
Noel T. Manning II
Gardner-Webb University

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Embracing the Challenges to Come

I have often used the first line from Charles Dickens’ A Tale of Two Cities—“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times”—to describe the present time in American higher education and in the life of Gardner-Webb University in particular. In the case of our University, it is more accurate to say “the best of times, but among the most challenging as well.” But even the challenges are exciting, and they can and will be met.

Our University is indeed blessed, and the times are good. We have an incomparable faculty and staff, dedicated to our students and their success, as well as to this University and to a region. I truly believe that for these—staff and faculty alike—this is more than a job, it is a calling. And while some of our students may on occasion disappoint us, as all young people can at times, Gardner-Webb’s students are among the brightest, finest, and most delightful young people you will ever encounter. It is uplifting to see how many of them are already committed in so many ways to the concept of service to people and to the greater good.

Previous editions of this magazine have documented great progress at our University in academic, and student life programs, as well as in campus development. The last edition of Gardner-Webb: The Magazine described several significant national awards and recognitions—four related to service, one to academic programs, and one to working environment. Next fall a new state-of-the-art science facility and our new Science Tower will open.

The challenges facing us are essentially the same as those facing other colleges and universities, and, for that matter, other institutions and businesses as well. There are three sources of pressure: increasing costs, due partly to increases in quality and growth in opportunities for students; steadily increasing social, political, and economic pressure to hold down the cost of higher education (student debt is being called “the next housing bubble”); and very difficult economic conditions that are affecting our students. There are three sources of pressure: increasing costs, due partly to increases in quality and growth in opportunities for students; steadily increasing social, political, and economic pressure to hold down the cost of higher education (student debt is being called “the next housing bubble”); and very difficult economic conditions that are affecting our students.

These challenges are making thorough strategic planning and evaluation imperative, and requiring that we hone our skills at planning and evaluation. Here is the bright side of the challenges—we will be called “the next housing bubble”); and very difficult economic conditions that are affecting our students.

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Sincerely,
A. Frank Bonner
President, Gardner-Webb University

Study Rates Gardner-Webb’s Core Curriculum in the Nation’s Top Two Percent

Gardner-Webb University’s core curriculum ranks in the nation’s top two percent for quality and breadth, according to the 2011-2012 What Will They Learn? study by the American Council of Trustees and Alumni (ACTA). The study rated all the major public and private colleges and universities in all 50 states—a total of 1,007 four-year institutions—on an “A” through “F” scale. Gardner-Webb was among only 19 schools—and the only school in the Carolinas—to earn an “A.”

ACTA argues that for students to gain the knowledge and values necessary for responsible democratic citizenship, they should be required to take the following seven core subjects: composition, U.S. government or history, economics, literature, math, science, and foreign language at an intermediate level. Gardner-Webb received an “A for requiring at least six of the seven.

“The beauty of our core curriculum,” said GWU President Dr. Frank Bonner, “lies in its diversity, its versatility. No matter the career field our graduates ultimately choose, their core classes provide the foundational knowledge, attitudes, values, and learning skills to enable them not only to achieve professional success but to lead fulfilled and productive lives as well.”

Former TV Anchor Trades Career for Calling

The Dimensions Program at Gardner-Webb recently welcomed Chris Justice, the senior pastor of Lee Park Baptist Church in Monroe, N.C. Justice spent 12 years with WCNC-Channel 36 in Charlotte, N.C., where he served as co-anchor of the evening newscast from 2004-08. Justice shared that the pressure of having to find a job drove him as a college student, and as career opportunities in television opened, he took them. “But then I realized that calling was bigger than career,” he said, and despite the surprised questions from many friends, he left his secure job to answer God’s calling to ministry. “When you line up calling and career, instead of keeping them at odds,” he told Gardner-Webb students, “everything fits.”

Along with Justice, the Dimensions program has recently welcomed such speakers as Trudy Cathy, daughter of Chick-fil-A founder Truett Cathy, and Mary Kay Beard, the former fugitive turned philanthropist who started Angel Tree Ministries. For more about the Dimensions program, call 704-406-4277.

GWU Gives First-Ever ‘National Student Day Service Awards’

October 6 marked the first annual National Student Day, sponsored by the National Association of College Stores (NACS). To celebrate, the Gardner-Webb Campus Shop and the Office of Community Engagement instituted a “National Student Day Service Award” to recognize students for their outstanding community engagement in and around the Gardner-Webb community.

This year, the Office of Community Engagement selected seven students as the Award’s inaugural recipients for outstanding servant leadership in projects like leading trips to retirement homes, tutoring elementary school kids, and launching community gardens. Students honored were:

- Hallie Hefner – Freshman
- Erwin Johnson, Jr. – Junior
- Kevin Kasakatis – Senior
- James Mauney – Freshman
- Kelly Montgomery – Senior
- Brittany Mote – Senior
- Haley Sieber – Sophomore

“Many of our students participate in service projects once or twice throughout the year, and we are proud of each of them. But by participating consistently in and even taking leadership of service projects, some students make an even more profound impact by building real relationships with those they are serving. This year’s recipients each display that type of faithful leadership,” said Stephanie Richey, GWU community engagement coordinator.
On the tenth anniversary of Sept. 11, a team of Christian, Muslim, and Jewish clergy called Clergy Beyond Borders (CBB) embarked on a national tour to promote interfaith dialogue and resist religious extremism in the United States. Dr. Michael Kuchinsky, a professor of political science at Gardner-Webb University and a member of CBB’s Board of Advisors, accompanied the caravan to “give witness,” he said, to the power and importance of interfaith tolerance in his own life. The tour made stops in 18 different cities around the country, and Kuchinsky joined the tour for several of those stops.

“We discussed how interfaith dialogue can happen, but the presentations themselves were conversations, so we were modeling how interfaith dialogue is done,” Kuchinsky said. “There have been too many examples of intolerance and violence against people of other faiths, especially as the memory of Sept. 11 began to wane. I think this is an important witness. It is, perhaps, not the most popular. But it needs to be made.”

Gardner-Webb University celebrates its Christian, Baptist-related identity, even while it respects the dignity and value of every person, regardless of ethnicity, gender, religious commitment, national origin, or disability. We are unashamedly Christian, and as part of our commitment to serve God and humanity in the love of Christ, we support interfaith initiatives that seek to promote grace, peace, and mutual understanding while addressing the needs of the community.

Masterclass Provides Students Sound Advice

World-class trumpeter Charles Schlueter, formerly of the Boston Symphony, recently gave a masterclass for all brass players at Gardner-Webb University and the surrounding community. Schlueter coached a handful of trumpeters on achieving a better sound, gaining what he called “noticeable improvement” and giving the students a wealth of ideas for their musical futures.

“To have someone like that, someone who’s truly a living legend on our campus to work with our students was just a really unique opportunity,” said Tim Hudson, a former student of Schlueter’s and a member of Gardner-Webb’s music faculty.

“He’s just got what seems like infinite wisdom to impart on all of his students,” said Ty Sheets, a music education and performance major at Gardner-Webb. “Talking with him and hearing him play is just sort of enlightening, because you know he’s been there, he’s done it, he’s been successful. It helped me to know that I could do all that stuff, too, because he’s a person just like I am. That’s something to keep working for because those opportunities are out there.”

Gardner-Webb Holds 20th Annual Beep Ball Game

The Noel Program at Gardner-Webb University hosted the 20th annual Beep Ball game, a version of “blind” softball that raises awareness about the challenges facing blind and vision-impaired individuals. In Beep Ball, sighted players must wear blindfolds while trying to hit a beeping ball, run to beeping bases, and decipher instructions shouted to them by sighted spotters. “It’s a good opportunity – an adaptive way – for people who want the chance to be able to play sports,” says vision-impaired senior Travis Sherrill, “and it gives others a chance to see what life is like for the blind.”

English Professor and Beep Ball veteran Dr. Matt Theado said, “It is wonderful how everybody cheers for everybody else. At that moment we are all sharing an intimate world. You get very close to those around you when you’re in the dark.” In 19 previous years, the faculty/staff team has only beaten the blind and visually impaired students once. This year’s game ended in a 6-6 tie.

Beeping Springs celebrates 100 Years of Memories

In 1911, the Town of Boiling Springs was incorporated, taking its name from the two bubbling springs that were located in the middle of what is now the campus of Gardner-Webb University. On Saturday, Sept. 17, 2011, the Town ushered in the next 100 years of memories with a memorable Centennial Celebration.

The day’s festivities included community choir performances, a Centennial Sprint 5K race, an historical walk through the Boiling Springs cemetery, a drama written especially for the Centennial Celebration, and a street festival complete with live music, arts, crafts, hot food, and even a firework display.

Gardner-Webb, which celebrated its own centennial in 2005, sponsored many of the Centennial activities, and even offered a spontaneous spark of excitement during the street festival, as a dozen of students, faculty and staff surprised onlookers with a flash mob dance performance.

“Today has been special not only for the Town of Boiling Springs but for Gardner-Webb University,” said GWU Director of University Relations Noel T. Manning, II, noting how closely interwoven the Town’s relationship has been with Gardner-Webb from the beginning. “In fact, the Town was incorporated largely at the request of Boiling Springs High School, our predecessor, and the town and gown relationship continues to remain strong.”

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Dr. William Martin Leads Student/Faculty Cast in Twain’s “Is He Dead?” Leads GWU Fall Production

When Professor James Thomas assumed his role as interim dean of Gardner-Webb’s new School of Performing and Visual Arts in July, he made it a goal to attract actors and directors with national experience to take part in Gardner-Webb’s Theatre Program. This fall, Thomas did just that, bringing Tony-nominated guest director Dr. William Martin to Boiling Springs to direct the GWU Theatre’s Fall 2011 production, “Is He Dead?,” a zany farce by Mark Twain.

Martin has nearly 300 productions to his credit, including several on Broadway. His Broadway premier, “The Lieutenant,” was nominated for five Tony Awards including “Best Musical,” and Martin received a Drama Desk Award nomination for “Best Director.” He holds the Ph.D. in Theatre History, and has served as visiting scholar and guest director at numerous colleges and universities throughout his career.

Martin planned to teach theatre before his career turned toward the New York stage, and says he still enjoys the opportunity to share his love of theatre with college students in an academic setting.

GWU Divinity Professors, Student, Participate in ‘Healing Communities’ Conference

Two professors and one student from Gardner-Webb’s Divinity School recently participated in a conference at Wake Forest University called “Healing Communities: Conversations Toward Shalom.” The conference focused on the intersection of physical health and spiritual well-being, not just for individuals but also for communities.

“Biblically, the ideas of peace and wholeness that are involved in ‘Shalom’ are community ideas, not just individual ideas,” said GWU Divinity Professor Dr. Jim McConnell, who presented on the ways ‘Shalom’ is manifest in the Biblical narrative.

Barbara Massey, a Divinity student at Gardner-Webb who spent 40 years as a registered nurse, recently developed a unique spiritual care ministry geared toward preparing local churches to meet the holistic health needs of the people in their communities. Massey shared that ministry during a special presentation at the conference, and she has already begun implementing it in her home church in Greenville, S.C.

“The church often treats people’s physical needs separately from their spiritual or social or emotional needs, but we rarely look at the interdependence of those. That interdependence is the core of this ministry.”

GWU Divinity Professor Dr. Sheri Adams also helped plan the conference and participated in the discussions.

Gardner-Webb University and the surrounding community rang in the Christmas season with its inaugural celebration “‘Twas the Night,” a dynamic musical event to benefit the Salvation Army Toy Closet. Each guest brought an unwrapped, new toy for donation to the Salvation Army. In all, more than 140 toys were donated.

Part concert, part drama, part sing-along and storytelling session, “‘Twas the Night” was based around two dramatic scenes—a contemporary Christmas façade scene and the biblical nativity scene. A variety of local bands and solo musicians, dancers, actors and creative readers, led the audience singing and reciting the Christmas classics.

“When the annual Christmas event with Carl Carter stopped, we wanted to find some way to continue the tradition of celebrating the Christmas season and meeting real needs in our community through the Salvation Army,” said Kelly Brame, assistant director of student activities and the event’s coordinator.

Brame added that “‘Twas the Night” was lots of fun, especially for kids, and that it gave parents the chance to show their children that the best part of presents is giving good gifts. “We look forward to making this an annual tradition for years to come.”

Gardner-Webb President Announces New Awards to Support Undergraduate Art

Two new annual awards will enable Gardner-Webb University to purchase original art by its undergraduate art students for campus decoration. Gardner-Webb President Dr. Frank Bonner announced recently. Together, the Presidential Purchase Awards for Undergraduate Art and for Senior Art will enable the University to spend $1,500 per year to purchase students’ original artwork for permanent display in campus facilities.

The money will award artists for their work exhibited at the School of Performing and Visual Arts annual undergraduate and senior art shows. The first purchased pieces will be displayed in the Tucker Student Center, which is currently under construction and set to open in 2012.

“The Department of Visual Arts is grateful to President Bonner for his generous establishment of the two annual awards. We are excited, and the art faculty think it is fitting, that the walls of the new Tucker Student Center and other campus buildings will be decorated with the original work of our very own students,” said Doug Knotts, chair of the GWU visual arts department.

“They work represents the dreams, aspirations, and concerns of the students of this university.”
They were marked, he said. Outsiders. At first, by jeers and cutting glances, or blatant disregard, even from some who were once friends. But gradually the marks grew more overt. Badges on their clothes to identify them in public. Permission slips they needed to leave the streets after hours. Sheets they were forced to hang from their storefronts and home windows. Illegal searches and seizures, usually at gunpoint. Orders to relocate into city ghettos. Boarded up doors. Bruises. Missing limbs. Fear. Then it began in earnest. Screams in the night, as the marked ones were torn from their homes, confined in concentration camps, raped and murdered in their front yards—children, or parents, often forced to look on. A careful, calculated holocaust, he said. All because the marked ones didn’t fit the ethnic profile the leaders deemed requisite for life in the nation’s future.

Sadly, an all-too-familiar story. But this isn’t the story of the Jewish Holocaust of the 1930s and ‘40s. The perpetrators weren’t Nazis and the victims weren’t Jews, or at least not mostly. The ghettos weren’t in German cities, and the camps weren’t called Auschwitz or Belzec. This story is far more recent, and when a survivor of the early ‘90s Bosnian Genocide named Amir Karadzic visited Boiling Springs this fall, Gardner-Webb got to hear it firsthand.

Karadzic is a native of Prizedor, a multi-ethnic region in Bosnia located in the strategic center of “Great Serbia,” what Karadzic called “an imaginary nation” that Serbian ultranationalists hoped to establish. To do so, the Serbs in 1992 launched an “ethnic cleansing” campaign against all non-Serb Bosnians in the Prizedor region, leaving thousands dead and even more displaced. In the decade that followed, both the United Nations and United States defined the conflict unquestionably as “genocide.”

A well-respected citizen and real estate investor before 1992, Karadzic was forced from his job, robbed of his possessions, and was on several occasions nearly thrown into concentration camps. “For three years,” he remembered, “I lived in what seemed to be a coma, a time during which my thoughts could not be heard and my actions were rendered useless.” He watched friends get beaten nearly to death, powerless to help because of fear for his own family’s safety. Eventually, having endured repeated death threats, Karadzic was forced to flee Bosnia and remained separated from his wife and son for months.

The Karadzics ultimately escaped to the United States in 1995, where Amir began work as a laborer in a St. Louis cheese factory. Today, he is a consultant for a mental health provider in St. Louis, and the founder of the non-profit organization “Union of Citizens of the Municipality of Prizedor.”

Their organization was the driving force behind the development of a gripping testimonial exhibit called “Prizedor Lives from the Bosnian Genocide,” which opened to thousands of guests at the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., and has been displayed in locations all around the United States. That exhibit accompanied Karadzic to Gardner-Webb, and was displayed for a month in the Dover Memorial Library.

It features dozens of panels with gruesome photos, diary entries, official documents, letters, and anecdotes that testify to the brutality inflicted upon non-Serb civilians during the Bosnian Conflict. Karadzic often travels with the exhibit, telling stories that many of the victims cannot bear to tell for themselves.

“The effect of war,” he said, “is to kill inside you everything that’s normal. If you survive, and you want to continue living a normal life, then you have to find some box inside your mind to lock it all away and set it aside. I feel guilty talking about this, and sharing these stories, because so many others suffered so much worse than I. But these people cannot bear to speak about it because they cannot risk opening that box.”

Fittingly, Karadzic’s visit to Gardner-Webb corresponded with the 10th anniversary of 9/11, and the symmetry was not lost on GWU Political Science Professor Dr. Michael Kuchinsky. “These are not easy subjects,” he said, “but it seems fitting as we remember 9/11 to bring the real urgency of some of these problems to campus and ask ourselves, ‘How far have we really come in matters of inclusiveness, tolerance of the stranger, openness to others, and cross-cultural empathy?’”

That is precisely the cathartic opportunity Karadzic’s exhibit offered to the Gardner-Webb community. “Behind this exhibit,” said Karadzic, “is an effort to help people understand what happened so that they won’t do it again.” He added, “We say that on purpose because in order to heal from these horrific crimes against humanity, in order to transcend or move on, one has to look at these things clearly and face-to-face.”

Karadzic explained that reconciliation has yet to occur in Prizedor because officials refuse to publically acknowledge that what happened was, indeed, genocide against civilians. “After WWII, the Germans erected monuments to honor the memory of Jewish victims of the Holocaust, and criminals were brought to justice.” In Prizedor, there are no monuments, no memories. “What’s worse,” he said, “is that the Serb forces outside the gates of one of the camps, and the person delivering your mail today in Prizedor was a guard in one of them. There has been no justice.”

“Without truth and honesty, reconciliation is impossible.”

Still, Karadzic insisted that non-Serb Bosnians are now marked only by their desire for peace, and that his purpose is not to incite more violence or to dig up painful memories of old grudges against old enemies. Instead, he hopes for reconciliation after nearly two decades of silence and tension. “In Prizedor, we are not looking for more violence. We simply want to know where our friends are buried. We want to talk about what happened.”

“Amir Karadzic

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Karadzic’s exhibit has become a traveling monument, carrying the memory of those lost to genocide, and testifying around the nation. He even agrees to one day here that his exhibit will one day bring justice to the world. “We have to speak up,” he said. “We have to tell them, to tell everyone that what’s happening is something that should never happen, and to learn that truth and honesty are our only ways to stop it. Without truth and honesty, reconciliation is impossible.”
Most architects insist that buildings have character, personalities even, much like individuals and communities. That is certainly true of Gardner-Webb’s Tucker Student Center, which GWU President Dr. Frank Bonner promised will be “the single-most impressive and most transformational building ever built on Gardner-Webb’s campus.” Complete with skylight ceilings and glass walls, open staircases and fresh-air balconies, the Tucker Student Center’s personality was designed to mirror that of Gardner-Webb’s community: open, relational, transparent and unique.

When it opens in the fall of 2012, the Center promises to completely transform the student experience by inscribing itself into the center of every aspect of campus life. Recently, in a special symbolic “Topping Off” ceremony, Gardner-Webb students, faculty and staff returned the favor, inscribing their names onto the building’s final structural truss before it was “flown” into place above the Center’s main entrance.

“The flying of the truss is a very special tradition in the world of construction, an important symbolic moment when that last structural piece is put into place,” Bonner said before adding his signature to the beam. “The Center is built for our students—they are its purpose. So it is quite fitting that they had this opportunity to permanently inscribe their names, and solidify their presence, within the walls of such an important structure on our campus.”

Lisa Tucker, Gardner-Webb alumna and daughter of Bob and Carolyn Tucker, whose monumental gift launched the Student Center project, also autographed the truss. “We certainly thank Lisa Tucker and her family for their friendship and generosity. Without them, this day may not have been possible,” Bonner said. Bonner also thanked the Frank Stewart family, Duke Energy, the Cannon Foundation, and the numerous individuals who have financially supported the Center, as well as Holland and Hamrick Architects and Rodgers Builders for their work in designing and constructing the facility.

After the truss was signed, Roger Holland and Greg Melton of Holland and Hamrick led a walk-through of the unfinished facility. They explained that several of the building’s features, including the skylight ceilings that provide natural light throughout the facility, make this building “unlike any other student center in the United States.”

“The Center is built for our students—they are its purpose.”

The building also features open-air terraces and balconies on each level, offering breathtaking views of the Lake Hollifield Complex that have never before been possible. The porches will feature double-sided fireplaces, offering warmth on chilly fall and spring evenings when students may want to lounge outside. And those perks are just the tip of the iceberg.

“We’re usually very critical of what we design, and we certainly don’t want to pat ourselves on the back. But honestly, at this stage, I don’t see anything I’d want to do differently,” Holland said. “This has been a wonderful collaborative effort between everyone in our office and the administration and staff at Gardner-Webb. It’s so exciting to see the finished result that I wish the building was finished tomorrow.”

Judging by the countless signatures, messages, prayers and memories scribbled on the symbolic final truss, Gardner-Webb students feel the same way.
Last fall, the Gardner-Webb University Runnin’ Bulldogs baseball program received a $1.3 million gift from long-time GWU supporters Bill and Sue Masters. Fifty percent of the gift will be set up to endow the program while the remaining half is designated for baseball scholarships. This gift brings the Higher Ground Capital Campaign total to $41 million.

“The remarkable generosity of the Masters family will change the playing field for Gardner-Webb baseball. A gift of this magnitude and focus will allow our program to recruit the brightest student athletes who can make the right plays in the classroom and on the field,” said Woody Fish, associate vice-president for Alumni Relations and Development.

Bill Masters grew up in Easley, S.C. with a deep love for baseball that took him from the sandlot to the ACC, where Masters was a walk-on at Clemson. “When I was a kid I always said that ‘I’d rather play baseball than eat when I was hungry,’” said Masters. He also went on to play semipro baseball, and served in the U.S. Army Air Force.

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 40 years ago.

“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. 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,” Masters said.

In 2008, the GWU baseball field was named in honor of Masters for his generous support to the baseball program, and on Nov. 12, Gardner-Webb named the Bill and Sue Masters Athletic Facility in the family’s honor with a ribbon cutting and dedication. This facility houses the baseball and tennis offices.

“Mr. Masters is a real friend to Gardner-Webb and has made a real investment in the future of our baseball program,” said GWU Head Baseball Coach Rusty Stroupe. “Mr. & Mrs. Masters trust that we are going to continue to uphold the values that Gardner-Webb stands for, and they trust that their investment will be used wisely now and in the future. I appreciate them putting that trust in our program.”
Scenic Impressions

“If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant.
If we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.”
- Anne Bradstreet
A quick glance at senior psychology major Kyle Wilkinson’s car says a lot about his passions. In the front seat sits a backpack, textbooks on Hebrew and Psychology, his laptop, a bag of gummy bears—typical gear for a full-time college student. But in the back seat and trunk are drums, guitars, microphones and speakers—the stuff of a “future” life in worship ministry that won’t quite wait until the future.

On three weekends out of the month, Wilkinson makes the one-hour trek from Gardner-Webb to New River Community Church in Lake Wylie, S.C., where he spends two days leading worship for a congregation of more than 1,000. “Kyle does an amazing job,” said New River’s worship pastor Wayne Bolin. “It’s amazing, because even though he’s a full-time student, he’s very much a full-time worship pastor too. He’s not just playing one on the weekends.”

Wilkinson has been singing in kids’ choirs since he was three, and in high school, he helped start a praise band. But he says he never set out to be a worship leader. “I tell people all the time that, at heart, I just want to teach people what it means to love God and how to worship Him. Right now my platform for that is singing and playing guitar.”

In June 2009, one of the pastors from New River asked Wilkinson and his band “The Unworthy Beloved,” to lead worship for their youth group. He had heard Wilkinson’s band play at Gardner-Webb’s student-led worship service called “The Verge.” The band ended up returning to lead the youth about once a month for the next few months, and Wilkinson saw a chance. “I really bothered them a lot I think, asking to work with them,” he laughs. “I felt a pull to that church and saw an opportunity there, too.”

He landed the internship for the summer before his junior year where he worked almost full-time at the church, shadowing Bolin and learning about the church. After returning to school, the pastors of New River told Wilkinson they liked him and wanted him to work for New River for the next two years, making it an easy transition into a full-time position.

“So going into my junior year of college, I had a part-time job offer but it was also kind of a full-time one, which was cool,” Wilkinson adds. “So many of our students, like Kyle, realize that they don’t have to wait until after graduation to be involved in ministry,” said Dr. Tracy Jessup, vice president for Christian life and service and senior minister to Gardner-Webb.

“He is using his gifts and talents now as they serve in leadership positions on campus and in local churches. They not only reap the benefit of gaining valuable ministry experience, but the Body of Christ is edified as our students contribute to advancing the kingdom of God through their service and leadership,” said Jessup.

Wilkinson admits that his brain is working full-time at balancing his lives as worship leader and student. “I’m preparing a message today for the Verge while preparing this weekend’s set list for New River, all on top of schoolwork. It’s crazy,” Wilkinson says. “So how does he manage it all?” Wilkinson says his help comes from support from really great friends, people who love and actively pray for him. But mostly, it is strength from God. “Seeing results of God moving through people’s lives keeps me going,” says Wilkinson. “The biggest thing is remembering that I’m a child of God, so I worship Him first and everything else is second to that.”
When people discover strange and unexpected connections, like random friends they share in common or obscure places they’ve both visited, they often remark, “Wow, it’s a small world.” But in the case of Gardner-Webb sophomore Kendra Bragg and GWU community engagement coordinator Stephanie Richey, that’s a bit of an understatement.

Shortly after the fall semester began, Richey was sitting outside the cafeteria offering applications for community service opportunities when a new student she didn’t recognize approached and asked, “Hey, you’re Stephanie Richey, right?”

“I just thought she was going to ask a question about community service,” Richey said, “but then she asked if I was from Winston-Salem. So now I’m thinking, ‘Ok, we’re both from Winston so we’ve got some personal connection. I still had no idea.”

Then Bragg asked, “Did you ever do this program with your youth group in high school called Ceaseless, and did you write to a kid whose family was doing relief work overseas? Yeah, I was that kid. My name’s Kendra Bragg.”

Now weeks later, Bragg just laughs as Richey recounts the story of their uncanny reunion outside the cafeteria. “That moment right there? That’s the coolest thing that’s ever happened to me,” Richey says, still shocked. “That’s the story I’ll tell for the rest of my life.”

As it turns out, Bragg met Richey at a “Ceaseless” event in either 2005 or 2006. Ceaseless was an initiative in the Winston-Salem area to bring youth groups from various churches together to pray, especially for the persecuted church around the world. Bragg, a 13-year-old whose parents worked for a non-government relief agency in Jordan at the time, was back in the U.S. for a brief visit and was at the Ceaseless event with her youth pastor.

“They paired us up for a silly, ice-breaker game,” Bragg remembers. “I was usually very shy, so when I noticed I would be paired with someone, I thought to myself, I need to seize this opportunity to make a friend.” I got paired with Stephanie, and I asked if we could exchange email addresses since I was heading back overseas. The rest is history.”

Born in Germanton, N.C., Bragg lived in the U.S. until she was 10, when God opened the door for her parents to move overseas, where her father did electrical engineering work and her mother taught English. They lived for several years in Sudan and then for several more in Jordan, before moving back to the U.S. when Bragg was 15.

Bragg discovered a passion for music and songwriting during her time overseas that she says kept her centered during the difficult periods of adjustment. “Music was just one thing that was constant for me when a lot of other things were changing. I was a teenager, and I was thrust into cultures that I wasn’t used to, and music was one of those things the Lord sent me to get me through and to reveal Himself to me.” Bragg’s whole family is musically inclined, and both her parents are musicians and worship leaders. She says music was one of the things that deepened their family bonds while overseas.

“One July in Sudan,” she remembers, “we only had a couple of days of electricity. But I didn’t mind because we would find different ways to grow closer together. The one CD player we had ran on batteries, so we would all pack into one room around it, my siblings and my parents, and we would just listen together.”

“Serendipitous, to Say the Least
Written by Matt Wilkes

W

That’s the coolest thing that’s ever happened to me.”

After moving back to the States, Bragg graduated from high school at 16 and went on to a community college, where she earned her associate’s degree last summer. She then began searching for colleges that would accept her into a music program, despite her lack of the formal music training because of her time abroad.

“I’m majoring in music business because I want to open a studio for artists and songwriters in this area who can’t afford the really big-name studios, to allow them to have a platform to share their music,” she says. “I want to continue writing my own stuff, too, to share my experiences in the hopes that music can do the same for others what it has done for me.” Gardner-Webb gave Bragg that chance, offering her a music scholarship and enabling her to pursue her dream.

It was only after she arrived that Bragg realized the strange connection with Gardner-Webb staffer Richey. Serendipitous, for sure. But the more the two talk, the more their connection seems like more than coincidence. Richey worked with a man at a radio station in Winston-Salem, for example, who knew Bragg’s parents because they helped him once when his tire blew. Bragg and Richey attended the same concert during another one of Bragg’s stateside visits.

Bragg is from Germanton, and Stephanie attended GWU as a student on a scholarship from Germanton Baptist Church, which Bragg’s family attended.

And somewhere, little porcelain dolls are singing, “It’s a small world after all…”
A pivotal scene in Paramount’s 1994 film “Forrest Gump” features Forrest running continually back and forth across the U.S. When asked why, Forrest’s answer is beautifully simple: “I just felt like running.” Ask Terry Hitchcock whether his 57-year-old body felt like running back in 1996, when he completed the equivalent of 75 consecutive marathons in 75 days, and he’ll just laugh. “The pain was unbearable—absolutely off the scale,” he says. But his cause—raising awareness for the plight of single-parent families—was too important, and too personal, for him to give up.

In a special Family Weekend presentation at Gardner-Webb University, Hitchcock shared the incredible story of loss, determination, faith and hope that led him to do the impossible. Within the span of a week in 1984, Hitchcock lost his wife, Sue, to breast cancer, and then his job to corporate politics. He suddenly found himself raising three children by himself and unsure of what to do next.

That began a stretch of life that Hitchcock said felt like “a marathon every day…I barely knew how to boil water, let alone be a single parent,” he remembered. But a self-described eternal optimist, Hitchcock had been raised by his grandparents to believe in himself. “I’m a dreamer,” he said. “My grandfather always told me that there is nothing in life that I can’t accomplish, that nothing would be impossible.” That spirit of hope enabled Hitchcock to hold his family together, and a decade later, on the eve of the 1996 Atlanta Olympics, it sparked an idea.

“The Olympics are about trying to do the impossible, going beyond what anybody says you can do,” Hitchcock said. So, at 57 years old, Hitchcock began training to run the more than 2,000 miles from St. Paul, Minn., to Atlanta, Ga., hoping to encourage other single-parent families to believe that “no matter what is against them, they can accomplish something great in life.” Hitchcock suffered a heart attack during his training, and then broke bones in his ankles and knees during the run. He ran through freezing cold and unbearable heat. He was even chased by a bear. But before the opening ceremonies in 1996, Hitchcock broke the finish tape in Olympic Park in Atlanta, completing a journey that had captured the imagination of the entire nation.

Today, Hitchcock continues to inspire audiences across the country to do the impossible and to strive to make a difference. He has co-authored a book about his run, “A Father’s Odyssey,” and his story was made into an award-winning documentary called “My Run,” narrated by Academy Award winner Billy Bob Thornton. Hitchcock donates the proceeds from his book and documentary sales, as well as his speaking fees, to raise money for single-parent families and for breast cancer, diabetes, and Asperger’s syndrome research.

Before a showing of “My Run” during Family Weekend, Hitchcock challenged Gardner-Webb students and their families to stay positive in the midst of their challenges, and to seek to make a difference in others’ lives. And while he graciously answered questions about the trek itself, he maintained that his story is ultimately not about running.

“For all of us, every day is a marathon,” he said. “For some people, it’s easy just to trot. For others, it’s terribly hard. Either way, look at what you’ve been able to do, just today. Look at how blessed you are. Then go help somebody. Pick them up, and don’t ask for anything in return. That’s my message, and that’s what this story is all about.”

For more about “My Run,” visit myrunmovie.com.
What a moment, when a giant of a man in stature and accomplishments—and a Gardner-Webb alum—strode past his friend and introducer Julius “Dr. J” Irving to the microphone on that hallowed stage and, to the guests in attendance, including GWU President Dr. Frank Bonner, said, “My name is Artis Gilmore, and I am a member of the Basketball Hall of Fame.” Gilmore was one of 10 individuals to be named to the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame Class of 2011, in August’s induction ceremony in Springfield, Mass.

The seven-foot-two Gilmore, who was nicknamed “A Train” for his dominance on the court, enjoyed a 17-year professional career in basketball after shredding the nets as a Runnin’ Bulldog. Gilmore played 12 seasons in the NBA (National Basketball Association) and before that, five years in the now non-existent ABA (American Basketball Association) with the ABA Kentucky Colonels (1971-76), the Chicago Bulls (76-82 and ’87), San Antonio Spurs (’82-’87), and the Boston Celtics (’88).

He won awards at every level he played the sport. He was the ABA Rookie of the Year and MVP in 1972, an ABA first teamer five times and first all-defensive teamer four times, and an NBA All Star on six occasions. Gilmore finished his pro career with nearly 25,000 points, over 16,000 rebounds, and well over 3,000 blocks.

In his hall of fame speech, Gilmore remembered playing basketball as a youngster in Chipley, Fla., with tied up balls that didn’t bounce and clothes that didn’t fit. “I idolized players like Bill Russell, Wilt Chamberlain, and Jerry West. I never dreamed that my name would join theirs in the Basketball Hall of Fame,” said Gilmore.

Prior to the ceremony, Gilmore recalled how he reacted after receiving the long awaited news that he was being inducted. “It was surreal. I immediately called my wife, Enola Gay, and later shared the information with my closest friends and relatives. To reach the pinnacle of one’s career, and to be honored for it, is truly a blessing. I am indeed thankful.”

After graduating high school in 1967, Gilmore came to Boiling Springs, N.C., and helped lead Gardner-Webb College to back-to-back national tournament appearances in ’67-68 and ’68-69, and to stunning victories like the team’s home win over a North Carolina team led by current UNC Head Coach Roy Williams. Gilmore dominated the paint like no other post player in school history, averaging a double-double during his tenure and finishing his career at Gardner-Webb with 1,530 points (22.5 points per game) and 1,150 rebounds (16.9 rebounds per game).

“When I think of the name Gardner-Webb, I think about the beginning years of my college career. It was my first time being in an integrated setting. Up until then, I had attended all black schools,” said Gilmore. “Gardner-Webb also gave Gilmore one of the greatest gifts of his life. “I am immediately reminded of meeting my wife of 39 years, Enola Gay.”

Gilmore gave his wife credit in his induction speech for being a Hall of Famer at home, taking care of the family while he was on the road. Gilmore and his wife have five children (3 daughters and 2 sons) and two twin grandchildren.

After two years at Gardner-Webb, Gilmore took his talents to Jacksonville (Fla.) University, where he led the Dolphins to the NCAA Title game in 1970, falling 80-69 to John Wooden’s UCLA squad. Today, Gilmore serves as special assistant to the president at Jacksonville University, where he has served as special assistant to the president of the university, a position he has held for the past three years.

Gilmore will be remembered as a great basketball player and an even better man, but most of all, Gilmore is a strong Christian. “Without a doubt, I would not be where I am today without my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.”

“I would not be where I am today without my Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.”
Athletic Hall of Fame

The Gardner-Webb University Athletics Hall of Fame is designed to honor leaders, athletes, coaches and builders of the Gardner-Webb athletic program. Featuring notable members of Gardner-Webb’s past, the Hall of Fame exhibits the accomplishments of inductees who exemplify the attributes of leadership, personal excellence and adherence to the traditions of Gardner-Webb. The hall of fame ceremony is an annual event that celebrates the contributions of these individuals.

Trey Perry finished his career as the all-time leader in Big South Conference history with 223 catches, and is second in the league record book with 2,673 receiving yards receiving. Perry also tied a school record with at least one catch in all 43 games he played for the season with at least 40 receptions in a Gardner-Webb uniform. Perry also tied a school record with 463 total tackles during his four seasons, a mark that still ranks second in the GWU record books 12 seasons later. Shannon worked himself into the starting lineup as a freshman in 1995, and exploded onto the scene in 1996 with 127 total tackles and first-team All-South Atlantic Conference honors. Shannon earned his first-team All-SAC honors three times during his career, and was a very talented dual-threat signal caller during his time with the Runnin’ Bulldogs. During an era when the pass was not a regular weapon in the college game, Shannon passed for 3,971 career yards and 31 touchdowns in three seasons – a mark that ranks eighth in school history. Shannon also ranks fourth in Gardner-Webb history in rushing yards by a quarterback, winning 664 yards and five touchdowns from 1976-1978. His best season came as a sophomore in 1978, when he passed for 1,441 yards, 15 passing touchdowns and three more scores on the ground. Shannon ranks sixth in school history in touchdowns accounted for by a quarterback, with 30 total scores.

Trey Perry’s career was the all-time leader in Big South Conference record for receptions! Congratulations to WR James “Trey” Perry III for breaking the all-time Big South Conference record for receptions!
It was 1964 and a young African American named George Surratt was determined to beat the odds. There had never been a black male to attend Gardner-Webb Junior College, but his dream was bigger than historical precedent. It was bigger even than the financial and familial circumstances that turned Surratt’s sprint through college into a marathon. But when he finally crossed the finish line, Surratt solidified his legacy as the first African American male to attend Gardner-Webb and the first to letter in track and field, and he says the knowledge and relationships he gained along the way were well worth the challenges of his journey.

Surratt was born and raised near campus in Boiling Springs, N.C. His father was a poor sharecropper, and then a custodian at Gardner-Webb, and his mother took care of Surratt and his brothers and sisters before working at Gardner-Webb as a cook. Surratt remembers his home as a happy one, full of love and compassion. He also remembers running—constantly running, whether it was up and down hills in his landlord’s cow fields or up and down baseball fields and basketball courts. Surratt developed exceptional athleticism and speed, and after graduating from Green Bethel High School in Boiling Springs, his dream was to play football at then Gardner-Webb Junior College.

“I turned down two scholarships to black colleges so I could attend Gardner-Webb. I didn’t want to leave home,” said Surratt. He first enrolled in the fall of ‘64 and soon after sought out Head Football Coach Norman Harris. “Before I got to practice with the team,” Surratt remembered, “Coach Harris told me some things he felt I should know. He said because I wasn’t on scholarship like the rest of the team, I had to prove myself even more. He also said that some people in the stands at the games might call me names, or try to provoke me, and he wanted my word that I wouldn’t let it affect me. I told him it wouldn’t bother me.”

A car accident robbed him of his first semester, so Surratt never suited up for the Runnin’ Bulldogs football squad. But he practiced with the team long enough for people to notice his speed. One of those people was his teammate Jim Nolan of Bennettsville, S.C., who Surratt says is “still my best friend.” Nolan suggested that Surratt try out for track and field and then, Surratt said, “taught me everything he knew, like how to hold my hands, how to breathe, and how to cross the finish line. I broke a lot of records in that spring of ‘65.”

Surratt competed in the 100m, the 200m, the 400m relay, the 800m relay, and the mile relay. But his best race was the 400m individual. He went undefeated in that event in 1967 and qualified for Nationals, but the College couldn’t afford to send him to compete.

Surratt also received support in the classroom from his teachers, even despite a persistent stutter that made it difficult for him to participate in class discussion. He mentioned the patience of one instructor in particular: “Dr. (Vann) Murrell was my Religion 101 teacher. He helped prepare me to make public speeches and what to say. I spoke at some churches. He even helped me after I graduated.”

Interestingly, despite the struggles and fear he must have overcome in taking such a bold step toward equality by enrolling and competing at Gardner-Webb, Surratt shies away from questions about race. Unless, of course, you’re curious about his record-setting races on the tracks at Gardner-Webb in the early ‘60s. He says his teammates, professors and the administration were all consistently supportive.

Due to several years of military service and then the demands of a full-time working schedule, Surratt would not graduate until 1976, earning a bachelor’s degree from the institution that was a junior college when he first enrolled. His perseverance even influenced his younger brother Tony Nathaniel, who also attended GW. They graduated together in December of that year. “I remember our father gave us each a two dollar bill when we graduated. That meant more to me than receiving a Mercedes, because I knew where it came from. It came from his heart,” Surratt said.

Surratt and his wife of 42 years, Carolyn, have five children, eight grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. At 65, Surratt still works today for Baldor Industries in Kings Mountain, N.C., and says he remembers his Gardner-Webb days fondly.

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Some of us are compelled to go to great lengths for the sake of helping others. That certainly describes Taylor and Donnie Doolittle, who decided to embark on an unforgettable biking journey across the U.S. that came to a fitting finish in the nation’s capital in early October. In the end, the two brothers rode over 3,300 miles from Oregon to Washington, D.C., spanning 62 days while raising over $6,000 for needy children in Fortaleza, Brazil.

For Gardner-Webb alumnus and former student Body President Taylor Doolittle, whose favorite part of the trip was being able to share the experience with his older brother Donnie, it was the journey that made it all worthwhile.

“All the fun times we had was a big enough encouragement to want to keep on riding,” said Taylor, who discovered his love for the outdoors with Donnie during their high school years. “There were definitely times when it was tough—when it starts raining and it’s 40 degrees. But I don’t think there was any point when we were considering, ‘Alright—let’s get home.’”

Using the trip as a platform to raise awareness and contributions, the Doolittles formed a non-profit organization, opened a bank account, created a website, designed a logo, sold tee shirts, and passed out business letters detailing the purpose of their charity. All these efforts would directly benefit Fortaleza’s Davis Lar Children’s Home, whose mission is to house and care for children victimized by prostitution, drug trafficking, abuse, and abandonment. By creating a network of childcare facilities, “The Lar” restores them to spiritual, physical and emotional health while reaching out to their families and communities.

The Doolittle’s journey, aptly dubbed “Long Haul for the Lar,” bore its fair share of ups and downs, and yet the brothers were encouraged by how quickly and sufficiently the lows gave way to more sustaining times. “I don’t remember any days when we were suffering,” said Taylor. “We saw when things were going bad, or when we had a rough day of riding, at the end of the day we’d say, ‘Whoa, this really worked out.’”

Oftentimes, their luck would turn around at the hands of complete strangers, whose hospitality was a pleasant surprise to the Doolittles. “Hospitality wasn’t region-specific,” said Taylor. “In every single state I can name an awesome family that took us in and gave us their hospitality was a pleasant surprise to the Doolittles. “Hospitality wasn’t region-specific,” said Taylor. “In every single state I can name an awesome family that took us in and gave us hospitality was a pleasant surprise to the Doolittles. “Hospitality wasn’t region-specific,” said Taylor. “In every single state I can name an awesome family that took us in and gave us hospitality was a pleasant surprise to the Doolittles. “Hospitality wasn’t region-specific,” said Taylor. “In every single state I can name an awesome family that took us in and gave us a comfortable place to rest.”

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The 1960s

Distinguished Alumnus

William A. Fields

William A. Fields graduated from Gardner-Webb in 1961 with a degree in the liberal arts. He spent nearly twenty years in various sales and marketing positions and as a self-employed contractor, before moving to Pennsylvania as part of the Mission Service Corps of the Southern Baptist Convention. His primary assignment was to help small churches along the East Coast. He later served on various committees and as a governing board member at several colleges and universities. He is a member of First United Methodist Church in Rutherfordton, where he has served on various committees and as a Campus Ministry Coordinator. He has also helped launch the Pennsylvania Racing Hall of Fame, a non-profit organization that promotes horse racing as an art and a sport.

The 1970s

Distinguished Alumnus

Bruce Bowers

Bruce Bowers attended Gardner-Webb in 1965, the first of his family to go college. Gardner-Webb introduced him to college life and, he says, did not allow him to get lost in the crowd, as sometimes happens at large universities. At Gardner-Webb, he became involved in student government and drama, and his first job in journalism was editing the student newspaper, The Pilot.

Distinguished Alumna

Ken Sanford

Ken Sanford earned his associate’s degree from Gardner-Webb in 1962 before earning his bachelor’s and then a master’s in education from Western Carolina University in 1965 and 1970, respectively. He returned to Gardner-Webb in 1968 as a physical education teacher and assistant football coach, and served as head track coach and Dean of Men until 1978, when he began his career in public school education. For the next 26 years, he worked variously as a head football coach, head track coach, health and physical education teacher, social studies teacher, and assistant principal at Rutherford-Spindale High School and then Chase High School, and was Chase High’s principal from 1998-2004.

Sanford is a member of First United Methodist Church in Rutherfordton, where he has served on various committees and teaches Sunday school. He has also volunteered regularly with Habitat for Humanity of Rutherford County. He and his wife, Diane, have two daughters and two sons, and they are the proud grandparents of eight grandchildren.

Distinguished Alumna

Owle

Owle has received numerous awards, including the prestigious Preserve America Presidential Award. He has also volunteered for the Cherokee Extension Program, the Vocational Opportunities Program, and Qualla Arts and Crafts. When asked about his Gardner-Webb experience, Owle said, “Gardner-Webb was an excellent school for me. It gave me the personal encouragement I need. I am thankful that I attended this fine school.”

Distinguished Alumnus

Freeman L. Owle

Freeman L. Owle attended Gardner-Webb from 1966-67, before transferring to Western Carolina University where he received a bachelor’s degree in social work and a master’s degree in education. He went on to teach in the Cherokee Elementary School for 12 years, and was once named Teacher of the Year. In 1990, he began lecturing on Cherokee culture and history, sharing the Cherokee story in schools, churches and organizations all over the eastern part of the United States.

Owle has received numerous awards, including the prestigious Preserve America Presidential Award. He has also volunteered for the Cherokee Extension Program, the Vocational Opportunities Program, and Qualla Arts and Crafts. When asked about his Gardner-Webb experience, Owle said, “Gardner-Webb was an excellent school for me. It gave me the personal encouragement I need. I am thankful that I attended this fine school.”

Distinguished Alumna

Aundra Maddox Adams

Aundra Maddox Adams graduated from Gardner-Webb in 1972 with a degree in liberal arts, and later earned a degree in teaching from UNC-Chapel Hill and then a master’s in educational administration. She taught school for 15 years and has been in administration for 13 years. Adams is also a member and Deaconess at Mount Olive Baptist Church, where she is involved in youth ministry, marriage ministry, and Christian education. Her entire adult life, Adams says, has been dedicated to helping children grow both educationally and spiritually, citing her faith in God as a key factor in her life’s success. “Gardner-Webb has played a huge part in preparing me and helping me keep God the center of my destiny,” Adams said. A native of Shelby, N.C., Adams met her husband, George Adams, during her time at Gardner-Webb, and the couple renewed their vows on campus in 2008. They have four children, eight grandchildren, and 10 great-grandchildren.

Welcome to the GWU Alumni Association, Class of 2011!

Gardner-Webb University welcomed more than 340 graduates into the proud ranks of Runnin’ Bulldog Alumni during the University’s annual fall commencement exercises in December.

During the ceremony, several students were recognized for outstanding leadership, citizenship, and academic excellence during their undergraduate careers. Harold Hollowood, who received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree, was awarded the Most Outstanding Male Graduate Medal. Haleigh Peterson, who received her bachelor’s degree in international business, was honored as the Most Outstanding Senior Graduate. Stephanie Bandy, who received the Senior Scholastic Achievement Award for maintaining her Class’s highest scholastic average while earning her bachelor’s degree in American Sign Language and Spanish.

Nearly 140 of the graduates were students in Gardner-Webb’s Greater Opportunities for Adult Learners (GOAL) program. The GWU College of Adult and Continuing Education presented the Academic Student Award to two GOAL graduates who tied for the highest scholastic averages during their tenure:

• Lisa Marie Hanson Brown, a human services major
• Denise Crone Jones, a business administration major

While those few were honored for special awards, the day was momentous for all of the more than 340 graduates, all recognized individually as they received their degrees. As Gardner-Webb President Dr. Frank Bonner said, “We pause to recognize our graduates one by one because we value them highly as individuals, and we are so very proud of each of them.”

To get involved with the Gardner-Webb Alumni Association, visit gardner-webb.edu or call 704-406-ALUM.

Pledge your Gift to the Gardner-Webb Annual Fund Today!

Each year more than 90% of Gardner-Webb’s students receive financial aid. The Gardner-Webb Grant provides scholarship money to almost every University student (based on academic merit or financial need). This is one of the most significant forms of financial aid that each student receives… but where does a Gardner-Webb Grant come from?

It comes from you! Your gift to the Gardner-Webb Annual Fund goes directly to provide our students academic and need-based scholarship assistance. And since so many GWU students take advantage of the grant, your support is vital to our students.

To make a contribution or if you have any questions about the Gardner-Webb Annual Fund, please call (704) 406-4060, or go online at www.gardner-webb.edu/ga.
\textbf{Distinguished Alumnus}

\textbf{Wayne B. Henderson}

After earning a spot as a walk-on linebacker for the Runnin’ Bulldogs in 1972, Wayne B. Henderson eventually earned a scholarship at Gardner-Webb and graduated with his Bachelor of Science in 1976. Since 1980, he has been the Owner and C.F.O. of Peachtree Mowers Co. Inc, and he has been an Executive Flight Academic Pilot since 1972 and a member of the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) member since 1990. He has also served with the Georgia Sheriff Association since 1990.

Henderson has also volunteered for 30 years at Camp Rutledge and he is a deacon and Sunday School teacher. In 2008, he won a Christian Choice Book Award for his book, “The Jesus Advantage.” Henderson has also served with the Georgia Sheriff Association since 1990.

Henderson and his wife of 38 years, Marion, have two children. At Gardner-Webb, Henderson says he received a great education, and was shown “how to live right.”

\textbf{Jeff McNeill}

Jeff McNeill graduated from Gardner-Webb in 1974 with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, and then earned his master’s from Clemson University in 1977. He has spent more than 35 years in higher education, and has been the Vice President for Development at Auburn University since 2008. After beginning his career as the field director for Clemson’s Alumni Association in 1977, he has held numerous executive offices in Advancement and Development for Clemson, N.C. State University, the University of Alabama, Presbyterian College, and now Auburn.

Assuming his current role amidst a nationwide economic crisis, McNeill was able to maintain Auburn’s giving levels in 2008 and then broke fundraising records in each of the next two years. In 2010, the Office of Development under McNeill’s leadership raised more than $240 million, exceeding its yearly goal by 276%. But as one of McNeill’s coworkers, Patti H. Northcutt wrote, the true extent of McNeill’s accomplishments cannot be quantified.

Calling herself an “inherited employee” after McNeill was hired at Auburn, Northcutt shared how McNeill encouraged her to complete his bachelor’s degree when she began in 1982, even taking on added responsibilities to ensure that her class time was uninterrupted. In a letter to Gardner-Webb’s Alumni Relations office, Northcutt wrote, “The last sentence of Gardner-Webb University’s mission statement reads, ‘Gardner-Webb prepares its graduates to make significant contributions for God and humanity in an ever-changing global community.’ Jeff McNeill has done just that. I owe more [to him] than I can ever repay.”

McNeill has served on numerous volunteer boards including the United Way and Habitat for Humanity. He has also served with Clemson’s Rotary Club, and he is a member of CASHE (the Council for Advancement and Support of Education). He and his wife, Teresa, have three children, and are members of First Presbyterian Church of Auburn. When asked about his Gardner-Webb experience, McNeill remembered the “small classes, ‘good relationships with faculty,’ and the ‘nurturing environment at Gardner-Webb,’” and said “Gardner-Webb was the right school at the right time for me. Gardner-Webb is a much finer place today because so many people believe in it and follow its purpose. I am proud to be one of them.”

\textbf{Dicy McCullough}

Dicy McCullough graduated from Gardner-Webb in 1975 with a Bachelor of Arts in Music Education, and earned a master’s in education from UNC-Charlotte in 1980. She taught in the Rowan-Salisbury Schools for 30 years until her retirement in 2006, and was voted MD Ulla Elementary School Teacher of the year in 2001. After the tragic death of her father in 2006, McCullough found a passion for writing that has turned into a weekly column for the Salisbury Post and her books and her story, and she fills school and church, and churches and organizations sharing her books and her story, and she fills school music interims as needed. She is also the pianist for Franklin Baptist Church of Salisbury, N.C.

McCullough and her husband of 30 years, Michael Dixon McCullough, have two daughters. When asked about her Gardner-Webb experience, McCullough said, “Gardner-Webb opened doors of opportunity for me through music education that I never would have known otherwise.”

\textbf{Mark Alan Tilley}

Mark Alan Tilley graduated in 1977 with a Bachelor of Arts in Religion. He served as a pastor for 21 years, and currently works as a financial advisor for Edward Jones Investments in Brevard, N.C. He also serves on the Board of the Christian Service Organization at Gardner-Webb, and believes in its mission to provide resources to equip young men and women for ministry both here and around the world.

Tilley and his wife, Rochelle, a cardiac recovery nurse at Mission Hospital in Asheville, N.C., are active members of Biltmore Baptist Church. They have four children and celebrated the birth of their first granddaughter in November.

\textbf{Marion Patricia Houston}

Houston received both athletic (basketball) and academic scholarships to Gardner-Webb in 1978, an experience that propelled her into an incredible career in business and philanthropy. After attending Gardner-Webb, she went to Barnett Business College in Atlanta, Ga., before moving to Paris, France, to attend the Paris Institute, where she was in the top 3% of her class. In Paris, Houston became a top model for designers such as Givenchy and was featured in ads for Maybelline, Essence, Newport and others.

Houston is currently the manager for Grammy Award winner Whitney Houston, for whom she negotiated the highest paid record deal in music history for $100 million in 2001. She is also the manager of the Celebrity Consignment Store in Shelby, N.C., which sells gently worn clothing donated by celebrities. In 2007, she launched Teen Summit through the Patricia Houston Foundation, an organization to “Rebuild, Restore and Repair” the lives of young adults. Houston and her husband, Gary Garland Houston, have one daughter.
The 1990s

**ALUMNA PASSING**
**DEBORAH SPIVEY HADLEY ’91 B.A.**
died on Sept. 24, 2011. She is survived by her husband, mother, sister and two stepsons.

**RICK CLARK ’93 B.S.** was elected president of the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police at their annual conference in Norfolk, Va. Chief Clark was appointed Chief of Police in Galax in Jan. 2001. During his tenure, the Police Department has been accredited by the Virginia Law Enforcement Standards Commission, and certified as a Crime Prevention Community by the Department of Criminal Justice Services. He was appointed to the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services Board in 2010 by Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell.

**MOORESVILLE AMERICAN LEGION POST NAMED FOR GARDNER-WEBB ALUMNUS**

It’s doubtful that the late Darrell Wilson (’53) would have ever been forgotten in Mooresville, N.C. The Mooresville American Legion Post 537 named after Darrell Wilson is the closest anybody would ever get to the late Darrell Wilson. The new Post was dedicated on Nov. 19, 2011, in Mooresville. Darrell Wilson was given a posthumous hero’s welcome at the dedication ceremony. Wilson was a decorated veteran of World War II. He was a decorated veteran of the American Legion Post 537 in Mooresville, N.C.

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SARAH PARTLOW MARTIN '01 A.A., '03 B.S.N. and her husband, Chad, welcomed their fourth child, Morgan, on Oct. 20, 2010.

AMBER REICHERT CURRIN '03 B.A. and her husband, Travis, welcomed their first child into the world on April 27, 2011. His name is Nevin Bennett Currin.

SHANNON O'DELL SMITH '03 B.A. and her husband, Ryan, welcomed another son, Cooper Finnlay Smith, into their family on June 24, 2011.

JON BREWER '04 B.S. recently joined the staff of Coldwell Banker Mountain View Real Estate in Kings Mountain, N.C. He has been a broker/realtor since 2002. Brewer is also an employee of Daimler Trucks North America and a member of the North Carolina Air National Guard.

RAYlene BYSON '04 M.A. was recently named Jackson County's Principal of the Year. She became principal of Jackson County Early College in 2008. She previously served as assistant principal at Smoky Mountain High School. She and her husband have two children and three grandchildren.

KEVIN GARAY '04 M.A. was recently named 2011-2012 Principal of the Year for Kannapolis City Schools. He has been the principal of A.L. Brown High School since 2009. He previously served there as assistant principal.

CRYSTAL ELIZABETH CARPENTER '06 B.S. and Dustin Lee Rudisill were married on June 11, 2011 at Boger City Methodist Church. Crystal is a teacher's assistant at Union Elementary School in Vale. Dustin is a firefighter for the City of Gastonia and is Fire Chief of Howard's Creek Volunteer Fire Department in Lincolnton.

CHRISTINE ROSE DOW '08 B.S. and Jesse Dean Pardue were united in marriage on May 28, 2011 at Arlington First Baptist Church in Jonesville, N.C. Christine is a customer care mentor for Lowe’s Companies and Jesse is a CNC programmer for Rock Solid Dimensional Stone. The couple resides in Hamptonville.

MATTHEW WILLIAM KNIPPEN '08 B.S. and ELIZABETH BUTLER MAXWELL '08 B.S. were married on Sept. 17, 2011 at St. Luke’s Chapel in Charleston, S.C. Matthew is employed by Vendue Inn in Charleston. Elizabeth is a physician assistant with Lake City Community Hospital. The couple lives in Johnsonville.

THOMAS JACKSON SANDERS '08 B.S. and KAYLA ELIZABETH MORGAN '10 B.S. were married on June 25, 2011 at Cowee Baptist Church. Thomas plays professional basketball in Europe and Kayla is a physical education teacher at Mountain View Intermediate School. The couple resides in Franklin, N.C.

JEREMIAH VANCE CHILDERS '99 M.DIV and Amber Elizabeth Blackwell were united in marriage on Oct. 1, 2011 at Inman First Baptist Church. The couple resides in Inman, S.C.

JEREL LANGLEY '08 B.S. and ASHLEY HALL '09 B.S. were married July 9, 2011 in Hendersonville, N.C. Jerel and Ashley were both members of the Gardner-Webb University track team. Jerel is an assistant women’s track coach at Eastern Michigan University and Ashley is an accountant with Arvin Meritor Inc. in Troy, Mich.

DEBORAH MCARThUR '09 B.S. and Stephen Stowe were united in marriage on April 16, 2011 in Rutherfordton, N.C. Debbie is a teacher at Rutherfordton Elementary School and Stephen is a Fine Furniture Maker.

MICHAEI GRAGG '11 M.Div. was recently called to Oak Grove Baptist Church in Boone, N.C. as pastor. He previously served as associate and youth pastor to Perkinsville Baptist Church. He and his wife, Casey, have three children.
New Science Wing Set to Open Fall 2012

“This new science wing is desperately needed. Because of limited lab space, our students have always had to tear down experiments each day to make way for the next class to use the lab. Now, we’ll have labs for each of our research areas, so our students will be able to set up ongoing experiments. Most of all, having new, up-to-date facilities, especially in the sciences, attracts good quality students to campus. I’ve been anticipating this for 30 years, so it’s exciting to see it happening.”

-Dr. Tom Jones, Professor of Biology