in age from four years to their teens—visited Gardner-Webb in December 2019 for a preview of college life. Hosted by the Noel Center for Disability Resources, the event was called Christmas B.A.S.H. (Bringing Academic



Photo by Brittany Randolph / Shelby Star

A signing Santa visits with the deaf children who attended an event sponsored by the Noel Center for Disability Resources in December 2019.

Scholarship Here). The day included both educational and fun elements. The students participated in science activities, watched a demonstration of

pottery making and saw a performance by the sign language choir. They also visited the residence quarters of a GWU Deaf student.



The new band uniform is modeled above.

Gardner-Webb Marching Bulldogs Receive Lead Gift from David and Marie Brinkley

Gardner-Webb University announced plans in Spring 2020 to reestablish the University’s marching band under the direction of Dr. Mark R. Cole, chair of the Department of Music. In August, GWU came one step closer to that day with a \$10,000 gift from long-time university supporters David and Marie Brinkley.

Gardner-Webb previously fielded marching band programs in the 1940s, 1970s, and most recently from 2007-2017. Cole is currently recruiting musicians for the Marching Bulldogs, which will take the field in Fall 2021, with hopes of having 75 members.

David and Marie, residents of Kings Mountain, N.C., for several decades,



David and Marie Brinkley

have two daughters who graduated from Gardner-Webb as student-athletes. David is also a former high school football coach, and operates the Brinkley Financial Group investment firm.

Gardner-Webb Archives Launches Digitized Version of Fay Webb Gardner Collection

The Gardner-Webb University Archives launched a digitized version of the Fay Webb Gardner Collection in the fall of 2019.

Gardner was the wife of former governor of North Carolina and U.S. ambassador to Great Britain, O. Max Gardner. Despite living in Raleigh, N.C., and Washington, D.C., the Gardners never forgot their hometown, Shelby, N.C., and were ardent supporters of the junior college in Boiling Springs, N.C. The trustees recognized their devotion to the college in 1942 when they voted to name the school Gardner-Webb after them.

Gardner collected genealogical materials dating back to the early 1800s pertaining to the Webb, Andrews, Love, and Gardner families of Cleveland and Rutherford counties in North Carolina. A large portion of the collection documents her involvement in her husband's political career and in her own organizations, such as the State League of Women Voters and Benjamin Cleveland Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution.



Fay Webb Gardner and her husband, O. Max Gardner



O. Max Gardner Foundation Inc. Moves Office Closer to Campus



O. Max Gardner III

“I wanted the Foundation to be more associated geographically with Gardner-Webb University,” shared O. Max Gardner III, grandson of former North Carolina Governor O. Max Gardner and the president of the Foundation. “I think this relocation will benefit the University and the Foundation and also confirm the historical relationship between the two institutions. I hope more students from Gardner-Webb, prospective students and their families, and just folks in this area will want to come and learn more about the Gardner and Webb families. Our hope is to enhance the Gardner-Webb community and Boiling Springs in general.”

The home office of the O. Max Gardner Foundation Inc. moved from Shelby, N.C.

into a home in Boiling Springs owned by Gardner-Webb University in the summer of 2020.

The new location at 1410 College Avenue was endowed to the University by Dr. and Mrs. Dan Moore.

The new location also houses historical documents and displays representing two families who continue to impact the life of GWU. The Foundation also supports the O. Max Gardner award, presented annually since 1949 to a faculty member in the Consolidated University of North Carolina System. Established by the governor's will, the award is the oldest, most distinctive statewide honor given by the System's Board of Governors.

Gardner-Webb Names Steve Serck as University Counsel

Steve Serck comes to Gardner-Webb from East Carolina University (Greenville, N.C.) where he provided direction on state and federal laws and training in all aspects regarding faculty, staff, and employment issues. His work at ECU also covered a wide array of matters relating to student and athletic engagements, academic affairs, disability support, equality and diversity, academic freedom, and higher education fundraising laws.

Serck also served at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro as in-house legal

counsel, and at the Ahlers & Cooney Law Firm (Des Moines, Iowa), where his expertise in higher education law led to opportunities to work with several colleges and universities.

Serck's work covers legal aspects of contract law, matters of human resources, general policy compliance, tax laws, law enforcement on a Christian college campus, information technology, and privacy and data security. Serck is GWU's first in-house legal counsel; in the past Gardner-Webb utilized outside resources.



Steve Serck



John J. Godbold Jr. receives the Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree, GWU's highest recognition of merit.

Gardner-Webb Recognizes University Benefactor with Honorary Doctorate

Gardner-Webb University bestowed its highest recognition of merit, the Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree, to John J. Godbold Jr.

The GWU Godbold School of Business is named after Godbold and his wife Linda. A distinguished business entrepreneur from Rock Hill, S.C., Godbold and his wife gave a multi-million-dollar gift to Gardner-Webb in 2008 to establish the school along with a pledge of annual support. In addition to funding enhancements for the school and development opportunities for the faculty, the donation provided four student

scholarships presented annually to business majors.

No stranger to the world of business, Godbold graduated from the University of South Carolina (Columbia) with a degree in marketing and spent more than five decades of his life in the banking industry, including 17 years in Cleveland County, N.C. He founded Carolina State Bank in 1989 and began his relationship with Gardner-Webb at that time.

Since 1971, GWU has presented honorary doctorates in various disciplines to more than 60 deserving individuals including O. Max Gardner, Fay Webb Gardner, Johnny Cash, and Earl Scruggs.

Gardner-Webb University Recognized for Dynamic Learning Opportunities



Gardner-Webb University received recognition in several categories from Colleges of Distinction, an organization that ranks universities on

the basis of student engagement and outcomes. In addition to honoring GWU as a 2020-2021 Christian College of Distinction, the recognition board bestowed the following accolades:

- North Carolina Colleges of Distinction
- Business Colleges of Distinction
- Education Colleges of Distinction
- Nursing Colleges of Distinction
- Career Development Colleges of Distinction

"We are so very pleased to be included in these rankings," noted Dr. Ben Leslie, GWU provost and executive vice president. "Among the criteria the Colleges of Distinction uses to evaluate institutions are student engagement, teaching excellence, a campus sense of community, and a strong record of successful outcomes for a school's graduates. Each of these are priority emphases on the Gardner-Webb campus, where we have seen significant growth in recent years."

Online MBA Program in Godbold School of Business Ranked Among Best in Nation



TheBestSchools.org, an independent higher education research firm, honored Gardner-Webb University's Godbold School of Business by ranking GWU's online Master of Business Administration with a concentration in Management Information Systems as one of the top 20 programs in the nation. Gardner-Webb is one of two North Carolina schools to receive such an honor and the only private school in North Carolina to do so.

According to TheBestSchools.org, Gardner-Webb's excellent curriculum, strength of faculty, reputation, accreditation, financial aid and quality of online instruction place it among the best of the nation's colleges and universities. Other factors include the types of online technology used to deliver content, and the extent and quality of the online community learning environment, including options for communication, interactivity, and collaboration between students as well as between students and instructors.

GWU School of Education is No. 1 in N.C. for Educational Leadership and Administration



The Gardner-Webb University School of Education is the number one Educational Leadership and Administration College in North Carolina as ranked by Universities.com, an education information website.

This ranking placed Gardner-Webb above the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Wingate (N.C.) University, East Carolina University (Greenville, N.C.), N.C. State University (Raleigh), in addition to other schools.

"This recognition further validates the rigor of our academic programs, the quality of our candidates and alumni, and of course, the quality of our professors," noted Dr. Prince Bull, dean of the School of Education. "Also, it is a reflection of the hard work of past and present student-centered faculty, highly qualified candidates, and dedicated and passionate leadership."

Universities.com bases its rankings on data from government sources, such as the U.S. Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) and others. The website also conducts student surveys and interviews college graduates to support these sources.



GARDNER-WEBB
UNIVERSITY

REFER A FUTURE BULLDOG

Alumni are our most important connection with high school students who are seeking the "right fit" for college. Every time you share your successful Gardner-Webb experience with a prospective student, you serve your alma mater by recruiting potential Future Dawgs who will continue the University's legacy of excellence in higher education.

Help extend the Gardner-Webb message into your community, and refer a student today.

admissions@gardner-webb.edu
800.253.6472

gardner-webb.edu/alumni-referral





Bulldogs Together ... Ready and Strong

Gardner-Webb Answered the Call to Serve During the Pandemic

As nations around the world began responding to the coronavirus pandemic in March 2020, Gardner-Webb University made the decision to follow the recommended prevention measures to help stem the spread. Students were asked to stay home for the rest of the spring semester, and all face-to-face classes transitioned to online delivery on March 18, 2020. The campus remained open and accessible to those who needed to return for various reasons.

What followed over the next several months was Gardner-Webb doing what it does best: Serving God and humanity. From the faculty, staff and students on campus to alumni across the country and the local community, these individuals accepted the challenges of COVID-19 and persevered.

In this edition of Gardner-Webb, The Magazine, we will introduce you to some of those people who used their talents to help others through the crisis.



On-Campus Support

For the nearly 200 students who stayed on campus for the spring semester after the initial transition to exclusive online learning, the GWU staff made sure they followed physical-distancing protocols. “The cafeteria staff has been nothing but a blessing,” noted student Bailey Reep. She applied to finish the semester on campus because of poor internet connectivity in her hometown of Cherryville, N.C.

“I have technology restrictions where I live,” Reep said. “When I reached out to Gardner-Webb about this issue, they were proactive in making sure that I was allowed back on campus with all the correct materials and safety measures possible. My professors quickly posted the course material and words of encouragement to all of us students. I cannot thank Gardner-Webb enough for all they have done, as well as Dr. Downs (GWU President) and his staff.”

Director of Housing and Resident Education John Johnson processed Reep’s request in less than 24 hours. Other students staying

on campus during the immediate aftermath of stay-at-home orders in March also had technology needs, and some asked to stay because they were student-athletes, international students, or they had internships or transportation limitations. “We are members of a community whose desire is to provide our students with a positive University experience,” Johnson affirmed. “This dedication is all the more important during these uncertain times.”

Several professors integrated Zoom, a cloud-based platform for video and audio conferencing. “We worked hard to stay connected,” said Mischia Taylor, Godbold Business School dean and instructor of marketing. “Our number one focus was to make sure our students were all okay and to let them know we were here to support them through this crisis. I texted with students to check in on them, especially my seniors who were having a hard time with commencement changing and struggling to think about a career when most organizations have suspended hiring.”

Taylor said when conducting a class using Zoom, the first thing she did was to catch up with what was going on with her students. “I have students who live in other countries, so they gave us updates as to what was going on in their world,” she related.

Others offered support in various ways, including:

- **Brian Arnold**, director of student activities, campus recreation and new student orientation, posted fitness workouts people could do at home each day.
- **Suzanne Glasscock**, general manager of Sodexo Dining Services, adapted the University Dining Hall to conform to social distancing and state-mandated food service protocols. She continued to provide healthy options for students for in-house and takeout services. She also worked with the Student Development offices to prepare and provide meals for isolated or quarantined students.
- **GWU Chief of Police Barry Johnson and the University Police officers** secured campus buildings and served the students who remained on campus through the end of the spring semester.

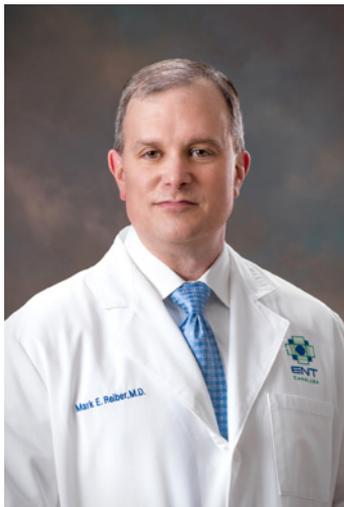
- **The GWU Housekeeping Team** (Johnnie Bostic, Venise Brintley, Lisa Carr, Suzanne Cline, Wanda Dawkins, Willie Hall, Andrew Harrill, Karen Haynes, Lisa Henson, Teresa Jett, Kimberly Ledbetter, Mitchell Leslie, Connie Meza DeSoto, Trudy Miller, Jim Richards, Sherrill Shepherd, Wanda Vickers and Sherry Wright) worked tirelessly to maintain the cleanliness of the campus and to make ready the residential spaces for returning students.
- **Jeff Hartman**, professor of exercise science, provided resources offering ideas to maintain wellness during the time of increased stress, isolation, and sedentary pursuits.
- **Jenny Humphries**, international student services director, worked tirelessly to help international students return home if they wanted to do so.
- **Barry Lane**, director of environmental and occupational safety, has continued to provide COVID-19 monitoring, contact tracing and health-protocol support and guidance for students, faculty and staff. Lane has worked directly with local, state and national health services to keep Gardner-Webb at the forefront of transparent interactions between agencies and university operations and reporting.



David Wacaster and his team continue to monitor and coordinate with local, regional, and national health and human services agencies.



GWU Police Officers have worked to provide support and resources throughout the pandemic.



Dr. Mark Reiber, faculty, GWU Physician Assistant (PA) Studies Program

- **Dr. Hebert Palomino**, School of Divinity associate professor of pastoral care and counseling, released a series of videos in Spanish on caring for people in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **Dr. Meredith Rowe**, assistant professor of biology, who simulated lab experiences for her students in unique ways.
- **David Wacaster**, director of facilities and maintenance, stayed informed about local, state, and federal directives to institute policies and make necessary changes around campus for the health and safety of everyone.
- **Cindy Wallace**, director of The Counseling Center, and her team continued to offer encouragement and provide support to students through in-person visits and phone calls.

Physician Assistant Faculty Serve Patients with Telemedicine

As the number of COVID-19 cases spread across North Carolina, many hospitals and

offices requested additional health care workers. Two faculty members from the GWU Physician Assistant (PA) Studies Program, Dr. Mark Reiber and Jamie Y. Camp, used telehealth options to help meet the needs.

Reiber, medical director for the PA Studies program, is an otolaryngologist (ear, nose and throat specialist) who divides his time between his practice’s locations in Gastonia and Shelby, N.C. His offices started utilizing telemedicine to better protect patients. “My experience with the visits has been very positive,” Reiber related. “Patients are very appreciative to speak directly with a doctor, and they want to maintain social distancing. Everyone has been very understanding of the strain on the hospitals and patient about waiting for non-urgent services. I have dealt with allergy issues, sore throats, cough, and a variety of follow up visits after previously performed studies.”

Camp, assistant professor in the PA program, also conducted telehealth visits with patients in a family medicine practice. He helped patients with typical problems and chronic disease management, but he also had many who were concerned about the pandemic and its associated respiratory symptoms. “They had many concerns on when to seek—and when not to seek—medical attention for those respiratory symptoms,” Camp said. “If symptoms were moderate to severe and (a cause) needed to be determined, the patients either came to our facility for testing/evaluation or went to the emergency department where diagnostics and treatment options were more accessible.”

Nursing Students on the Front Lines of the Pandemic

Several of Gardner-Webb’s nursing students provided care to patients during the coronavirus pandemic, including Jason Wesley DeFreitas and Lou Hipps.

As a clinical supervisor at Atrium Health-Lincoln, DeFreitas, ’21, helped his colleagues and patients manage the challenges. A student in the Doctor of Nursing Practice program, he was one of three supervisors on a 30-bed medical-surgical unit.

His responsibilities involved managing 80 health care teammates, including registered nurses and health care technicians. “We care



Lou Hipps, student in the RN to BSN program



for a diverse population of patients, ranging from pediatrics to geriatric,” DeFreitas related. “I served as charge nurse some days, attended facility leadership meetings other days, and acted as a fill-in unit educator.”

DeFreitas kept staff members calm regarding the daily reported cases of COVID-19 in the county and facility. He relayed the latest information on COVID-19 and what Atrium Health was doing systemwide to educate teammates and combat the virus. “Being a leader requires keeping your team informed with the right information so that panic and rumors don’t swell within the unit,” he noted. “Many patients and their families had to alter their lives in radical ways because of COVID-19. Staying home more often, making decisions when and where to go out if home supplies are needed, and when will they return to work, are factors related to the health status of themselves and those around them.”

He added, “I feel that the nursing profession is built for moments like this in our history. We have been the most trusted profession for many years now, and it’s time we showed people,

our country, and the world why. I feel honored to be in a profession that helps others. Our therapeutic nursing ways truly help people lead and live better lives.”

Hipps, a student in the RN to BSN program, served patients as a Humana telephonic care manager for the Medicare/Medicaid population. “I connect members with resources to improve their health,” Hipps explained. “I work with the most vulnerable population, trying to keep them informed and healthy at home. We added a proactive COVID survey to establish risk. Patients are happy to have the telephonic and/or telemedicine appointments available with their doctors to keep from getting exposed. Each of my patients has at least one chronic condition.”

Her job is even more important during the pandemic, because she helps members attempt healthier behaviors despite the economic and social conditions that influence their health status. For example, if her patients don’t have transportation, they can’t go to the doctor or pharmacy. If they don’t have money for food or medicine, their chronic condition is poorly

Dr. Jeff Hartman,
Gardner-Webb
University professor
of Exercise Science



Photos by Sarah Tudor, Creative Circle

“From using our fleet of buses to provide school nutrition meals to over 18 satellite stops to seeing communities and departments come together to meet the needs of employees and students, the bright spots have been rewarding.”

Chad Holloman,
Johnston County (N.C.)
Public Schools, director of
transportation services

managed. “Navigating insurance and the health care system is difficult and many people give up,” Hippias said. “Patients are concerned about not having enough food, they are behind on their bills, many have mental health challenges, and really need assistance navigating the health system. Many of my patients need help with transportation and were socially isolated before the virus.”

Educator Navigates COVID-19 Challenge

The GWU School of Education has alumni located across the state serving at all levels, from superintendents to classroom teachers. When public schools closed in North Carolina on March 14, 2020, Gardner-Webb alumnus, Chad Holloman (‘15), emerged as a leader.

Amid the crisis, Holloman accepted a new administrative role. An assistant principal in the Johnston County (N.C.) Public Schools, he was promoted to director of transportation services and responsible for the day-to-day operations and maintenance of a fleet with over 300 buses.

With more than 37,000 students staying at home, Holloman needed to provide meaningful and relevant telework for the department’s employees. For the system’s driver-only employees, these materials consisted of reviewing bus safety, bus driving skills, as well as conflict management, ethics, drug and alcohol training, managing student behavior, and working with colleagues and parents.

Despite the challenges, Holloman experienced many inspiring moments. “From using our fleet of buses to provide school nutrition meals to over 18 satellite stops to seeing communities and departments come together to meet the needs of employees and students, the bright spots have been rewarding,” Holloman asserted.

Katie H. Barnes, ’12, Accepts Challenges with ‘Patience, Grace, and Flexibility’

Gardner-Webb University 2012 alumna Katherine “Katie” Harte Barnes has been a teacher for nearly a decade, and is currently

at Pinnacle Classical Academy in Shelby, N.C. Pinnacle is a tuition-free public charter school serving more than 1,000 kindergarten through 12th-grade students.

“I am constantly reminding myself that no one, ever, has gone through this before in this setting, so none of us are expected to be perfect, know the right answers or know them right away,” Barnes observed. “I’m also reminding myself that it’s OK.”

Barnes adapted to the online instruction transition and developed physical distancing standards of instruction for face-to-face involvement as well. Flexibility is the key for a successful teaching and learning environment Barnes observed, but there were challenges that hit her hard when instructing exclusively online began. “In the classroom setting, I feed off of my students’ personalities, their questions and conversations, their intrigue, etc.,” she asserted. “All of this was stripped away during distance education, because there was no more real-time teaching that my students thrive off of so well.”

Barnes uses Google interactive sessions for students and parents. “The parents needed some encouragement and feedback on how to help their child be successful with distance education,” she related. “(Initially) I kept the learning objectives simple and doable for my students and their parents, making sure that the content I was assigning did not take hours per day to complete. I recorded video lessons to introduce new content. I held class Google Hangout (Meet) sessions several times a week, and the goal of these sessions was not to teach a lesson or to discuss content, but to simply be together, talk, and share what each other had been up to that day. We were used to being together eight hours a day, five days a week, and that outlet of socialization and emotional support was taken out of their learning realm.”

Barnes offered an inspirational message to her fellow educators. “No matter what grade you teach, how many subjects and students you teach, or how many years you have been teaching, you have to be all in for those students,” she stated. “They need you to be there for them academically, spiritually



and emotionally. Teaching is a hard job on a good day, and giving 100 percent of yourself can sometimes feel like an insurmountable challenge. When the days get hard, remind yourself that this career takes a courageous person—and that courageous person is you. Your students are looking for and expecting your best each and every day. Show up, stand tall, and make a difference!”

Bulldogs Together: Ready and Strong

The Gardner-Webb family continues to adapt, lead and serve God and humanity during this uncertain time. Throughout the pages of this issue, you will find additional stories of students, faculty, staff and alumni who answer the call to step up and take on these challenges face-forward.

“I am constantly reminding myself that no one, ever, has gone through this before in this setting, so none of us are expected to be perfect, know the right answers or know them right away.”

**Katie H. Barnes,
teacher at Pinnacle Classical
Academy in Shelby, N.C.**

Lab Treatment

Carrie Long, '11,

Conducting Tests on COVID-19 Virus at National Institutes of Health Facility in Montana

In early January 2020, before COVID-19 and the coronavirus became daily news, a Gardner-Webb University alumna worked in a lab that was gearing up to study the disease. Dr. Carrie Long, who graduated in 2011 with a degree in biology, is an independent research scholar at Rocky Mountain Laboratories in Hamilton, Mont., part of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), which is a component of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). “You may have seen Dr. (Anthony) Fauci on TV,” Long noted. “He’s my boss about five times removed.”

The New York Times reported on the important work and 120-year history of the lab. Its researchers contributed significant discoveries related to the 1918 influenza and coronaviruses like SARS and MERS. According to the article, researchers from the Laboratory of Virology started working on SARS-CoV-2 since shortly after hearing rumors that the illness in Wuhan, China, was caused by a coronavirus.

Long joined the lab in 2016 after receiving her Ph.D. in immunology and microbial pathogenesis from West Virginia University (Morgantown). She usually works in the lab’s Coxiella Pathogenesis Section. *Coxiella burnetii* is a highly infectious and deadly bacteria that causes a disease called Q fever. “I’m working on characterizing the host immune response to the bacteria as well as developing a vaccine for the pathogen,” she stated. “I was awarded an independent research scholar award, which allows me to have an independent research group at the NIH. It’s been a huge learning experience and a great opportunity for me.”

Her work on Q fever is on hold while the lab focuses its resources on the coronavirus. Long was assigned to the group developing preventive treatments and vaccines to combat COVID-19. “I am currently assisting with SARS-CoV-2 projects in the Laboratory of Virology,” Long related. “SARS-CoV-2 is the virus that causes the disease COVID-19. Basically, we are able to model the human disease (COVID-19) in animals (e.g. rodents and monkeys) to get a better understanding of the disease course and try out novel therapies and preventive treatments. I actually just got back to my computer from infecting a batch of hamsters with the virus this morning.”

She explained some of the research process. “We are treating animals with compounds that may confer at least some degree of protection against the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the disease that



it causes (COVID-19),” she said. “Because of our unique high containment laboratory facilities and expertise, we are able to safely handle the virus and infect animals after they have been experimentally treated, allowing us to test a number of different compounds. Being able to utilize my expertise in a way that may ultimately help people during this crisis has been a respite in these challenging times.”

Long, a pole vaulter on the GWU track and field team, said her professors and coaches at Gardner-Webb helped her develop her interests and abilities. “I am confident that my experience both as a student and an athlete at GWU helped to prepare me for this role by contributing to the development of foundational skills such as those related to communication, critical thinking, team building, and time management,” she asserted. “Interacting with professors and staff who were excellent, caring mentors themselves has been a crucial cog in my own development as a mentor. I began developing these skills at GWU in a supportive, student-centered environment surrounded by faculty and peers who cared not only about me but also the greater good. My time at GWU was a catalyst in my desire to pursue science as a career in the hopes of ultimately enhancing human health.”



Dr. Lolita Bryant, center, teaches nursing students in obstetrics/labor and delivery.

Photo by Jeff P. Janowski / UNC-Wilmington Office of University Relations

The Light Bearer

Lolita Bryant, '20,

Honored to Serve as a Nursing Educator and Leader

Lolita Bryant, of Wilmington, N.C., is especially proud to have earned her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from Gardner-Webb University in 2020—the “Year of the Nurse.” The celebration recognizes the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale.

“She was known as the ‘Lady with the Lamp,’ who helped to formalize nursing education,” Bryant reflected. “She was the founder of the first scientifically based nursing school—the Nightingale School of Nursing at St. Thomas’ Hospital in London in 1860. For all these years, she has been a role model for the professional nurse. I hope that I can leave a legacy in my nursing career where my light and gift given to me by almighty God will shine on forever.”

Bryant continued, “Although the coronavirus has changed our

world, nurses placed in the forefront of this pandemic made a difference. Our lamps continue to shine so bright during this crisis. I am sure Florence Nightingale would be proud to see the professional nurse in action today. I hope we have placed a smile on her face in heaven.”

Bryant is a lecturer and clinical instructor in the baccalaureate nursing program at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington (UNCW). She received her bachelor’s and master’s degrees from there and her great-great-grandfather, Abram Bishop, sold his property to the college.

Her area of expertise is obstetrics/labor and delivery. “I love serving others and putting a smile on the face of someone who needs their spirits lifted when they are not feeling well,” she offered. “I enjoy teaching nurses, interacting with nursing students and giving back to my community. I feel my nursing career has been a gift from God. I truly love what I do.”

In addition, Bryant also teaches registered nurses in the online RN-BSN program at UNCW. Further, she works as Outcomes Manager II in the Patient Safety Department at New Hanover Regional Medical Center (Wilmington, N.C.) Her role there is to support nurses who are caring for patients at the bedside, help

drive practice changes throughout the organization, and ensure the use of best practices and evidence-based care to achieve the best possible outcomes for the patient.

Her studies at Gardner-Webb helped her move into the next level of her profession. “The nursing professors and the classes at GWU prepared me to lead health care innovations and influence policy that is founded on the science and theory of nursing, analytic principles, evidence-based practice, and strong leadership at the highest organizational level,” she observed.

Bryant also appreciated the support and prayers from the nursing faculty. “When I came to campus for my intensives, the nursing professors prayed for God’s peace and protection over me as I completed this program,” she related. “We also had a designated area in our courses if we needed prayer and support. I really love the scriptures the nursing professors posted in the courses. Dr. Yvonne Smith, my project chair, gave me guidance and advice as I completed the implementation of my capstone project. Her patience and gentle spirit are amazing. I learned so much from her I feel that I can begin to teach, assist and support nurses who are completing their studies at the graduate level.”

In the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, both of her jobs changed significantly. For safety, students weren’t allowed in the hospital, so the faculty created an online learning environment. “We had the opportunity to use ‘shadow health,’ which turned out to be a great alternative,” she noted. “This program provided the students with the ability to engage with digital standardized patients to perform patient exams, practice documentation and develop clinical reasoning skills. However, after about five months, some of the restrictions eased, and we could take the students to the clinical sites while following the safety guidelines.”

Her position at the hospital changed in the beginning of the pandemic, as well, by utilizing virtual/Zoom meetings. “The virtual experiences were very successful for all the administrators and leaders in the entire organization,” she asserted. “After several months, we started face-to-face meetings following the safety guidelines. We also explored the use of more virtual opportunities in the future.”

While nurses who provide face-to-face care for their hospital patients are true heroes of the pandemic, telehealth also has a place. “Telehealth has many advantages, including keeping patients and nurses safe from possible exposure to COVID-19, improving access to care and cutting health care costs,” Bryant described. “It also offers its own type of personal and lighthearted, or even heart-warming connections. Many patients liked the idea of having an appointment in the comfort of their homes. Some patients introduced their loved ones and pets to their health care providers virtually. Although some patients have situations when they specifically need to see the health care provider in the office, telehealth supports health care delivery that is far less cumbersome for many patients and health care providers alike.”

Compassion Wins ... always

Chaplain Will Runyon, '05,
Offers Connections for Families in Midst of the Pandemic

Despite protective masks and gowns designed to keep him and his patients safe, Will Runyon, chaplain director for Phoebe Putney Health System in Albany, Ga., found a way to offer comfort in agonizing circumstances. The 2005 School of Divinity alumnus of Gardner-Webb University became a bridge between dying patients and their families in a COVID-19 hotspot.

“Albany, Georgia, and Phoebe during March and April were one of the hardest hit areas in the world,” Runyon stated. “At one time, we were third per capita for deaths behind only Wuhan, China, and France. Just like New York, we were seeing more patients die than we had ability to handle.”

Many people in the town of about 74,000 lost multiple family members. “At the height of our local crisis, the emotional toll on our team was enormous,” Runyon described. “We are blessed to have a robust Employee Assistance Program as well at Phoebe. Our therapists and I worked six and seven days per week during March and April and into May supporting staff as well as holding virtual visits for patients and families. Most of the virtual visits we were doing were limited to those patients who were imminently dying due to the sheer number of deaths we were seeing every day.”

In May, ABC broadcast journalist Diane Sawyer filmed a special report that included the crisis in Albany. She interviewed Runyon and one of the hospital’s ICU nurses who had lost nine patients that week to COVID-19. Runyon’s story and photos were also featured in an article in USA Today.

The Albany outbreak was linked to two separate funerals that were held before stay-at-home and physical distancing orders were instituted. “Many of our staff had been exposed, several of whom became sick, several of whom died,” Runyon related. “By March 15, the hospital was forced to lock down our facility to all outside visitors. This also meant that all volunteer services were suspended, including my team of chaplains. Myself and my program coordinator were here to provide emotional and spiritual support. It was a very scary time. It quickly became a very lonely time for us as well as for our patients and families.”

Because of the isolation, Runyon and the staff quickly saw the need to connect dying patients and families. “Several



Will Runyon, chaplain director for Phoebe Putney Health System in Albany, Ga.

Photo by Andres Rengifo / Phoebe Health

nurses started using their personal phones to FaceTime with patient families, as well as myself and other staff,” he commented. “Our CEO gave us permission to commandeer several iPads from our information services department to use for this purpose.”

During the most difficult days, he vowed not to let anyone be alone. “There is no manual or playbook for what we were experiencing across the nation and the world,” he stated. “Being a chaplain means having to adjust and adapt to new infection control measures, visitation policies, and supporting families virtually.”

The crisis subsided in Albany through May and June, and Runyon’s hospital started allowing limited visitation to patients who were not sick with COVID-19 and visitation allowances for end-of-life situations. Every day, they continued to care for around 50 patients with COVID-19.

While navigating the global pandemic, Runyon experienced some unique blessings as well. “During the height of our crisis at Phoebe, I had a patient with COVID-19 who was rapidly declining. This patient was in her 90s, alert and able to make her own health care decisions,” he informed. “She did not want

to be placed on a ventilator. Her family was spread across the country, from Texas, Arkansas, Georgia, South Carolina and Florida. Because we used iPads and FaceTime, we ‘gathered’ this family, spread across thousands of miles, all at the same time and place to allow them and this patient to see each other. She expressed her desires to her family. Her children and grandchildren pleaded with her to allow the medical team to intubate her, but she talked to them about her wishes. She told them, face to face, what she wanted and why she wanted to forego aggressive treatment. Most importantly, she was able to tell her family goodbye face to face.”

Runyon concluded, “2020 has taught me that it is OK to question God and whatever plan He may have for our lives. In hindsight, I can absolutely see how God worked to place us in Albany for times such as these. It’s the getting there, to the other side, to be able to see with hindsight what challenges us, stretches us and frankly tears us down and rebuilds us. We go with the knowledge that our past has shaped us and built us for the present. The support and love we’ve received from our Gardner-Webb family has sustained us and for each of you, we give thanks. Many blessings as our journeys continue!”



Dr. Sharon Webb, coordinator for Clinical Mental Health Counseling Programs, Gardner-Webb

Inner Counsel

Dr. Sharon Webb Provides Ongoing Counseling to Military Families and Front-line Healthcare Workers During the Pandemic

Dr. Sharon Webb, coordinator for Clinical Mental Health Counseling Programs and associate professor at Gardner-Webb, continues to work with the American Red Cross throughout the COVID-19 crisis as a facilitator for online, interactive workshops for the military community. In addition to her work with the Red Cross, Webb also volunteered to provide free confidential virtual mental health counseling for North Carolina front-line healthcare workers through The Emotional PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) Project.

The Red Cross programs were designed to help military personnel manage COVID-19 pandemic-related stress and

learn healthy coping methods. Although members of the military are accustomed to handling constant change and uncertainty, COVID-19 adds a host of different stressors. They experienced situations where family reunions were delayed, or faced uncertain deployment schedules. Veterans sought out broader support systems and had difficulty accessing community resources.

Before COVID-19, the workshops met in person, had one facilitator, and included topics on effective communication, trauma talk, connecting with kids, stress solutions and other subjects. “As a military child, wife, and now mom, I’ve always had a special place in my heart for our military, realizing the tremendous commitment and sacrifices they and their families make,” Webb asserted. “When I learned about a need for licensed mental health professionals to be Service to Armed Forces (SAF) Resiliency Facilitators a few years ago, I immediately signed up for the training, and I began serving military and their family members in this additional role. As a resiliency facilitator, I have had the honor of meeting with groups from the military and their families for pre-deployment and post-deployment sessions, and veteran caregivers.”

The online sessions during the pandemic included two facilitators and covered such topics as managing the stress of isolation, working from home, learning relaxation exercises, and more. The Zoom sessions went well, Webb said. In the first two weeks the online format was offered, she received four requests to conduct the workshops and received several since then.

Webb volunteers with the Red Cross in several capacities. Her parents taught her the value of serving others. “I was blessed to have parents who modeled service throughout my life, through sweet tokens and manual labor,” she shared. “My dad often shares his version of an Albert Pike quote, ‘What I do for self dies with me, but what I do for others will live on.’ And I keep coming back to a scripture verse that I aspire to live by, which aligns with serving others: (Philippians 2:4-5) ‘Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in ourselves, which is also in Christ Jesus.’”

Her first Red Cross volunteer position was CPR/First Aid instructor after completing the training offered by Gardner-Webb more than 20 years ago. When she obtained her mental health licensure in 2006, she became the mental health lead for the Cleveland County American Red Cross chapter in Shelby, N.C. “My first national deployment for disaster mental health was in 2012, and I have served in various locations for 14 deployments, including mass casualty shooting incidents, hurricanes, tornadoes, and floods,” she informed. “Many people just think of blood drives as the main thing the Red Cross does, but the organization has vast service in many other areas. I am in my second year of service to the Armed Forces Facilitator, and most recently I took on the responsibilities as the Blue Ridge Piedmont Chapter Mental Health Lead, consisting of 12 counties.”

Webb received her bachelor’s, master’s and educational specialist degrees from Gardner-Webb and her doctorate from Walden University in Minneapolis, Minn. Webb is a N.C. Licensed Clinical Mental Health Counselor Supervisor and National Board-Certified Counselor. A member of several professional organizations, she is in line for presidential leadership of the N.C. Counseling Association and is a past president of the N.C. Association for Counselor Education and Supervision.

Five Tips for Taking Care of Your Mental Health

Dr. Sharon Webb shares five ways to manage stress and take care of your mental health:

- 1 Stay connected! Humans are relational beings. Physical distancing doesn’t need to be isolation from others. Find creative ways to connect with others, even if virtually. Social connection is one of the most powerful stress reducers.
- 2 Acknowledge your feelings. What we resist persists. It’s okay to acknowledge feeling sad, angry, lonely, etc. These are normal human feelings, and it helps to be able to share them with someone you trust, whether a mental health professional or a trusted friend or family member.
- 3 Replace media consumption with time to reflect on positives in each day, and gratitude for others and what goes well, even if it’s just recognizing resilience in putting one foot in front of the other or finding a way to look forward. Much of what we see and hear in media forums heightens anxiety and is a reminder of what we cannot control in our lives.
- 4 Find a way to give back/serve others. Using our skills for a broader purpose enriches our lives as we facilitate and see recovery and healing of others.
- 5 Self-care is not selfish. We need time to nourish ourselves to best help others. Make time in daily routines for prayer, rest and relaxation (take a leisure walk and note the beauty in nature, read a book, breathe deeply, etc.). Making time for enjoyments can interrupt or reduce anxiety.

Adjusting Course

Laura Shipman, '20,
Embraces Change Brought on by the Pandemic

Gardner-Webb University graduate student Laura Shipman finished the 2019-2020 school year with creativity and collaboration. When public schools around the country transitioned to remote learning because of the coronavirus pandemic, personnel at the charter school where she worked quickly formulated a plan.

Shipman wore three hats at the school located in Haywood County, N.C.: Director of Special Education (SPED), multi-tiered system of supports coordinator, and middle school Exceptional Children's (EC) teacher. The school serves 309 children in kindergarten through eighth grade and is the county's only charter school. It has 26 staff, one administrator, and five teachers' assistants.

Within hours of learning that schools would transition to distance learning, the head of the school and all the lead teachers met to devise a plan to get electronic devices to the students and determine how to serve small children who can't yet work independently on computers. Teachers arrived at the school and prepared to sign out electronic devices and made printed copies of assignments for students who didn't have access to a computer or the internet. The next day, the teachers and staff set up a drive-thru pick up for students and families. On the third day, students attended their first online virtual class meetings with their teachers.

Different grade levels worked together in collaboration with special education (SPED), art, music, drama, physical education, and outdoor education teachers to develop a feasible schedule to avoid overworking both students, parents, and staff. As the SPED director, Shipman kept everyone informed of the guidelines provided by the N.C. Department of Public Instruction Exceptional Children's Department as well as the Office of Special Education.

"Due to the laws that govern students with disabilities and how their Individualized Education Plans (IEP) are written, we had to make sure that the students' education was equitable with their general education counterparts," Shipman added. "The SPED teachers worked with the general education classroom teachers to collaborate on the amount



Photo by Joe Bolado

of daily instruction or assignments the students were given and worked on teaching packets that were modified or differentiated for students. We used Zoom to have IEP meetings so that IEPs remained compliant."

"It was a challenge, but in the long run, so many of our students excelled," affirmed Shipman. She completed her add-on licensure for executive leadership studies and school administration at Gardner-Webb in August 2020. Now, she is a doctoral candidate in the educational leadership and administration program at GWU and is teaching exceptional children in Buncombe County, N.C.

The pandemic changed educational interactions, and schools across the nation will continue to adapt to a new normal (even beyond the pandemic). But for schools, and educators who continue to place the needs of the students first, success will always be within reach.

Remember Your Why

Dr. Brittany Ray Encourages Teachers and Students to Reach Beyond Challenges

The Gardner-Webb University School of Education has alumni located throughout the state serving at all levels, from superintendents to classroom teachers. When public schools closed in North Carolina on March 14, 2020, educators made the switch to distance education—a task most had never attempted before. Amid this current crisis, these educators continue to adjust.

Administrators, like Dr. Brittany M. Ray, offer support to their staffs and the children during this unprecedented time. Ray earned her Master of Arts in executive leadership from GWU in 2013 and her doctorate in educational leadership in 2018. She is an assistant principal for a middle school in Fayetteville, N.C., that has approximately 1,100 students.

Ray's greatest challenge during COVID-19 is not being able to gauge the true feelings of her students and staff. Usually, she relies on body language to determine a person's demeanor. "I believe that body language can tell you a lot about an individual; and unfortunately, due to COVID-19, I have been looking at computer screens and avatars," Ray observed. "To encourage my students and staff, I gave the teachers a virtual teacher appreciation week. I partnered with students and families to get video clips and pictures of students expressing their appreciation. In addition, I made sure that I included things that would help with their mental and physical health, such as virtual mindfulness yoga practices and Zumba sessions online."

Ray began teaching middle school students in 2010. She wanted to teach this age because that's when students need admirable role models. "Kids start to discover what kind of person they want to be," she asserted. "They are easily influenced, and I wanted to influence them in a positive way. I transitioned into an administrator role because I wanted to have a larger part in the decision-making process to evoke change."

Besides learning the leadership skills she needed for an administrative role, she valued the master's and doctoral classes at Gardner-Webb because she met other educators from around the state. "I enjoyed my cohort members and the support that we gave each other," she praised. "I developed lifelong relationships. We still keep in touch with each other. I also learned the importance of networking. I received my first administration job



Photo by Sarah Tudor

from a connection that I received through Gardner-Webb."

Ray said teachers in her school used inquiry-based learning techniques to engage their students during the time of remote learning. "The techniques allowed students to virtually collaborate and do projects," she offered. "For example, one of my teachers gave students the task of finding the 'perfect mask,' and its components. Students were allowed to create a mask out of any material, but they had to explain their reasoning."

Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19, Ray encourages her staff to "Remember your why."

She believes that teaching post-COVID-19 will require educators to stay open minded and ready to try unconventional instruction methods. "In addition, self-care is important," Ray advised. "We need to continue to take care of ourselves physically, spiritually and emotionally. Moving forward, I think that school systems should include more social-emotional learning resources and personnel for both students and teachers."

SGA invites students to get s'more out of life with fun, fellowship and some campfire treats. (Dec. 2019)





“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. ... Love your neighbor as yourself. No other commandment is greater than these. ”

- Mark 12:30-31

BEACON STUDY BIBLE



Gardner-Webb University students, faculty and staff marched peacefully down Main Street and through campus to bring awareness to racial injustice.

Gardner-Webb Students Stand Together as One

More than 300 Gather to Begin Tough Conversations About Racial Injustice and Inequality

Holding signs that read “Black Lives Matter,” “My life matters,” “Act justly, Love mercy, Walk humbly (Micah 6),” and “We stand with you,” a diverse group of students, faculty and staff marched peacefully down Main Street and through campus. Coordinated by Darien Reynolds, Donnie Thompson and other members of the football team, the group’s message was “Together as One.”

The march ended at the O. Max Gardner Music Building, where more than 300 gathered to hear speeches from students, a NAACP representative from Charlotte, N.C., and GWU officials.

Reynolds and Thompson talked to their coaches about having the march and then spread the word on social media. Reynolds

graduated in December with a criminal justice degree and minor in homeland security. Thompson graduates in the spring with a sports education degree and minor in communication.

“There’s not a lot of African American students on campus, and I wanted everyone to be educated on what we go through and our lifestyles on a daily basis and make them understand what’s going on in America,” Reynolds said.

Thompson added, “I was pleased with the turnout, but still very hungry to have a bigger crowd next time we put an event together. Racism is real, and it’s everywhere. I want all students to have those hard conversations with their friends and family about ending racism. I



want to encourage all the white students to use their voice, because in my opinion, they have the biggest one to help fight this battle and break the chain of hate. We are the strongest when we come together as one.”

Gardner-Webb Head Football Coach Tre Lamb told the crowd that the football team had been discussing racial injustice for a long time. “But, the fact of the matter is, we have been talking about it for 200 years,” Lamb observed. “In my opinion, our generation can be the one to stop it. I’ve got a (young) daughter, and I don’t want her to see this when she gets older. It breaks my heart. Our generation can end it, period. I think we need to encourage each other to have intelligent, difficult conversations. Be around people you’re uncomfortable being around and have real conversations. Get to the depth of what they believe and why they believe it. Have some humility.”

JeNai Davis, GWU director of Diversity and Intercultural Initiatives, also emphasized the need to have real

“You are leaving your mark. You are making the change and that is important. Don’t let the conversations end here. Don’t get out here and march, post your pictures on social media and then go on with your lives tomorrow. If it stops here, the violence still continues as it has for all these years.”

JENAI DAVIS

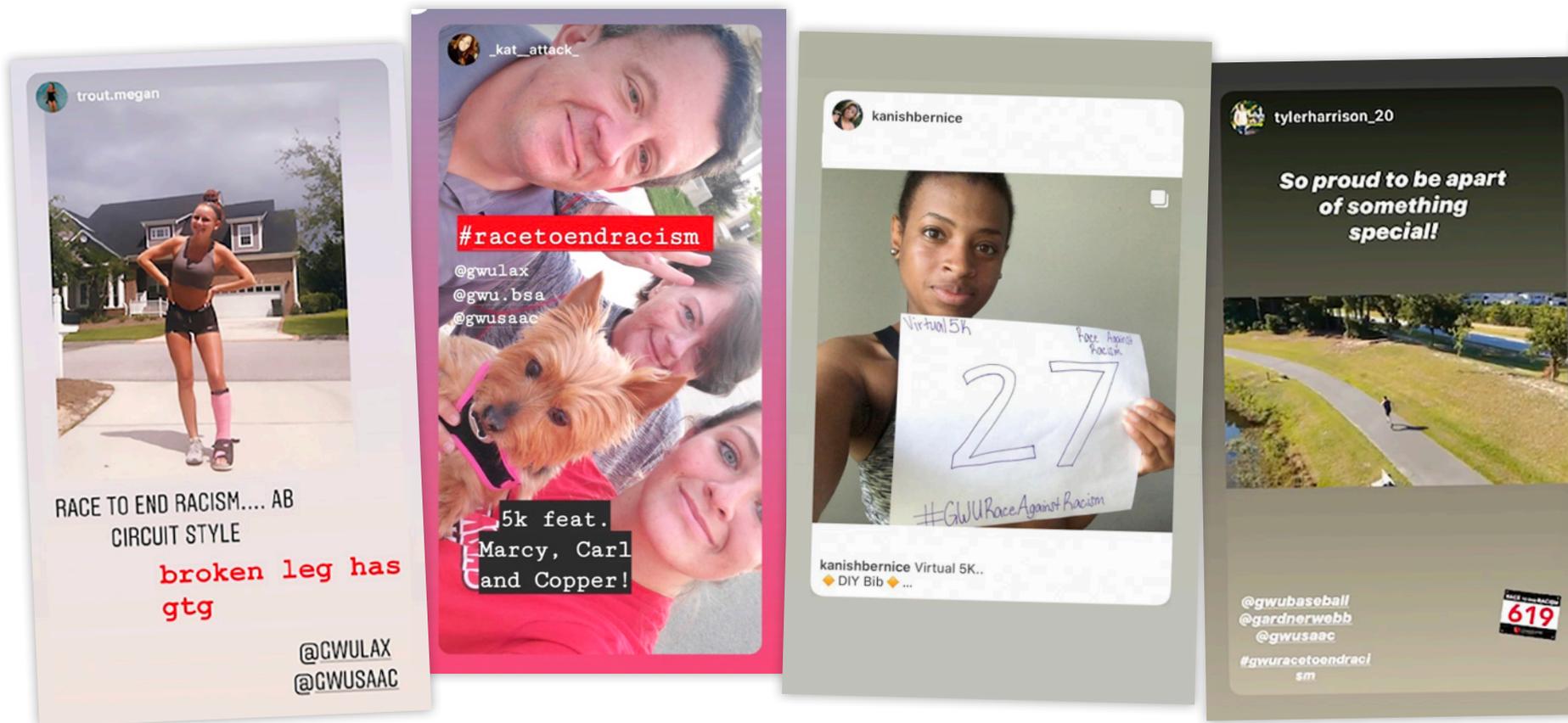
communication and to participate in local, state and national elections. “This is a huge movement right now, what you guys are doing,” Davis shared. “You are leaving your mark. You are making the change and that is important. Don’t let the conversations end here. Don’t get out here and march, post your pictures on social media and then go on with

your lives tomorrow. If it stops here, the violence still continues as it has for all these years. I want to thank these guys who put this together, because they have friends at other universities who are doing the same thing.”

Gardner-Webb President Dr. William Downs thanked the students for organizing the event. “You know, we talk a lot at Gardner-Webb about ‘community,’” Downs said. “We talk a lot at Gardner-Webb about ‘family.’ This crowd here today is family. This is a big, diverse, amazing family. Of all the groups that exist in society, family is the strongest. Family has the strongest of bonds. Students, faculty, staff ... we have to stay glued together. These are uncertain but historic times, and we have to stay together.”

He pledged the University’s commitment and support to every student. “If you want to march together and call on those around us to help make a better world, then we will walk that journey with you,” he affirmed. “We will walk together as one. We will not repay hatred with hatred, but we will make a powerful statement about justice, a powerful statement about respect, a powerful statement about peace, and a powerful statement about unity. Gardner-Webb will stand with you.”

Downs ended his comments with a quote from the late John Lewis, the civil rights leader and congressman from Georgia. “You are a light. You are the light. Never let anyone — any person or any force — dampen, dim or diminish your light ... Release the need to hate, to harbor division, and the enticement of revenge. Release all bitterness. Hold only love, only peace in your heart, knowing that the battle of good to overcome evil is already won.”



Uniting Against

Virtual 5K Gains International Support, Raising Nearly \$5,000

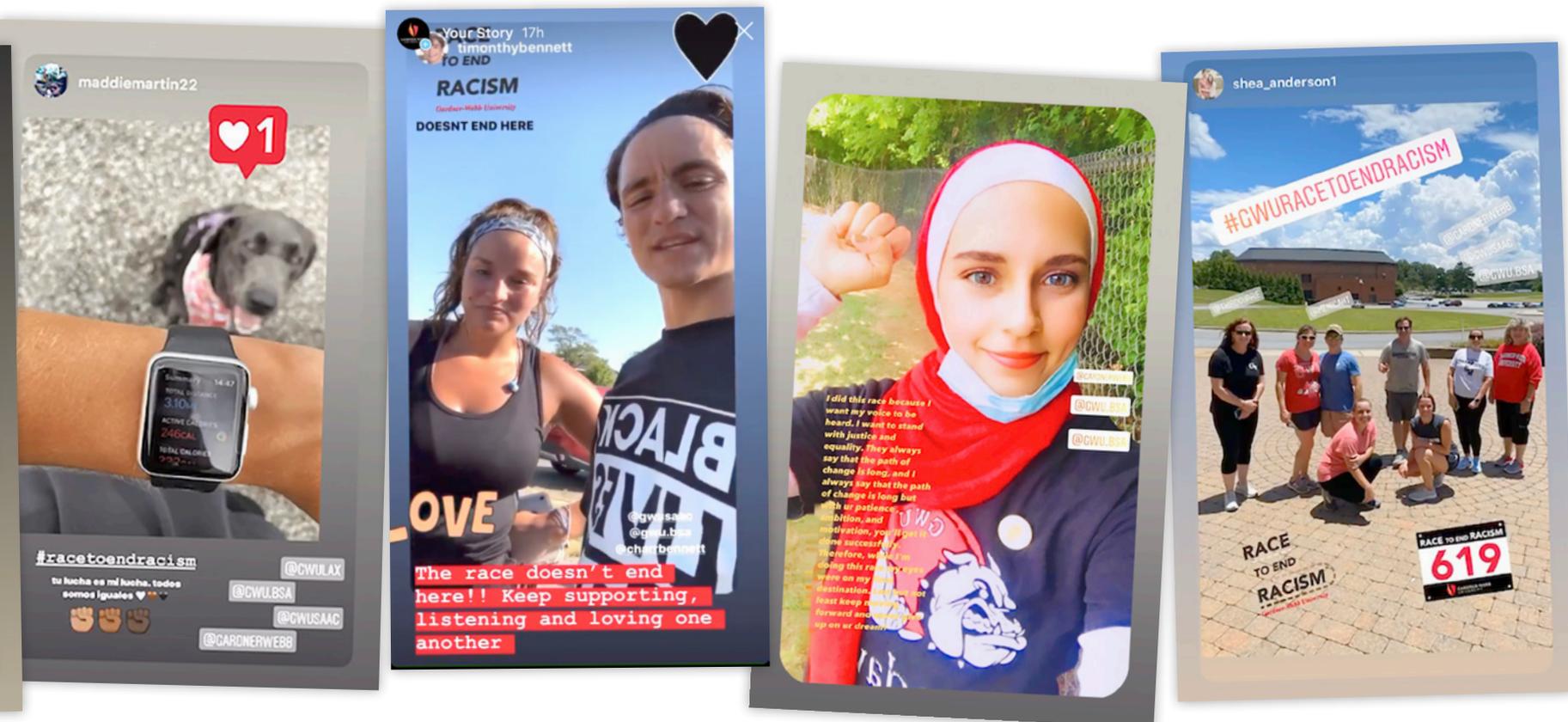
One Gardner-Webb University women's soccer player saw what happened to George Floyd and the protests in response that called for an end to racism and racial inequalities. Instead of waiting on someone else to do something, she was moved to action.

Junior Gabby Berkes gave her teammates an idea for a virtual 5K that ignited a fire. "Gabby initially presented the idea to show our support during these times," shared Kylie Ameres, a soccer player and vice president of the Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC). "This idea immediately caught the support of our entire team and it was presented to the SAAC. Our team is comprised of many ethnicities, races and nationalities, so it was a very cool experience to listen to everyone's unique ideas and unite as one team to create this 5K for change."

The momentum for a virtual 5K Race to End Racism grew quickly. Word spread on social media, and the race reached beyond Boiling Springs, drawing in participants from the local community, throughout the state, and even across the world.

When Head Women's Basketball Coach Alex Simmons heard that the 5K's donations were supporting the GWU Black Student Association (BSA), she decided to take it several steps forward. It's 8.9 miles from her house to the GWU campus. She challenged 100 people to donate \$8.90 and she would run the route. Donations poured in, and the goal was exceeded in no time. Student-athletes and GWU staff decided to come along for support, so they joined her for the run at sunrise on June 19, which is the celebration of Juneteenth—the oldest national commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States.

"My high school coach—and it's in the Bible—used to tell us a triple-braided cord is unstoppable, and I think that is exactly what happened (with their support)," Simmons said after completing the run. The verse is Ecclesiastes 4:12: "And one standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer; three is even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken." (Living Bible Translation)



Racism

“I’m not sure I could have done it by myself, so I’m super grateful that they all felt called—felt compelled to do it with us,” Simmons shared.

Running with her were Chuck Burch, GWU vice president for Athletics; Talen Francis, lacrosse player and president of SAAC, BSA and the Pre-Law Society; Savannah and Carley Plentovich, women’s basketball players, Dr. Bill Downs, GWU president; and Jeremy Luther, assistant men’s basketball coach. Her husband and children joined her part of the way, and GWU Chief of University Police Barry Johnson provided support and ensured the runners’ safety along the busy two-lane road to GWU’s campus.

Francis ran with Simmons to thank her for her support. “It’s very personal for me, because I am a black woman and most of the stories I’ve seen on Twitter and the news resonated with me,” Francis affirmed. “I wanted to take a stand and be on the right side of history. It means a lot to see people support us and care. I urge everyone to take time to listen to their black

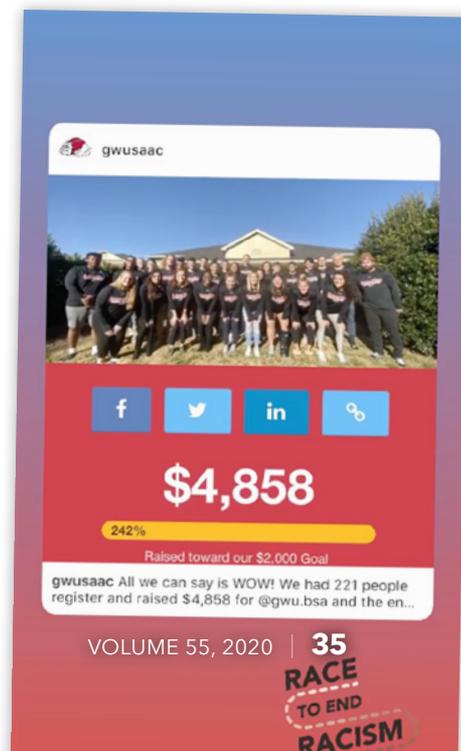
athletes, get engaged, and be an active part of dismantling racism.”

Throughout the day, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and friends either walked or ran the 5K on campus or wherever they were. They joined the event from North Carolina, Maryland, Connecticut, Indiana, Virginia, Ohio, and Sweden, contributing nearly \$5,000. More than 200 registered participants posted photos and videos of themselves on social media running, walking and sharing why they decided to get involved using the hashtag #GwuRacetoEndRacism.

Afterwards, Simmons reflected on the success of the event and the close-knit Gardner-Webb community. “In my coaching career I’ve been at some great schools,” Simmons said. “I think Gardner-Webb is just different. Being here you feel that family atmosphere. You feel that people want you to do well and people are behind you. Being the only black female coach on campus is huge. I want my players to see me as a leader and not only that I talk about being a leader but do things that show leadership.”

“And one standing alone can be attacked and defeated, but two can stand back-to-back and conquer; three is even better, for a triple-braided cord is not easily broken.”

ECCLESIASTES 4:12
(Living Bible Translation)





Leah Carpenter, of Stanley, N.C., is the University's first Tucker Scholar.

Let the Son Shine

Leah Carpenter,
of Stanley, N.C.,
Named as the First
Tucker Scholar

A high school senior described as a “ray of sunshine” is the first recipient of the Tucker Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength Scholarship at Gardner-Webb University. Leah Carpenter, of Stanley, N.C., made history when she received the award, which is given to a student with exceptional academic achievement and who also exemplifies the commands of Jesus found in Mark 12:29-31—“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; and love your neighbor as yourself.”

Gardner-Webb President Dr. William M. Downs noted the significance of the occasion. “The Tucker family name has become

synonymous with student success here at Gardner-Webb. Each day we get to enjoy the showcase facility called the Tucker Student Center. And now, thanks to the continued generosity of the Tuckers, we come together to celebrate the awarding of the inaugural Tucker Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength Scholarship—the most prestigious undergraduate award at Gardner-Webb.”

Carolyn and Robert Tucker, who gave the University \$5.5 million in 2010 for the Tucker Student Center, established the Tucker Scholarship in March 2019 with a \$4 million scholarship endowment.

The formal scholarship presentation was made by the Tuckers' daughter Lisa, a 1989 alumna. "I was so impressed with you from the moment we met," she told Carpenter. "Everything you stand for, it beams from you immediately."

Carpenter, a nursing major, graduated from Highland School of Technology in Gastonia, N.C. She was one of 90 individuals recommended for the scholarship, and among 15 finalists. "I am extremely overjoyed and grateful to the Tucker family," Carpenter stated. "It's amazing to be selected for this scholarship. I wanted to come to Gardner-Webb because of the nursing 100 percent passing rate (on the licensing exam). Also, whenever I came to campus here, I felt at home. I told my mom, 'Whether I get the scholarship or not, Gardner-Webb is the place.'"

She was a member of the Beta Club and her past community service includes packing meals for a homeless ministry, helping with a summer

home repair ministry, and serving on a mission trip to those impacted by Hurricane Florence. She is a member of a Bible club and shares her faith with those around her. "I feel like I owe something back to the community, because it's what Jesus would do," Carpenter expressed. "It's the best experience you will ever have in your life, humbling yourself and helping others. I enjoy every single minute of it."

Carpenter was nominated for the scholarship by Taylor Campbell, a GWU alumna and her youth pastor at New Covenant United Methodist Church in Mt. Holly, N.C. "She's a leader and does so much in our youth group, our church and our community," Campbell described. "Her love and her light just radiate."

During her freshman year, Carpenter is excited to meet new people, further her education, and grow in her faith. "I feel that God has called me to the nursing profession, because I enjoy helping others," she asserted.

"I feel like I owe something back to the community, because it's what Jesus would do. It's the best experience you will ever have in your life, humbling yourself and helping others. I enjoy every single minute of it."

LEAH CARPENTER

About the Tucker Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength Scholarship

The Carolyn and Robert Tucker Endowed Scholarship Fund expresses the commitment of the Tucker family to supporting students who wish to pursue higher education at Gardner-Webb.

The purpose of the Tucker Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength Scholarship is to award full tuition, room, board, and required fees to a student who exemplifies the principles and values of Christian service as embodied by Carolyn and Robert Tucker in their personal and professional lives.

The scholarship will be awarded annually to a deserving student who exemplifies the attributes highlighted in Mark 12:29-31. The candidate will stand apart from other applicants by the depth of character, faith, and service-driven life. The student must demonstrate how they can thrive in the challenging GWU academic environment and graduate prepared to live out the university's motto making a difference for God and humanity.



Congratulating Leah Carpenter at the Tucker Scholarship Presentation are Gardner-Webb President Dr. William M. Downs and Carolyn and Robert Tucker.

“I am really excited about the opportunity to serve Gardner-Webb in this new way. I have a deep love for this institution and community and see this as part of my calling as a nurse practitioner.”

DR. JILL HOUSER



Dr. Jill Houser, the Gardner-Webb University health provider for the Student Health Clinic

New Student Health Clinic Features Familiar Face

Dr. Jill Houser, Former Gardner-Webb Nursing Assistant Professor, Leads Effort

Gardner-Webb University and its partner, Atrium Health, celebrated a historic day for the campus on Thursday, July 16, 2020, with a ribbon cutting for the new GWU Student Health Clinic at 148 Memorial Drive. Leaders of the two entities praised the experience and leadership of the clinic’s new provider—a familiar face on campus and in the community—Dr. Jill Houser, previously an assistant professor in the Hunt School of Nursing.

Dr. Nicole Waters, associate provost for the College of Health Sciences, remarked how plans for the new Student Health Clinic began long before the COVID-19 pandemic. She noted that God’s timing was perfect in providing the clinic and its new provider. “I am grateful for Dr. Jill Houser’s servant heart to meet the needs of the young adults on campus,” Waters observed. “I am confident that she will display the Atrium Health and Gardner-Webb University mission daily. I know her knowledge and advanced skills will serve the health and well-being of our campus. More importantly, I know her heart. She exemplifies the core nursing value of caring, and her relationship-building strengths will serve well in building mutual trust among students.”

While teaching full time for the past five years, Houser maintained her Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP) national certification by practicing in a clinical setting on a regular basis. She has worked in occupational/population health and family practice settings as an FNP since 2004. Houser began working with Atrium Health Employer Solutions in Cleveland County, N.C., in 2012. During that time, she helped establish the Cleveland County Employee Health and Wellness Center and implemented a wellness program for Cleveland County employees. She has worked with both adults and children in a primary care setting with an emphasis on healthy behaviors and preventative health.

In 2015, Houser joined the Gardner-Webb Hunt School of Nursing as an adjunct clinical

faculty member. She primarily taught in the FNP program where she coordinated the courses in Pediatric Primary Care, Transition into Practice, and Final Evidenced Based Practice Project. She maintains a special interest in educational technology and simulation. Houser worked with the College of Health Science Simulation Coordinator to implement simulations into the FNP program. The FNP curriculum now includes service learning as well due to Houser's love of her community. In 2017, Houser received a promotion to assistant professor of nursing. The same year, she started delving into Universal Design for Learning and has since presented nationally on the topic.

"I am really excited about the opportunity to serve Gardner-Webb in this new way," stated Houser, a Boiling Springs native. "I have a deep love for this institution and community and see this as part of my calling as a nurse practitioner. I would love to see the clinic be a safe place for students to interact with the healthcare system. Being part of the larger Atrium Healthcare system will allow students to have access to much more than just this one clinic. They will have access to all the resources and expertise of the entire Atrium system. Being in a rural area, access to care is a concern for many of our students. I would like to eliminate that barrier with the addition of the new Student Health Clinic."

Before taking on her new role at the Student Health Clinic, Houser had worked extra hours with Atrium Health to conduct virtual visits because of the pandemic. Although she had helped pilot the virtual visit program in 2014, the day-to-day practice changed significantly. "When it became apparent that COVID-19 was going to have a global impact," Houser noted, "I reached out to the manager of Virtual and requested to be updated on the training so that I could help out."

Houser's affinity for her community spurs her to work with several organizations to improve health outcomes for Cleveland County. In May 2018, she joined the Benchmarks NC team as a research and outcomes specialist for Partnering for Community Prosperity. The group currently focuses its efforts in the Graham Elementary School neighborhood in Shelby,



Brian Gwyn, GWU alumnus and Atrium Health senior vice president, assists GWU President Dr. William M. Downs at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Student Health Clinic.

N.C., by addressing social factors that impact community health.

She earned her associate's degree in nursing from Cleveland Community College and her Bachelor of Science in Nursing from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She received her Master of Science in Nursing, Family Nurse Practitioner Concentration from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she also obtained a specialty concentration in rural and underserved populations. As part of her master's thesis, she completed a research study concentrating on the spiritual care practices of nurse practitioners working in rural North Carolina. This study appeared in the *Journal of the American Academy of Nurse Practitioners* in 2006.

Houser completed her Doctor of Nursing Practice degree from East Carolina University in July 2017. In line with her interest in technology, she implemented a text messaging program with the diabetes clinic at the Cleveland County Health Department as part of her scholarly project.

Included in her many accolades throughout her career is a nomination for the Carolinas Healthcare System Pinnacle Award, the highest award offered to employees. She is a recipient of the Carolinas Healthcare System KEIP Award for excellence in leadership and patient care, and the Carolinas Healthcare System Values in Action Award, which recognizes excellence in patient care and a demonstration of system values.

About the GWU Student Health Clinic

The staff includes Dr. Jill Houser, provider, and a Certified Medical Assistant. "We provide primary care student health services and see patients in person, via telephone, or virtually via video," Houser said. "We have a lab for needed services and two exam rooms. In July, we are open Monday through Thursday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m., and in August through May, we are open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Students can call 980-487-2390 to schedule an appointment."



Head Football Coach Tre Lamb has Bold Vision for Gardner-Webb

Pandemic Preparations Offer More Time to Build Program

Gardner-Webb University welcomed Tre Lamb into the Gardner-Webb fold at one of the strangest times in University history. As the COVID-19 pandemic put the fall 2020 football season on hold, new head football coach Tre Lamb moved forward with building a program that he feels will be explosive and fun to watch.

“We are thrilled to have Tre Lamb agree to lead our football program at Gardner-Webb University,” said GWU President Dr. William Downs. “He quickly rose to the top of a large and distinguished list of interested coaches

with his bold vision, his unmatched energy and his confident commitment to winning championships at GWU. Tre comes from a long line of successful football coaches, and leading young men to victory is in his DNA. His plan to immediately and positively impact our student-athletes is impressive, and we couldn’t be more excited.”

Lamb previously served as offensive coordinator at Tennessee Tech in Cookeville, where he developed a national reputation as a rising star in the coaching industry. “Tre is a great fit for our university and football

program,” said Vice President for Athletics Chuck Burch. “The young men on our roster are empowered by his genuine love for the game and interest in building our team to its full potential.”

Football runs deep in the Lamb family, with Tre Lamb the latest to rise to the position of head coach. His father, Hal, recently retired after a legendary career and three state titles at Calhoun (Ga.) High. His grandfather, Ray, won three state championships during a career that included head coaching stops at Warren County (Ga.) High, Commerce (Ga.) High and Monroe Area (Ga.) High. His uncle, Bobby Lamb, has more than 100 wins and four national playoff appearances during a Division I coaching career at Furman University and Mercer University.

“This is a dream come true for me,” said Lamb. “Gardner-Webb is a program with great potential. Our approach on the field will be innovative and fun. We will recruit young men who will represent this school and community with class and integrity.”

Lamb was part of a coaching staff at Tennessee Tech in 2019 that engineered one of the biggest turnarounds in Division I FCS nationally. Prior to his position in Tennessee, Lamb called the plays for Mercer in 2017 and spent four seasons as the quarterbacks coach for the Bears. He mentored John Russ to an outstanding career and helped freshman Kaelan Riley to a spot on the Jerry Rice Award Watch List and Southern Conference Freshman of the Year honors in 2017. Lamb also served as the quarterbacks coach at Tennessee Tech in 2013.

As a player, Lamb played quarterback at Tennessee Tech from 2009-2012, serving as team captain during his final three seasons. He led the Golden Eagles to an Ohio Valley Conference title in 2011, the program’s first since 1975, and a spot in the NCAA Division I FCS Playoffs for the first time. Lamb was outstanding during his team’s title run, directing an offense that set nine school records including single-season marks for points scored

(355), scoring average (32.3 ppg) and most first downs in a season (238).

As the program’s Robert Hill Johnson Award winner, Lamb set three individual school records himself in 2011, establishing new marks for single-game passing attempts and completions and the single-season record for total offense with 2,555 yards.

He finished his career with 5,301 passing yards, which ranks third in program history. He passed for a single game school-record 481 yards vs. Southeast Missouri State as a senior.

Lamb played for his father, Hal, at Calhoun (Ga.) High before joining the college ranks, posting a 21-4 record as a starter under center. A first-team All-State selection in 2007, he passed for 2,232 yards and 27 touchdowns as a senior.

Lamb graduated from Tennessee Tech with a degree in interdisciplinary studies education and exercise science.

He and his wife, Carter, have a daughter, Olivia James.

What They’re Saying About Gardner-Webb Head Coach Tre Lamb

Georgia Head Coach Kirby Smart

“Tre is a rising star in college football. He knows football and he knows how to create a culture of winning. He will do great things at Gardner-Webb!”

Charlotte Head Coach Will Healy

“I’ve spent a lot of time around Tre. I think he is the right man for the job. He is a true relationship builder and will connect with his players. He is a tremendous offensive mind. He did a great job helping build a program at Mercer and resurrecting a program at Tennessee Tech. What an awesome hire by Gardner-Webb.”

Tennessee Tech Head Coach Dewayne Alexander

“With Tre, you’re getting somebody who’s very intelligent, a really smart football coach. He’s been around the game his whole life. His granddad was a great coach. His dad was a great coach. His uncle is a great coach. He’s a football junkie. We are going to miss him, but this is a great opportunity for him as head coach at Gardner-Webb.”

South Carolina Offensive Coordinator Mike Bobo

“Tre comes from a great football family. He is smart, hard-working, and on the cutting edge of college football. He will energize the Gardner-Webb football program!”

Former Tennessee Tech Head Coach Watson Brown

“Tre is a great hire for Gardner-Webb. He was a great quarterback on our Tech team that won an Ohio Valley Conference championship for first time in 36 years. He’s been an outstanding offensive coordinator at Tech as well. He’s one of the outstanding young coaches on the rise. Tre is ready for this and will do a great job. I couldn’t be prouder of him.”

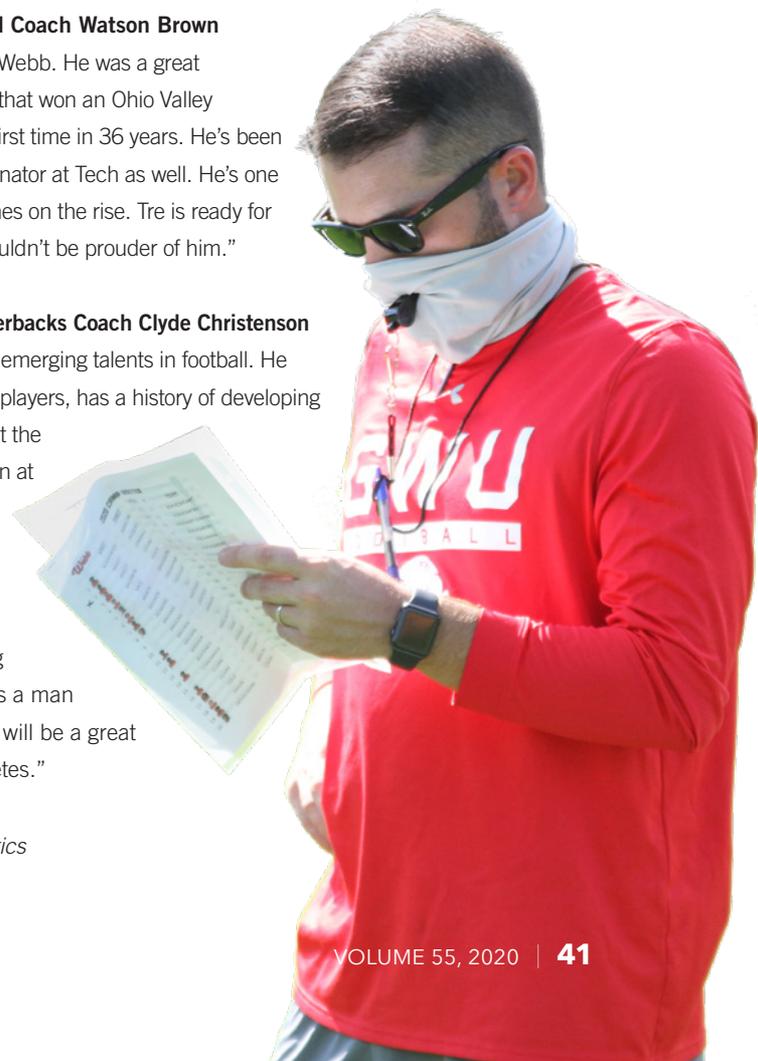
Tampa Bay Buccaneers Quarterbacks Coach Clyde Christenson

“Tre is one of the most exciting emerging talents in football. He knows how to connect with his players, has a history of developing strong quarterbacks and will get the most out of his team. He will win at Gardner-Webb the right way.”

Former Furman and Mercer Head Coach Bobby Lamb

“Tre is one of the bright young coaches in the business. He is a man of character and integrity and will be a great influence on the student-athletes.”

Story provided by GWU Athletics



Gardner-Webb Paces Big South With Four 2020 Christenberry Award Winners

Allison Chandler, Jennifer Jackson, Courtney Kanetzke and Brian Stepanek Achieve Honors

Gardner-Webb University once again led the way as the Big South Conference announced a record 12 student-athletes as recipients of the 2020 George A. Christenberry Award for Academic Excellence.

The Runnin' Bulldogs had four recipients. No other Big South school had more than two.

The Gardner-Webb quartet included women's golfer Allison Chandler, women's swimmer Jennifer Jackson, women's track and cross-country runner Courtney Kanetzke, and men's soccer player Brian Stepanek.

The award honors the male and female student-athletes within the conference who

attain the highest cumulative GPA during their undergraduate collegiate careers. This marks the eighth year in a row that the league has posted a record total.

Each of the 12 student-athletes honored in 2020 boasted perfect 4.0 GPAs for their academic careers.



Allison Chandler (Chester, Nova Scotia) was the 2020 Big South Women's Golf Co-Scholar-Athlete of the Year. In 2019-20, she was second on the Runnin' Bulldogs and 12th overall in the Big South with a career-best 75.00 scoring average—nearly three strokes ahead of her previous best. She helped the squad to a pair of second-place finishes during the fall season. Chandler led the team in scoring as a junior and was team medalist twice during the spring season. A two-time WGCA All-America Scholar-Athlete selection, Chandler was a member of the dean's list and a member of the Alpha Chi Honor Society while at Gardner-Webb.



Jennifer Jackson (Rocky Mount, N.C.) excelled in the pool as a senior during the 2019-20 season, setting personal records in each of her events at the 2020 CCSA Championships. She was a member of an All-Conference relay team, as her 200-yard medley relay finished third at the event. Jackson was also part of fourth-place finishes in the 200-yard free relay and 400-yard medley relay at the 2020 CCSA Championships. A finalist for CCSA Scholar-Athlete of the Year, she earned her third spot in three seasons on the CCSA Academic All-Conference Team. Jackson received Gardner-Webb's Dr. Dee "Doc" Hunt Academic Achievement Award in 2018, and was a member of the Gardner-Webb Dean's List and Alpha Chi Honor Society.



Courtney Kanetzke (Mills River, N.C.) competed in the 3,000m run for the Runnin' Bulldogs during the indoor season and with the cross-country team this past fall. She also competed in the outdoor 5,000m run and 1,500m run during her collegiate career. She set a personal record with a time of 12:20.98 at the 2020 VMI Indoor Classic, and had outdoor bests in the 1,500m run (5:41.78) and 5,000m run (22:21.14) during the 2019 outdoor campaign. A dean's list and Alpha Chi Honor Society member at Gardner-Webb, Kanetzke was part of a GWU delegation to the National Honors Conference in New Orleans, La. She also participated in the Southern Regional Honors Council in Memphis, Tenn., in 2019, and was a member of the 2020 Gardner-Webb University Who's Who list.



Brian Stepanek (Davidson, N.C.) played in 25 career matches, including a career-high 12 contests in 2018. He made four career starts for the Runnin' Bulldogs and recorded one goal and one assist. Stepanek earned CoSIDA Academic All-America honors following the 2018 season—the first national academic honor for a GWU men's soccer student-athlete since 2009. He was also named to the 2018 United Soccer Coaches Association's Scholar All-South Region Team, and has been a dean's list member at Gardner-Webb.

Gardner-Webb also led the Big South with four Christenberry Award winners in 2019.

Story provided by GWU Athletics

CHAMPIONSHIPS BEGIN WITH SCHOLARSHIPS

Your support helps fund scholarships for 22 NCAA Division I sports at Gardner-Webb.

Gardner-webb.edu/bulldog-club





Bulldog Bash Raises More than \$45K for Gardner-Webb Athletics

Funds Help Student-Athletes Achieve Academic and Athletic Goals

The second annual Bulldog Bash student-athlete fundraiser brought in more than \$45,000 for Gardner-Webb University’s student-athletes. Despite the challenges posed by COVID-19 and moving to an online format, the two-day event exceeded last year’s total by \$18,000.

Sponsored by the Gardner-Webb Bulldog Club and GWU athletics, this year’s fundraising auction drew the support of 268 participants through web communication channels. They bid on more than 270 items, from sports equipment and memorabilia to travel packages and coaching sessions.

More than 400 students compete in NCAA Division I intercollegiate athletics at Gardner-Webb. “The funds raised during the Bulldog Bash significantly aid the efforts of our coaches to provide their student-athletes with a more memorable experience during their time as a Runnin’ Bulldog,” observed Chuck Burch, GWU vice president for athletics.

Burch thanked Will Mabry, Bulldog Club director, and Ryan Bridges, director of sports information, for their work in coordinating the event. “It’s because of these two that the event was successful and our student-athletes will reap the rewards of their efforts,” Burch added.

The event sparked some friendly

competition among the bidders.

Some of the more popular items were a GWU football prototype helmet, men’s basketball packages, a trip to Kona, Hawaii, a GWU baseball package, and hand-painted GWU Christmas ornaments.

Gardner-Webb President Dr. William M. Downs expressed his gratitude to the alumni and fans who participated. “The proceeds go straight to helping our student-athletes strengthen their performance both in the classroom and on the fields of competition,” Downs affirmed. “To win championships, we need the finest facilities and the most effective training equipment. To win championships, we need the Bulldog Club and the larger Bulldog Nation to boldly invest in our 22 Division I teams ... that so many Gardner-Webb supporters stepped up during these challenging times is a great sign for our future! We want to win, and we want to win now; with support from the Runnin’ Bulldog faithful, our coaches and players can claw their way to the top.”

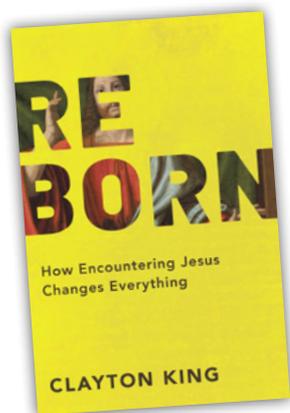
For more information on the Bulldog Club or to give directly to the team of your choice, contact Will Mabry at 704-406-4630 or bulldogclub@gardner-webb.edu.



Gardner-Webb alumnus Clayton King preaches in Uganda's Mandela Stadium to 100,000 people, the largest audience of his career.

By God's Grace

Clayton King, '95,
Has Shared Life-
Changing Power of
Jesus with People All
Over the World



On New Year's Eve in 2019, Gardner-Webb University alumnus, Clayton King, and his wife, Sharie, shared the Christian message to 100,000 people in Uganda's Mandela Stadium. It was the biggest crowd they've ever spoken to, and organizers believe, one of the largest Christian gatherings ever held in Africa. "It was incredible," King reflected. "She was the first woman to ever speak from the main stage at this event. They told us between 20,000 and 30,000 people responded to the invitation."

King and his wife are partners in the non-profit ministry he founded in 1995 when he was a senior at Gardner-Webb. From his dorm room, Lutz 111, King started with a telephone, an answering machine and a spiral notebook. "I would get 10 messages a day from youth

pastors to come and preach," King shared. Now, Crossroads/Clayton King Ministries offers numerous summer camps at Anderson (S.C.) University, student conferences, and leadership and coaching networks. King serves as a distinguished professor of evangelism at Anderson and holds multiple honorary doctorates.

In March, when the country shut down in response to COVID-19, lives were put on hold, Uganda was a memory, but also a source of hope. King's team realized their signature event, Crossroads Summer Camp, might not happen, leaving 5,300 students with nowhere to go. They began to plan an online alternative, which was released when they decided to cancel camp. The free content, "Crossroads: Hometowns," included messages and worship segments

“There’s no way I could adequately explain how much my experience at Gardner-Webb prepared me for ministry—I mean, it was everything—from my professors to campus ministries to the ministry teams I served with.”

CLAYTON KING



recorded at New Spring Church (Anderson, S.C.), where King is a teaching pastor.

“We took a big step of faith; we honestly felt like God wanted us to offer this as a free gift to the church,” King asserted. “We had between 17,000 and 20,000 kids go through the program. Our mission is to serve the local church, and we also knew that youth pastors who had been planning to take their kids to camp wouldn’t have the assets, the resources, or the energy to throw together something at the last minute to do with their kids.”

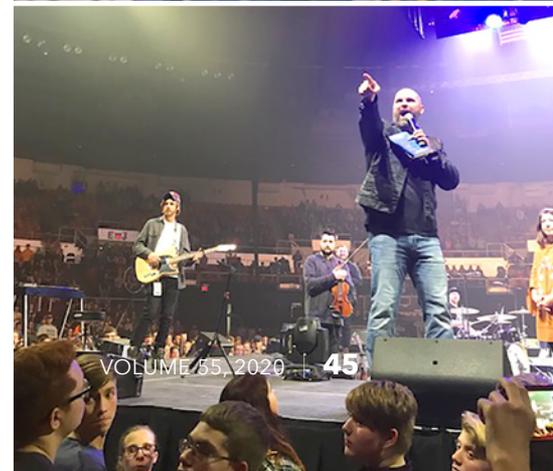
Because of the interest and the need, the ministry offered more online content in the fall. King also published his 17th book this year, “Reborn,” with Baker Publishing. He is most proud of this work, which focuses on how Jesus changes lives. He writes about 12 broken people in the New Testament who came face-to-face with Jesus.

The King’s two sons, Jacob and Joseph, have

grown up in the ministry. Eighteen-year-old Jacob is preaching now, and has even shared the stage with his dad at New Spring Church. Looking back on his life, King attributes all his accomplishments to the grace of God—starting with his birth mother who gave him up for adoption. “The parents who adopted me were a great Christian family, hardworking, blue collar, Baptists to the bone—the grace of God,” he continued. “When I became a Christian, we were in a great church. It was the grace of God that I had a pastor who took me under his wing at age 14 and disciplined me and showed me how to preach.”

Further, King believes God directed him to Gardner-Webb. He was committed to play football at Clemson. However, Randy Kilby, former GWU admissions counselor, called to ask him why he hadn’t applied for the Presidential Scholarship, which was due the next day. Kilby told him he needed to be at Gardner-Webb to prepare for ministry and faxed him the form. King completed it and drove to GWU to turn it in. King was awarded full tuition, room and board.

“There’s no way I could adequately explain how much my experience at Gardner-Webb prepared me for ministry—I mean, it was everything—from my professors to campus ministries to the ministry teams I served with,” King affirmed. “I lived in Boiling Springs from 1991 to 2014 and built relationships with pastors in Cleveland County. Gardner-Webb is the soul of Boiling Springs. I was impacted and influenced by my friendships with Tracy Jessup (vice president, Christian Life and Service), Robert Canoy (dean, School of Divinity), Chuck Burch (vice president, Athletics), the coaches and all the different men and women in the community. To this day, I am close to Tracy Jessup and Dr. Canoy. It’s all the grace of God. He put people and opportunities in my life at just the right time, every single time I needed it.”





Trey Miller opened his new dental practice, Smile Solutions Dentistry in Harrisburg, N.C., in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Delivering Smiles

Trey Miller, '08
Sinks his Teeth
Into New
Dental Practice

When Trey Miller graduated from Gardner-Webb University in 2008, the thought of becoming a dentist hadn't entered his mind. The Kannapolis, N.C., resident certainly had no idea that in the middle of a pandemic he would open his own practice, Smile Solutions Dentistry in Harrisburg, N.C.

Despite the uncertainty, Miller said people called to schedule appointments every day. "People are happy. They love the practice, and they are leaving Google reviews," Miller observed. "It's not the blast off I wanted, but this isn't a normal time, so considering the situation, I think we're doing well. I'm optimistic."

Not only is each new patient special to him, but every patient contributes to a cause that is near to his heart. Miller partnered with an organization in Harrisburg called the Dream on 3 Foundation. This nonprofit is much like

The Make-a-Wish Foundation, but instead, it focuses on making sports-based dreams come true for children with chronic illnesses, intellectual and developmental disabilities, and life-altering conditions. With each new patient, he donates money to the foundation to help make a child's wish come true.

"For me, it was a great opportunity because sports were the foundation of my life, from baseball to cycling, for 25 years of my life," Miller asserted. "To be able to give somebody else those same opportunities, just a little piece of what has made me what I am today, that's why I chose them (the Dream on 3 Foundation)."

Miller, a native of Hickory, N.C., was recruited to play baseball at Gardner-Webb, but that wasn't the only reason he accepted the scholarship. "There was something about Gardner-Webb—it just felt like it was home,"

Miller reflected. “I remember leaving and saying, ‘This is it; this is the place for me.’ It had that hometown feel. It was the feeling I got when I walked around campus and the sense of community it had.”

However, he experienced a knee injury during his first semester as catcher. Despite the injury, former baseball coach Rusty Stroupe kept him on the team for three years giving him some playing time. After two knee surgeries, Miller left the team and focused his energies on academics. He graduated with a 3.8 grade point average and was inducted into the Tri-Beta Honor Society.

He was a biology major with a minor in chemistry and concentration in psychology. He intended to go to medical school, but after completing several internships he decided against a career in medicine.

Miller was given the opportunity to work as a lab assistant at Gardner-Webb and that experience led to his first job. “I’m a big outdoorsman – big into fly fishing – I just got really big into conservation,” Miller related. “I did an internship that led to a job with Mecklenburg County (N.C.). I ended up working in downtown Charlotte (N.C.) for five years, before going to dental school.”

While working in Charlotte, he started racing all over the country as a professional cyclist. He met his wife, who was also racing bikes. His in-laws, including his brother-in-law, who is a dentist, made an interesting observation during a holiday meal. “We were all sitting around at Thanksgiving dinner and my in-laws decided that I would be a really great pediatric dentist,” Miller explained. “It was really uncomfortable, but then I started thinking about it. I love working with my hands, I love making relationships with people. I love helping people, and I feel like I am physically doing something to help someone in another way. It kind of all came together.”

He needed a reference for his application to dental school. He called Dr. Tom Jones, professor of biology and Dr. Don Olive, associate professor of physics and astronomy, and was reminded again why Gardner-Webb is a special place. “I still had professors’ phone numbers,” Miller said. “Tom Jones answered the phone in the middle of his lecture and said, ‘Hey



Photos by Adam Willis

Trey, what is going on?’ He and I were buddies. We had traveled together—we went on Katrina relief trips and we played golf. He said, ‘I will write you a letter of recommendation and get it to you this week.’”

Miller continued, “Dr. Olive was also glad to write me a letter. That was almost five years after I graduated. If I had gone to a big university, they would have been like, who, what number are you? I was so thankful to have gone to Gardner-Webb, a small university so that I had those types of relationships.”

In addition to the references, he also had all the prerequisites he needed and the grades to get into dental school at West Virginia University. He graduated in 2017 with his Doctor of Dental Surgery, and after three years of experience opened his own practice in April 2020.

“I knew from the start of dental school that I wanted to have my own practice,” Miller affirmed. “Life is about being fulfilled and fulfillment for me is growth, the ability to help others and have a meaningful impact on people’s lives.”

For more information visit smilesolutionsdentistrync.com

“There was something about Gardner-Webb—it just felt like it was home. I remember leaving and saying, ‘This is it; this is the place for me.’ It had that hometown feel. It was the feeling I got when I walked around campus and the sense of community it had.”

TREY MILLER

"I joined them and realized that ROTC at Gardner-Webb is a family. We are super close. We don't just see each other three times a week at 6 a.m. We spend the majority of our week hanging out with each other."

LARRI ROBINSON



Larri Robinson competes in an event sponsored by the Gardner-Webb ROTC to raise money for a local veteran's organization.

No Wasted Time

Larri Robinson, '20,
Discovers Army ROTC
Gave Her Structure
to Excel

After researching her interests and spending time on the job with her mother who works in healthcare, Lareshia "Larri" Robinson, of Hendersonville, N.C., chose nursing as her career path. She enrolled in Gardner-Webb University's Hunt School of Nursing for three main reasons: The program accepts freshmen, she received a scholarship, and the campus felt like home.

However, during her first semester at GWU, she encountered a problem that most students don't complain about—too much free time. "I was used to being a year-round athlete, not having any down time, just go, go, go," Robinson explained. "I got here and I was sitting in my dorm room thinking, 'I have four hours



to waste, just today.' I didn't have the structure in my life that I was used to having."

Her dad served in the Army so she had researched the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC). She decided to talk to Capt. Michael Meissner, director of the Army ROTC program and senior military science instructor at GWU. "He invited me to come and do PT (physical training) with the group," Robinson shared. "I joined them and realized that ROTC at Gardner-Webb is a family. We are super close. We don't just see each other three times a week at 6 a.m. We spend the majority of our week hanging out with each other."

In her sophomore year, she applied and was offered a ROTC scholarship. "There's a team, a family, a bond that can't be broken when you find your niche, and the military is my niche," Robinson described.

After receiving her associate degree in nursing in May 2019, she participated in the ROTC's Nursing Summer Training Program (NSTP), a requirement for all nursing cadets. "It's a glimpse into your future," Robinson noted. "During NSTP at Walter Reed Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., I spent approximately 136 hours there, mostly in the surgical intensive care unit but I also rotated into medical-surgical and the pediatric floor. I learned the expectations and the realities of being an active duty U.S. Army nurse."

While she was there, she took advantage of an opportunity to be a guardian for an honor flight of veterans who came to Washington, D.C., to see their memorials. "They get assigned a one-on-one for the day, because they need extra help," she related. "That entire day really solidified in my mind that I am doing what I am meant to do. Walking up to the wall with a Vietnam veteran – I don't even have the words to put into perspective the emotion behind it and the pride you feel to be able to say that this happened and he was a part of it. He wanted me to walk up to the wall with him, because he knows I'm the future of it."

When Robinson graduated in May 2020 with her Bachelor of Science in nursing, she received a commission as a second lieutenant and is fulfilling her contract to serve four years of active duty in the military. "I was a total introvert," she reflected. "The Army taught me how to talk to people, how to utilize my resources, and to become an overall leader."



About ROTC

Founded in 1916, the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) is a college program offered at more than 1,700 colleges and universities across the United States. In exchange for a paid college education and a guaranteed post-college career, cadets commit to serve in the military after graduation. Gardner-Webb also provides free room and board for students who receive an ROTC scholarship.

Gardner-Webb has had an ROTC presence since the 1990s when the GWU students could enroll in Army ROTC at Wofford College in Spartanburg, S.C.

However, the current program came into existence with the Partnership Agreement signed in July 2004 by the U.S. Army, UNC-Charlotte, and Gardner-Webb University. In the Spring of 2005, GWU Army ROTC became C Company, 49er Battalion. The 49er Battalion consists of the following schools: UNC-Charlotte, Belmont Abbey College, Davidson College, Johnson & Wales University, Winthrop University, Gardner-Webb University, Queens University, Johnson C. Smith University, Wingate University, Pfeiffer University, Lenoir Rhyne, and Central Piedmont Community College.

ROTC cadets use their talents in various fields in the military including infantry, engineers, tankers, military police, and in health care such as nursing. Students receive in-depth instruction in the art of leadership and the science of management which is augmented by practical exercise on a weekly basis.

“I am honored to have the opportunity, and I am excited to join the team that serves the Gardner-Webb community.”

NATE EVANS

Gardner-Webb Selects New Vice President for Advancement

Nate Evans Excited to Connect with Alumni and Campus Community

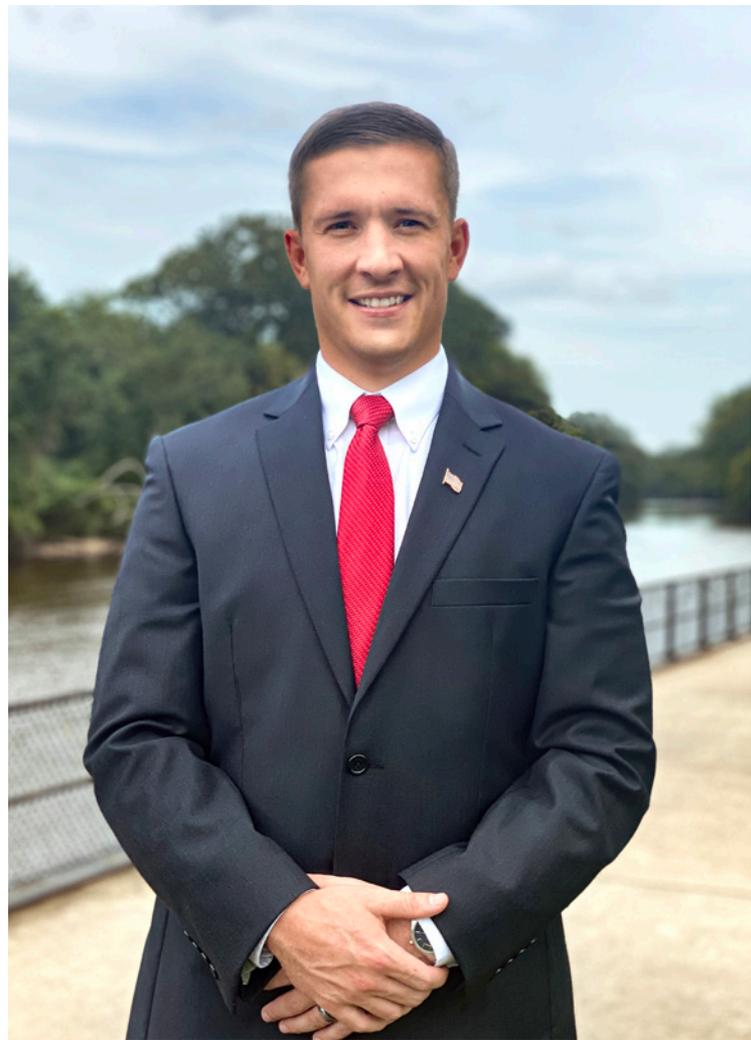
Officials at Gardner-Webb University selected Nathaniel “Nate” J. Evans, of Greenville, N.C., as vice president of Advancement. A member of the senior staff, Evans manages the offices of alumni relations, major gifts, the Bulldog Club, and the annual fund. Most recently, Evans served as senior advancement officer at East Carolina University (ECU) in Greenville.

“Nate Evans injects a new level of energy, determination, and skill to fundraising and external relations at GWU,” praised University President Dr. William Downs. “I worked with Nate at ECU during my time there as dean, and I have great confidence in his ability to organize a strong team, to map out a data-driven strategy, and to persist until he reaches or exceeds his goals. Nate brings professionalism and a compelling personality that Runnin’ Bulldogs everywhere will appreciate.”

Evans began his higher education career as an admissions counselor for ECU Undergraduate Admissions. After several years in this position, he transitioned to university advancement working as a major gifts officer on behalf of the ECU Honors College. His role soon transitioned to a regional officer where he diligently worked to engage alumni throughout the region and country to include North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, Texas and Colorado. Evans’ efforts led him into a senior advancement officer role where his responsibilities continued to expand.

“I am honored to have the opportunity, and I am excited to join the team that serves the Gardner-Webb community,” Evans shared. “As a student and later as a fundraiser, I’ve seen firsthand the impact that philanthropy can have for not only students but the rest of the campus community. I am grateful for the chance to help the Runnin’ Bulldogs continue a legacy of success. I am looking forward to connecting with alumni, the staff, and students as we all work together to write Gardner-Webb’s next chapter. I can’t wait to get started. Go Dawgs!”

During his time in university advancement, Evans helped to raise more than \$5.6 million. In addition to securing major gifts, his responsibilities included assisting donors with charitable estate planning and working with community-based programs. More importantly, Evans helped to connect and re-engage



Nate Evans, Vice President for Advancement

hundreds of alumni, who were able to give back and support the university through generous gifts of time, talent, and treasure.

Before his higher education career, Evans served in the U.S. Air Force and later in the small business sector. He holds a Bachelor of Arts in exercise and sports science with a minor in biology from ECU along with a Master of Science in human resource management from Western Carolina University (Cullowhee, N.C.).

Evans and his wife Brittany are members of Eastern Pines Church in Greenville. He has also served with Brothers First Motorcycle Ministry and was the head coach for a middle school wrestling team.

CLASSACTS

1970s

ROGER HAAS '70



received the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, one of the highest civilian honors the state of North Carolina can bestow and the highest award for state service granted by the governor of North Carolina. Haas received the award for his 16 total years on the Kannapolis City Council and more than 30 years as a community leader. He served as U.S. Tobacco Southeast Regional Vice President where he founded one of the marketing arms of the company that promoted the racing industry. He was on the Cabarrus County Republican Party Executive Committee. He was an active member of the Kannapolis Rotary Club serving as program chair, social committee, and was a Paul Harris Fellow. Haas was an American Red Cross volunteer and board member. He also worked as a volunteer in the school system teaching the fundamentals of business. He was one of the first people to advocate for the location of the Kannapolis Intimidators minor league stadium and secured a \$40,000 grant for its construction. He served as a 600 Festival committee member, was on the United Way Advisory Council, and when the Cabarrus County Tourism Authority was organized, he was appointed to serve on it and later became chairperson. Haas received a bachelor's degree in business from Gardner-Webb.

JACKIE HARRIS '71

retired from the Rowan United Way as resource development and marketing director and will be working part-time at Capstone Recovery Center as director of development and community outreach. Harris also works with Jobs for Life, teaching three sessions and helping clients find jobs once they complete the course.

She previously served as area director for the American Cancer Society. She received her associate degree from Gardner-Webb.



JOHN SEARIGHT '75

was inducted into the Gardner-Webb Athletics Hall of Fame. A key piece for Gardner-Webb's basketball juggernaut in the 1970s, Searight continued a rich tradition of strong post play during his two seasons with the Runnin' Bulldogs. His effort in the paint helped the 'Dogs to 48 wins over two seasons and produced two-year totals of 675 points and 470 rebounds. As a junior, he was solid down low with averages of 8.9 points and 6.4 rebounds per game to help Gardner-Webb to the NAIA National Tournament. He took on a more prominent role as a senior, exploding for season averages of 16.9 points and 11.2 rebounds per game. Searight earned first-team NAIA All-District 26 honors that season and was also the MVP of the Asheville Optimist Tip Off Tournament and a member of the 1974 Gardner-Webb Holiday All-Tournament Team. He ranked second in scoring and first in rebounding on that 1975 Gardner-Webb squad and was the 1974-75 recipient of Gardner-Webb's Karl Neilson Award.

RON RASH '76



received the 2020 Sidney Lanier Prize for Southern Literature from Mercer University's Spencer B. King Jr. Center. Rash, a poet, short story writer,

and novelist, graduated from Gardner-Webb. He is the John Parris Distinguished Professor of Appalachian Studies at Western Carolina University. He is the author of the New York Times bestseller "Serena" which was also a 2009 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction finalist and "Above the Waterfall." Other prize-winning novels include "The Cove," "One Foot in Eden," "Saints at the River," and "The World Made Straight." He wrote four collections of poems and six collections of short stories including "Burning Bright," which won the 2010 Frank O'Connor International Short Story Award, and "Chemistry and Other Stories," which was a finalist for the 2007 PEN/Faulkner Award. Rash is a two-time recipient of the O. Henry Prize given annually to short stories of exceptional merit.

CARL MARTIN '78

was one of four individuals inducted into the Starmount High School 2019-2020 Hall of Fame. Martin played basketball for a year at Wingate University and then transferred to Gardner-Webb University, becoming a three-year starter and team captain. During Martin's career, Gardner-Webb claimed the top spot in the NAIA weekly basketball ratings. Martin received the WBTV Carolina Classic MVP and the team compiled an 80-10 record. To this day, he holds the single game individual record for most free throws made (16) and highest free throw percentage (16-16 100 percent) at Gardner-Webb. He attributes his success to his mother, school administration, teachers, coaches, teammates, fans and, of course, hard work. After graduation from college, he moved to Allentown, Pa., where he worked for Chrysler. He returned to North Carolina, working first for Barclays American Financial and then for Lowe's Companies. He has been married to his high school sweetheart, Gloria, for 37 years.

1980s



SUSAN BRIGGS '81

was inducted into the Gardner-Webb Gallery of Distinguished Alumni. Retired from the banking industry after 37 years of service, Briggs held the position of market president for BB&T, managing Gaston, Cleveland, and Lincoln counties in North Carolina. A Gastonia resident, she had various leadership responsibilities within the bank as well as the communities she supported. Past community work includes co-chair of United Way, Hospice of Gaston Capital Campaign, and serving on various boards including Gaston Community Foundation, Gaston Chamber of Commerce, Gaston Together, Daniel Stowe Botanical Garden/Visitors, Gaston County Sports Hall of Fame and Gastonia Rotary East. Since retiring in 2018, she continues to enjoy being involved in community works, church, and Gardner-Webb University. She serves as a member of the GWU Board of Trustees and chair of the administrative affairs committee. She obtained her bachelor's in business administration from Gardner-Webb in 1981 and for two years attended the graduate school of banking at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge.

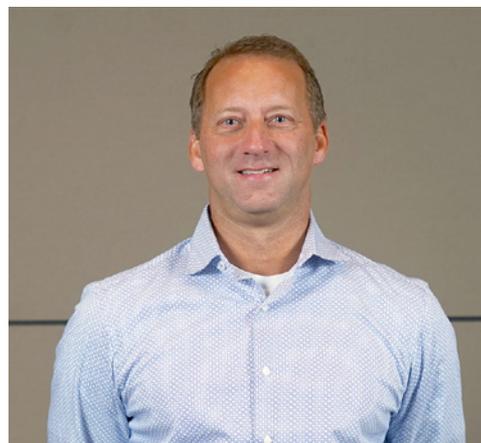
ROBERTA BORDEN WILSON '87



opened a private psychotherapy practice, Grace Christian Counseling, with offices in South Charlotte and Gaston County.

Wilson received a Bachelor of Arts in communication studies and English. She completed a master's degree in clinical mental health counseling at Regent University in 2017. She specializes in trauma therapy for children, teens, adults, and couples. She recently completed training in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR). She is a certified compassion fatigue educator and therapist, a N.C. licensed professional counselor-associate and a nationally certified counselor. She also has numerous FEMA certifications and is a member of Chi Sigma Iota, the national counseling honor society. Grace Christian Counseling's Charlotte office is located at 8045 Corporate Center Drive. The Gaston County office is located at Park Street United Methodist Church in Belmont. Wilson formerly worked as a high school English teacher in Lincoln and Cleveland counties and was a journalist at newspapers throughout the Charlotte metro area, including serving as editor of The Star in Shelby. She was named to Gardner-Webb's Distinguished Alumni gallery in 1996. While at GWU, Wilson was editor of The Pilot, the school newspaper, for four years. She also received the senior English and Communication Studies awards.

1990s



MARK SMITH '91

was inducted into the GWU Gallery of Distinguished Alumni. A four-year starter on the inaugural soccer team

at Gardner-Webb, Smith received a bachelor's degree in administrative management in 1991. After graduation, he earned a master's degree in sports management from the United States Sports Academy, graduating with honors in 1992. He began his career with the Charlotte Checkers as an original staff member. Following his tenure with the Checkers, he worked in the sales and marketing department at Charlotte Motor Speedway. Currently vice president of marketing for the Charlotte Knights baseball team, Smith lives in Marvin, N.C. He was part of the team's transition from South Carolina to uptown Charlotte and the Truist Field. Through his leadership, the Knights have led all 160 Minor League Baseball teams in attendance with 145 sellouts averaging over 9,100 fans per game for six consecutive seasons.



ARCHIE WOOD '93

was inducted into the GWU Gallery of Distinguished Alumni. With more than 25 years of experience in the fuel supply and distribution industry, Wood is regarded as an industry leader and actively participates as a subject matter expert within industry associations. As a certified transportation professional, Wood currently sits on the National Private Truck Council's National Advisory Board, Safety Committee, and is a past member of the board of directors for North Carolina Trucking Association. He is currently employed as manager – transport operations for Speedway LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Marathon Petroleum Company – a leading energy

company and the largest U.S. refiner along with midstream and retail operations. A resident of Yadkinville, N.C., he obtained his Bachelor of Science in business administration from GWU in 1993.

TINA FLEMING '93

is the first woman police chief of Troutman, N.C. After receiving her associate degree in law enforcement technology at Forsyth Tech and completing Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) at Wilkes Community College, Fleming worked full time at the Wilkesboro Police Department while completing her Bachelor of Science degree at Gardner-Webb's Statesville location. She went on to work at the Mooresville Police Department in 1993, serving for 10 years as a D.A.R.E. officer, patrol officer, and field training officer, rising to the rank of lieutenant. In 2003, Fleming took a job with the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services' alcohol branch. She trained officers in DWI forensic testing, taught classes for officers' certifications for various aspects of DWI enforcement, and maintained intoxilyzer devices for 12 counties. She worked part time with the Troutman Police Department dating back to 2003. In 2006, Fleming became Mitchell Community College's director of BLET and officially retired from there on Jan. 1, 2020.



BROOKS DERRICK '96

was inducted into the GWU Athletics Hall of Fame. An early standout for head

coach Tony Setzer's soccer program between the posts, Derrick finished his four seasons at Gardner-Webb as one of the best goal keepers in program history. Derrick's legacy was built on steady production. He posted school records with 18.0 career shutouts and a 1.43 goals against average from 1993-1996. Derrick also ranks second in GWU history with 362 career saves. His best season came in 1995 when he established Gardner-Webb's single-season records with 10 shutouts and a 0.95 goals against average. His 1995 shutout total still ranks No. 5 in the South Atlantic Conference record book. Derrick's heroics in goal that season helped Gardner-Webb to its first winning season, as the Runnin' Bulldogs closed that campaign with a 12-6-1 overall mark and a 4-3-0 record in the South Atlantic Conference.



SHED HARRIS '96

was inducted into the GWU Athletics Hall of Fame. One of Gardner-Webb's unsung heroes on the gridiron in the 1990s, Harris was a workhorse in the backfield. Harris played on Gardner-Webb's famed 1992 team that finished 12-2 and advanced to the NAIA National Championship Bowl, but was at his best after fighting back from an injury-shortened 1993 season. Harris returned stronger than ever, leading Gardner-Webb in rushing in 1994, 1995, and 1996. He was a force in his final campaign, rushing for a career-high 1,080 yards and 13 touchdowns in 1996. That

production saw Harris earn second-team All-South Atlantic Conference honors and finish his career as one of the most productive rushers in program history. Harris finished with 2,453 career yards and 24 touchdowns on 513 carries, with his yardage total still ranking No. 6 in program history. He is also one of only five ball carriers in program history to record 500 or more attempts in a career.

JULIANNE K. RHODES '97

has self-published her second Christian fiction novel, "The Renter Next Door," set in Darlington, S.C. Rhodes is a native of Canton, N.C., west of Asheville. She is a graduate of Gardner-Webb and the Focus on the Family Institute in Colorado Springs, Colo.

2000s

STEVE VARLEY '00



has been tapped as the new vice chancellor for advancement at UNC-Pembroke. Varley was selected following a national search utilizing a firm specializing in advancement professionals. He has a Master of Business Administration from Gardner-Webb and previously worked at GWU as director for publications and design, an instructor in the Godbold School of Business, and as vice president for development. He has also worked at Yale University as director of development and alumni affairs for the School of Nursing and most recently was the vice president for development for the Multiple Myeloma Research Foundation.

MICHAEL MIKOTA '02



has been selected as the president at Spartanburg (S.C.) Community College. The Gaffney, S.C., native was approved by a unanimous choice of the Spartanburg County Commission

for technical and community education. Previously, he was president of Central Carolina Technical College in Sumter, S.C. Mikota holds a bachelor's degree from Wofford College and a Master of Business Administration from Gardner-Webb University. During the late 1990s and early 2000s, he worked with Wachovia Bank being promoted to assistant vice president of business banking.



WILLIAM ANDREWS JR. '03

was inducted into the GWU Athletics Hall of Fame. A standout receiver, Andrews finished his four-year career at Gardner-Webb with more catches than any man before him. He set a GWU freshman record by catching 70 passes in 2000 as the Runnin' Bulldogs made their move to the NCAA Division I-AA ranks. His 12 catches for 203 yards that November helped GWU shock No. 23 ranked New Hampshire on the road and Andrews capped the season by earning honorable mention I-AA All-America honors from the Football Gazette. By the time his career finished, Andrews caught at least one pass in each of his 43 career games played and set Gardner-Webb's all-time receptions mark with 234. He added 3,149 yards and 35 touchdowns over four seasons, earning first-team All-Big South Conference honors in both 2002 and 2003. Andrews posted 10 games with at least 100 yards receiving in four years and was part of teams that compiled an impressive 30-13 overall record during that span. Andrews' efforts helped Gardner-Webb win 17 games in 2002

and 2003 along with a pair of Big South Conference titles and top 20 rankings in both major national polls in 2002.

MANNY GOMEZ '04

has been promoted to the rank of captain with the Winston-Salem Police Department (WSPD), the first Hispanic captain in the history of the department. Gomez joined the department in 1999 after moving to North Carolina from his hometown of Brownsville, Texas. He has an associate degree in applied science in criminal justice from Forsyth Technical Community College, a Bachelor of Science in criminal justice from Gardner-Webb University, and a Master of Public Administration from Appalachian State University. Gomez is a 2018 graduate of N.C. State University's administrative officers management program. He was awarded the North Carolina Criminal Justice, Education, and Training Standards Commission Advanced Law Enforcement Certificate and the Winston-Salem Police Department Officer of the Month award.



MANNY TRUJILLO '04

was inducted into the GWU Gallery of Distinguished Alumni. After graduating magna cum laude from Gardner-Webb with bachelor's degrees in chemistry and biology, Trujillo obtained his medical degree from the Medical College of Georgia (Augusta) and completed a rigorous six-year training program in general surgery at Spartanburg Regional Medical Center. During his residency,

he discovered his passion for plastic and reconstructive surgery. He performed another three years of specialized training in plastic and reconstructive surgery at Emory University (Atlanta, Ga.), where he focused on the fields of reconstructive microsurgery and super microsurgery, which involve transplanting tissue from one area of the body to another and using a microscope to suture blood vessels together less than 1 mm in diameter. After obtaining his training, Trujillo returned to Spartanburg and works at Spartanburg Regional Medical Center. He routinely performs complex microsurgical transplant procedures to restore the form and function of patients who have suffered deformities caused by trauma and cancer. He serves as an assistant professor at Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) Area Health Education Center (AHEC) in Charleston, S.C. Trujillo also founded and is the program director of a microsurgical training program offered to plastic surgeons seeking to learn this skill. The program saw its first trainee in the fall of 2020.

MICHELE MCCULLOUGH '05

was named teacher of the year at Mint Hill Middle School in Matthews, N.C., where she has been for 12 years. She received a degree in American Sign Language from Gardner-Webb. She teaches extensions of the language arts and social studies common standards. She received a master's degree in special education: adapted curriculum from UNCC and has also obtained a national board certification. She enjoyed coordinating with UNCC via involvement in numerous academic research pilot studies and hopes to continue this throughout her career.

TONYA HOUEP '05

has been named the new principal of North Iredell Middle School. A veteran educator who has spent her 22-year career in Iredell-Statesville Schools, Houpe has served as a classroom teacher, an assistant principal, and most recently as principal

at East Iredell Middle School for six years. A graduate of North Iredell High School, Houpe obtained her Bachelor of Science in education from UNCC. She went on to receive a Master of Arts in education from Gardner-Webb, her school administrator license from Appalachian State, and finally a doctorate in educational leadership from Wingate University.

KELLY WITHERS '06

was named associate superintendent of Rowan-Salisbury Schools. Withers has served as principal at South Rowan High School since 2014. She began her career with Rowan-Salisbury Schools as a science teacher at West Rowan High School. Withers has a doctorate in education from the UNC-Greensboro. She received her master's from Gardner-Webb University and her bachelor's degree in clinical laboratory science from UNC-Chapel Hill.

KEVIN JOYCE '06

received an award from the Midway/Monroeton (N.C.) Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8297. A native of Stoneville, N.C., Joyce is assistant principal at Mt. Airy High School. He was named high school teacher of the year. In 2006, Joyce received his master's degree in school administration. He also earned National Board Certification.

AUDRA HARRISON '07

has been hired by the Athletes Lab LLC to head the strength and conditioning, speed, agility, and performance training for the newly opened Athletes Lab Performance Center in Maiden, N.C. After high school, she played at Gardner-Webb, earning a 4-year degree in K-12 physical education while becoming the first player to earn 1,000 kills/1000 digs since Gardner-Webb elevated to a Division I university. Harrison then became a volleyball graduate assistant at Midwestern State University in Wichita Falls, Texas, earning a Master of Exercise Physiology. She has also worked with the College of William & Mary (Williamsburg, Va.).



BRIAN JOHNSTON '07

was inducted into the Gardner-Webb Athletics Hall of Fame. Defensive end Johnston played college football more than 2,300 miles from his home in San Diego, Calif., and spent four seasons making the most of his time on the east coast. After one productive season at outside linebacker in 2004, Johnston's career took off when he moved to defensive end as a sophomore. He led the Big South with 5.0 sacks in 2005 and posted 12.5 tackles for loss, earning first-team All-Conference honors in the process. Johnston improved once again in 2006, earning second-team Division I FCS All-America honors and Big South Conference Defensive Player of the Year honors after finishing with 77 total tackles, 14.0 tackles for loss and 8.0 sacks in 11 games. Prior to his senior season, Johnston was named to the Ted Hendricks Award Watch List. He responded with 74 total tackles, 29.0 tackles for loss, 6.0 sacks and 23 quarterback pressures to earn consensus Division I FCS All-America honors and Big South Conference Defensive Player of the Year. Johnston finished his career with 296 tackles, a school-record 53.5 tackles for loss and a school-record 69 quarterback pressures. His 20.5 career sacks remain in the top 10 in school history and his overall tackles are the most ever by a defensive lineman at Gardner-Webb. Johnston went on to record two sacks in the 2008 Hula Bowl and was selected by the Kansas City Chiefs in the seventh round of the 2008

NFL Draft. He played in nine games as a rookie in 2008.

RENEE DYER '08

has joined SCORE Charlotte as the first volunteer mentor for Cleveland County, N.C. The volunteer organization consists of more than 87 active, retired, and semi-retired executives and business owners. As certified SCORE mentors, these men and women provide free confidential mentoring, including help for start-ups and expansions. After completing her doctoral study on women who own small businesses in Cleveland County, Dyer said that she was interested in being a volunteer for SCORE in order to continue helping small businesses. A native of Blacksburg, S.C., Dyer received a Bachelor of Science in business administration from Gardner-Webb, a Masters of Business Administration in finance from East Carolina University in Greenville, N.C., and a Doctor of Business Administration in finance from Walden University, Minneapolis, Minn.



ELIZABETH MAXWELL KNIPPEN '08

was inducted into the GWU Athletics Hall of Fame. Knippen spent time with Gardner-Webb's volleyball program as part of her two-sport career in Boiling Springs, but it was her excellence with the GWU track & field program that turned heads. She finished her career as one of the most honored and decorated throwers in program history. She was a two-time Academic All-America selection, garnering

those awards following the 2007 and 2008 seasons. She earned All-Atlantic Sun Conference honors 12 times and finished her career with five school records to her credit. Knippen was named 2007 Atlantic Sun Conference Most Outstanding Field Performer following the Outdoor Championships – winning the shot put title with a distance of 12.99 meters. She also earned All-Conference honors with strong efforts in the hammer and javelin during that same meet. Knippen also won the 2008 Atlantic Sun Discus title at the Outdoor Championships with a distance of 38.58 meters.

JEFF JAMES '08

is the superintendent of Iredell-Statesville (N.C.) Schools. He served as the superintendent of Stanly County (N.C.) Schools prior to his current role. He holds a Master of Education in school administration degree from Gardner-Webb and a doctorate in educational leadership and cultural foundations from UNC-Greensboro. He began his career in school administration as an assistant principal, high school summer school principal, and then interim principal at South Iredell High School before being tasked with the challenge of turning around one of the district's lowest performing middle schools. As principal at Troutman Middle School, James led the school to the highest composite growth of all middle schools in the Iredell system for 2009-2011. During his tenure, the N.C. Department of Public Instruction recognized Troutman Middle as one of the "Top 25 Most Improved Schools".

CAROLYN BRANDON '09

is the director of Scholarships and Financial Aid at Catawba Valley Community College in Hickory, N.C. Brandon has been a member of the financial aid staff for the past 16 years. She is a graduate of Bunker Hill High School and earned a bachelor's degree at Gardner-Webb University.



PORSHA RUSSELL '09

was inducted into the GWU Gallery of Distinguished Alumni. Whether being crowned Shelby (N.C.) High School's homecoming queen, leading Gardner-Webb's cheerleaders, ministering to youth through performance dance and mentorship at Changers Church International, or providing for kids through Cleveland County's educational and social services, Russell's passion has always been serving people, particularly children who cannot advocate for themselves. A 2009 graduate of Gardner-Webb, Russell works with Mecklenburg's Youth & Family Services. She trains and counsels numerous social workers, public servants, and families via organizations such as SAYSO and Guardian ad Litem. A resident of Charlotte, N.C., she regularly volunteers with food banks, shelters, and participates in a bevy of charity fundraising events. Russell also serves children participating in the Special Olympics, and in 2015 was honored as Mecklenburg County's Social Worker of the Year.

2010s

SHELLY BULLARD '10



is the Pinnacle Classical Academy Headmaster. Bullard earned her doctorate in educational leadership in 2010 and Master of Science in school administration in 2003 from Gardner-Webb. She received her Bachelor of Science in elementary education from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. Her career in education spans

more than 20 years, serving as a teacher at the elementary level as well as teaching for Queens University in the master's program for school administrators. She also teaches educational technology at Gaston College. She has served in an administrative capacity for the past 18 years.

DAVID DAMERELL, '11

is the new assistant director for ticket services at Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts in Vienna, Va. Previously Damerell worked for The Washington Ballet, one of the premier ballet companies in the country, as a box office manager and for the Washington Nationals baseball team. He received a bachelor's degree in sport management from Gardner-Webb.

JACOB VANDENBARK '11

is an entrepreneur. He started a business called Draw Near Co. that produces a daily devotional journal that he invented, the Near Journal. He sold more than 1,000 journals to people and churches as beta tests, and launched a Kickstarter campaign to help fund version two of the Near Journal. Vandenbark leverages his business to support youth groups. For every four journals that he sells he donates one free to a youth ministry, sending several to youth ministries around the country. He has a Bachelor of Science degree in economics/finance from GWU. His company's website is drawnear.co.



MICHELLE SKIPPER '13

was inducted into the GWU Gallery of Distinguished Alumni. Inspired

by her rural North Carolina roots, Skipper has pursued quality health care for all, whether in her home community or in Nicaragua. She believes that nurse practitioners can transform the health of communities and educates nurse practitioners to become quality clinicians and local leaders. Over her 28-year career, she has progressed from a night-shift nurse in the newborn nursery to director of the adult-gerontology and family nurse practitioner specialties of the DNP program at East Carolina University (Greenville, N.C.). She and her husband also supported those with medical needs during the aftermath of Hurricanes Matthew and Florence, getting food, medication, and supplies to those who were homebound and could not make it to safe shelter. She received recognition from the town of St. Pauls where she resides, as well as the North Carolina Office of State Human Resources for her compassionate work. She became a fellow in the American Association of Nurse Practitioners in the summer of 2019. She received her Doctor of Nursing Practice from GWU in 2013.



KEON WILLIAMS JR. '14 was inducted into the Gallery of Distinguished Alumni at Gardner-Webb. Williams works in municipal finance on the capital markets trading floor at Wells Fargo in Charlotte, N.C., where he is one of the youngest African-American professionals. He

mentors local college students and serves the homeless and less fortunate. Williams credits Gardner-Webb for helping him understand that faith and business are not mutually exclusive. He is on the board of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes Metro-Carolina and the Young Professional Council of the Levine Museum of the New South. He recently created his own 501c3 nonprofit called Play Fresh Inc., which utilizes the power of football to educate middle school students on composting, recycling, and sustainability. Play Fresh hosted its inaugural football camp for the Cleveland County community in 2019 at Gardner-Webb, which was led by 20 former Gardner-Webb football players. He graduated from GWU in 2014 with a Bachelor of Science in economics/finance and a minor in French.

DENITA DOWELL-REAVIS '16 is the principal of North Rowan Middle School, appointed by the Rowan-Salisbury Schools Board of Education. Previously, she was the principal at Faith Elementary School and was chosen from 52 applicants. She received a bachelor's in journalism from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill before going on to earn a master's in teaching from the University of Memphis and a leadership doctorate from Gardner-Webb.

ELIZABETH A. JONES '16 is a certified family nurse practitioner who practices at Jones Family Practice in Shelby, N.C. After earning her associate degree in nursing from Foothills School of Nursing she went on to obtain her Bachelor of Science in nursing from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte in 2010. She earned her Master of Science in nursing from Gardner-Webb. Currently, she is studying to complete her Doctor of Nursing Practice from Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio.

JULIA DESERIO '18



won the title of Miss Gastonia 2020. DeSerio is the chorus and piano teacher at Crest Middle School in Shelby (N.C.) and graduated from Gardner-Webb University in 2018 with a bachelor's degree in music education and voice.

MAGUY YANCEY, '18

was promoted to district coordinator for remote learning, world languages, and cultural education with Wayne County Public Schools in Goldsboro, N.C. She received her Doctor of Education in educational leadership and administration in 2018 from Gardner-Webb. She previously served as a vice principal and world languages instructor for Wayne County. She also has her master's degree in executive leadership from GWU.

CHANTHA P. SCOTT '19

is the first full-time cardiology outpatient nurse practitioner at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center (WFBMC). She is a graduate of the family nurse practitioner master's program at Gardner-Webb University. She earned a bachelor's degree in public health education with a minor in biology from the UNC-Greensboro. She obtained her nursing degree from Winston-Salem (N.C.) State University in 2010 and worked as a cardiology nurse at WFBMC.

NICK TOMLIN '19

is the new assistant principal of Elkin High School (EHS). Before leaving for his duties with the National Guard for the last two years, Tomlin taught history at EHS for five years. While completing his National Guard assignment in Charlotte, N.C., he was working on his master's degree in executive leadership in school administration with Gardner-Webb University. He graduated in May 2019.

NINA WILLIAMS '19

is a professor at the UNC-Wilmington and a labor and delivery nurse at New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington. She earned a Master of Nurse Education from East Carolina University in 2015 and a Doctor of Nursing Leadership from Gardner-Webb University in May 2019.

2020s

ALLEN MICHAEL WILSON '20

is the assistant principal at Cedar Creek Middle School in Youngsville, N.C. Previously, he was a science teacher with Nash-Rocky Mount Public Schools where he served on the leadership team and as eighth grade level chair. He has a Master of Arts in executive leadership studies with a North Carolina School Administrator's License from Gardner-Webb.

BLAIR HAAG, '20

received recognition as the 2020 School Support Employee of the Year for Greenville County (S.C.) Schools. Greenville Federal Credit Union sponsors the awards in conjunction with the school system. Each award winner received \$500 cash and a special award commissioned by the credit union. The winner's school or department also received \$500 cash. Haag, who received her master's degree in executive leadership from Gardner-Webb, is the instructional coach at Greenville High Academy. She planned a professional development program to train teachers on using Google Classroom and Google apps before students in the district received Chromebooks. She designed post cards that teachers could send

to parents with updates on their child's progress. She was actively involved in the school's spirit week and organized football recruiting efforts. She assisted the student council with spirit week, provided support for the PTSA and Booster Club, and reimagined the SIC Report to the community that has resulted in multiple state awards.

PRISCILLA BUDZINSKI '20

became assistant principal of East Rutherford High School in Bostic, N.C. Previously, she was an instructional technology facilitator at Chase High School in Forest City, N.C. She earned her Master of Arts in executive leadership studies with a North Carolina School Administrator's License from Gardner-Webb.

First in Flight
YOU **GW**
NORTH CAROLINA

**PERSONALIZE
YOUR PRIDE**
GARDNER-WEBB PRIDE PLATE

For more information visit: gardner-webb.edu/license-plates

IN MEMORIAM

GWU Trustee Dr. Jack Hunt, Dentist, Farmer, Entrepreneur and Statesman Dedicated His Life in Service to Others

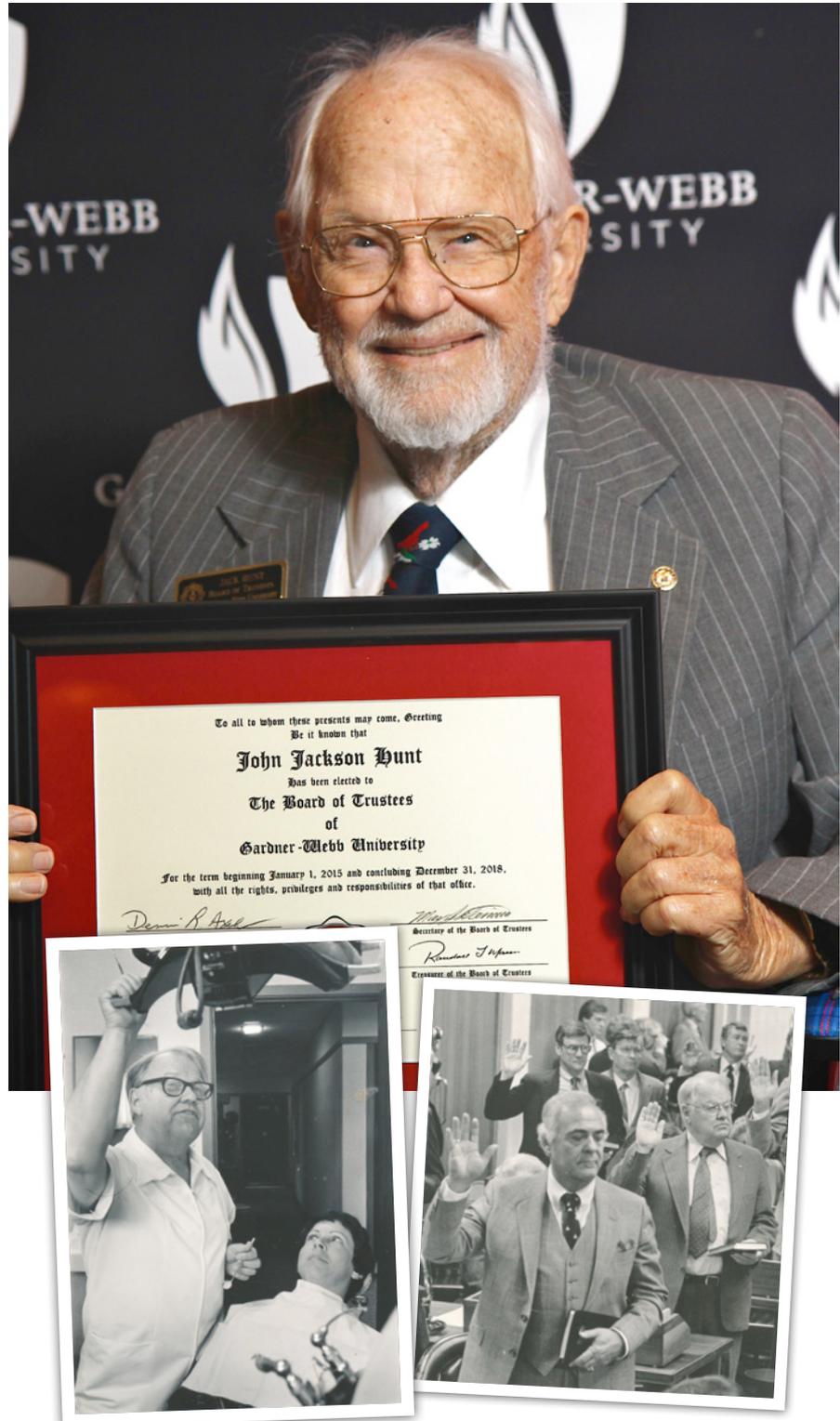
Dr. John Jackson “Jack” Hunt, Gardner-Webb Trustee Emeritus, who once reminded all elected officials that service is not about the “Love of Power” but the “Power of Love,” passed away May 27, 2020. The public servant, dedicated supporter of Gardner-Webb University, and namesake for the Hunt School of Nursing was remembered and celebrated by the GWU campus and community.

A native of Lattimore, N.C., Hunt excelled at many careers in his lifetime—as a dentist, a farmer, an entrepreneur, and a statesman. Hunt graduated from Lattimore High School in 1939, Wake Forest College in 1943, and earned a Doctor of Dental Surgery degree from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1946.

A veteran of World War II and the Korean War, Hunt earned the rank of major in the U.S. Army. For 22 years, he served as an elected representative in the North Carolina General Assembly. He was the longest-running chairman of the house rules committee and also served as speaker pro-tempore. Hunt and his wife, Ruby, financially supported many community projects for institutions including Gardner-Webb, Cleveland Community College, the Ruby Hunt YMCA, and the Earl Scruggs Center. In 2012, Hunt received an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters by the Gardner-Webb Board of Trustees.

Among his most notable accomplishments as a representative, Hunt helped author legislation that secured state financial support for nursing students in North Carolina at a time when North Carolina had a shortage of nurses. This legislation was a catalyst for the growth of nursing education at Gardner-Webb and other institutions around the state. In July 2014, Hunt and Ruby presented a generous gift to the University to establish the Hunt School of Nursing.

Hunt and Ruby were married 71 years when she passed away on May 27, 2017.





Gardner-Webb Remembers Trustee Rod Clouse

GWU Trustee Rod Clouse passed away June 27, 2020. He was the chair of the Godbold School of Business Board of Advisors, and also a member of the GWU Board of Trustees.

A native of Indiana, Clouse and his wife, a Boiling Springs native, retired to Cleveland County, N.C., in 2010. His association with Gardner-Webb began as a sports fan eager to immerse himself in his new community. Fellow church members introduced him to GWU athletics and in 2012 he joined the Bulldog Club.

Flowing from his interest in sports, Clouse's affinity for the University extended beyond the field of play and into its strong academics and emphasis on service. After a career in national and international manufacturing, Clouse felt drawn to GWU's acclaimed Godbold School of Business. The more he learned

about the school the more excited he became about supporting it. In 2014, he agreed to serve on the school's board of advisors.

Clouse spent his career with Parker Hannifin Corporation, which specializes in manufacturing motion and control technologies and systems. Clouse embraced the Cleveland County community with his characteristic curiosity and energy. He bought the Roundup store in Shelby from longtime GWU friend and benefactor Dr. Jack Hunt. He also owned the Affinity Salon and Spa in Shelby. He served on the Habitat for Humanity board, the Cleveland County Arts Council Board, the Cleveland Community College Foundation Board and was a Guardian ad Litem—a court-appointed advocate to represent the best interests of foster children.



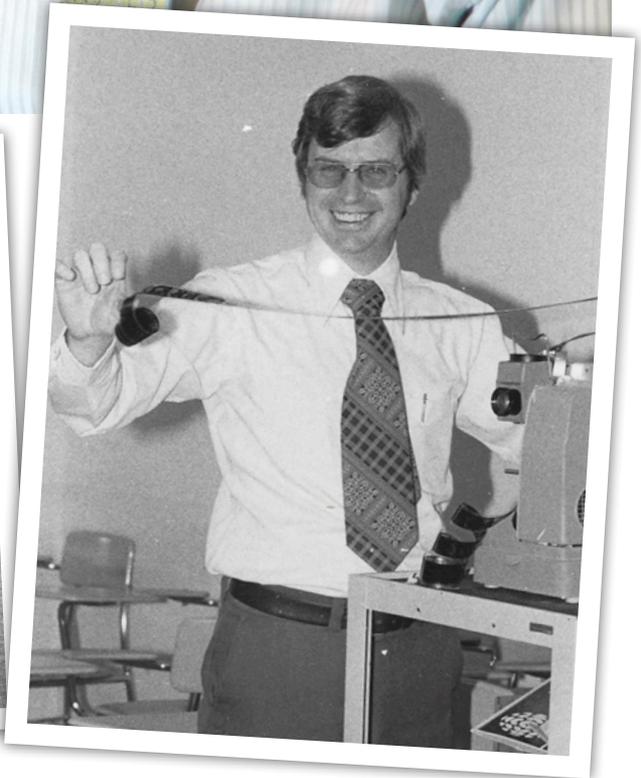
Contributions of Dr. Roger Gaddis Remembered by the Gardner-Webb Community

Dr. Roger Gaddis, professor emeritus of psychology, who served Gardner-Webb University from 1974 to 2011, passed away Aug. 14, 2020. Gaddis was chair of the department of psychology for 17 years and managed the development of graduate programs in psychology. He was also instrumental in the creation of GOAL (Greater Opportunities for Adult Learners), now known as the Degree Completion Program.

Gaddis hired Dr. David M. Carscaddon, current dean of the GWU School of Psychology and Counseling. “A man of grace and dignity, Roger was a gentleman in the highest sense of the word and made everyone who worked for him feel included and vital to the mission of the department,” noted Carscaddon, who worked with Gaddis for 21 years. “I know that I am a better person to have known and worked with Dr. Roger Gaddis. I was blessed to know him and I will miss him greatly.”

Among his proudest accomplishments at Gardner-Webb was participating in the planning stages, the implementation, and the administration of the GOAL program. The program, developed and implemented in the late 1970s, made it possible for many adult learners to complete their degrees. Gaddis also coordinated the human services program until 2010.

In addition to his educational achievements, he served on the board of directors for Broughton Hospital in Morganton, N.C., and Cleveland County Mental Health and Pathways in Shelby, N.C. When he retired from Gardner-Webb, Gaddis said he wanted to be remembered by the Gardner-Webb community as one who embodies the University’s commitment to Christian faith in the forms of selfless service, moral action, and treatment of all people with respect and dignity.





Professor Emeritus Dr. Bob Blackburn Remembered for His Many Contributions to GWU, Community and State Organizations

GWU professor emeritus Dr. Robert R. Blackburn passed away Nov. 28, 2019. He was a GWU professor for 24 years and chair of the department of health and physical education for 19 years.

Blackburn, a native of Mooresboro, N.C., attended Gardner-Webb and completed his bachelor's in health and physical education in 1954 at Erskine College in Due West, S.C. He served two years in the U.S. Army, and began his teaching career at Walhalla (S.C.) High School. In 1958, he came back to Gardner-Webb as an assistant professor in the Department of Health and Physical Education, head basketball coach, line

coach for football, and head track coach. He left in 1963 to chair the department of health and physical education at Louisiana College in Pineville. He earned his master's degree in 1968 and doctorate in 1969 from George Peabody College in Nashville, Tenn.

Returning to GWU in 1969, his key accomplishments include launching the undergraduate major and developing a graduate program in health and physical education and coordinating the building plans for the Lutz-Yelton Convocation Center. He coordinated community swimming lessons, a program that grew to over 1,000 children and adults each summer. He led workshops for teachers

and he served as the part-time executive director of the N.C. Alliance for Athletics, Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (NCAHPERD). When he retired from Gardner-Webb in 1996 he accepted the position on a full-time basis (1996-2000).

Blackburn was an author and was active in numerous organizations throughout the decades including the Cleveland County Board of Health, and the American Heart Association. He was honored by several groups for his service and volunteer leadership efforts.

A member of Boiling Springs Baptist Church for 40 years, Blackburn served as a deacon and Sunday school director.



Rev. Dr. M. Vann Murrell Encouraged Students to Study the Bible and Walk Faithfully with the Lord

The Rev. Dr. M. Vann Murrell passed away Oct. 31, 2019, in Beulaville, N.C. He was a professor emeritus of religion and former chair of the GWU Department of Religious Studies and Philosophy.

Murrell began teaching at Gardner-Webb in 1967 as it moved from two-year to four-year status. He was named chair of the new department of religious studies and philosophy and was active in shaping its curriculum. Dr. Alice Cullinan of Boiling Springs, professor emerita of religion, taught with Murrell for 21 years. “In my opinion, Vann demonstrated the importance of balancing Christian scholarship with practical service and ministry,” Cullinan reflected. “He challenged his students to strive to be

people who wisely studied the Scriptures, while he encouraged them to personally walk with the Lord and to serve Him faithfully.”

Dr. Perry Hildreth, GWU professor of philosophy, still uses his text from Murrell’s “Teachings of Jesus” class. “That course, particularly, with Dr. Murrell helped all of us to grow beyond our basic childhood Sunday school perspective of Jesus to a more mature and theologically rich understanding of our Lord,” Hildreth said. “I have little doubt that when I teach students ‘Introduction to New Testament,’ I am passing along something that I learned all those years ago with Dr. Murrell.”

Murrell earned a bachelor’s at Wake Forest University in 1951, his Master

of Divinity at Southeastern Seminary, and Ph.D. at University of Edinburgh, Scotland. He taught at Campbell University from 1962-1967 and at Gardner-Webb until 1995 when he became pastor of Brookwood Baptist in Jacksonville, N.C. After retiring from the pulpit, he returned to the classroom to teach for Campbell University and Coastal Carolina University on Camp Lejeune Marine Base until 2016.

He was interim pastor at 54 churches in North Carolina over the course of his career. He and his wife, Ina, led more than 20 groups to the Middle East to walk where Jesus walked. Before her death in 2018, they celebrated their 68th wedding anniversary. He is survived by his four children and eight grandchildren.



NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
PPCO

Office of University Communications
P.O. Box 997
Boiling Springs, NC 28017

We're Getting the Band Back Together



The Gardner-Webb Marching Bulldogs are getting tuned up to take the field, and we need your help to reach our \$100,000 goal.

Your gift today will be music to our ears.

webbgive.gardner-webb.edu/band

*Your tax-deductible donation will assist in the purchase of new uniforms and band equipment



GARDNER-WEBB
UNIVERSITY