

GARDNER-WEBB

Volume 57, 2022

THE MAGAZINE



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 🔥 GWU LAUNCHES NEW BULLDOG BRAND
- 🔥 DR. KAREN AUBREY NAMED NEW PROVOST
- 🔥 DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI HONORED
- 🔥 DR. ANDREW T. GOODRICH NAMED VP FOR ATHLETICS
- 🔥 GOLFER ZACK BYERS SETS RECORDS

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.

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CONTENTS



14

Feature

Gardner-Webb Launches New Runnin' Bulldog Brand

This is the first complete athletics' rebrand since the 1980s



2

From the President's Desk

3

News & Notes

14

Feature

22

Around Campus

26

Students

28

Faculty/Staff

32

Bulldog Nation

37

Advancement

42

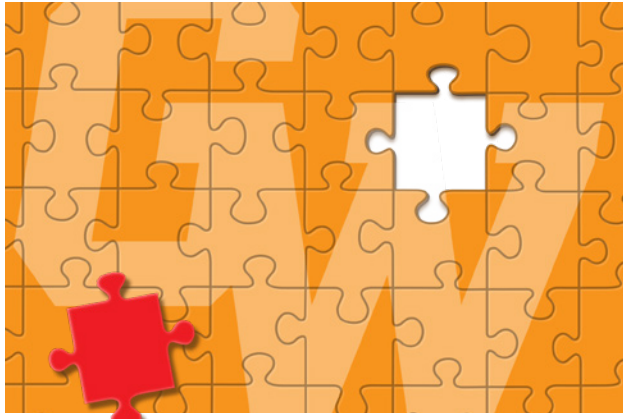
Alumni

54

Athletics Hall of Fame

58

In Memoriam



22 The Great Beyond

Living and Thriving Through the Autism Spectrum

Celebrating Motherhood, Exploring Leadership, and Welcoming Integrity
Alexandra Arrington, '22, Thanks for Family Support While Juggling Education and Career

When motherhood and professional success are both on the mind, it can be a challenge to balance the two. For Alexandra Arrington, '22, the journey has been one of discovery and support. She is currently completing her master's thesis on the impact of family support on the professional success of women in leadership. Her research focuses on the experiences of women who have successfully managed both roles, and she aims to provide insights and resources for others in similar situations.

Arrington's journey began when she started her first job at a professional services firm. She quickly realized that the demands of work and family were often in conflict. However, with the support of her family and colleagues, she was able to find a balance. She emphasizes the importance of communication and seeking support from those around you.

As she continues to explore leadership and integrity, Arrington remains grateful for the support she has received. She believes that family support is a key factor in the success of women in the workplace. Her research will contribute to a better understanding of the challenges women face and provide practical advice for navigating them.

The Great Outdoors
Longtime Supporters, David and Marie Brinkley, Provide Lead Gift for New Amphitheater Complex

A gift that has transformed the landscape of Gardner-Webb University is now a reality. The new Amphitheater Complex, a gift from longtime supporters David and Marie Brinkley, is set to be completed in the fall of 2022. The complex will include a new amphitheater, a new outdoor classroom, and a new outdoor classroom building. The gift is a testament to the Brinkleys' commitment to the university and their desire to provide a world-class educational experience for their students.

The new Amphitheater Complex will be a centerpiece of the university's outdoor education program. It will provide a space for students to learn about the environment and to engage in outdoor activities. The complex will also be a place where students can enjoy the beauty of the outdoors and the company of their friends and family.

David and Marie Brinkley have been supporters of Gardner-Webb University for many years. They have made numerous gifts to the university and have been instrumental in the development of many of its programs and facilities. Their gift of the Amphitheater Complex is a testament to their love for the university and their commitment to its success.

26 Students
Thankful for family support while juggling education and career

37 Advancement
Longtime Supporters Provide Lead Gift for New Amphitheater Complex

BULLDOGNATION

Building Life Champions
Dr. Andrew T. Goodrich to Helm GWU Athletic Programs

In a new year, comes a new challenge. Dr. Andrew T. Goodrich, '84, has been named the 11th president of Gardner-Webb University. He will be leading the university through a period of significant change and growth. Goodrich has a long history of leadership at Gardner-Webb, having served as the university's 10th president from 2010 to 2018. He has been instrumental in the university's success and has been a strong advocate for its students and faculty.

Goodrich's appointment as president is a testament to his leadership skills and his commitment to the university. He will be responsible for overseeing the university's operations and for ensuring that it remains a place of excellence. He will also be responsible for building a strong relationship with the community and for ensuring that the university is a positive force in the world.

From SGA President, to Counterterrorism Analyst, to White House Briefer

During a 10-year career at the White House, Dr. Andrew T. Goodrich has held some of the most prestigious positions in the federal government. He served as the president of the Student Government Association (SGA) at Gardner-Webb University, as a counterterrorism analyst at the Department of Homeland Security, and as a White House briefer. Goodrich's career is a testament to his leadership skills and his commitment to public service.

Goodrich's appointment as president of Gardner-Webb University is a testament to his leadership skills and his commitment to the university. He will be responsible for overseeing the university's operations and for ensuring that it remains a place of excellence. He will also be responsible for building a strong relationship with the community and for ensuring that the university is a positive force in the world.

32 Bulldog Nation
Dr. Andrew Goodrich to helm GWU athletic programs

42 Alumni
The Gardner-Webb 2022 Gallery of Distinguished Alumni

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**
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- Managing Editor**
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- Assistant Editor**
Jackie Bridges
- Editorial Assistance**
Shelley M. Stockton
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- Contributing Writers**
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Marc Rabb

- Contributing Photographers**
J.J. Bennett
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Jaden Poe
Nell Redmond
Cyrus Richer
Scott Steimare
Wayne Community College
Alyssa Wilkie
Dan Peele
Pete Souza
Spokesman-Review



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: rrobbins@gardner-webb.edu

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*Unless otherwise noted, most stories credited to Jackie Bridges

Progress, Purpose and Positivity

Hello friends of Gardner-Webb University! I am delighted that you have connected with us through this latest issue of our annual magazine, and I invite you to enjoy reading in these pages a sampling of the amazing accomplishments of our students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community partners.

The year 2022 was a tremendous one for GWU. Our students flourished, competed, excelled, graduated, and just generally made us all very proud. They are the reason we are here. They are the reason we as administrators, faculty, staff, and coaches are energized each day. They are the reason we should all be confident that Gardner-Webb's mission is being lived out in powerful ways, not just in our Cleveland County backyard but indeed across the region, nation, and globe.

Inspirational, world-class instruction is the foundation of what we offer our students. New degree programs in Biochemistry, Homeland Security Administration, Bible and Theology, and Sport Management are all now underway. Additional new offerings in Cybersecurity and an accelerated Master of Public Administration are teed up and ready for launch in 2023. As an institution, we are intentionally looking for ways to better align our academic degree programs with society's most pressing needs. Doing so will enable Gardner-Webb to be an indispensable partner to employers in all areas of a rapidly changing economy.

Degree programs are not the only things new at GWU. We have a new Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, Dr. Karen Aubrey. We have a new Vice President and Director of Athletics, Dr. Andrew Goodrich. We have also named a new Vice President for Enrollment, Dean T. Clark. We have a new Executive Director of the Bulldog Club, GWU alumnus Wes Cogdill. We have a new Director of Athletic Bands, Dr. Sarah Fabian. We have a new Director of Diversity and Inclusion, Mr. Lawrence Brinson. Dr. Wilson Hawkins is our new Honors Program Director, and Dr. Meredith Rowe has been named inaugural

Director of The Webb in Washington (our semester-long immersion program in D.C. for GWU students). Dr. Aaron Rice has joined Gardner-Webb as the new Chair of the Department of Music, and Dr. Kortni Alston is our new Chair in Communication, Art, and Design. Together, these and other new colleagues are bringing new energy, fresh ideas, and a "roll up your sleeves" approach to making Gardner-Webb better every day.

But, wait, that's not all... we are so excited that in 2022 Gardner-Webb forged a new partnership with Aramark to provide our dining services. With the transition to Aramark, our campus community will see a new look and a new menu in The Caf, a new Starbucks and a full-service Chick-fil-A in the Tucker Student Center, a mobile food truck to serve fans at athletic events, and a range of new flavors across all food venues. Another familiar national brand—Barnes & Noble College (BNC)—has taken over management of the Campus Shop, providing options for students to bundle their textbooks for reduced costs. The B&N Campus Shop, still located in the Student Center, is also the place to get all of your Gardner-Webb merchandise... represent your favorite university in style!

There was also this little matter of an athletics rebrand in 2022. Indeed, for the first time in 35 years, Gardner-Webb worked to refresh and enliven our Runnin' Bulldog mascot logo as it appears at our sports facilities and on the uniforms of our 22 NCAA Division-I teams. The next time you are on campus, I invite you to see the #NewDawgInTown as he appears on the field at Spangler Stadium, on Eddie Holbrook Court at Paul Porter Arena, and in an increasing number of locations in and around Boiling Springs.

And speaking of Boiling Springs... we are making wonderful progress on our planned 900-seat outdoor performance arena, to be located on campus along Main Street. The Brinkley Amphitheater (named after lead donors David and Marie Brinkley) received a major financial boost from the State of



North Carolina, which approved a \$500,000 appropriation for the project in the fiscal year 2023 budget. Once completed, this venue will provide a perfect setting for music concerts, theatrical performances, public speakers, alumni events, pep rallies, and much more.

While there is so much that is new, fresh, and exciting on and around Gardner-Webb's campus, one thing remains a firm constant: our mission. Having now completed our 117th year, this special place that we now call Gardner-Webb University is steadfast in following the call to service For God and Humanity. We strive every day to prepare those who will graduate with a GWU degree for leadership in their professional careers and in their personal lives. We are shaping those we teach and mentor to become not just thinkers and doers, but also world-changers. Our caring and compassionate Christian community inspires students as they walk life's journey, and we should all be impressed by the way our graduates go into the world eager to make positive and lasting differences in the lives of others.

You can't help but love Gardner-Webb. This place is distinctive, and it is our home. We hope that you, too, will always feel welcome to come home and visit us in Boiling Springs or at our Charlotte Campus. We're eager to stay in touch with everyone throughout Bulldog Nation!

Thank you, in advance, for reading this new issue of *Gardner-Webb: The Magazine*. See you in The Springs!

With warm regards,

Dr. William M. Downs
President

NEWS & NOTES

Over 800 Earn Degrees in Gardner-Webb Commencement Ceremonies

During commencement exercises held at Gardner-Webb University, over 360 degrees were awarded on Dec. 11, 2021, and over 500 were awarded on May 6 and 7, 2022.

At the December event, Emily A. Yelton, an elementary education major, earned the Senior Scholastic Achievement Award. The Degree Completion Program Academic Award was presented to Chadwick Brady Tate, a computer information systems major.

The commencement speaker for the fall was Dr. David Podgorski, a GWU graduate with a degree in chemistry and an assistant professor at the University of New Orleans who has received numerous awards and honors.

The speaker for the May commencement was Power 5 Basketball Coach Chris Holtmann. A former GWU head basketball coach, Holtmann is in his 25th year of collegiate coaching and has served as head basketball coach of The Ohio State University since 2017.

Several graduates were honored for outstanding leadership, citizenship, and academic excellence. The Most Outstanding Female Graduate medal was presented to Sarah Goode, of Lenoir, N.C., a Senior Scholastic Award winner and English major with a concentration in creative writing. As a participant in the Undergraduate Research Scholar Program, she wrote a draft for a juvenile fantasy novel. Goode has been involved in campus ministries and after graduation will intern with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association in Charlotte, N.C.

The Most Outstanding Male Graduate medal was presented to Thomas Manning, of Boiling Springs, who was a double major in English and communications.



He served as president of the senior class, vice-president for Alpha Chi, was on the creative team for the award-winning documentary “The Dancin’ Bulldogs: A 16 Seed’s Journey to the NCAA Tournament” (2020), and has worked with the GWU sports information department producing athletic broadcasts and webcasts for several years.

Senior Scholastic Awards were presented to students who completed their academic careers with a perfect 4.0 GPA. The honorees were:

- Bien Gabrielle Rodriguez Gaddi, of Stanley, N.C., management.
- Emily Rhew, of Mooresville, N.C., psychology.
- Faith Evangeline Parandhamaia, of Accident, Md., management.
- Holly Grace O’Brien, of Cornelius, N.C., marketing.
- Jonathan A. Frye, of Columbia, S.C., biology.
- Louise Karin Schmidtgen, of Ettlingen, Germany, international business.

The Degree Completion Program Scholastic Award was presented to Grace Elizabeth Davis, of Johnson City, Tenn., management; and Allison Melette Duncan, of Spruce Pine, N.C., elementary education.

The Darlene J. Gravett Citizen Scholar Award was presented to Dr. Nichole Ijames, who received her Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership. The award is named in honor of Gravett, longtime dean of the Graduate School and associate provost emerita.

Ijames is the principal at Challenger Early College High School in Hickory, N.C. For her dissertation, “Armored Vulnerability: Stories of Leader Resilience Among Black Female Principals,” she interviewed Black women principals across North Carolina, inviting them to share their stories of resilience in navigating racial and gender-related barriers inherent to their roles as Black women in the principalship.

Gardner-Webb Receives Grant for iBelong Mentoring Program for Minority Males

Gardner-Webb is one of eight schools that received a \$5,000 Minority Male Mentoring Grant from North Carolina Independent Colleges and Universities (NCICU). Funding was provided by the Council of Independent Colleges and Universities and was matched, in large part, by the VF Foundation, the grant-making organization funded by VF Corporation, a manufacturer of apparel, footwear and accessories. Grants were also presented to Catawba College, Chowan University, Davidson College, Guilford College, High Point University, Livingstone College, and Queens University.

With the grant, GWU Student Success Division provides iBelong, the program matches minority male students with mentors and peer tutors. The mentors



are minority community leaders with connections to Gardner-Webb. Along with the funds from NCICU, Gardner-Webb made a financial commitment to the program by helping to purchase

Student Lingo, a tutoring software that offers a variety of information for students, such as workshops on stress management, academic skills, finances and scholarship opportunities.



Dr. Ellen
Campos
Sousa



Dr. Aihua
Zhang

President Downs Presents Awards to Faculty for Research and Professional Development

President William M. Downs presented the 2022-23 Grant-Seeking Reassignment Award to Dr. Ellen Campos Sousa, assistant professor of marketing, and the President's Early Career Award for 2022 to Dr. Aihua Zhang, assistant professor in the Gardner-Webb University Department of Social Sciences.

The Grant-Seeking Reassignment Award provides recipients the time to prepare and submit a proposal for external funding in support of scholarly activities and program enhancements. Campos Sousa's project, "Social Change via Relational Engagement: Redeeming Women's Power," is a collaborative effort between partners in the United States and Brazil. It focuses on research

and hands-on program development and implementation to assist women in overcoming the personal anguish associated to poverty, violence, cultural stigmatism, external expectations, self-doubt and more.

The Early Career Award honors Zhang's outstanding performance in professional development and excellence in community service. It includes an additional \$1,000 in professional development funds for Zhang to use during the 2022-23 academic year.

Zhang began her work at Gardner-Webb in 2019, and in 2021, the faculty recognized her with the scholarship award. She recently published a book, "The Beijing Young Women's Christian Association."

Gardner-Webb Awards Faculty Emeritus Status and Long-time Faculty/Staff Retire

Several Gardner-Webb faculty and staff members were recognized with retirement. Two were honored with emeriti titles: Dr. Tom Jones, professor emeritus of biology and Dr. Kent Blevins, professor emeritus of religious studies.

Those retirees are:

Ken Baker – 23 years of service, chair of the Department of Health, Sport and Physical Education since 2005.

Kent Blevins – 24 years of service, professor of religious studies. He taught Christian theology, Christian ethics, science and religion, Christian perspectives toward violence, and Baptist heritage.

Chuck Burch – 25 years of service as vice president of Athletics and athletic director. During his tenure, he led GWU with additional sports teams, new facilities, and the rise to NCAA Division I.

Carmen Butler – 30 years of service to GWU in various areas including instructor, advising dean and dean of student success.

Tracy Jessup – 30 years of service, vice president of Christian Life and Service, minister to the university. During his time, he also worked as special assistant to the president and as enrollment coordinator for the School of Divinity.

Barry Johnson – 26 years of service to University Police, including numerous years as chief, creating community partnerships, campus relationships, and consistently leading the GWU Police Department through change and engaged front-line servanthood.

Tom Jones – 42 years of service, professor of biology, director of honors program and coordinator for numerous study abroad opportunities and immersive travel experiences for field research.

C. Mickey Metcalf – 20 years of service, professor of business administration. He primarily taught graduate management and law courses.

Deborah Ware – 17 years of service, professor of health, sport and physical education and graduate program coordinator.

Danny West – 20 years of service, director of the Doctor of Ministry program, director of ministry leadership development and professor of preaching and pastoral studies.

Baptist Women in Ministry Honors GWU Professor Sophia Steibel

Dr. Sophia Steibel, Gardner-Webb University professor and the first School of Divinity faculty member to serve as the Bonnie Price Chair for Christian Formation and Leadership, has been recognized by Baptist Women in Ministry. She is the recipient of the 2022 Frankie Huff Granger Distinguished Mentor Award.

This honor is presented each year to a mentor who has supported and empowered women called to ministry to use their gifts in service of the church. Three of Steibel's students, Kelly Settlemyre, Jennifer Jennings and Sarah Blosser Blackwell, nominated her for the award.

She joined the Gardner-Webb School of Divinity faculty in 2001. Before then, she was an associate professor of religious education at Gardner-Webb. Steibel is the former director of Campinas Baptist Theological College, Campinas, Sao



Paulo, Brazil. Additionally, she served on the faculties of South Brazil Baptist Theological Seminary and Baptist Religious Education Institute, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. She is active in the life of

First Baptist Church of Shelby, N.C.

Baptist Women in Ministry was founded in the 1970s to recognize women in Christian leadership, servanthip and stewardship.

Partnerships Facilitate Transfers to GWU

Following an ongoing commitment to provide an affordable, world-class Christian education, officials at Gardner-Webb University signed transfer agreements with several community colleges across the state, as well as one private high school.

These partnerships include the “Bulldog Bound” direct-entry program that simplifies the transfer process for students who complete associate degrees in qualifying areas.

Partnerships include:

- Gaston Christian School (GCS) Dual Enrollment – Students take classes concurrently for GCS high school credit and GWU college credit with the potential to earn up to a maximum of 27 credit hours through Gardner-Webb.
- Davidson-Davie Community College – With Bulldog Bound this offers seamless transfers for students studying in the fields of human services, business and accounting.
- Spartanburg Community College – Bulldog Bound and the Business Pathway Agreement, which accepts students into GWU’s Degree Completion



Spartanburg Community College President, Michael Mikota, left, and GWU President William Downs

Program after completing Associate of Applied Science (AAS) degrees in accounting and management.

- Stanly Community College – Bulldog Bound and Pathway Agreements that accept students into GWU’s Online-Degree Completion Program after completing AAS degrees in accounting, business administration, criminal justice, early childhood-licensure, early childhood-non licensure, and early childhood-career ready.
- Wake Tech Community College – Articulation agreements for AAS degrees in accounting and finance,

business administration, health and fitness science, nursing, human services technology, criminal justice technology and forensic science.

- Cleveland Community College – Transfer program for students who receive an AAS degree in health and fitness science.
- Isothermal Community College – Bulldog Bound, Bulldog Way, and nursing co-admission program. The Bulldog Way Grant provides a \$3,000 scholarship to any Isothermal Community College student who applies and gains admission to one of Gardner-Webb’s traditional, residential programs.



They will go. Will you send them?

The Gardner-Webb Mission Endowment Fund (MEF) provides scholarships for students to answer God’s call to go on missions—to serve and love their neighbors.

They Will Go...

Every year, GWU students travel the state, country and world on short-term mission trips. These trips are life-changing experiences that shape students’ view of the world, serving others and the calling to “Love God, Love People.” Each student is responsible for the cost of their trip—no matter how expensive. International trips can often cost a student more than \$2,500. Many students desire to have this mission immersion experience and feel called to go, but they lack the financial resources or community of support to participate. The MEF bridges that gap for them.

Help us Send our Next Team!

For information contact Aaron Hinton at 704-406-4101 or donate online at Gardner-webb.edu/give

It’s Our Mission



Serve
Our students go when God calls, locally and globally.



Sustain
We partner with existing ministries to encourage their efforts.



Grow
We join the Great Commission, recruiting disciples for Jesus.

The Webb in Washington Offers Unique Living and Learning Experience

The Webb in Washington is a new immersive academic and professional opportunity open to students at Gardner-Webb. Students chosen to participate take courses through a partnership with American University (Washington, D.C.) and gain professional, resume-building experience at an internship in an area of interest while there. Additionally, students network with GWU alumni working in the D.C. area.

Moryah Snype, a political science and international affairs major, is serving as the inaugural student participant in this life-changing opportunity.

This innovative program launched with an initial donation from GWU alumnus, Chris Meekins, and his wife, Amanda, who live and work in the D.C. area. After graduating from GWU in 2006 with a degree in political science and economics, Meekins moved to D.C. A former senior Department of Health and Human Services official, congressional chief of staff, and health policy advisor, he now works as a Washington health policy research analyst at Raymond James.

“My hope is this will provide opportunities not available when I was at Gardner-Webb and therefore make it easier for students as they transition from the Webb to the career path of their choosing,” Meekins said.



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Gardner-Webb School of Divinity Offers New Master's in Bible and Theology

The Gardner-Webb School of Divinity launched a new program in the 2022 fall semester. The Master of Arts in Bible and Theology (MABT) is a 36-credit hour concentrated curriculum, providing biblical and theological knowledge to guide others into a deeper understanding of scripture and Christian theology. Up to 17 hours of the 36-hour degree may be taken online.

School of Divinity Dean and Professor of Theology Dr. Robert Canoy expressed

his excitement over this new educational opportunity. “The MABT is for men and women who are interested in growing in their calling and in their professional futures,” Canoy observed. “Because ministry today takes various shapes, this new degree is an essential component that will elevate both new and long-term ministers. Focusing specifically on Bible and theology, students can earn their master’s degree in as few as three semesters (excluding summers).”

Accredited by the Association of Theological Schools, the MABT is intended primarily as professional preparation and equips students with leadership skills for congregational or para-church ministry settings.

The degree is designed to provide a credential that will support individuals in teaching ministry of the church, leadership in faith-based ministries and organizations, and church staff positions not requiring ordination.

Gardner-Webb's Delegation to National Alpha Chi Convention Brought Home Top Honors

At the Alpha Chi National Convention and centennial celebration, all five students from Gardner-Webb received an award and a monetary prize. Moreover, two students from GWU—Caleb Etchison and Allyson Butts—won the top two national awards. The other three winners, Grace Burgin, Kimberly Cole and Michelle Lominac, won second place in the Collaborative Research Competition. The theme was “Next Century, New Era,” and the team won a \$2,500 prize for their project on genetic modification.

Etchison, of Gastonia, N.C., received the \$3,000 Gaston Scholarship for his discussion of an original orchestral piece that was performed on campus last fall. A music composition major, the title of his research was “Motivic Development in The Psalm of Taios.” His faculty mentor, Dr. Bruce Moser, associate professor of music, suggested that Etchison write the paper to describe the work he had put into composing the music.

Dr. June Hadden Hobbs, professor of English and director of undergraduate research, co-sponsors the group along with Moser. Hobbs said this is only the second time in chapter history that a



Caleb Etchison and Allyson Butts won the top two Alpha Chi national awards for their research.

member has received the prestigious Gaston Scholarship. The other winner was Christian Jessup in 2017. Additionally, each Alpha Chi chapter is allowed only two applicants for the 12 national scholarships and both students who applied from GWU won.

Butts, of Concord, N.C., is working on her bachelor's in exercise science and master's in strength and conditioning,

won a \$2,000 Nolle Scholarship for her paper titled “Who Is Sherlock? Sidney Paget and Conceptions of Arthur Conan Doyle’s Sherlock Holmes.” Her faculty mentor was Assistant Professor of English Composition Matt Duffus. Butts said the paper grew out of her appreciation for art and curiosity about illustrations of Sherlock Holmes in a magazine.

► **SAVE THE DATE**
April 20, 2023



**DOUBLE
DAWG
DAY**

Doubledawgday.gardner-webb.edu



2021-'22 fiscal year marks one of the highest gift totals in the last decade

Gifts to Gardner-Webb are provided by support of individuals, companies, churches & foundations. These gifts support capital projects, education, scholarships & more.



2177

Total number of unique donors. This the highest number of individual donors in the last decade (since 2011).



1286

The most donations in a single day came during Double Dawg Day in April 2022 with more than 1286 donors giving on that day.

\$6+M

Gifts received for Gardner-Webb were over \$6 million for the 2021-'22 fiscal year.

\$1.37 M

In new pledges and planned gifts for a variety of GWU needs.

Gardner-Webb University Celebrates Fundraising Milestones

With profound gratitude for its loyal alumni and friends, Gardner-Webb University celebrates a historic milestone. At a time when most universities are reporting fewer donors, GWU has experienced a significant increase.

For fiscal year 2022, the University recorded the highest number of unique donors (2,177) since 2011. These donors provided one of the highest dollar amounts in recent history, helping the University to reach nearly \$6 million in receipted gifts. Additionally, benefactors have committed \$1.37 million in new pledges and planned gifts.

“This milestone shows that despite tough economic times, Bulldogs are relentless and willing to invest in GWU’s future,” praised Nate Evans, vice president for the Office of Advancement. “This support will enhance our facilities, strengthen our instruction and ultimately bolster the Gardner-Webb experience for our students.”

Gifts provide support for numerous Gardner-Webb programs, educational pursuits, athletics and more. Scholarships, capital projects, and academic improvements are all areas where GWU donors invested their financial resources this year. Gifts are made possible because of the selfless support of individuals, churches, foundations and companies around the world.

On April 7, 2022, Gardner-Webb recorded the most single-day donations in school history. Double Dawg Day is the University’s annual day of focused giving, and on that day, more than 1,286 donors gave a record total of \$766,131. Contributions came from 42 states and as far away as Italy and Liverpool, England.

“It’s exciting to see Bulldogs across the nation stand behind the mission of this great University,” Evans added. “We are grateful to our alumni and friends for their dedicated support.”

Gardner-Webb President William Downs believes the best is yet to come as the school seeks to build stronger relationships with current donors while cultivating a varied and more diverse group of supporters beyond the established norms.

“Bulldog Nation is a loyal bunch, and the determined efforts from our new advancement team are helping us connect with a wider circle of donors who genuinely care about GWU’s mission,” affirmed Downs. “This institution that we now call Gardner-Webb is in its 117th year, and like those who came before us we dare to dream. We dream about growing opportunities for our students so that they may make positive and lasting impacts after they graduate... that’s the most compelling reason to give, and our generous donors understand that students will always be our top priority.”



More than \$75,000 in Grants Provide New Technology for Renovations to Dover Library

In March 2022, significant renovations were made to the third floor of Gardner-Webb's John R. Dover Library. Built in 1974, the last major renovation was in 2010.

Initially, the plan for the third floor was changing paint and carpet, but after input from the Student Government Association and a suggestion from President William Downs to apply for state and federal grants, a broader design emerged.

With grants and additional support funding, plans were initiated by engaging in a collaborative partnership between several departments across campus.

Much of the third floor's collection of books was relocated to the first floor. The additional space on the third floor was transformed into several new areas:

an archive reading room, several study rooms, two conference rooms, and an event space that will accommodate 100 people.

Grants received by Dover Library:

- COVID-19 Mini Grant, \$1,500 from State Library of North Carolina for hand sanitizer stands, digital signage, and touchless thermometer.
- Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC): Focus on Small and Rural Libraries Grant, \$3,000 from American Library Association for discussions with Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Association to begin digitization project of Ebenezer archives.
- North Carolina Preservation Consortium (NCPC), \$1,234.50 to preserve Boiling Springs High School

diplomas and to preserve old Bibles in archival boxes.

- LSTA EZ-1 Grant, \$37,525 from State Library of North Carolina for a new plotter, 3D printer, laminator, people counter, and archival technology.
- NC Adapts EZ Grant, \$23,176 from State Library of North Carolina to furnish new study rooms on the third floor, a conference room, and create a new University Archives space.
- American Rescue Plan: Humanities Grant, \$10,000 from American Library Association and National Endowment for the Humanities to create a makerspace (printing lab) in the library in conjunction with an interdisciplinary course, includes 3D printer, 3D scanner, teaching stipend, and supplies.

Dr. Sharon Webb Appointed to Fill NCAA-Mandated Position to Advocate and Support Student-Athletes

Dr. Sharon Webb has been named the Faculty Athletic Representative (FAR). A professor in the School of Psychological Science and Counselor Education, Webb succeeds Dr. Chris Davis, who served since 2009. This position, mandated by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), is appointed by and reports directly to the president.

Webb serves as an essential liaison and advocate for the more than 600 Runnin' Bulldogs who participate in varsity athletic programs. Her duties are to support the NCAA Division I philosophy, especially to establish and maintain an environment in which the athletic activities of student-athletes



are conducted as an integral part of the student-athlete's educational experience. In addition, the FAR also promotes an environment that values cultural diversity and gender equity among student-athletes and athletics staff. The FAR term is three years with possibility of reappointment.

Webb is the president-elect of the N.C. Counseling Association and serves as coordinator for GWU Clinical Mental Health Counseling Programs. She noted that some of her favorite Gardner-Webb community experiences involve attending athletic events and cheering on student-athletes.

Charlotte Business Journal Selects President Dr. William Downs for Elite Honor

The Charlotte (N.C.) Business Journal named GWU President Dr. William Downs as one of Charlotte's 2022 Most Admired CEOs. This award recognizes leaders who have a strong vision for their companies, have shown commitment to culture in the workplace and made significant contributions to the Charlotte community.

Downs was among 40 honorees handpicked from more than 140 nominations made by members of the business community. Further, he was one of only three selected from the education category.

"I am excited to see Dr. Downs was selected by our newsroom as a Most



Admired CEO for 2022," praised CBJ Market President and Publisher TJ McCullough. "Since he has arrived at Gardner Webb, he has moved the needle

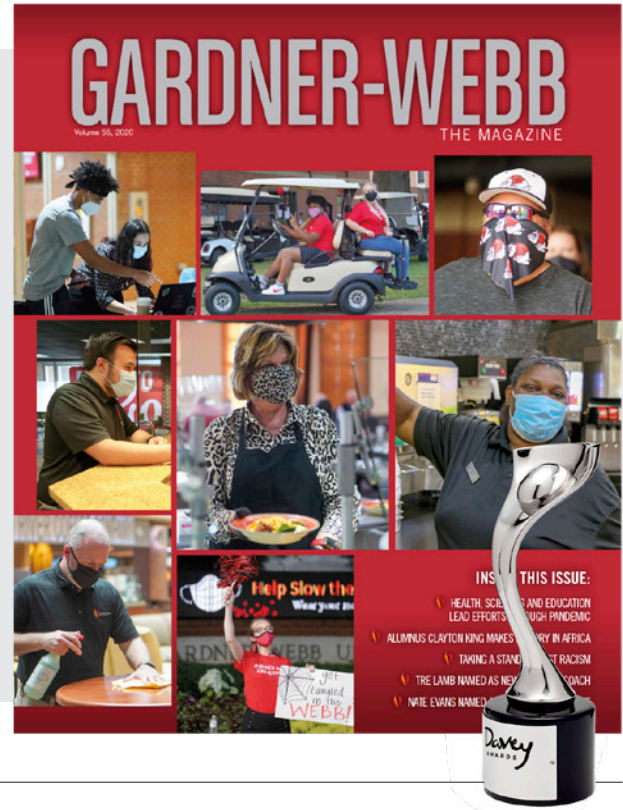
and continues to do so. I am proud to be an alumnus."

Downs began his term as Gardner-Webb University's 13th president on July 1, 2019.

Gardner Webb: The Magazine and SPARK Publications Win National Honor

The 2020 edition of Gardner-Webb: The Magazine, the official magazine for Gardner-Webb University, and its production partner, SPARK Publications of Charlotte, N.C., received a silver Davey Award. The Academy of Interactive and Visual Arts (AIVA) selected winners for the annual awards from over 2,000 entries from across the U.S. and around the world. For 17 years, the Davey Awards has honored the finest creative work from the best small shops, firms, and companies worldwide.

Gardner-Webb: The Magazine is published annually by the Division of Marketing and Communications. Since 2013, the magazine has received numerous awards including those from the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), The Communicator Awards, the Hermes Creative Awards, the Davey Awards, and the Collegiate Advertising Awards.



Gardner-Webb and Town of Boiling Springs Host Webbstock '22

Gardner-Webb University and the Town of Boiling Springs hosted Webbstock '22 on April 9. This new annual event brought the community together to enjoy music, food, craft vendors and activities for children.

It's a celebration of the greater community, noted Vice President for Student Development and Dean of Students, Lesley Villarose. "We are excited about the traditions, resources and talent that are here in Boiling Springs and in Cleveland County," she affirmed.

Main Street was closed for the festival, which included performances by Acoustic Syndicate, The Phobes Band, Dirty Grass Soul and That One Band.

Boiling Springs Town Manager Justin Longino was excited to partner with the University to host "a true street festival." He explained, "Shutting down a core area of downtown—the physical border between the Town and University—creates such effective symbolism for the community coming together."



Longino continued, "When we come together for an event like this, it drastically increases our

community footprint and allows us to bring together a broader group of people."

National Bobblehead Hall of Fame and Museum Unveils Gardner-Webb Mascot



The National Bobblehead Hall of Fame and Museum unveiled the first officially licensed, limited-edition bobblehead of Bo, Gardner-Webb University's official live mascot. The special edition bobblehead represents Bo as a puppy.

Sitting on a circular red and green base bearing his name on the front and Gardner-Webb on the back, the Bo bobblehead is in a sitting position and wearing a red collar with a tag that reads BO. The bobbleheads are individually numbered to 2,022, and available through the National Bobblehead Hall of Fame and Museum's website at bobbleheadhall.com.

"I suppose you know your mascot has truly made the big time when it shows up as a limited-edition bobblehead!" observed Gardner-Webb President William Downs. "We hope our fans and alumni act fast to secure their own keepsake celebrating our beloved Bo."

Bo, who celebrated his first birthday on May 4 is an English Bulldog who came from a breeder in Garner, N.C. Since becoming the official mascot, Bo has represented Gardner-Webb on campus and in the community. He can be seen connecting with alumni and supporting the Runnin' Bulldogs at home athletic and other community and outreach events.

"We're excited to create this bobblehead of Bo, the busiest bulldog in North Carolina," National Bobblehead Hall of Fame and Museum co-founder and CEO Phil Sklar said. "Gardner-Webb is in good paws with Bo representing the University and we think alumni, students, faculty, staff, and other members of the Gardner-Webb community will really enjoy this bobblehead."



Celebrating Mentors

Gerald Thomas '87, (left), acknowledges his Gardner-Webb mentor Dr. Rick Wilson. Wilson was a celebrated and engaging presence on the GWU campus in the Department of Religious Studies during the 1980s. He went on to a distinguished career with Mercer University, teaching posts around the globe and president of the Liberia Baptist Theological Seminary.

Do you have a mentor from your time at Gardner-Webb you would like to acknowledge? If so, we invite you to submit information for consideration by filling out **THIS FORM** ►



Selected submissions may show up in university communications platforms. Submissions are for consideration only, and are not guaranteed placement.



Gardner-Webb Launches New Runnin' Bulldog

VPCo. Created New Athletics Brand After Interviews with Over 500 Stakeholders

The launch of a new Runnin' Bulldog for Gardner-Webb followed six months of research, over a year of athletic brand exploration, and interviews with more than 500 Gardner-Webb stakeholders. Working with VPCo. in Charlotte, N.C., the University's revitalized athletic brand was drawn from historical graphics dating back to before the 1960s and updated with an innovative, customized look with swagger.

"Distinctive, Fresh, Bold, and Confident...those were among the qualities that we prioritized when we set out to take our Runnin' Bulldog to the next level," shared Gardner-Webb President William Downs.

“Watching Varsity Partners work to design something special for our student-athletes and for our fans has been pure fun. I love the look! It’s big, it’s authentic, it’s fierce, and it’s got swagger.”

William Downs, Gardner-Webb President



“Watching Varsity Partners work to design something special for our student-athletes and for our fans has been pure fun. I love the look! It’s big, it’s authentic, it’s fierce, and it’s got swagger.”

Fans are seeing the transformation in sports venues, uniforms, billboards, bus wraps, and more.

The University Marketing Council recommended this rebrand work to Downs in July 2021, because the last GWU athletic brand update was more than 35 years ago. Additionally, the previous bulldog logo has become less distinctive over the years and has been adapted into numerous “clip art” illustrations across the internet. However, loyal fans of the retired logo can be

assured it will be used for “retro” and “throwback” promotions.

In creating the new brand, VPCo. conducted focus group research with alumni, faculty, staff, students, student-athletes, trustees, community members, and friends.

“We needed some consistency with our visual identity, and we felt it was very important to be inclusive in this process,” noted Marc Rabb, assistant athletic director for Athletic Media Relations. “We had conversations with coaches and student-athletes, and this was really important, and truly successful.”

Kylee Garrison, a Gardner-Webb volleyball player from Huntersville, N.C., enjoyed participating in the process and



was excited about the new brand. “I am not someone who normally loves change, so I was surprised by how much I liked the new designs,” observed Garrison, who is dual-enrolled in the Master of Science strength and conditioning program. “I think it matches the vision for updating the campus and progressing towards the future. I look forward to seeing how this starts a chain reaction at GWU and what it looks like to be a Runnin’ Bulldog. Thank you to everyone who worked so hard to make sure that we all have a renewed sense of school pride.”

Nick Irwin, partner and chief creative officer with VPCo., commented that as his team worked through the identity process with the GWU campus and Boiling Springs area, they sensed a genuine sense of community. “We really enjoyed

working with everyone to design an updated identity that aligns with the growth, vision and spirit of Gardner-Webb,” he affirmed. “We feel that the end result is an excellent representation of a Runnin’ Bulldog’s steadfast determination, and the student-athlete’s drive for success on and off the field.”

The new branded bulldog logos, wordmarks, distinctive fonts, spirit stripes and other special items, such as soccer “shields,” were created for Gardner-Webb athletics. These elements bring a new level of consistency and visibility to expand the GWU brand nationally. “The iconic red jersey was incredibly important for our updated logo, and that came through in the conversations, as was having a mark that represented determination and moving forward,” added Irwin.



L'Mia Littlejohn, an exercise science major and member of the basketball team, believed it was time for the University to have a new look. "I think it is important to rebrand so we stay current," she noted.

Head Basketball Coach Tim Craft praised the new branding and logo enhancements as the latest example of Gardner-Webb athletics continuing to strive for excellence. He emphasized, "VPCo. has done an amazing job of modernizing our bulldog and other features of our brand, while also capturing the tradition and community that makes Gardner-Webb special and unique. This new look is enhancing school spirit, and is an exciting change for our student-athletes, alumni and fans."

University Marketing was instrumental in bringing all areas of the University community together for this effort. Richard McDevitt, vice president for University Marketing and Communications, believes that the importance of instituting a unified brand identity is one that speaks beyond athletics. "This is more than a new logo; it is a refueled and renewed energy for the entire university. It has been a longtime coming," McDevitt noted. "Our goal as a marketing team is to breathe life into our brand through powerful and engaging content delivered consistently to our audiences. We are always excited to amplify the voice of our Runnin' Bulldogs, and we were honored to work on this project."



BornToRun

Alumnus and Student Take New Dawg for a Spin

After a launch in April, the revitalized Gardner-Webb Runnin' Bulldog logo was off to the races. The fierce new Dawg went along for the ride on two race cars. At Hickory (N.C.) Motor Speedway, alumnus Blake McCandless sported the bulldog on a late model car owned by Landon Huffman. In the Cookout Summer Shootout series at Charlotte (N.C.) Motor Speedway, student Trevor Wester displayed the GWU mascot on a Legend Car owned by Corey Gordon.



Blake McCandless Gets Career Boost from NASCAR Hall-of-Famer

McCandless has a degree in sport management (2017) and a Master of Business Administration (2020) from Gardner-Webb. While building his talents as a broadcaster, he has taken every opportunity to learn. His persistence and talent even gained the attention of NASCAR Hall-of-Famer Dale Earnhardt Jr.

Twice, Earnhardt has mentioned McCandless as someone who has a future in motorsports broadcasting. His most recent endorsement came while McCandless was preparing to drive a race car for the first time. On Twitter,

Earnhardt posted a photo of McCandless in a GWU basketball shirt and praised his talents as a racing broadcaster. The post got the attention of GWU and less than a week later, McCandless was at Hickory Motor Speedway with the GW Bulldog along for the ride.

Although McCandless has racing roots—his grandfather “Mr. 4-Speed” McCandless, was a legendary drag racer—he’s only driven cars on iRacing. The computer-simulated racing game organizes, hosts and officiates online racing on virtual tracks all around the

world, including a training model for Hickory Motor Speedway.

At the track, McCandless brought the Runnin' Bulldog home to a sixth-place finish. “It was awesome to showcase Gardner-Webb,” McCandless asserted. “The new brand and the whole revamped energy around the school is really great. It was cool to have the Bulldog on board and at least it got a pretty good show.”

Besides the chance to drive a race car, his iRacing hobby helped him launch a broadcasting career. He began serving as a commentator for races on the iRacing

competitive ladder in 2020, covering the eNASCAR iRacing Road to Pro Series campaign. In 2021, he received the first boost to his career from Earnhardt, who competes in a few iRacing events and had heard McCandless announce races. Earnhardt commented on his weekly podcast that somebody ought to take a look at McCandless as a broadcaster or pit reporter.

“All of a sudden, when somebody like him says something like that it carries a lot of weight and a lot more attention is paid, too,” McCandless observed. Earnhardt arranged for him to shadow some members of the NBC crew. Afterward, he accepted a pit reporting position with Pit Row TV, utility work with NASCAR on NBC, and a job announcing at Ace Speedway in Elon, N.C.

McCandless said his experience in the car will help him improve as a track announcer. “Hopefully, I will be able to get behind the wheel a couple more times,” he observed. “The broadcast booth—it’s nice and air-conditioned in there—is where I’m most comfortable. I get as much enjoyment watching it and being able to share that experience with people as much as being a part of it, too.”

Trevor Wester Proud to Have Runnin’ Bulldog on Legend Car

Wester, ’24, drives a Legend Car in the Semi-Pro Division. The car is a 5/8-scale fiberglass full-fendered version of the famed NASCAR modifieds driven by legendary drivers such as Fireball Roberts and Buck Baker.

In the summer series at Charlotte Motor Speedway, the drivers race on the frontstretch quarter-mile track, going about 75 mph. At longer tracks, they reach speeds up to 100 mph. Wester finished the summer series fifth in points out of 32 cars. Since 2020, he has won a total of five races in the Legend Car. He is excited about having the Runnin’ Bulldog on the car on racetracks like the Atlanta Motor Speedway, Charlotte Road Course, Citrus County Speedway and others.

Wester, a student in the University Honors Program, is a marketing major with a minor in broadcast journalism. He described his first year at Gardner-Webb as extraordinary. When his professors and friends found out about his racing experience, he said they supported him

wholeheartedly. He wanted the chance to show off his school pride with the Bulldog on his car.

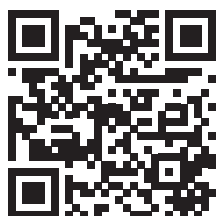
“Every time I put my helmet on, I’m representing the school and its values,” Wester asserted. “And I know all the people—friends, students, faculty—they’re out there rooting for me, and every time I win, I win it for them, so it means a lot, that’s for sure.”

Time management helps Wester balance his responsibilities, and he knows what is important. “Doing well in school is my number one priority, but I do make time for racing,” he acknowledged. “In the past, I have found myself doing homework at the track, in between sessions. My professors have been extremely supportive; they do everything they can to help me pursue my dream. Whether it’s completing an assignment

early, or getting one-to-one time after class, my professors always help me in any way that they can.”

Wester would like to continue racing and moving up in the NASCAR divisions, but if that doesn’t work out, he could go into marketing for a NASCAR team or end up in a broadcast booth. Whatever the future holds, he’s learned valuable lessons on and off the track. “I have learned, not only about myself, but about life,” he observed. “For me, it’s so much greater than winning and losing. It’s taught me so much mentally—how to be stronger, how to fight and persevere.”

Check out the video companion piece to this story here:



Gardner-Webb Athletics Highlights In The Title IX Era – A Timeline

From its early beginnings in the 1970s, women's athletics teams at Gardner-Webb continue to produce conference championships, All-Conference performers, All-Americans, Hall of Famers and national tournament teams. Several of those notable moments are listed below:

1975 Women's basketball plays its first senior college game

1978 Women's volleyball added as a varsity sport

1980 Women's tennis added as a varsity sport

1980 Women's cross country added as a varsity sport

1984 Softball added as a varsity sport

1990 Women's soccer added as a varsity sport

1991 Dina Smith McClure (basketball) becomes first female student-athlete inducted into the Gardner-Webb Athletics Hall of Fame

1996 Women's basketball advances to NCAA Division II National Tournament

1997 Softball wins South Atlantic Conference Tournament title

1997 Women's volleyball wins South Atlantic Conference Regular Season and Tournament titles

1998 Women's golf added as a varsity sport

1999 Women's tennis advances to NCAA Division II Regional Tournament

1999 Women's volleyball wins South Atlantic Conference Regular Season and Tournament titles for the second time in three seasons

1999 Women's track and field added as a varsity sport, finishes 4th nationally indoors and 5th nationally outdoors in first Division II season



Leading **the** Way

Title IX Celebration Highlights the Women Athletes and Leaders Who Poened Doors for Future Generations

On June 23, 1972, when Title IX of the Education Amendments was signed into law by U.S. President Richard Nixon, Linda Cody Shelton was a basketball player at Enka High School. The law opened the door to countless educational and athletic opportunities for women, like Shelton, a member of the first GWU women's basketball team in the '70s.

Throughout 2022-2023, Gardner-Webb joined universities and athletics departments around the country to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Title IX. In addition to recognizing its individual pioneers and trailblazers in athletics and administration, Gardner-Webb honored several teams and alumni groups at games and events on campus; here are just a few of those.

Shelton was 17 and a rising senior when Title IX passed. That summer, she came to Gardner-Webb University for a basketball camp. By the end of the week,

she was committed to attending Gardner-Webb. Her decision was based on the trust she had in men's basketball Head Coach Eddie Holbrook, who promised her the University would field a women's team her sophomore year.

She believed in Holbrook so strongly that she turned down a basketball scholarship from another college. "I fell in love with the campus while I was at basketball camp and that made my decision right there," Shelton asserted.

Freshman year, she kept stats for the men's team. When her sophomore year began, Shelton was in Holbrook's office every week asking, "Are we going to have a team?"

Finally, the positive response came. Shelton noted that she and her teammates were proud to be called Lady Bulldogs. "We wanted to live up to the reputation that the men had put into place," Shelton said. "We wanted to be that good also."

Coached by Phyllis Littlefield, the women's team played its first game on Nov. 18, 1975, in historic Bost Gymnasium vs. Claflin (S.C.). The starting five consisted of Shelton, Pam Helton, Sherwin Johnson, Wanda Nantz and Linda Ramseur. The Lady Bulldogs picked up their first win soon after, beating UNC-Charlotte 61-56 on Dec. 9, 1975, in Bost Gym. Helton led the way with 23 points, Shelton added 11 points and Ramseur scored 10.

Shelton noted that the women's basketball team felt accepted and valued. "We were a big family—all the athletes and non-athletes—not just a team, but the whole campus was a family," she described. "We went to each other's games. We just all loved and supported each other."

Moreover, the Lady Bulldogs held their own. "We won our division championship and were runner-up in the state my senior year (1975)," Shelton affirmed.

As Shelton and her teammates created a foundation for women's basketball and other sports, more women brought expertise in academics and administration throughout GWU's 117-year academic history. Leading the way is Gardner-Webb's co-namesake, Fay Webb Gardner, who was an ardent supporter of the University, along with her husband, the 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 of Shelby and the small college in Boiling Springs. Their devotion to the college was recognized in 1942, when the trustees voted to name the school, Gardner-Webb, after them.

Mrs. Gardner was a leader in the community and extensively involved in her husband's political career. She was also a member of the State League of Women Voters and the Benjamin Cleveland Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. For their contributions, Mrs. Gardner and her husband were inducted into the Cleveland County Hall of Fame in 1976.

Dr. Darlene J. Gravett, the University's first female member of the senior staff and associate provost emerita, is another influential woman in GWU's more recent history. Born in Roanoke, Va., Gravett lived there for 10 years before moving from one state to another as well as to other countries as the daughter of an Army enlisted man, who retired as a master sergeant, and then as the wife of Ray, an Army officer, who retired as a lieutenant colonel.

Along the way, she managed to stay at Eastern Kentucky University for all four years to earn a Bachelor of Arts degree in English; she worked around her husband's various Army assignments to attain her master's degree in English education from the University of Miami while he was in Vietnam the first time; and finally, she earned a doctorate in English literature from the University of Southern Mississippi while her husband had an ROTC assignment there and while he was in Vietnam a second time. Upon her husband's retirement from the Army after 21 years of active-duty service, she started her full-time teaching career, 10 years at one college and then 18 years at Gardner-Webb. After retirement, the couple stayed in Boiling Springs, where they have lived for over 30 years, longer than anywhere else in her life. She describes these different phases of her life in her autobiography "Army Brat, Army Bride, Civilian: A Life."

1999 Swimming added as a varsity sport, finishes 14th nationally in first Division II season

2000 Women's tennis advances to NCAA Division II Regional Tournament for the second season in a row

2000 Sylvia Chelimo, Nicole McLain and Julia O'Neal combine to win five individual Division II national titles in track and field

2000 Melissa Smith swims to NCAA Division II individual national title

2004 Women's swimming wins the first of four-straight Northeast Conference championships

2005 Women's soccer star Leeanna Woodworth leads NCAA Division I in scoring

2007 Terra Wilson swims to school's first NCAA Division I All-America honor

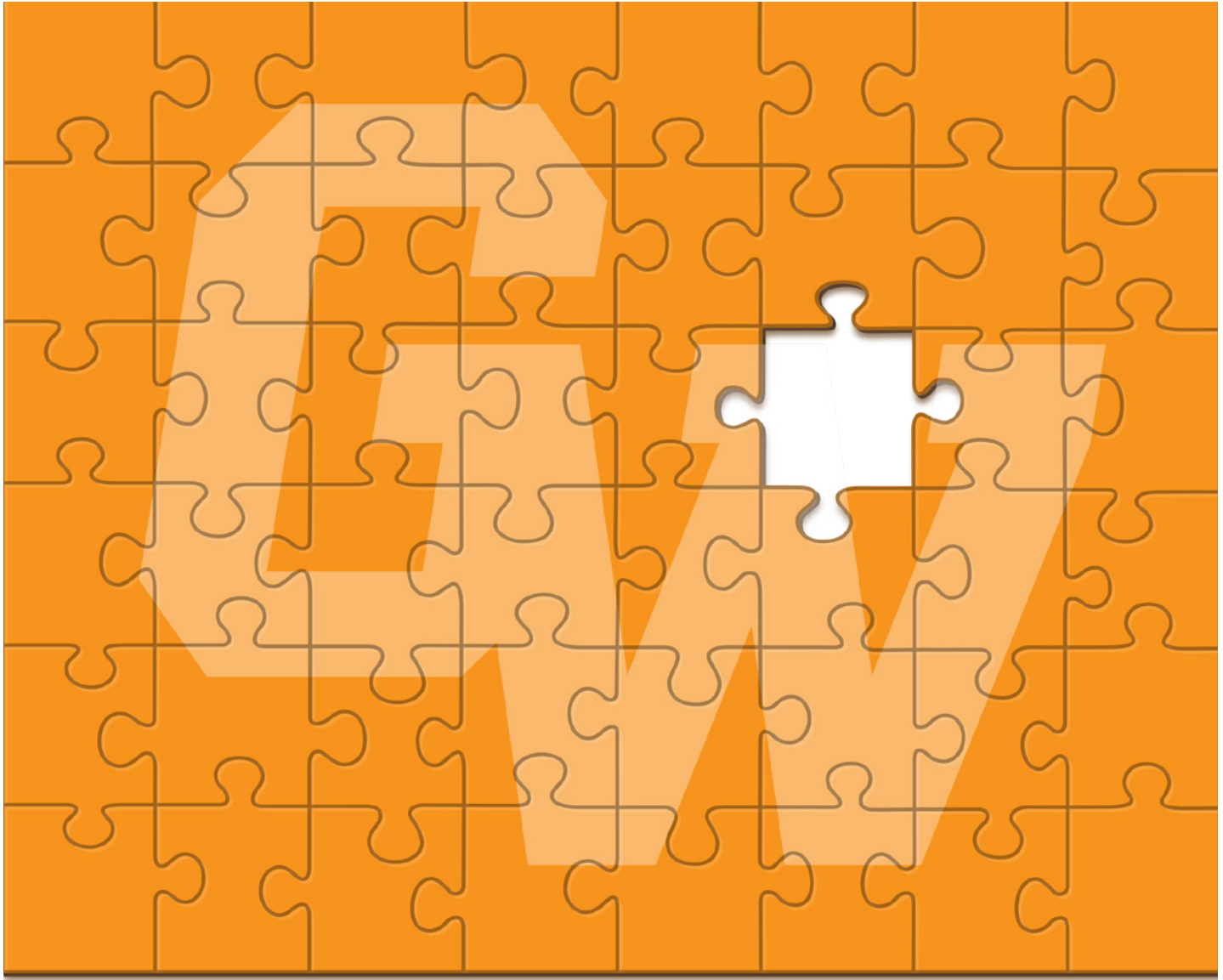
2010 Women's basketball wins the Big South Conference regular season championship

2011 Women's basketball wins Big South Conference Tournament, earns automatic bid to the NCAA Division I Championship

2015 Women's lacrosse added as a varsity sport

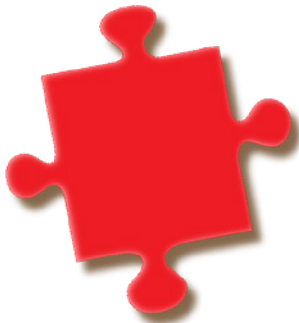
For a more extensive online look at Gardner-Webb pioneers and trailblazers, check out this QR code:





The Great Beyond

Living and Thriving Through the Autism Spectrum



Over the last two decades, the number of those diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) has increased significantly. A neurodevelopmental disorder, ASD can cause social, communication, emotional, and behavioral speed bumps. Based on the most recent data, the Center for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that approximately 1 in 44 have been identified as having ASD, which compares to 1 in 150 in 2000.

On Gardner-Webb's campus, students living with ASD receive support from the staff of the Noel Center for Disability Resources, along with their professors and their friends. On the following pages, we will introduce you to an alumnus and a student who refuse to be characterized by ASD, and a graduate student, who teaches the "exceptional" students in her class to discover and develop their strengths.

His Own Pace

COLE RAY—Writer, Runner, Teammate and Friend

WHEN COLE RAY RUNS, he describes the experience as a feeling of fulfillment. A Gardner-Webb University track and field student-athlete, his goal for every competition is to beat his own personal record (PR). Cole feels most comfortable in the 1,500-meter race on the track and the 5K in cross-country.

Cole has been breaking records—and stereotypes—all his life. He was diagnosed as being on the autism spectrum when he was 5 years old. His parents, Rod and Merritt Ray, said when that happened, they didn't know much about autism. "We embarked on a journey to learn as much as we could as fast as we could," Rod informed. "This mission



became a family project. We sought out the best therapies and schools that we could find. Our goal was to leave no rock unturned."

When the family learned that physical activity, while beneficial for everyone, is especially helpful for individuals on the autism spectrum, they provided Cole plenty of opportunities for exercise. Rod, a tennis coach at Wofford College in Spartanburg, S.C., began running with Cole. Cole reflected that he enjoyed running with his Dad and competing in triathlons. Additionally, Cole became proficient in karate and swimming, and earned his Eagle Scout designation from the Boy Scouts.

Cole said the Noel Center for Disability Resources has helped him with writing,

scheduling, balancing anxieties and developing social skills. His professors are approachable, available and encouraging within and outside of classroom situations. He also has a deep appreciation for the community he's developed with other student-athletes in the track and field program at Gardner-Webb.

Track and Field Coach Brian Baker said Cole's determination and hard work motivates his teammates. "They cheer for him and get excited when he races," Baker observed. "Cole has opened their eyes to (the notion) there's more to athletics than winning. It's about perseverance for each person, and everyone has goals in life they want to accomplish. He grounds them."

‘Just Like Everyone Else’

Alumnus **WILL BRAUNLICH**, '20, Found Support at GWU to Pursue His Interests



GARDNER-WEBB UNIVERSITY'S FACULTY, staff and students provided Will Braunlich, '20, a supportive environment to pursue his interests and passions. Now, he works at two jobs that he loves: hosting a movie review show on local cable TV through Simsbury Community Media, and working as a paraprofessional in the special education department at a school near his home in Simsbury, Conn.

Braunlich earned a degree in broadcast journalism and worked as an announcer at WGWG.org, Gardner-Webb's official radio station. "I wanted to go into broadcast journalism, because I love telling stories," Braunlich offered. "I want to share the stories of the world and help inspire people. I also love playing music and talking to people, whether directly or indirectly, which is where I've grown a huge passion for radio."

His experience in communications also helps him interact with the students.

Braunlich, who is living with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), hopes to encourage them in the same way that people inspire and support him.

Not only did he gain hands-on experience in broadcasting, he also had a chance to be *Mac*, the GWU costumed mascot when the men's basketball team made the program's first-ever appearance in the NCAA Tournament in 2019. "It was an experience unlike any other, and I wouldn't have traded it for anything," he reflected. "The best part of being *Mac* was, without a doubt, interacting with fans of all ages—from students, to alumni to citizens of the area. It was a humbling and rewarding experience knowing I got to be part of something really neat."

Braunlich said people who are on the autism spectrum want understanding and friendship. "What I want people to know is that I would like to be treated like everyone else," he asserted. "No special treatment,

just talk to me like I'm your friend, family member, coworker, or classmate."

He added, "Being on the spectrum is definitely challenging, as we are introduced to new experiences. However, I've learned I can do anything that anyone else can. A disability doesn't define who you are, it's all about the kind of person you become (or want to become)."

Braunlich also offers the following advice to all college students. "The one thing I learned the most while at Gardner-Webb is don't be afraid to ask for help," he affirmed. "Whether it be a professor, a fellow classmate or anyone on campus, they will do everything they can to help and make everything better."

Braunlich continued, "My advice is to go above and beyond in classes and outside of that as well. Try and go out and engage in activities, that's how you'll meet people and create relationships that will last a lifetime."

The Advocate

Exceptional Children's Teacher, **MONICA SHERER**, '23, Educating Children Throughout Challenges

NEARLY 15 YEARS AGO, MONICA SHERER, of Gastonia, N.C., received news that was both troubling and exciting. In the midst of a national economic crisis, her employer offered a choice: Take a voluntary layoff or receive tuition to attend a community college.

It was her chance to go for her dream. "I wanted to teach as a young girl, but my life took a different path and I needed to join the workforce," said Sherer, currently a graduate student in the College of Education at Gardner-Webb University.

With encouragement from her husband, Sherer earned her associate degree in 2011. She began working for Gaston County Schools in 2012, first as a kindergarten teacher assistant, and then as a behavior lab specialist—the second opportunity that changed her career path.

"I originally thought I was going to be a guidance counselor, because my heart is helping people," she shared. However, she met a student who faced many challenges. His determination to succeed inspired her to become an Exceptional Children's (EC) teacher and help other students overcome their challenges.

She received her bachelor's degree in educational studies with a minor in psychology in 2014 and earned her license as a special education teacher for grades K-12. She was hired as a general curriculum resource EC teacher at Costner Elementary School in Dallas, N.C.

Students come to her classroom for extra assistance in a variety of subjects. Each qualified student meets eligibility criteria under one of the 14 categories for students with disabilities. One documented category that has continued to grow in student population within the last two decades is autism. Sherer said each student with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is unique with varying degrees of diverse needs and abilities. "They may require visual schedules, sensory stimulation such as wiggle seats, noise cancelling headphones, written schedules, short, concise verbal or non-verbal communication, social stories, and other aids



to assist them," she described. "Their needs are extremely distinctive, so there is no prescribed instruction that would work for every student on the autism spectrum."

While her students receive guidance and support from Sherer daily, she feels they model a multitude of unforgettable life-lessons for anyone willing to take the time to engage. "They teach me so much about being resilient, about taking chances," Sherer affirmed. "Even when they fail, they keep going until they make that success. I tell them, 'You can do anything you set your mind to. Write your goals. Let's work towards those goals, and we will get there.'"

In 2021-22, the Gaston County Schools Department of Exceptional Children presented her a state honor, The Educator of Excellence. The award acknowledged her innovative instructional programs and methodologies that lead to positive outcomes for students with disabilities. She received the award at the 70th Conference on Exceptional Children held in Greensboro, N.C. "I started crying, because I couldn't believe it," Sherer reflected. "For me, being an educator is doing what's right for my students. To have somebody notice it at that level was mind blowing."

Through a partnership with Gardner-Webb University and Gaston County Schools, she is one of 14 Gaston County educators chosen to obtain their master's degrees in school administration through a full-tuition scholarship. "I've always thought of myself as an advocate for students, but I wanted to earn my master's to be an advocate on a greater platform," she asserted. "I want to be that change agent for students at a higher level."

The Noel Center for Disability Resources at Gardner-Webb partners with qualified students with disabilities to ensure equal access to a higher education. The staff guides students in their journey to obtain knowledge and skills and build confidence to become effective self-advocates. The determination of accommodations and services is a collaborative process. These accommodations and services include, but are not limited to, notetakers, extended testing time, materials in alternative format, lab assistants, interpreters, orientation and mobility, assistive technology and software, and testing accommodations. Contact the Center at 704.406.4270 (v), 866.298.0119 (vp), or by email at disabilityservices@gardner-webb.edu.

Celebrating Motherhood, Exploring Leadership, and Welcoming Integrity

Alexandra Arrington, '22, Believes Leadership is an Activity, not a Role

Wife, mother, academic and entrepreneur—Alexandra Arrington, of Charlotte, N.C., is in her final year in the Doctor of Education in Organizational Leadership (DEOL) program at Gardner-Webb University, and she finds contentment and success in all these roles.

“We don’t have to fit into a specific professional box,” Arrington noted. “We can make opportunities that work well for us so that we are not completely sacrificing ourselves or completely sacrificing the needs and wants and desires of our family. I have been really grateful to be able to be in a position to hold all those things at once in a way that facilitates thriving for myself, for my family, for professional pursuits and for academic pursuits.”

To accomplish her goals in each area, Arrington relies on the support of her husband and children. “I have a delightful spouse, who is good about helping us to organize our life in ways that are manageable,” she emphasized. “I couldn’t do it without their moral support and making space and room for me to be able to do things.”

Besides her love for learning, Arrington is also an educator. She’s an adjunct at Johnson C. Smith University; works part time at Queens University in teaching digital equity; and as a consultant, she provides diversity, equity and inclusion training for individuals and organizations.

The Gardner-Webb DEOL program appealed to her because of its flexible schedule and content, which aligns with her educational background in interpersonal and organizational communications, African American studies and career development counseling.

Her doctoral consultancy/practicum project combines her interests. “I am looking at the impact of Black leadership



on organizational culture and practices,” she explained. “If you look at Fortune 500 companies over the last 50 plus years, there have been 19 leaders of color and these are out of hundreds of CEOs, C suite (executive level) and board leaders. There are only five currently and two women out of the five that lead these top multi-billion dollar international companies.”

Her research analyzed the opportunities available for leaders who are African American or identify as Black. She also looked at the type of leadership practiced by leaders of color and how it differed from other top-level leaders. She partnered with Hue House in Charlotte, a local creative startup marketing and advertising firm led by three young, energetic African Americans. They strive to create opportunities for artists who identify as Black, Latino and other underserved or underrepresented groups.

David Butler, one of the Hue House founders, said Arrington was instrumental in giving them the framework to think about the culture they wanted to create within the company. “She helped us delineate what

traits we saw as part of our strategy for our for-profit business and how those things were aligned or different related to our non-profit organization,” Butler reflected. “She provided space and facilitated conversation that allowed for us to brand and shape our formal on-boarding processes alongside a code of ethics and conduct as well.”

Arrington has come to understand that preconceived notions and definitions of “leaders” are not uniform and are easily misinterpreted. “One of the prominent takeaways from our program is that leadership is an activity and not a role,” she assessed. “We have come to know and understand and connect with the fact that you can lead from wherever you are in an organizational hierarchy—in your home as a parent, a mother, or at any level, any position.”

She’s learned that leaders should focus on inspiring and influencing, having integrity and working ethically. “That has revolutionized how I understand, approach and cultivate leadership among folk that I work with and work for,” she affirmed.

Connections and Community

Michelle Lominac, '23, Values the Peers and Faculty Contributing to her Educational Journey

Ask senior Michelle Lominac, of Concord, N.C., to name the most important lesson she's learned at Gardner-Webb University, and her answer reveals her approachable personality, character and priorities.

"My biggest takeaway—make connections," Lominac affirms. "Making connections with peers maximizes the experience as a whole. Making connections with faculty is key to finding a mentor, seeking help, and asking for advice. Making these connections has been the best thing for me to get the most out of my education, so it's certainly something I'll carry with me."

A political science major in the University Honors Program, Lominac participated in the 2022 GWU Summer Undergraduate Research Program and gained experience for graduate school. She is minoring in business administration and criminal justice administration. Her plans are to pursue a Master of Public Administration and then, a career as a city or county manager.

The topic of her five-week summer research was exploring how the First Amendment protection of free speech applies to social media platforms. "In researching full-time, I found so much information that I learned how to use scholarly judgment to wade through the many articles and theories and find those most substantial, significant, and valuable to me," she expounded. "I learned how to reshape my view throughout the process—how to step back and imagine my project from an unbiased perspective in order to decide my next steps."

In her study, Lominac discovered the tension that exists between First Amendment protections of the freedom of speech and the editorial and liability



rights of private entities, such as social media corporations. "There has been a lot of speculation about the legislative and judicial future of the topic, so it has been great to explore the variety of potential solutions," Lominac offered. "However, there is no applicable jurisprudence, and the laws that exist concerning the internet are outdated."

Her faculty mentor was Dr. Elizabeth Amato, associate professor of political science and international relations. Lominac appreciated Amato's guidance when the information she discovered didn't match her plans for the project. "She assured me and helped me figure out a new direction to take my research," Lominac related. "She let me know that sometimes scholarship is not as simple as we would like or expect, but we can roll with the punches and allow the work to enhance our ideas."

Lominac advises students who want to apply for the Summer Undergraduate Research Program to choose a topic they want to spend hours researching.

"I grew up in politics," she shared, "I've grown to love political science for all its facets—politics, theory, government. I chose a business administration minor, because I felt it would be versatile for whatever my future plans would be. I also chose a criminal justice administration minor, because I was interested to learn more about the system from an administrative perspective."

Lominac serves as secretary for the Alpha Chi honor society and was part of a collaborative research group that won an award and monetary prize at the national Alpha Chi convention. She is also hospitality coordinator for The Gathering, the weekly student-led worship service.

"Gardner-Webb is home," she asserted. "I'm supported and encouraged in my academic and non-academic pursuits. I'm comfortable yet challenged daily. Most importantly, I've found an irreplaceable community at Gardner-Webb."

Living the Adventure

Dr. Karen Aubrey Named Provost



“In searching for a new provost for Gardner-Webb, I was looking for a strategic partner, a program builder, and a relentless pursuer of student success,” explained GWU President William Downs. “We have found all of those crucial qualities in Dr. Karen Aubrey.”

Aubrey was named Gardner-Webb’s new provost and vice president for academic affairs after a nationwide search. She previously served as vice president for academic affairs and as a professor at LaGrange College. She has 30 years of experience in higher education, working since 2007 in administrative leadership positions.

“Dr. Aubrey understands the importance of developing degree programs and high-impact practices that will attract high-ability students and grow the institution’s reputation for excellence,” added Downs.

At Gardner-Webb, Aubrey supervises academic deans, directors and department chairs across the College of Arts and Sciences, College of Health Sciences, College of Business, College of Education and School of Divinity. Among her many duties, she provides leadership in the areas of new program development and is reshaping and reinvigorating the University’s efforts to improve student retention rates. She coordinates the University’s multiple accreditation reviews and works collaboratively with the Athletics Department to support the academic success of over 600 student-athletes participating in 22 Division I sports.

“I have a strong, strong belief that liberal arts education builds strong foundations... strong foundations for

“ The sheer variety and diversity you find on a liberal arts campus makes each day an adventure.”

Dr. Karen Aubrey, GWU Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

us to be good decision-makers, to be good citizens, to be good humans,” noted Aubrey. “I think it provides all the skillsets that employers are looking for, so it excites me to know that we are providing that for students ... helping to give them pathways to a better life, and a life with more options.”

Aubrey’s understanding of liberal arts within the Christian tradition also provides a foundational appeal to her at Gardner-Webb. She brings with her a wealth of experience and appreciation for the importance of bringing those two elements together.

“The faith component of Gardner-Webb is the glue that binds it all together.” Aubrey asserted. “The love, compassion, devotion and deep caring that our students and faculty and staff share really transforms the campus.”

Her extensive academic and administrative experience includes such areas as curriculum development, experiential learning, outreach, shared governance, and resource management. Much of her work at LaGrange was directed at creating infrastructure, launching innovative programs in support of high impact practices and market demand, expanding faculty development support, and developing internal and external partnerships. Additionally, she has extensive experience in accreditation procedures through the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), including serving as a SACSCOC reviewer and presenter at annual meetings.

Among her many additional accomplishments, Aubrey is most satisfied with her work in experiential learning. She was active at, and helped



grow, Augusta University’s study abroad programs and administered LaGrange College’s Global Engagement program. Almost 90% of LaGrange students travel abroad, and wherever they go a service-learning activity is part of the program. For example, in South Africa, students construct a greenhouse for a school; and in Senegal, they deliver school supplies and interview and write about the story of the SEED Academy, a school for middle school and high school children that specializes in training gifted academics and athletes in basketball.

“I do think that experiential learning and other high impact practices are some of the most powerful educational experiences

we can give our students,” added Aubrey. “Study away, undergraduate research... I think those active learning experiences tests parts of ourselves in unpredictable ways, and they cause us to grow.”

Aubrey also believes there is monumental value in the power of internships for all involved. “Internships appeal to students, parents, future employers ... and I think they teach the types of real-life skills that begin as ideas in the classroom,” noted Aubrey. “They also build confidence in students and create valuable networking for career pathways.”

Aubrey began her academic career as a graduate teaching assistant in 1985 at the University of Southern Mississippi, where she became an instructor in 1989. She was hired as an instructor at Augusta University in 1990, where she was promoted to assistant professor in 1993, associate professor in 1997 and served as a professor from 2010 to 2017. She taught courses ranging from core curriculum undergraduate surveys to graduate level seminars in the Department of Communication, Department of English and Foreign Languages, in campus study abroad programs and in University System of Georgia European Council Programs.

She earned her Ph.D. in 18th Century British Literature in 1990 from the University of Southern Mississippi. She received her Master of Arts in English Literature in 1985 from the University of Central Arkansas, and her Bachelor of Science in Education in English, with a secondary teaching certification in English, in 1983 from the University of Central Arkansas.

“Out of Many... One”

Lawrence Brinson, Welcomed as Director of Diversity and Inclusion

“The director of diversity and inclusion is a very important leadership position for the University community,” stated Vice President for Student Development and Dean of Students Lesley Villarose. “We are fortunate to have found someone as talented, accomplished and dedicated as Lawrence, who brings to Gardner-Webb over 20 years of professional experience working in the field of diversity and inclusion.”

Chosen after a nationwide search, Lawrence Brinson began his role in April. Brinson’s various professional positions include education policy and practice facilitator with the National Education Association (NEA), instructional specialist with Discovery Education, K-12 educator with Charlotte (N.C.) Mecklenburg Schools, youth services coordinator with the Charlotte Housing Authority, and program manager with the Salvation Army of Mecklenburg County. In all of these roles, he implemented initiatives that promoted diverse and inclusive communities.

“Gardner-Webb’s student body is populated by an increasingly diverse mosaic of backgrounds, reflecting the dynamics of our broader American society,” noted GWU President William Downs. “In the United States, our country’s motto—*E pluribus unum*—‘out of many, one’—speaks directly to the importance of finding unity in diversity. Here, we affirm our mission as one that serves God and Humanity—*Pro Deo et Humanitate*—and by that we mean all humanity. I’m grateful to have Lawrence Brinson with us in this essential mission.”

Brinson’s responsibilities include providing strategic development and leadership for University initiatives that strengthen campus unity and enhance respect for diversity in its many forms.



He is engaging students, faculty and staff to further behaviors, attitudes and policies that support diversity, equity and inclusion on campus. He also leads the identification, planning and implementation of educational programming and training to create a more diverse, equitable and inclusive University community.

“My goal is to bring to the forefront a community-developed vision for diversity and inclusion ensuring that all members of the Gardner-Webb community feel valued,” Brinson shared. “I am working to build strong relationships based upon trust, transparency, and honesty in order to move this meaningful work forward.”

During Brinson’s time at Gardner-Webb, the Office of Diversity and Inclusion conducted a series of focus groups designed to facilitate dialogue. Brinson added he is working with the GWU students, faculty and staff to engage in several activities that will “help to promote an inclusive environment.” Brinson believes, “These ongoing efforts

will help strengthen our community and better prepare our students for life in a diverse society after their time at Gardner-Webb University.”

A native of North Carolina, Brinson has a bachelor’s degree from Johnson C. Smith University in economics with a minor in business administration. Additionally, he attended the Shaw University School of Divinity.

Throughout his career, Brinson has worked with organizations and groups providing leadership in areas of human and civil rights, minority achievement, multicultural initiatives, and advancing higher educational attainment opportunities for students. Brinson is also the founder of the Instruction and Professional Development Academy (IPDA), which develops action programs that work with educators in one-on-one settings to provide guidance and focus on practical Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) strategies to increase student engagement and learning.

"I want to get the crowd involved; I want to bring a big show to the stadium. We want a spectacle."

Dr. Sarah Fabian, GWU Director of Athletic Bands

Immersed in Walls of Sound

Sarah Fabian is Director of Athletic Bands

Dr. Sarah Fabian brings a rich musical legacy with her to Gardner-Webb University as the director of athletic bands. A Baltimore, Md., native, Fabian has served as director of Bands at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa, and offers a wealth of experience in the drum and bugle corps circuit, working most recently with the Cadets Drum and Bugle Corps, a performance group within Drum Corps International (DCI).

A lifelong lover of the performing arts, Fabian comes from a family of talents. Her father was a jazz pianist and played trumpet, her mom was a professional opera singer, and she even has a sibling who embraced the musical roots as well.

Although new to the Gardner-Webb faculty, this isn't Fabian's first visit to Boiling Springs, N.C. "One of the biggest things that led me to Gardner-Webb was my experience with Carolina Crown (Drum and Bugle Corps) back in 2009," Fabian noted. "I spent about a month and a half here for spring training. The campus made a huge impression on me at that time."

As she builds the GWU marching band program, Fabian coordinates the recruitment of prospective students and is responsible for academic support, skill instruction, practice, performance planning and execution. Some of her other duties include providing one-on-one instruction, ensemble instruction, event management, developing alumni contacts, promoting fund-raising initiatives, budget planning and oversight. She manages large group events, including summer music camps, music festivals, and marching competitions.



"Marching band is a great opportunity to build relationships and lifelong friendships," added Fabian. "We want students to have a place where they can grow as a musician... and as a person. We want to develop a family."

"Sarah's passion for recruiting new band members and for growing our 'Power Sound of The Springs' means that great things are happening with our student musicians and for our fans," praised GWU President Dr. William Downs. Fabian echoes those sentiments. "I want to get the crowd involved; I want to bring a big show to the stadium," she affirmed. "We want a spectacle. We can bring light,

energy and excitement to the fans in the stands."

Fabian holds a Ph.D. in Music Education from George Mason University, a bachelor's degree in music education with a concentration in percussion from Towson University, and a master's in music education from the Peabody Conservatory of Johns Hopkins University.

Fabian is a frequent guest presenter and conductor on marching band development, concert band, jazz ensemble techniques and honor bands. Fabian is also affiliated with multiple music education organizations with national and international connections.

BULLDOGNATION



Building Life Champions

Dr. Andrew T. Goodrich Named VP and Director of Athletics

“I have great confidence that Andrew Goodrich will lead Gardner-Webb athletics into a new and highly successful era,” said GWU President William Downs. “He has vision, tenacity, experience, and an appetite for building championship programs. The passion is palpable, and everyone who meets Andrew will quickly learn that he simply won’t be outworked. The future for Runnin’ Bulldogs sports is incredibly bright!”

Gardner-Webb University has named Dr. Andrew T. Goodrich as Vice President and Director of Athletics. He steps into the

role following Chuck Burch’s retirement after serving more than two decades in the position.

Goodrich comes to Gardner-Webb by way of Syracuse University, where he has worked as Deputy Director of Athletics & Chief Marketing Officer since 2018. The Owego, N.Y., native is an honors graduate of the University of Notre Dame, with an MBA in Marketing. He also earned a Ph.D in Higher Education Administration from the University of South Florida, as well as a graduate certificate in Administrative Leadership from Cornell University.

Previously working at International Business Machines (IBM) in the early 2000s, Goodrich recalls an important realization he had during that period in his life. “While working as a financial analyst and accountant at IBM, I was coaching youth football and baseball in our community. I enjoyed my job at IBM, but I loved working with kids and especially using sports to help teach them how to be a champion in life and on the field. During this time, I knew that I needed to pursue a career as an athletics administrator,” Goodrich said. The experience he gained

in crafting entrepreneurial strategies at IBM would prove to be crucial to his professional path in the years to come.

Shortly thereafter, he began his MBA studies at Notre Dame, also working as a graduate assistant with the marketing department. “As a student in the graduate school program, I was able to take an athletics administration course from Dr. Kevin White, who was the director of athletics at the time. It was during this class that I knew for absolute certain that I was going to become a Division One athletics director someday,” Goodrich said.

His extensive background in higher education and various leadership positions throughout the collegiate athletics industry have instilled a strong sense of confidence in Goodrich as he approaches this role with Gardner-Webb. “I have a very unique background as a professor with a Ph.D in Higher Education Administration, that helps me develop trust and collaboration with faculty and campus leaders,” Goodrich said. “I have worked in both the internal and external operations within high performing athletics departments all across the nation, which allows me to work efficiently and effectively with the academic and compliance departments, as well as the revenue generation, fan experience, and strategic communications departments.”

During his tenure at Syracuse, Goodrich assisted in the generation of approximately \$80 million annually in revenue for the program. A particularly significant project at Syracuse for Goodrich involved the negotiation of a 10-year naming rights agreement for the JMA Wireless Dome. A member of the Syracuse Executive Cabinet and University Leadership Team, Goodrich worked to manage 19 NCAA Division I athletic programs, including 600 student-athletes from 32 countries. Multiple attendance records for football and men’s basketball at Syracuse were set under his watch, and he also assisted in the search and hiring process of six head coaches and one Senior Women’s Administrator at the school.

With the landscape of the NCAA continuing to evolve in the Name, Image,

and Likeness era, Goodrich guided Syracuse into this new environment with co-licensing agreements for student-athletes. Jim Cavale, founder and CEO of the athlete brand-building app INFLCR, speaks highly of Goodrich’s contributions in this field. “Andrew Goodrich is always thinking outside the box. I’m excited to see him get the opportunity to lead Gardner-Webb into the new era of college sports,” Cavale said.

“I have worked in both the internal and external operations within high performing athletics departments all across the nation, which allows me to work efficiently and effectively with the academic and compliance departments, as well as the revenue generation, fan experience, and strategic communications departments.”

Andrew T. Goodrich, Vice President and Director of Athletics

Additionally, Goodrich negotiated Syracuse’s largest e-commerce deal, and developed the second-largest corporate sponsorship agreement in school history, with a value of \$4.48 million. Syracuse was granted the 2022 Clyde Award as the top Learfield Corporate Partnerships Property of the Year.

Prior to this stretch at Syracuse, Goodrich worked at the University of South Florida as Senior Associate AD, External Relations from 2014-2018. This was preceded by two years at the University of Miami, Florida as the Associate AD, Marketing and Sales from 2012-2014.

Goodrich joins Gardner-Webb with an eager ambition to build on his career of notable successes. “This is a university that is not only going to survive the changes to NCAA governance, it is going to thrive and be stronger than it has ever been,” Goodrich said. “I’m confident that 10 years from now, GWU will be the standard by which other

schools like us are evaluated.” He is also enthusiastic about the leadership exhibited on campus. “I’m so inspired by Dr. Downs and his vision for competitive excellence at Gardner Webb,” Goodrich continued. “His attitude is contagious, and I believe he will help GWU grow in all facets of the university system. The coaches I’ve met are passionate and driven to serve these students and the community by helping these teams perform their best.”

ACC Commissioner Dr. Jim Phillips praised Goodrich as a deserving selection for this position at Gardner-Webb. “Andrew is an outstanding leader that brings a wealth of experience to the role as Vice-President and Athletics Director at Gardner-Webb University. He has made significant impacts during his career and will serve as a tireless ambassador for the Runnin’ Bulldogs and the more than 600 student-athletes that compete across 22 sponsored sports,” Phillips said.

A devout Christ-follower, Goodrich is drawn to Gardner-Webb’s foundations as a Christian institution. “I’m so excited to work at Gardner Webb, a University that puts its Christian faith at the top of their set of values. God and His providence has provided me with every great thing in my life, and I couldn’t think of a better way to honor God than to use my talents and my life experiences to help these young men and women develop their mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual strengths,” Goodrich said.

Citing the Gospel of Matthew as a source of spiritual guidance throughout this process, Goodrich pointed to the Parable of Talents in Chapter 25. “Some are given five talents, some two, others just one. We are all called to be good and faithful servants. To put our faith in the Lord and honor Him by multiplying our talents,” Goodrich said. “I call this having a Five Talent Mentality. You will see in the years to come that we, the Runnin’ Bulldogs, are not going to bury our talents, we are going to honor God and take the talents we have and multiply them, and in doing so inspire others to join us, put their faith in God, and do the same in their lives.”

Written by Thomas Manning ’22



“Why not Me”

Golfer Zack Byers Swings His Way into Gardner-Webb History

Gardner-Webb golf standout Zack Byers, '22, made history as the first player from the University to qualify for the NCAA Division I Men's Golf Championship. His individual victory at the 2022 Big South Tournament sent him to the West Palm Beach Regional, where he then qualified for the national tournament.

Discussing his mindset in the Big South Tournament, the Shelby, N.C., native Byers said, “I knew going into the final round that I had to win to get the [regionals] bid, so I was four shots back, and I kind of just looked at Coach Tee (Burton) before the round, and I said, you know, ‘why not me?’”

After a successful spring on the course, Byers had in mind the possibility of

qualifying for regionals with an at-large bid. “I knew I needed a really good finish (at the Big South Tournament) to maybe get close,” Byers said. It dawned on him that he would need to win the day outright to ensure his ticket to West Palm Beach was punched. “I was like, ‘Coach, I think we’re going to need to go out there and win today just to make it for sure.’ We knew that if you win, then it’s a guarantee,” Byers said.

Byers found himself in a three-hole playoff against Campbell University’s Henrik Lilja. “He had, maybe a seven or eight-footer to tie to force the playoff to continue,” Byers said. “So I was just kind of standing there beside Tee [Burton], you know, just kind of closing my eyes, sitting there thinking, ‘This is a good chance to have it done.’ I kept my eyes closed and just listened. I didn’t watch his putt at all, but I didn’t hear it hit the bottom of the cup.” At that point, Byers and Burton embraced realizing that Gardner-Webb history had been made.

At the ensuing regional tournament at West Palm Beach, Byers finished in a tie for sixth place, granting him the individual bid for the NCAA Championship. At the championship tournament in Scottsdale, Ariz., Byers shot a 233 over three rounds. This included a 76 in his final round, only shooting over par on four holes.

Throughout the 2022 season, Byers had a total of three outright wins and four top-10 finishes, along with the second-best stroke average in the conference. This was coming off of a 2021 season that saw its share of physical challenges for Byers, including a shoulder surgery in May 2021. “Ever since then, I kind of took my recovery really seriously,” Byers said. “I came back, and through the recovery, I learned a lot about golf and a lot about myself, truly.”

He also described the process of learning to hone in on different aspects of his game that he had been missing. “Beforehand, I would’ve been just a

power guy trying to hit things as hard as possible,” Byers acknowledged. “It (time and recovery) taught me to think a little bit more... about the... finesse side of the game and focusing on tempo and controlling the golf ball.”

The mental side of the sport is another major factor that Byers discussed. “A lot of golf is played between the six inches between your ears. That was the biggest growth during spring ’21 especially, my mental perspective...being confident, and believing, and trusting.” He said that Burton was instrumental in this development. “Coming into college, I didn’t have the most impressive resume, so he somewhat took a gamble on bringing me into the University on scholarship to come play, and all I can

do is say thanks to him... Tee has been kind of like a father figure/mentor to me, and I couldn’t be luckier to have him around.”

As a local student-athlete from Shelby High School, Byers spoke of his love for the small school atmosphere of Gardner-Webb. “I’m the kind of person where I’m going to get to know everybody,” Byers shared. “And, I feel like at Gardner-Webb... I know every single one (of the students on campus) almost. I don’t think that kind of thing happens at a bigger university... here, it’s just one big community, one big family.”

Local ties and connections are another significant part of Byers’ college life. “In my life, I put a big emphasis on family,” he affirmed. “So, having my family live 20-25 minutes away from campus, it’s

the biggest thing to me.”

Talking more of the standing of Gardner-Webb golf within the NCAA, Byers said he is proud of the precedent he has set along with Burton in his success at the University. “We want to show that Gardner-Webb is capable,” Byers asserted. “If you work hard and you have the right attitude, the next person can come out and do the same things... I’m proud to say that I’ve come to Gardner-Webb.”

Byers will finish out his collegiate playing career at the University of South Carolina, where he will pursue a graduate degree and take advantage of his final year of NCAA eligibility.

Written by Thomas Manning ’22

**GARDNER-WEBB
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Gardner-Webb Student-Athletes Earn Academic Awards from Big South Conference

Five Gardner-Webb student-athletes were honored at the annual Big South Conference Awards in 2022. The group included Anna Fish, who received the Bob McClosky Insurance Graduate Fellowship, and Jennifer Escalera was awarded the Sunbelt Rentals Scholarship.

The trio of Jonathan Frye, Faith Parandhamaia and Louise Schmidtgen received the George A. Christenberry Award, which is given annually to the league’s student-athletes who attain the highest GPA during their undergraduate collegiate careers.

Frye, who majored in biology/ biomedical sciences at Gardner-Webb, Parandhamaia, who majored in business management, as well as Schmidtgen, who majored in international business/ computer science, all completed their respective undergraduate degrees with perfect cumulative GPA’s of 4.0.

Frye (Columbia, S.C.) helped Gardner-Webb Swimming to a first-place finish in the men’s 200-yard medley relay and 400-yard medley relay at the 2022 Coastal Collegiate Sports Association (CCSA) Championships (breaststroke leg). He also placed third in the 100-yard breaststroke (55.77) and fourth in 200-yard breaststroke (2:01.86) at the meet.

Parandhamaia (Accident, Md.) set personal bests this season in the 1,500-meter run (UNCC Invite - 4:59.48, 19th), 800-meter run (Winthrop Invite - 2:24.32, 9th), and the mile run (VMI Classic - 5:39.95, 22nd).

Schmidtgen (Ettlingen, Germany) earned points in the pole vault for GWU at the 2022 Big South Outdoor Track and Field Championships with a season-best height of 3.14 meters. She cleared at least 3.50 meters in the pole vault six times in her career, including a personal-record of 3.70 meters for fourth-place

at the 2019 Conference Outdoor Championship. Schmidtgen won the pole vault twice in her career—the 2021 Winthrop Spring Invitational (3.49 meters) and the 2019 Terrier Relays (3.50 meters).

The Big South Conference Graduate Fellowship Program, which was presented to Fish, was established by the league in the fall of 2005 as a means of recognizing the academic excellence of Big South Conference student-athletes who intend to pursue postgraduate studies upon graduation from a Big South Conference institution.

Fish started all 48 contests she played at Gardner-Webb since joining the squad in 2019, and logged 4,183 career minutes of action. She helped the Runnin’ Bulldogs reach the Big South Women’s Soccer Championship game in 2019. Fish is pursuing her Master of Physiology at North Carolina State University.

The Big South’s Sunbelt Rentals Scholarship, part of the league for 13 years, is presented to underrepresented populations including minorities, women, disabled students, as well as current and former military. Escalera received this scholarship that is also awarded to students entering their final undergraduate semester at a Big South member institution.

Escalera is a distance runner with Gardner-Webb Track and Field and Cross Country. The Rutherfordton, N.C., native competes in the 1,500-meter, 3,000-meter and 5,000-meter events in track for the Runnin’ Bulldogs. She has run in each of the past two Big South Conference Cross Country Championships.

Gardner-Webb has been a full member of the Big South Conference since 2008.



2022 Big South Conference Awards

Anna Fish,
Bob McClosky Insurance Graduate Fellowship



Jennifer Escalera,
Sunbelt Rentals Scholarship.



George A. Christenberry Award

Jonathan Frye,
Swimming



Faith Parandhamaia,
Track and Field



Louise Schmidtgen,
Track and Field

The Great Outdoors

Longtime Supporters, David and Marie Brinkley, Provide Lead Gift for New Amphitheater Complex

A family that has enthusiastically supported Gardner-Webb for more than a decade is making another transformational gift to the University. David and Marie Brinkley are providing the lead gift for a new amphitheater, part of an Outdoor Performance Complex, which will be built at 206 South Main Street, Boiling Springs. Gardner-Webb purchased the 1.78-acre property, site of the former Hardee's, in January 2021.

With the couple's multi-year pledge, GWU began work on the project. In honor of their commitment and past generosity, the amphitheater will be named "The Brinkley Amphitheater."

"I am profoundly grateful to David and Marie Brinkley for their kind and continued investment in the people and programs of Gardner-Webb University," shared GWU President Dr. William Downs. "They are truly special people, and they are helping us turn some ambitious dreams into action. The Brinkley Amphitheater will enliven

not just our campus but also our broader community. It will be a showcase venue for the performing arts. It will bring new energy to our great college town, and it will serve as a catalyst for year-round entertainment and engagement. A big, big win for our campus and for all of us who love this area."

The first phase of the project will be to construct a 600-seat amphitheater, stage and courtyard. This event space will be home to the performing arts, a summer concert series, future Webbstock events, and speakers. The attractive place will also be an area where students can gather, read or study. The second phase involves the construction of a Main Street-facing building that will house both a campus shop and a nationally recognized eatery.

The Brinkleys have two daughters, Kristie ('04) and Carrie ('06), who graduated from Gardner-Webb as student-athletes. David, who serves on the GWU Board of Trustees, is a former high school

football coach, and is retired from the Brinkley Financial Group investment firm.

When David saw Downs' presentation on the proposed amphitheater, he went home and shared the details with Marie. As with all their decisions, they prayed about it and decided to join the effort. "We felt like this is a worthy project that will be used quite a bit at Gardner-Webb for a lot of different events and hopefully the community of Boiling Springs and all of Cleveland County," Brinkley affirmed. "We felt like the amphitheater is going to be a good opportunity to bless a lot of people."

Guided by their faith and a commitment to help improve the lives of children and young adults, the Brinkleys have supported academic programs; gave the lead gift for the Brinkley Softball Stadium in 2015; and most recently, provided the lead donation for the Marching Bulldog Band Uniforms.

Groundbreaking for the complex was scheduled for November 30th.



Artist rendering courtesy Holland & Hamrick Architects, P.A. Design is subject to change

“This is an outstanding example of forward-thinking public-private partnership, a true win-win for our campus and for our community.”

William Downs, Gardner-Webb President

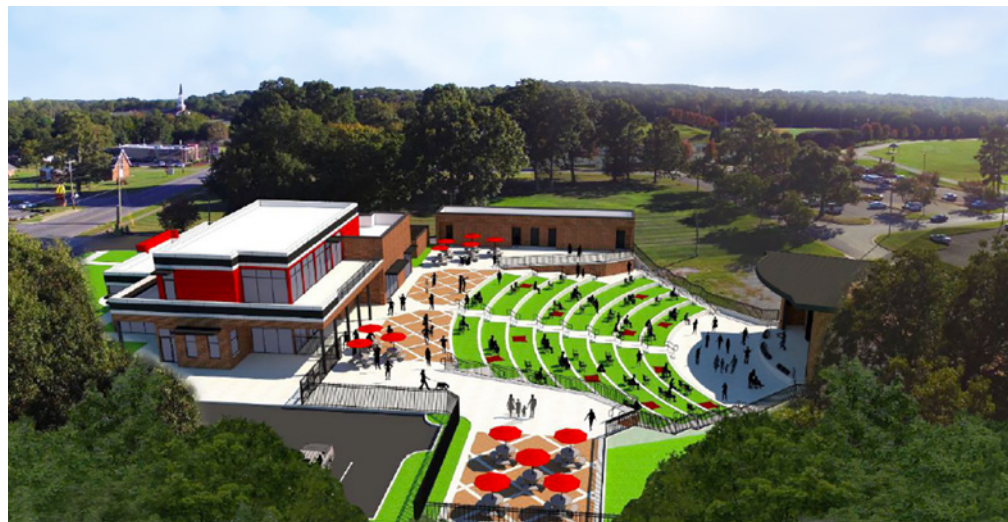
North Carolina Budget Allocates \$500K for Gardner-Webb, Boiling Springs Partnership

Funds Requested by Cleveland County Leaders to Help Construction of Outdoor Performance Complex

North Carolina’s General Assembly drafted the state’s fiscal year 2023 budget (signed into law by Governor Roy Cooper on July 11), and it included a \$500,000 allocation that will accelerate Gardner-Webb University’s collaboration with the Town of Boiling Springs. Initiated by a proposal from Cleveland County Manager Brian Epley and endorsed by the County Board of Commissioners, the funding will help support construction and operations at the University’s planned outdoor performance complex.

Citing an economic study requested by County Commissioners, County Manager Brian Epley noted that public investment into projects like the outdoor performance complex enhance population growth and increase the workforce pool. “Cleveland County Government continues to support the efforts of our municipal and outside partners,” Epley related. “The complex will offer many exciting opportunities and add significant value to our community.”

Under Gardner-Webb President William Downs, the University adopted a five-year Strategic Plan in 2020, which included a commitment to aggressively pursue grants from various external sources, including state and federal government. Since that time, Gardner-Webb has received numerous awards for academic enhancement and building improvements across campus. The new grant from the state of North Carolina



Artist rendering courtesy Holland & Hamrick Architects, P.A. Design is subject to change

will help Gardner-Webb’s aspirations to expand the performing and cultural arts, not just to benefit students but also for current and future residents from across the region. Gardner-Webb and the Town of Boiling Springs already succeeded in launching the inaugural WebbStock music festival in April 2022; with funding support from private donors and now the State, the two partners can grow opportunities for concerts, commercial activities, and dining.

“This is an outstanding example of forward-thinking public-private partnership, a true win-win for our campus and for our community,” praised Downs. “I am especially grateful to Cleveland County Manager Brian Epley and to all the members of the Board of Commissioners for spearheading the proposal that led to generous state funding. With the support of our elected representatives (Senator Ted Alexander, Representative Kelly Hastings, Speaker of the House Tim Moore), we will help bring new energy and new attractions to Boiling Springs. I look forward to working

with Town Manager Justin Longino to ensure that Gardner-Webb University continues to build momentum as a catalyst for smart growth in this place we love to call our home.”

As the complex grows, Gardner-Webb University and the Town of Boiling Springs should see an increase in what both Downs and Epley deem “cultural capital,” raising the quality of community life and helping to attract families and businesses to the area.

Longino said the town lobbied for the project with legislators, and everyone on the staff is excited to begin the work with Gardner-Webb. “We are ecstatic that this vision is being brought to reality,” Longino affirmed. “It will be a focal point for the region and complement our transformative Downtown Master Plan and help bring even more changes to Boiling Springs. It’s another great partnership for all involved and a testament to how committed Gardner-Webb, Cleveland County, and the state of North Carolina are to our town.”

Gardner-Webb Advancement Office Welcomes New Bulldog Club Executive Director

GWU Alumnus Wes Cogdill Leads Efforts to support Over 600 Student-Athletes

Gardner-Webb University's Office of Advancement announced a new executive director for the Bulldog Club. Alumnus Wes Cogdill, of Boiling Springs, brings experience as a student-athlete, educator, coach and marketing professional to the important role of supporting the University's Athletics programs.

Cogdill is no stranger to Gardner-Webb. In addition to being a 2008 alumnus, four-year letterman and Academic All-Conference on the baseball diamond, he served as a fundraiser in the GWU Office of Advancement for three years. In his new position, Cogdill reports directly to the Vice President for Advancement Nate Evans. His responsibilities include implementing and managing fundraising and membership growth strategies with a focus on supporting over 600 student-athletes and the University's 22 NCAA Division I teams.

"Wes' experience as a student-athlete and his deep appreciation for the University will serve as a valuable foundation to his success," Evans observed. "His approachability and hard work ethic will only strengthen our efforts, and Runnin' Bulldog fans from all over will appreciate his appetite for success."

Cogdill returns to his alma mater after serving as Market Development Manager at His Way At Work. His duties there included partnering with organizations and their leaders to evaluate their workplace environments. Then, he helped them focus organizational leadership through the lens of Christian principles.

"I'm pleased to have Wes rejoin our team at Gardner-Webb," shared GWU President William Downs. "He's coming into the position with eyes wide open, well aware that for us to be successful we have to grow our Bulldog Club quickly. At the D-I level, our Bulldog Club must transform into a much larger, much stronger, and much better funded organization. If you look across the NCAA landscape, the universities that produce consistent winners are invariably those that are backed by vibrant booster clubs. Wes' roots at GWU are deep. He cares about our success. I know he's ready to roll up his sleeves and get busy building something special."

Cogdill graduated from Gardner-Webb with his Bachelor of Arts in Communications with a concentration in public relations and a minor in marketing. He completed his lateral entry teacher certification in 2013 and has five years of experience as a secondary school exceptional children's teacher. During that time, he coached high school golf and



middle school baseball. Additionally, Cogdill worked in the GWU Admissions office as a counselor, managing the Student Recruitment Ambassadors and serving as Alumni Partnerships Representative.

"I am thrilled to have the opportunity to be back home with my Gardner-Webb family," Cogdill affirmed. "I recognize that athletics influences Runnin' Bulldogs to become part of the Gardner-Webb team that impacts the campus community. I am grateful for the chance to help the Runnin' Bulldogs continue building winning traditions. I am looking forward to connecting and reconnecting with alums, staff, and students as we work together to write the next chapter in the Bulldog Club. Go Dawgs!"

Cogdill and his wife, Kristen, have two children and a dog, Bentley. He is an active member of Pleasant City Church and serves as a member of the Board of Directors for Cleveland County Partnership for Children, board member and treasurer for Jim Rice Ministries, and board member of the Foothills Junior Golf Association.



Artist rendering courtesy Holland & Hamrick Architects, P.A. Design is subject to change



Baseball Program Infused by Indoor Training Facility

Donor and Loyal Baseball Fan, Bill Masters Continues to Cement His Legacy

A GWU benefactor, whose legacy of giving energized the men’s baseball program, made another significant gift to the sport he loved so much. Bill Masters, who passed away on June 25, 2022, gave the lead gift for the Masters-Melton Indoor Baseball Facility, also named in honor of his longtime friend, Patsy Melton Willis.

The remaining funds to complete the project were donated by generous friends, alumni and parents.

“Baseball alumni and friends made this possible,” commended Vice President for Advancement Nate Evans. “No university capital dollars were used in the funding of this project, and it shows the transformational impact that philanthropy can have on a program and the University.”

The Masters-Melton Indoor Baseball Facility offers space where the Diamond Dawgs can continue to practice in any weather. It provides a development

tool for current players and will aid in recruiting high-caliber student-athletes. Located near Moss Stadium, the facility will contain a weight room, a multi-functional turf area that allows for hitting, pitching and fielding practice, nutrition center, player lounge, and office.

“Having a space available when we have inclement weather is a game changer,” asserted Baseball Head Coach Jim Chester. “24/7 access to a facility that focuses on player development takes our program and recruiting to the next level.”

Moreover, the Masters-Melton Indoor Baseball Facility will enhance camps hosted by the baseball program and can be rented out to other youth programs.

Chester added, “The Masters-Melton Indoor Baseball Facility again shows Bill Masters and Patsy Melton Willis’ commitment to our program and a true student-athlete experience. Also, this was a team effort! Our program, university’s Advancement Office, Gardner-Webb

baseball alumni and friends turned a dream into a reality. The facility will be a daily reminder of Bill Masters’ love for Gardner-Webb baseball.”

Masters, a native of Easley, S.C., began his relationship with Gardner-Webb in the 1970s when he worked as production manager at Cone Mills in Cliffside, N.C. Though he wasn’t a GWU grad, he saw the importance of investing in GWU and athletics. He recognized the great benefits of collegiate athletics, and his support also extended to the tennis program.

In 2008, the GWU baseball field was named in honor of Masters for his generous support to GWU baseball. Then in 2011, the University named the Bill and Sue Masters Athletic Facility, which houses baseball and tennis offices, in recognition of their continued generosity.

Groundbreaking for the new facility took place on October 29th.



PACE Program Named for Johnny L. and Shirley P. Searight

A poor child raised on a farm taught himself to play basketball and earned a scholarship to college. Now, that child, the Rev. Johnny L. Searight, and his wife, Shirley P. Searight, alumni of Gardner-Webb University, have created educational opportunities for students in similar situations. With the help of the GWU Advancement team, they have established the Searight Leadership Certificate (SLC) and the Searight Multicultural Leadership Award (SMLA). Funded by a generous endowment, their gift also provides support and naming of the existing Professional and Continuing Education (PACE) program to the Searight PACE Program.

“This significant contribution from the Searights secures the future of our PACE program, which offers courses to enhance the skill levels of professionals ranging from entry level to mid-

“This significant contribution from the Searights secures the future of our PACE program, which offers courses to enhance the skill levels of professionals ranging from entry level to mid-management, executive, and beyond,”

Nate Evans, Vice President for Advancement

management, executive, and beyond,” said Vice President for Advancement Nate Evans. “Additionally, the certificate program and award created for undergraduate students will prepare them for leadership and service in their professional careers and in their personal lives.”

Searight, who has served various churches in the area for more than four decades, came to Gardner-Webb in 1973. He helped the Runnin’ Bulldogs achieve 48 wins over two seasons. He earned multiple honors, including first-team NAIA All-District 26, and was inducted into the GWU Athletics Hall of Fame in 2019. He

received a Bachelor of Science degree in physical education in 1975 and a Master of Science in pastoral care and counseling in 2009. He has served as pastor of Jones Tabernacle CME Church in Lawndale, N.C., for four years, and before that, he served 20 years at Piney Ridge CME Church in Union Mills, N.C. He has served on

the Christian Service Organization board at Gardner-Webb and currently serves on the PACE advisory board.

The Searights were married while he was at Gardner-Webb. He began pastoring his first church in 1978. Shirley graduated from Gardner-Webb in 1977 with a degree in business administration and a concentration in education. She was in education for 32 years, in the classroom for 24 years and in testing for eight years, all at Crest High School in Shelby, N.C.

The Searights wanted to do something meaningful and lasting for students in need. “We had some things in mind that we would like to help students who had been poverty-stricken,” he said. By helping underprivileged students, the Searights are paying forward the help he received to attend college. He also believes they are following the commands of Jesus in Matthew 25 to provide for the “least of these.”





Alumnus of the Year, Patrick Woody

From SGA President, to Counterterrorism Analyst, to White House Briefer

Distinguished alumnus Patrick Woody, '03, has always had a distinct fascination with history and politics. Election season was like the Super Bowl for him. His mother took him with her to the voting booth every year on Election Day, instilling in him a sense of civic responsibility. Early in high school, Woody decided that he wanted to pursue an education in law studies.

However, the decision to begin his education at Gardner-Webb University did not come about in a traditional fashion. "I like to say Gardner-Webb came into the picture by divine accident," Woody said.

During a Christian college fair exhibit at his high school, Woody met a Gardner-Webb admissions counselor. Initially reluctant to apply for a spot at GWU, Woody was eventually convinced to give it a shot, and to submit his application for the University Fellows scholarship as well. Unbeknownst to Woody, the admissions counselor was in regular contact with his mother over the next several weeks to discuss how her son would be a great fit at Gardner-Webb University.

Woody won a scholarship, but still not entirely convinced, he decided to go for one more tour of GWU, at his mother's encouragement. Sitting in

on a Constitutional Law class with the former long-time professor and chair of the Social Sciences Department, Dr. Barry Hambright, Woody was the only person who could answer a particular question about a Supreme Court case. Woody remembers that Hambright said something along the lines of, "A senior in high school just answered this question. None of you did. Maybe you need to be taking notes from him." This moment left an indelible mark on Woody, and later in the day, he realized that Gardner-Webb was the place for him.

"Looking back on that now, 20 years removed from Gardner-Webb, I'm like,

“Be willing to speak truth to power. I remember there were times that I said things to President Trump, President Obama, and Vice President Biden that they may not have wanted to hear, but they were the things that were the truth.”

Patrick Woody, '03, BA in History and Political Science

“Yeah, I would’ve hated going anywhere else,” Woody said. “I had incredible friendships that came out of my time at Gardner-Webb. I learned the importance of service. I knew it coming into Gardner-Webb, but it deepened in me, that I was going to work toward something that contributed more to others than just myself.”

He worked as a student tour guide and admissions associate, and was elected SGA President. As a student in the social sciences department, Woody was exposed to a diverse array of political opinions. The instructors allowed and even encouraged debate and the exchange of opposing ideas. “It is easier for us to meet each other in the gray, than stand so solidly in the black and white and never ever try to learn what the other person is thinking, and what drives them and what leads them and motivates them,” Woody said.

Additionally, Woody co-hosted a political TV show which was recorded on campus and aired on local cable that allowed for a free space of expressing opinions. Called “Politics in Black and White,” students and faculty members with viewpoints from all sides of the political spectrum made appearances on the show, which sparked engaging conversations and dialogue.

A primary life lesson that Woody takes from his time at Gardner-Webb is to, “Serve the greater good.” Also citing the importance of maintaining a sense of humility, Woody said, “Let your work speak for itself... and that’s what happened with my career. People recognized the work I did. And it gave me opportunities and opened doors that I



President Barack Obama and staff listen as Patrick Woody, at right, offers briefing

never would have believed I would have been able to walk through.”

After graduating from GWU with a BA in History and Political Science, Woody spent some time working with a tech nonprofit and civic education nonprofit. He was recommended through a mutual connection to apply for a position with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), and soon accepted an analyst role. After some time with DHS, he transferred to the National Counterterrorism Center as part of a team that covered online and internet-based terrorism. One particular assessment he wrote caught the attention of The White House, which resulted in a six-month project working under the Obama Administration.

An opportunity for Woody within the CIA soon arose, in which he continued to focus on internet-based terrorism. The Director of National Intelligence requested a brief from Woody on the dark

web, and concluded that President Barack Obama needed to hear this information directly from the source. Woody was tasked with editing an hour-long brief into an eight-minute piece to be delivered to Obama, Vice President Joe Biden, and the National Security Council in the Oval Office. This experience opened up a wide range of other duties for Woody to carry out. In the ensuing months and years, he was frequently traveling across the country and overseas to brief government officials on numerous issues. “Because I was briefing so much, it became like second-nature to me,” Woody said.

Through these networks, Woody became the interim briefer for the Secretary of Homeland Security John Kelly with the Trump Administration. When this temporary engagement was fulfilled, Kelly told Woody to circle back around to apply to become his permanent briefer if the position was available in

Since 1957, the Gardner-Webb Gallery of Distinguished Alumni has honored those who have made significant contributions in their fields of service and the communities in which they serve. The 2022 honorees are Kitty Hamrick Hoyle and Patrick Woody.

the future. Kelly was soon named White House Chief of Staff, and Woody became his full-time briefer in November 2017. This role was usually on a one-year rotation, but Woody was continually asked to return. He essentially became President Donald Trump's backup briefer during this time period as well. Woody remained the full-time briefer for several White House Chiefs of Staff until January 2021.

"The impact and the ability to do good makes me motivated to wake up each day," Woody said. He also remarked that it was crucial to be candid and realistic, no matter the audience. "Be willing to speak truth to power. I remember there were times that I said things to President Trump, President Obama, and Vice President Biden that they may not have wanted to hear, but they were the things that were the truth."

Woody was very aware of his position as an advocate for the average U.S. citizen. Describing this outlook, he said, "One of the things I always told my chief of staff and their deputies: 'I'm going to tell you everything you need to know, everything you think you need to know, everything you don't need to know. And then some things I'm going to tell you that are outside of intelligence, but are critically important for you to know, because you live in a bubble, and you need to know what the average person is thinking.'"

That frame of mind also lends a great deal to his attitude on retaining a sense of respect and empathy for all people. Professional roles are temporary, but, "It's who you are as a person that never changes," Woody said. "You have to acknowledge that deep intrinsic value of

each person... as you move throughout your career and throughout your life, value everyone regardless of what they can offer you, because what they offer you shouldn't matter. You should treat them with the same degree of respect that you would want to be treated."

And, above all, Woody emphasizes the significance of human relationships and spending time with your loved ones. "Even as you move throughout the world and things get really good professionally for you, take time for your family, because those are the things that people will remember after you die," he asserted. "Your career could be gone tomorrow, so value those things that you really don't have a chance to get back."

Written by Thomas Manning '22



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Did you know that Gardner-Webb students come from 44 states and 45 international countries ?

Mentors, Barrier Breakers and Second Chances

Growing up in Boiling Springs, N.C., Distinguished Alumna, Kitty Hamrick Hoyle's backyard was Gardner-Webb University. The youngest daughter of Wellington "Wellie" and Margie McCluney Hamrick, Hoyle remembers swimming in the GWU pool and attending church at Boiling Springs Baptist, which once stood where Dover Chapel is now.

"I care about Gardner-Webb," Hoyle affirmed. "It is very much like home to me."

Her father started his precast concrete business in 1963 less than a mile from campus, and some of the land owned by her great-grandfather Noah Hamrick now belongs to the University. The Hamricks also supported GWU athletics; her father's cousin, "Red" Jack Jolley, played football and is in the Gardner-Webb Athletics Hall of Fame. Her mother was a nurse at Royster Memorial Hospital (now a residence hall). Her sisters (Nancy Wages and Lou Ann Slater) and cousin (Ann Lancaster) graduated from Gardner-Webb when it was a junior college. And, Lou Ann helped with fundraising to build the not-for-profit Crawley Memorial Hospital (now the College of Health Sciences).

Hoyle also received a bachelor's degree in business administration from Gardner-Webb, but not until 2015. When she started on the path to earn her bachelor's, she had been president of her father's business, Wellington Hamrick Inc., for two decades. In an industry dominated by men, she had proven herself and gained the respect of customers and leaders in the field.

Hoyle is thankful for her parents and others in her life who guided her and gave her a chance to develop her skills and strengths.

After high school, she went to college to pursue her interest in art, but at the end of her second year felt she wasn't on the right path. She withdrew from



Alumna of the Year, Kitty Hamrick Hoyle

college in the 1970s and came back home. Her cousin, Gerald Lipscomb of Lipscomb Signs in Forest City, N.C., offered her a job, but more importantly, he was a mentor who shared common sense advice about networking and making an impression. She remembered what Lipscomb said after seeing her at an auction with her dad. "He told me, 'Your dad was talking to these men and

you just turned around and walked off,' and he said, 'Don't do that. You need to get in that conversation and stay in that conversation,'" she related. "So he really turned a lightbulb on for me."

Eventually, she came to work for her father. "I enjoyed being outside, and my mind and my dad's mind worked in a similar fashion," she reflected. "What was a good strength for him also turned

“I care about Gardner-Webb. It is very much like home to me.”

Kitty Hamrick Hoyle, '15, BS in Business Administration

out to be good for me. Dad was a welder and built everything from scratch. He had friends who were very resourceful—electricians and plumbers and all of these guys who were part of that greatest generation.”

She continued, “I was the parts runner, so when they built something they would say, ‘Go get a cylinder block bearing or this shaft.’ I would go to Dixie Industrial and wait for roller bearings and solenoids. I had so much fun doing that.”

Her father purchased two ready-mix concrete trucks in 1985, and she learned to make concrete. “For decades, the community and customers who were well versed in the trade, taught me about concrete, and what they needed to have good job performance; they put us on the map,” she asserted. “One of those good customers was Raleigh Humphries, who had worked all over several states. I am so grateful for those people, so I’m a product of this very immediate area.”

When she took over the company in 1989, her office was near the road and easily accessible to people in the community. “Those friends of mom and dad were very generous to me,” she acknowledged. “They used to just stop and come in and ask questions and talk to me.”

In 1993, she married Marvin Hoyle of Lawndale, owner of Marvin Hoyle Construction. Their talents and strengths complement each other. “Marvin respects my opinion, and we collaborate well together,” she praised. “His partnership has been instrumental in the success of the company. And he gave me the license to focus on work.”



Marvin helped design and construct a new building in Boiling Springs, and managed the project in 2004, when the company expanded to open a ready-mix plant in Shelby, N.C.

Kitty was recognized in 2005 with The ATHENA Leadership Award®, which is presented to a woman or man for professional excellence, community service and for actively assisting women in their attainment of professional excellence and leadership skills. She was honored and humbled to be included in this group of Cleveland County leaders.

Because of Hoyle’s confident demeanor, many people were surprised to discover she had not finished her degree at that time. “During a

conversation with Shannon Kennedy, GWU alumna, and then vice president at Cleveland Community College (CCC), Hoyle learned that her old college credits were still valid. Kennedy guided her through the enrollment process, and Hoyle earned her associate’s degree in 2011. Standing in line at the CCC graduation ceremony, the woman next to her explained that she was already taking classes at Gardner-Webb and highly recommended the Degree Completion Program.

Hoyle thought about what the woman said and decided the timing was right to pursue her bachelor’s degree at Gardner-Webb. “It was really helpful to have an advisor who knew me and my objective,” she stated. “Everything I learned was so useful at work. As I sat through those classes, whatever the topic was, I always applied it in my mind to my work.”

While the concepts were immediately helpful in running the business, she was also grateful for her education when she sold the ready-mix business in 2018 and the rest of the business in July 2022, retiring after 33 years at the helm. “To put together everything they wanted me to do and talk to them in an intelligent manner—that would have been harder to do without some of the formal education I received at Gardner-Webb,” Hoyle asserted.

Now, she is honored to serve on the GWU Board of Trustees, and through the years, she has served on several boards in the community: Cleveland County Arts Council, Broad River Greenway, Life Enrichment Center, Cleveland Community College (Gov. Beverly Purdue’s appointee), Isothermal

Community Block Grant Board, and Carolinas Ready Mix Concrete Association Board.

Her parents instilled in her the importance of giving back to the community. She has established three scholarships for Gardner-Webb students in memory of her parents and cousin, Elizabeth Ann Lancaster. The Elizabeth Ann Lancaster Scholarship is presented to a Cleveland County student who intends to pursue a career as a teacher in the public school system. “Ann, our older cousin, was a nearby fixture in our extended family,” Hoyle shared.

“She always wanted the best for girls and gave her love without the need for anything in return. She was a dedicated teacher for 41 years in Cleveland County and gave many hours of service to

Boiling Springs Baptist Church in music and education positions.”

The Margie McCluney Hamrick Nursing Scholarship salutes Hoyle’s mother; she was the only child in her family to take professional training, graduating from the Shelby Hospital School of Nursing in the Cadet Corps in 1948. Margie spent most of her career as an R.N. on the staff at Royster Memorial Hospital in Boiling Springs and escorted the first patient into the new community-funded Crawley Hospital in the 1970s. When she was in her 60s, Margie traveled as a medical professional to Togo, Africa.

The Wellington Hamrick Scholarship is awarded to first-year female students in Cleveland County who plan to study math and science,

engineering, architecture, construction-related or construction trades, or technical programs related to construction materials.

“Dad was involved in many businesses over his lifetime usually more than one at a time,” Hoyle reflected. “He had a wonderful sense of and love for the beauty of nature. He cared for his community and church and served both in a quiet way. He was my mentor when my life wasn’t going so well. He allowed me to have a place to work and to grow. He restored some of my self-esteem and taught me to be forgiving and appreciative of others. Looking back on it now, I realize how keenly he perceived what I needed and how expertly he filled my needs and directed me toward the light.”

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Call to Crisis

Drs. Adam and Marielle Combs' Search to End Human Trafficking Leads to Ukrainian Assistance

When Drs. Adam and Marielle Combs, of Goldsboro, N.C., heard about the needs of Ukrainian refugees and orphans, they didn't hesitate to help. Working with the anti-human trafficking organization, Exitus, these 2021 alumni of Gardner-Webb University—and adjuncts in the Hunt School of Nursing—utilized their nursing and administrative skills to care for Ukrainian families in desperate need.

Adam explained that Exitus has a team that works with adoption agencies and orphanages in Ukraine. People in the United States adopt the children, and Exitus recruits nurses to

fly back with them, because sometimes the children have life-threatening medical conditions.

Less than two weeks after Russia invaded Ukraine in March 2022, the couple accepted their first mission and were on a plane headed to Romania. Then, just a few months later, Marielle helped an American couple bring their adopted Ukrainian child home to the United States. Marielle now serves as the Nursing Education Director for Exitus, and has been appointed to the advisory board for PBJ Learning, a company that provides educational products to fight trafficking.

On that second trip with Exitus in the summer of 2022, Marielle flew with the adoptive parents and another team member to Poland to retrieve a non-verbal disabled child. Despite the dangerous nature of the trip, Marielle went in faith.

"I believe in the mission... and knew God would guide all of my steps and would open and close doors," said Marielle, a native of the Republic of Panama. "When I was a child, the United States invaded Panama. I heard the bombs, helicopters, and automatic weapons during the night when the invasion started and days after. I survived, and my heart can relate to the peril the Ukrainians are going through to a degree. If I was not willing to go, who would have been? I had to step up."

A ground team crossed the border into Ukraine to retrieve the child from

the orphanage. In Poland, Marielle provided medical care to the child, and the team waited for the little girl's visa to be granted. Within 10 days, the couple was on a plane headed to America, bringing their child home after a two-year adoption process.

As Marielle provided medical support to the child, she witnessed the adoptive parents' immediate love for their new daughter. "When the plane landed on U.S. soil, the child became an American citizen," Marielle stated. "Normally, when one goes through the citizenship ceremony, the pledge of allegiance is recited for the first time as a citizen. I held the child and said her first pledge of allegiance with her as it was a very exciting moment for me to experience with her. I became an American citizen in the fifth grade, and I remember my very first pledge as an American citizen, and I wanted to do the same for her."

Looking back, Adam and Marielle understand that they were led all along their journey to be exactly where they needed to be...and when. Marielle has been a nurse for more than 20 years and a nurse educator for 13. Adam entered the nursing field in 2013 and began teaching in 2017. Their education equipped them to make a difference in the lives of

Ukrainian families fleeing their homes.

"I know it sounds cliché, but really God nudged me towards human trafficking," explained Marielle. "And this was two years before I even knew I wanted to go for my DNP (Doctor of Nursing Practice). I just knew that I was interested in human trafficking, but I didn't know anything about it or how I could plug in."

Then, in 2019, she and Adam entered the DNP program at Gardner-Webb University. When it came time to choose a topic for her dissertation, Marielle mentioned human trafficking, and Dean Tracy Arnold of the Hunt School of Nursing thought it was a great topic.

Her dissertation was titled, "Human Trafficking: Empowering Healthcare Providers and Community Partners as Advocates for Victims." The unique topic caught the attention of nursing educators, and Marielle was invited to present at two national conferences. The paper was also published in the "Journal of Holistic Nursing," the official journal of the American Holistic Nurses Association, which focuses on advancing the science and practice of holistic nursing and healthcare.

Because Marielle is also a nursing instructor at Wayne Community College in Goldsboro, the college wrote a story about her accomplishments, which was picked up by the

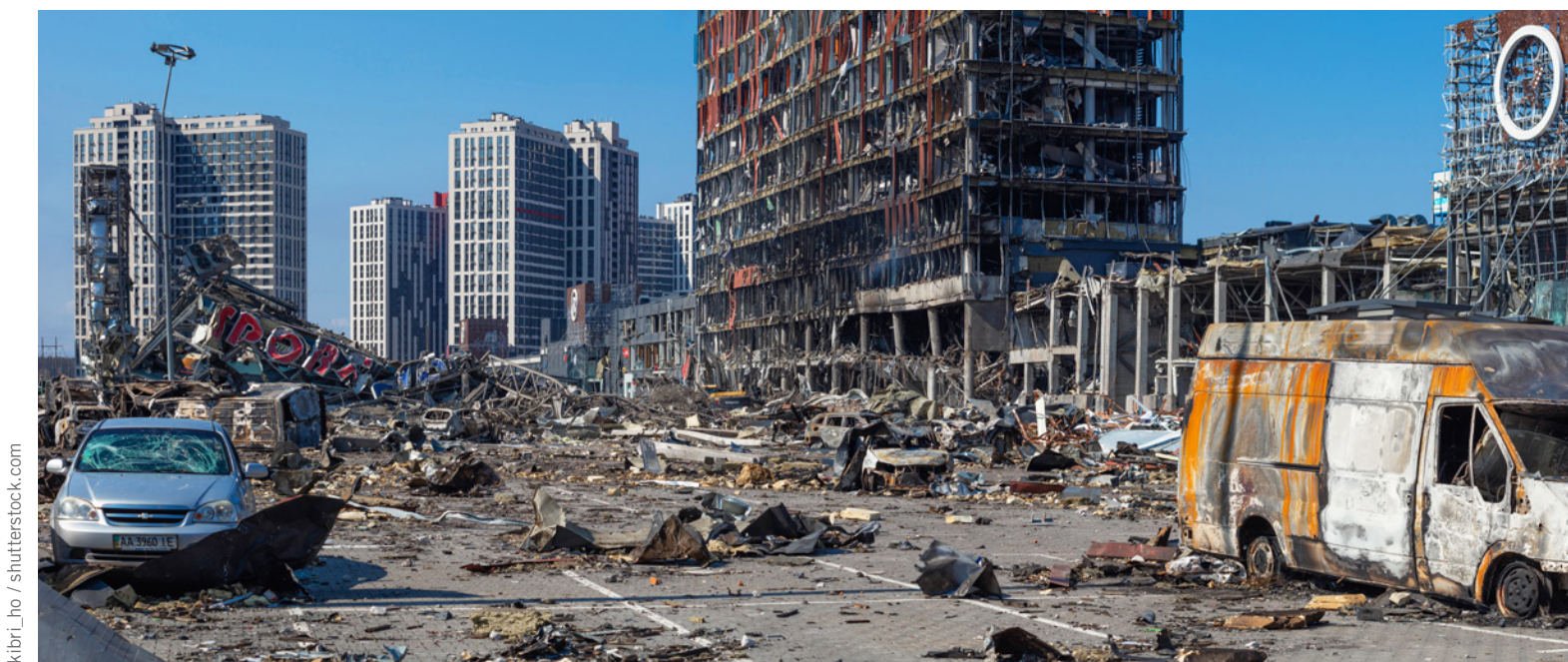
media. Incidentally, Adam is an instructor at Wayne Community College, as well.

"A local doctor reached out to me and said, 'I'm in a group for human trafficking and I would love to talk with you and see if there is any way we can partner,'" Marielle related. "We met with them on a Monday and on Wednesday we were loading a truck up for Kentucky for tornado victims, and all of a sudden, we are going to the border of Ukraine to get orphans. It happened very quickly."

On that first trip, they landed in Romania—where the temperatures were below freezing—and waited for the ground team to rescue the children. They thought everything was in place for a fluid transfer, yet the team was unable to work it out with the orphanages and had to leave the children.

Despite the disappointment, the Exitus team helped in other ways. They answered a call for help from a church in Palanca, Moldova, trying to assist refugees at an unofficial border crossing. They were asked to do a needs assessment of the small clinic, and because of their Gardner-Webb DNP classes, the couple knew exactly what to do.

"God made the doors open," Adam concluded. "His faithfulness and goodness in all of this was so evident."





Philanthropist Jim Sheehan and Gardner-Webb Alumna Summer Hess walk through the Community Building Campus in Spokane, Wash.

Building Community

Fulbright Fellow Summer Hess, '06, Motivated by Exploring Inquiry Through Critical Thinking

Summer Hess, a 2006 alumna of Gardner-Webb University, has actively promoted the concept of community since her days on campus. Not just a word to describe a place on a map, her goal is to create a sense of community by bringing people together, building strong relationships, and impacting lives in a positive way.

She remembers hosting a forum on community at one of the shops in Boiling Springs. "It wasn't affiliated with anything in particular other than I wanted to get some of the leaders who I really respected together to talk about why building community matters," Hess reflected. "It's a pretty natural evolution that later in my life, I use the English degree I earned

at Gardner-Webb to edit a book on building community."

Her new book, "One Block Revolution: 20 Years of Community Building," honors a group of diverse changemakers in Spokane, Wash. It contains the stories of 20 people who have participated in the Community Building Campus, started by philanthropist Jim Sheehan.

During her four years on the GWU campus, Hess said she began a personal path of inquiry. An English major, her professors engaged students in critical thinking by offering a place to discuss difficult topics and ask hard questions. "English is the best subject to study because you get to read about everything," she reflected. "Literary criticism is

historically informed and so you have to deeply understand history and social movements and everything that's influenced how we live and understand the world today."

Hess earned her Master of Fine Arts in non-fiction writing from Eastern Washington University in Spokane. From 2011-2012, she was a Fulbright Fellow in Chile. Her husband is also a GWU alumnus, Matt Jones, Class of 2009, who was a Fulbright Fellow in New Zealand. They loved the Spokane area and decided to stay there after graduate school.

One of her first jobs was working as an executive assistant to Sheehan. "I quickly grew in my role and became a project manager for the six-building campus,"

Hess shared. “I ran a lot of programs, a professional development series for non-profits and a small business loan program for the businesses that were incubated in the commons building.”

She worked at the Community Building Campus for six years and is now a social



Summer Hess, '06

impact advisor with Measure Meant, a women-owned consultancy. “We help organizations that care about equitable and sustainable business practices

analyze opportunities, implement change, and sustain their impact,” she described. (measurepnw.com)

Sheehan asked her to edit a book about what the Community Building had accomplished, and she was happy to help. She is donating 100% of her royalties from the book to the Community Building Foundation, which provides grants to non-profits with creative solutions for a more vibrant, just and sustainable city. “I’ve never seen one person invest in a single city block with so much intention, enthusiasm and real resources,” Hess observed. “Jim’s story is super interesting. He was a public defender for more than 20 years and some of the higher profile death penalty cases in the state of Washington were assigned to him.”

He received an unexpected inheritance and decided to put his money to work for people and the planet. He purchased and renovated a cluster of six buildings in a dilapidated corner of downtown Spokane and repurposed them. They have served as an interdisciplinary hub where grassroots leaders run campaigns, build coalitions, host meetings, train activists, and transform their city. Sheehan and his family foundation are committed to investing into the Community Building Campus. “His mantra has been for a long time: the antidote is community, so if we



bring people together, if we build strong relationships, if we trust each other, we can do a tremendous amount of work together,” Hess explained. “He put his resources out there and got out of the way so that everybody else could do the hard work of building community.”

The people who contributed to the book represent the dynamics and complexities of community building. “It is one of the greatest pleasures of my life to capture

the impacts and help tell that story,” Hess said. “We hope it tells the story of how intentionally investing in relationships over time can affect social change in the long-term and those effects can be felt outside the block on the city level and in some ways even on the regional and state level.”

The book is available on Amazon, Barnes and Noble, Latah Books and other retailers.



The Cycle of Life

Chandler Redmond Hits His Way to History

Gardner-Webb University alumnus Chandler Redmond, '19, made baseball history as only the second documented player to ever complete the home run cycle.

Currently playing with the Springfield (Mo.) Cardinals, a Double-A affiliate of the Saint Louis

Cardinals, Redmond's record-breaking night came in an August 10, 2022 matchup against the Amarillo Sod Poodles. In the Cardinals' 21-4 victory, Redmond hit home runs in four consecutive innings: a two-run shot in the fifth inning, a grand slam in the sixth, a solo homer in the

seventh, and finally a three-run blast in the eighth. This was the first time that a minor league player hit for the home run cycle since Tyrone Horne—also of the Saint Louis Cardinals' affiliate—did it in 1998. Redmond finished the night 5-6, with a total of 11 RBIs.

"I hit the ball, and just kind of stood there and watched it, and then I pointed right into the dugout at the guys ... and they're just going nuts."

Chandler Redmond, '19

"The grand slam is the hardest one to get out of the way," Redmond acknowledged. "So once I hit that I was like, you know, 'Maybe I can do it.' But, you know, it was only my second time of having a multiple home run game in my pro career. So I was like, 'No, I can't get that thought in my head or else it's never going to happen.'"

After hitting his third home run in the following inning, Redmond added that the possibility of hitting for the cycle really began to set in. Initially, his teammates in the dugout did not even realize the trajectory of his stat line. "People, after my third homer, they started, 'Dude, you have three homers, that's crazy,'" he related. "And I was like, 'Yeah dude, it's crazy, but get this—I don't know if you guys have been paying attention to what I've been doing, but I could hit for the home run cycle, I've just got to hit a 3-run shot.'" Redmond said that his teammates were still not convinced it was actually going to happen. "You know they're laughing, hyping me up, like, 'Yeah, you can do it!' Knowing, odds are, it's probably not going to happen."

When he approached the plate for his at-bat in the eighth inning, Redmond noted he had an internal conversation with himself. "I was like, 'Alright Chandler, you can't blow this.' I was just telling myself, 'Don't get too big, don't try and force the issue. But man, if you get your pitch, you can't miss it.'" Redmond reflected. "So fortunately, I didn't miss it. You know, I don't even know if I did it, I think it was all God. He put the pieces in place."

As for his teammates' reaction, Redmond said, "I hit the ball, and just kind of stood there and watched it, and then I pointed right into the dugout at the guys that I was talking to, and they're just going nuts."



A native of Middletown, Md., Redmond hit for a school record 50 home runs during his career at Gardner-Webb. He was drafted in the 32nd round of the 2019 MLB Draft by the Cardinals, but the road to get there was wrought with obstacles. During his time playing high school baseball at Georgetown Prep in Maryland, Redmond dealt with a case of the "yips*." Talking about this mental block, Redmond said, "It's not physical, it's just all in your head. And so I couldn't really throw a baseball. If you were 15 feet away from me, I wouldn't be able to hit your chest more than once in a row. It was crazy, it was almost like *Space Jam*, where The Monstars take your superpowers... And it just [happened] overnight, I couldn't throw a baseball. And I couldn't understand it."

Redmond's high school coach, Chris Rodriguez, had a connection with former Gardner-Webb Head Baseball Coach Rusty Stroupe. Rodriguez reached out to Stroupe about Redmond's potential.

"Coach Stroupe sent out his recruiting coordinator to come watch me play one game," Redmond said. "I was hitting the ball really well... And he ended up offering me a scholarship of about \$1,000... So of course I took it right away, it was the only offer that I had. And it was to play Division I college baseball down South—I don't know what more you could ask for."

Discussing his pride in having a strong work ethic, Redmond championed his former hitting coach at Gardner-Webb, Ross Steedley. "We connected really well, right from the get-go," Redmond said. "I woke up every day ready to get to work and I was just so excited to be able to get that opportunity, because I had the yips (in high school), and I didn't think that I was going to play college baseball. So that was just all God's work, God's plan. And He's just put so many great people in my life."

Speaking more of his time at Gardner-Webb with Stroupe and Steedley, Redmond talked about their steadfast examples of reflecting Christ in their daily lives, representing the University's motto of "For God and Humanity." Redmond's wedding ceremony was even officiated by Steedley.

For young people looking to pursue a dream in their life, Redmond talked about the importance of working diligently and maintaining strong roots of faith. "I would just say, don't let anybody tell you that you can't," he shared. "The only person that's going to decide that is you. Whatever you want to do, whether it's something in academics, something in sports, if you can go at it with everything that you have, keeping [God] first, He's going to open so many doors."

Written by Thomas Manning '22

* *Yips* is a term coined by sports writers to describe when an athlete's skills are affected by stress.

ATHLETICS HALL OF FAME 2021-22

Gardner-Webb inducted Nine athletes into the Athletics Hall of Fame Classes of 2021 and 2022

The Gardner-Webb University Athletics Hall of Fame (HOF) is established to honor athletes, coaches, leaders, and builders of Runnin' Bulldogs sports. The Hall of Fame also serves to preserve the historical highlights and outstanding contributions made to the University's athletic programs. GWU has honored Hall of Fame inductees since 1991. Each Hall of Fame member is presented with a commemorative plaque and official HOF ring. The name and record of achievements for each member is also on permanent display in the Lutz-Yelton Convocation Center.

THE 2021 CLASS

The 2021 class included Daniel Cooke (Baseball and Football, 2002-2006), Daniel Elliott (Wrestling, 2001-2006), Tyler Kettering (Soccer, 2003-2006) and Evgeny Slesarev (Tennis, 2006-2010).

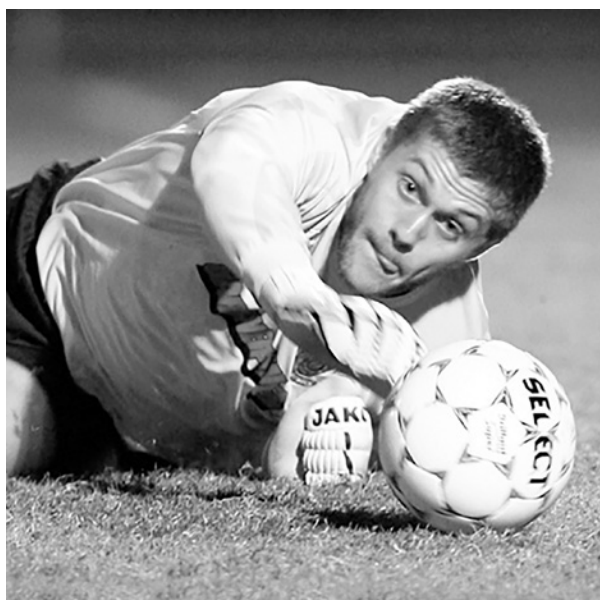


Two-sport star **Daniel Cooke** started 251 games in football and baseball during his time in Boiling Springs. Cooke was named first-team All-Big South Conference in football four times while starting at safety. The Football Gazette tabbed Cooke a third-team All-American in 2006. He was a member of the 2006 Atlantic Sun Conference All-Freshman Team in baseball, earned a spot on the A-Sun's 2008 All-Tournament Team and was a 2009 All-Big South selection on the diamond. Cooke started all four years in both sports. On the gridiron, he finished with 282 tackles, 12.0 tackles for loss and eight interceptions. He also broke up 21 passes. As a freshman he led the team with 99 total tackles, becoming the first rookie in a decade to do so. In baseball, Cooke finished his 207-game career with a strong .324 batting average to go with 17 home runs, 145 RBIs, 91 walks and 94 stolen bases. He ranks in the top-10 in program history in 12 different offensive categories, and is the career leader in steals, walks and runs scored. Cooke remains the only man in Big South Conference history to earn All-Conference honors in both football and baseball.



One of the most decorated wrestlers in Gardner-Webb program history, **Daniel Elliott** earned his spot in Runnin' Bulldog lore with hard work, sweat and dedication to his sport. Elliott got better each season on the mat, wrapping up his time with a school-record 108 career victories. He won 20 matches as a freshman and, after a redshirt season, won 21 matches. He posted 27 wins as a junior and earned his first trip to the NCAA Division I Wrestling Championships at 149 pounds. Elliott established new school marks for single-season wins and consecutive wins as a senior, culminating with a 39-2 regular season mark in 2005-2006. That dominance allowed Elliott to earn a final top-10 ranking going into the postseason. He qualified for the NCAA Championships again and won his second East Regional title at 149 pounds. The Fuquay-Varina, N.C., native was also named Regional Most Outstanding Wrestler as a senior in 2006. He led Gardner-Webb for the third season in a row with 84 takedowns and finished with a team-high eight pins. Elliott finished third that season at the prestigious Southern Scuffle in Chattanooga, Tenn., knocking off several nationally-ranked opponents. Elliott has served as head wrestling coach for his alma mater since 2012 and has been honored as Southern Conference Co-Coach of the Year (2014-15).

Tyler Kettering's nine saves in the magical NCAA Tournament win over University of Alabama at Birmingham in 2006 ranks second in Atlantic Sun history for a national tournament match. Following his Gardner-Webb collegiate playing career, Kettering went on to play professionally for the Wilmington Hammerheads of the USL (2006-2007) and the MLS Chicago Fire (2008-2009).



A stalwart who became one of Gardner-Webb soccer's first stars at the Division I level, goalkeeper **Tyler Kettering** left his mark all over the program's record book before his four-year career was complete. The Xenia, Ohio, native led the nation in saves twice and set Gardner-Webb and Atlantic Sun Conference records with 446 career stops. Kettering set a Gardner-Webb single-season mark in 2004 with 134 stops, his first time atop the national statistics list. He followed with 116 stops in 2006 to climb back atop the national stats sheet. Kettering topped the 100-save mark three different times during his 73-game career. He posted 15.0 shutouts during that career, which ranks second in Gardner-Webb history and ninth in the A-Sun record book. Kettering earned second-team All-Atlantic Sun Conference honors in 2004 and 2006, and was a member of the league's All-Freshman team after posting 113 saves in 2003. He also earned All-Tournament honors from the A-Sun in both 2003 and 2006. His nine saves in the magical NCAA Tournament win over University of Alabama at Birmingham in 2006 ranks second in Atlantic Sun history for a national tournament match. Following his collegiate playing career, Kettering went on to play professionally for the Wilmington Hammerheads of the USL (2006-2007) and the MLS Chicago Fire (2008-2009).



Legendary tennis player **Evgeny Slesarev** excelled at every step of his career at Gardner-Webb, and he finished his four years in Boiling Springs with 116 total wins on the court. The native of Krasnoyarsk, Russia, won 70 singles matches during that stretch and remains one of the most dominant players to step on a tennis court in a Gardner-Webb uniform. Those 70 victories established a new school record, as did his 46 doubles wins. In 2010, Slesarev posted an 18-3 overall record, including a 5-1 mark in league play, to earn Big South Conference Men's Tennis Player of the Year honors. He set a new school season record with 21 singles wins as a junior, going 21-5 at the No. 1 position. He earned All-Conference honors in two different conferences, twice in the Big South (2009 and 2010) and twice in the Atlantic Sun Conference (2007 and 2008). Slesarev was the first male student-athlete in Gardner-Webb history to earn Player of the Year honors from the Big South Conference.

THE 2022 CLASS

In honor of the impact of Title IX on collegiate athletics at Gardner-Webb, the 2022 class celebrated women trailblazers, pioneers and record-breakers. This list included Christa Fullwood (Softball, 2008-2010), Emily Harrellson (Cross Country/Softball, 1994-98), Dominique Hudson (Basketball, 2007-2011), and Phyllis Littlefield Moore (Basketball/Volleyball, 1975-79).



Christa Fullwood ranks in the top-five in Runnin’ Bulldogs softball history in total bases, RBIs, doubles and batting average. Her .460 batting average from 2009 is the second-best in program history, and she finished her career with a .380 batting average, 31 doubles, 20 homeruns, and 107 RBIs. Fullwood was a two-time All-Big South Conference first team honoree, two-time NCCSIA All-State recipient, and a 2010 second-team NFCA All-Region (Mid-Atlantic) selection.



Emily Harrellson lettered in basketball, cross country and softball while at Gardner-Webb. She graduated with a 3.78 GPA while double-majoring in business and physical

education. Her academic achievements helped to earn her the First Union SAC Scholar-Athlete of the Year in cross country (1997), the First Union SAC Scholar-Athlete of the Year in softball (1998), and she was recognized three times as a Division II Academic All American (twice for cross country and once in softball). Harrellson was also recognized with the South Atlantic Conference Presidential Award, and was named to the All-SAC first team in cross country (1996, 1997). She earned All-SAC second-team honors twice in softball (1996,1998). In 1996, she was a member of the Runnin’ Bulldogs softball squad that finished the season with a 30-14 record and was a part of the 1997 Food Lion SAC Tournament Championship team. Harrellson also played 25 games as a freshman on the basketball court for the ‘Dawgs.

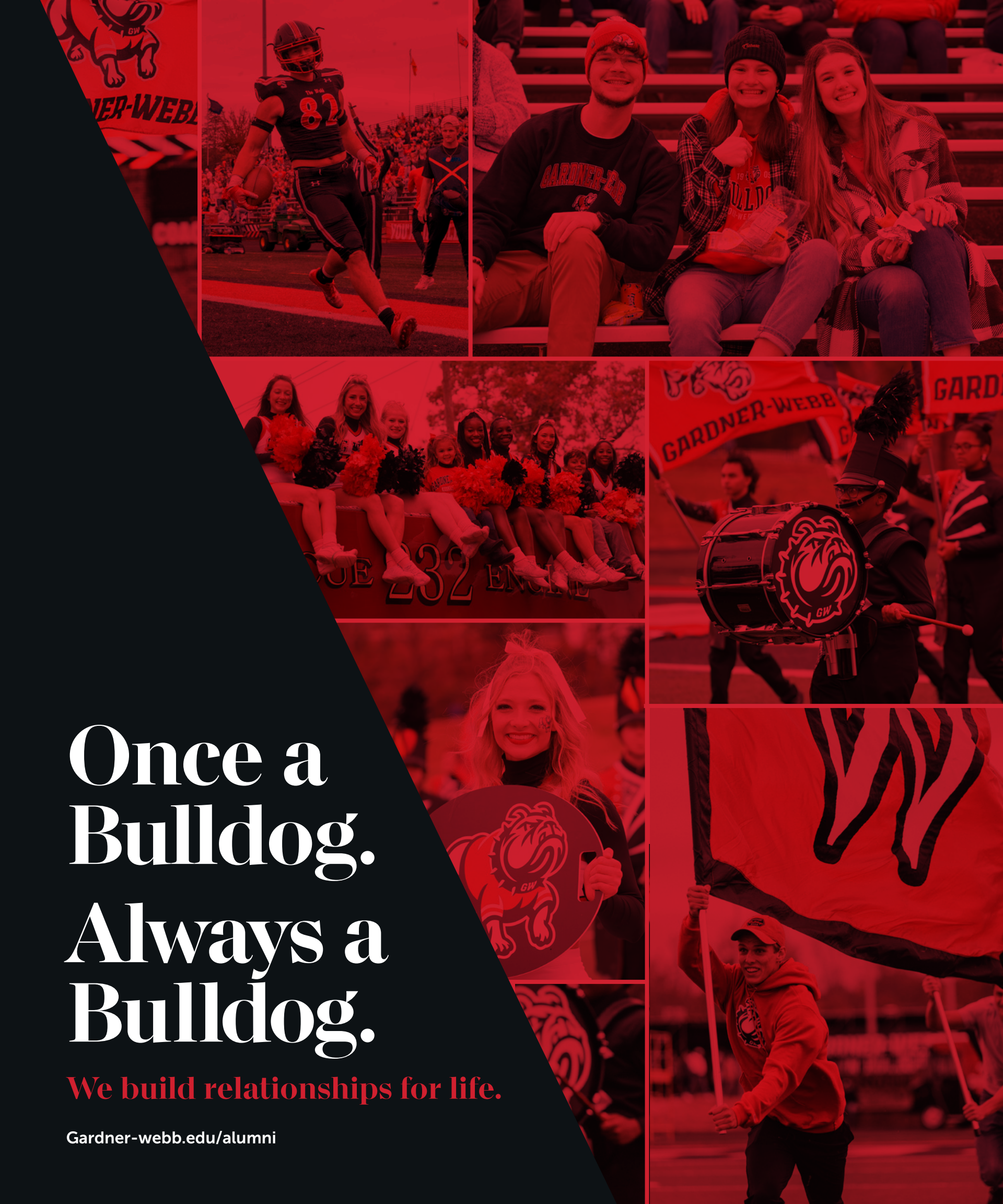


Dominique Hudson finished her career as GWU’s Division I all-time leading scorer with 1,407 career points on the basketball court, which ranks fifth all-time in GWU history. She was also the ‘Dawgs DI career assists leader (579) and steals leader (244). Hudson also ranked first in GWU’s DI career record book in games played (129), minutes played (3545) and free throws made (419). She ranked second in GWU DI history in

most games started (102), third in field goals made (443) and fifth in three-pointers made (102). During the 2009-10 season, Hudson picked up a DI single season record for GW with 78 steals. Hudson earned a spot on the 2010-11 Big South Presidential Honor Roll and was the Big South leader in assists (194) for 2011, a GWU regular season record for the DI era. Hudson led the Runnin’ Bulldogs to a WNIT appearance (2010) after winning the Big South regular season title, and first-ever NCAA Tournament appearance in 2011. She was a member of the 2008 Big South All-Freshmen team, two-time All-Big South Conference selection, three-time Big South All-Tournament Team honoree, and the 2011 Big South Tournament MVP.



Phyllis Littlefield Moore was the first coach for Women’s Basketball and Volleyball during the senior college era. She was a pioneer and advocate for women’s athletics at Gardner-Webb in the 1970s. From 1975-79, her basketball teams held a 56-21 record (72.7%), and in just the fourth season as a four-year school, she led the Runnin’ Bulldogs to a 21-4 record.



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IN MEMORIAM

GWU Hoops Legend John Drew Dies at Age 67

Gardner-Webb men's basketball legend John Drew passed away in Houston, Texas, on April 10, 2022, at the age of 67.

Drew's No. 22 jersey hangs in the rafters inside Gardner-Webb's Paul Porter Arena. It is one of only four men's basketball jerseys to be retired, joined by Artis Gilmore, George Adams and Eddie Lee Wilkins.

A native of Vredenburgh, Ala., Drew played for the Runnin' Bulldogs from 1972-1974 and was immediately a star under Coach Eddie Holbrook. The 6-foot-6 forward burst on the scene by averaging 24.4 points per game during the 1972-73 season and earned NAIA All-America honors in 1973-74 after pumping in 25.9 points and 13.0 rebounds per game as a sophomore.

He was part of Gardner-Webb teams that won 43 games during his career, including a stellar 25-3 mark in his final campaign. The high-powered Runnin' Bulldogs earned the No. 3 seed that season in the NAIA National Tournament in Kansas City, Mo.

Drew remains Gardner-Webb's highest draft pick by any of the major professional sports leagues in the United States—drafted with the 25th overall pick by the NBA's Atlanta Hawks. He averaged 18.7 points and 10.7 rebounds per game in 1974-75 with the Hawks, earning a spot on the NBA All-Rookie Team in the process.

Drew finished second in NBA Rookie of the Year voting that season.

He was a two-time NBA All-Star selection, with his best season coming in 1976-77 when he scored 24.2 points per game. He topped 20 points per game again over the next two seasons and



again in 1980-81 and—after being traded to the Utah Jazz—in 1982-83.

He finished his career with 15,291 points, which is the top mark for all rookies in the 1974 NBA Draft class. Drew made 4,319 career free throws and shot 74.8% from the line during his 739-game career in the NBA.

Before heading off to college at Gardner-Webb, Drew earned elite status in the Alabama high school ranks playing for J.F. Shields High. He remains one of the most heralded basketball players the state has ever produced. Drew scored 41.0 points per game for his high school career and averaged 44.0 points per game as a senior—earning third-team Parade All-America honors. His career and single-season scoring marks remain atop the state's record books.

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Dr. Gerald Keown Remembered by GWU Community for His Passion to Teach and Serve

The Gardner-Webb University community remembers the contributions and legacy of Dr. Gerald Keown, who passed away on Dec. 14, 2021. Keown was professor emeritus of Biblical Studies and the former associate dean of the Gardner-Webb University M. Christopher White School of Divinity. He began his tenure at GWU in 1996 as a professor of Old Testament Interpretation and served as associate dean from 2006 to 2019.

“Gerald Keown came to the School of Divinity when the school was still in its infancy,” remarked Dr. Robert Canoy, the school’s dean. “His coming, after 15 years as professor of Hebrew and Old Testament at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary (Louisville, Ky.), rounded out the biblical faculty of Greek and New Testament. When he and I later become associate dean and dean, we worked closely together continuing to build on the academic, spiritual formation, and accrediting history of the school.”

Keown was both an internationally recognized Old Testament scholar and an actively engaged churchman. He had spent time teaching in Moscow Seminary of Evangelical Christians and the Singapore Baptist Seminary. Keown co-authored a volume of Word Biblical Commentary on Jeremiah 26-52, and has been published in several books and journals. He was named the Bob D. Shepherd Chair in Biblical Studies in 2010. He gladly served as an interim pastor for churches across Kentucky and the Carolinas. Keown had embraced many opportunities during retirement. He and his wife, Sharon, were very involved in their church, Fernwood Baptist, Spartanburg, S.C. Keown taught an adult Sunday School class, served as a deacon, and sang in the choir.



Keown earned his Master of Divinity at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He was ordained as a minister by St. Matthews Baptist Church, Louisville, in August 1975 and earned a Doctor of Philosophy in Old Testament Studies in 1979. After graduating, Keown worked three years as “The Chair of the Bible” at the University of Missouri, Columbia. In 1982, Southern Seminary contacted Keown concerning an Old Testament faculty position. He taught at Southern Seminary for 14 years and was associate dean before accepting the position at Gardner-Webb.

Keown and his wife, Sharon, were married nearly five decades. “He and Sharon were staunch supporters of Gardner-Webb University,” Canoy added. “Their love for the church matched their love for theological education. Gerald’s powerful tenor voice could be heard regularly in chapel, on Holy Land trips, and at his beloved Fernwood Baptist Church in Spartanburg, S.C.”

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"You can't be their preacher until you've been their pastor."

Dr. W. Randall Lolley, Former Gardner-Webb Trustee, dies at 90

Dr. W. Randall Lolley, former trustee of Gardner-Webb University from 1998 to 2001, passed away on March 21, 2022, in Raleigh, N.C., surrounded by his family. In addition to being a member of the Board of Trustees, Lolley was honored at GWU in 2000 with the establishment of the W. Randall Lolley Chair for Pastoral Studies.

Lolley once wrote that he wanted to be remembered as a "believer in Jesus Christ, who loved life, and served people as best he could; who now will enjoy life everlasting in the presence of my Saviour Jesus."

He was born in Troy, Ala., on June 2, 1931, to Roscoe Lee and Mary Nunnelee Lolley. While in college, he was pastor of churches at Good Hope, his home church in Troy, and Reece and Piney Grove near Samson, Ala. While in seminary, he was pastor at Pine Ridge and Poplar Springs Baptist churches in Zebulon, N.C. He was also associate pastor at Broadway Baptist Church, Fort Worth, Texas. Following seminary, Lolley was pastor of First Baptist Church, Winston-Salem, N.C., First Baptist Church, Raleigh, N.C., and First Baptist Church, Greensboro, N.C.

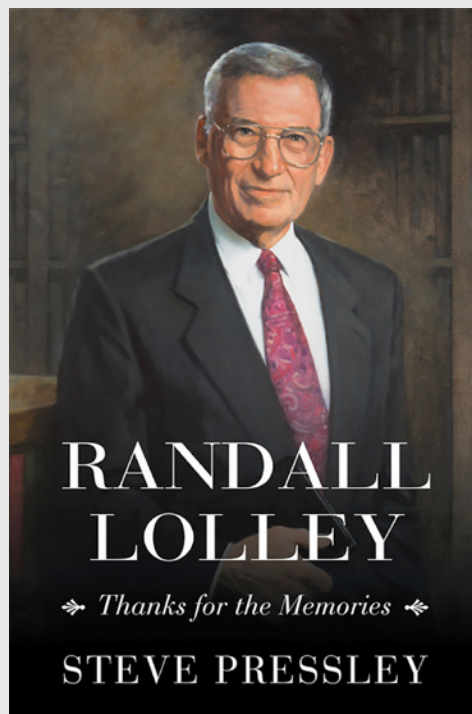
He was president of his alma mater, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, N.C., from 1974-1988. In the late 1980s, he was awarded the Alexander Meiklejohn Award by the American Association of University Professors for his defense of academic freedom.

Lolley was also a trustee at Campbell University, Meredith College, NC Baptist Retirement Homes, and the Baptist

House of Studies at Duke Divinity School. He preached, taught and lectured in churches and schools in 41 states. He traveled with his family and camped in every state of the United States, traveled to all seven continents, and visited over 118 countries around the world.

His impact on the Gardner-Webb community will continue in numerous ways for years to come.

Author and long-time pastor Steve Pressley released a book on Lolley's life in 2021. "Randall Lolley: Thanks for the Memories" from Smyth & Helwys is available in digital and hardback formats at many favorite booksellers. The book description offers an echo of what many at Gardner-Webb have felt throughout the years in serving with Lolley.



"You can't be their preacher until you've been their pastor," Randall Lolley insisted. That settled conviction guided his relationships not only with congregations but also with the hundreds of students, faculty members, administrators, and supportive personnel.

Enriched by recollections from people who knew Dr. Lolley best, "Randall Lolley: Thanks for the Memories" tells the story of a renowned and beloved academic leader, denominational servant, and church minister who elevated the pastoral dimension of his life above all other callings.

“Bill Masters was one of a kind, and he is leaving an indelible legacy behind at Gardner-Webb.”

William Downs, Gardner-Webb President

Gardner-Webb Community Mourns Loss of Longtime Friend and Supporter, Bill Masters

The Gardner-Webb University community remembers Bill Masters, of Shelby, N.C., a longtime friend and supporter of the baseball program, who passed away at age 94 on June 25, 2022. Masters grew up in Easley, S.C., with a deep love for baseball and once said that he would rather play baseball than eat.

“Bill Masters was one of a kind, and he is leaving an indelible legacy behind at Gardner-Webb,” asserted GWU President William Downs. “Always kind, always supportive, always there with a smile and a story. We will joyfully remember him each time the Runnin’ Bulldogs take to the field that bears his name.”

Masters graduated from Easley High School in 1945, served several years at Fort Bragg with the U.S. Army Air Corps and was honorably discharged in 1947. After his time in the army, Masters attended Clemson University, where he earned a degree in textile manufacturing and was a walk-on for the Tigers baseball team. After graduation, he went on to play semi-pro baseball. Masters spent most of his career in the textile industry, working for the White Horse Cotton Mill in Greenville, S.C., Riegel Textiles in Ware Shoals, S.C., and Cone Mills in Cliffside, N.C., where he served as production manager. It was while in Cliffside that he began his relationship with Gardner-Webb in the early 1970s.

Masters described why he and his wife Sue supported Gardner-Webb in an article written by the University in 2011. “I was inspired that Cone Mills was involved in supporting private colleges like Gardner-Webb, and I wanted to be a part of that kind of community,” Masters said in the story. “Through the years, Sue and I have



seen Gardner-Webb grow from a two-year college to university status, and we have continued to see improvements along the way. This is a thriving university that we just want to be a part of.”

Head Baseball Coach Jim Chester said that Masters touched so many lives through his example and encouraging words. “It is hard to put a number on how

many Gardner-Webb baseball student-athletes Bill Masters impacted since his involvement with the University,” Chester affirmed. “His message to our team was always simple—be kind, be respectful, help others, and love your time on the field with your teammates! His love for Gardner-Webb and our program has been something that we will cherish and remember forever.”

Masters support spanned several decades and helped transform both the baseball and tennis programs. In 2008, the GWU baseball field was named in honor of Bill for his generous support to GWU baseball. Then in 2011, the University named the Bill and Sue Masters Athletic Facility, which houses baseball and tennis offices, in recognition of their continued generosity. In 2022, it was announced that an additional athletic training facility for the baseball program would also bear his name.

See page 40 for companion story.



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