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The Gardner-Webb Magazine

GARDNER-WEBB

THE MAGAZINE

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On the Cover: GWU President Frank Bonner, Vice-President for Christian Life and Service Tracy Jessup, Community Engagement Coordinator Stephanie Richley and Service Learning Program Coordinator Susan Manahan discuss the national call to service (page 12).

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Gardner-Webb University
Realizing the Dream

I am not a carpenter, an artist, or an architect, but I have always admired their ability to take ideas, even dreams, and transform them into reality before our eyes. As you return to campus this fall for a play or a Runnin’ Bulldogs sporting event, you will be thrilled to see the progress of the Tucker Student Center, which we eagerly anticipate opening in the summer of 2012. Every day, the Center looks more like the manifestation of our original dreams, and I am reminded of all the generous friends who, like visionary carpenters or inspired artists, have been the catalysts for helping us make the Center a reality for our students.

It is striking how closely the growth of the Tucker Student Center parallels the growth of our students themselves, and our entire University family, into a generation of leaders dedicated to large scale, tangible service in our communities. Gardner-Webb has been blessed this year by an armful of national awards and honors for our unique commitment to faith, service, and leadership. We were even handpicked by the White House to participate in the new President’s Interfaith Community Service Campus Challenge. You’ll read more about those stories in this issue.

You’ll also learn about the contributions of Gardner-Webb students, faculty, staff and alumni to the booming local foods movement in Boiling Springs. You’ll enjoy the story of Cotton Bolick, an alumnus who was literally blown from the sky during World War II, but whose resolve enabled his miraculous escape from certain death. You will even come to know a woman whose heart for Christ, whose passion for service, and whose commitment to Gardner-Webb motivates me every day to be a better leader myself. The stories are literally as diverse as the people who inspire them.

I trust you will enjoy this issue of The Garden-Webb Magazine, and I challenge you to think about your own Gardner-Webb story. Has it yet been written? What sort of story would you like it to be? We are climbing ever higher in our quest to achieve a “Higher Ground” in Christian higher education, but it will take the support, involvement, and prayers of visionaries like you to make that dream a reality.

Sincerely,

A. Frank Bonner
President, Gardner-Webb University
Carolina Crown’s Fifth Year in Town

Award-Winning Drum and Bugle Corps Spends Fifth Consecutive Summer at Gardner-Webb

If you’re anywhere close to Gardner-Webb during the late spring, you’ve probably heard the synchronized sounds of Carolina Crown, the world-class marching drum and bugle corps based out of Fort Mill, S.C. This year marked the fifth consecutive year that GWU hosted Carolina Crown’s spring training. Comprised of drum majors, brass players, a pit ensemble, a drum line, and dozens of instructors and marching specialists, the corps’ members hail from colleges and universities all over the country. Spectators watched as they prepared their dynamic 2011 show, “Rach Star.”

Covering the likes of Hendrix, Guns & Roses, and Ben Folds, and featuring everything from stage diving to piano concertos, Crown 2011 explored the world ranking, his signature maneuver called “skipping the jig,” his biggest tournament bloopers, and his emotions upon securing the top

Professional Angler and hometown hero Bryan Thrift, then the world’s top angler, visited campus.

“You Get a Line, I’ll Get a Pole”

World’s Best Angler, Bryan Thrift, Makes a Splash at Gardner-Webb

Only in our dreams will most of us have the chance to seek advice from the world’s leading expert in our field. But that dream recently came true for the Gardner-Webb University student fishing club, when FLA Professional Angler and hometown hero Bryan Thrift, then the world’s top angler, visited campus. Before a crowd of GWU fishing club members and other students, faculty, staff, and friends, the Shelby, N.C. native graciously fielded questions about his approach to fishing, his emotions upon securing the top world ranking, his signature maneuver called “skipping the jig,” his biggest tournament bloopers, and his advice for how the Gardner-Webb students can find success on and off the lake.

Like all great advice, Thrift’s message was pertinent to more than just fishing. “Always remember to keep an open mind,” he said. “Never get stuck in your approach. You never know when trying that different approach is going to unlock the key to being successful. And try not to get frustrated. This is a difficult sport, but getting frustrated may ruin your next chance to do something great.”

A LOOK AT ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

GWU School of Education Hosts Charlotte Mason Education Conference

More than 180 teachers recently traveled from all over the U.S. and Canada to Boiling Springs for the seventh annual Charlotte Mason Education Conference, hosted by the GWU School of Education. Titled “A Charlotte Mason Education—A True Alternative,” the conference explored how the philosophy of British educator Charlotte Mason (1842-1923) constitutes a “true alternative” to other contemporary models of education.

During the four-day conference, participants enjoyed presentations with titles like, “The Two Towers—Paradigms at War in Middle Earth,” “Wonder and Admiration…Living Science,” and “Inspiring Heroism and Claiming Magnanimity: What Mason Said about Citizenship.” They engaged in discussion groups led by Mason experts, education scholars, and experienced teachers from every level and arena.

Mason believed that education is about more than communicating isolated facts; rather, education is about inspiring students to understand their relationship with the living world around them, and to engage actively in that world. Dr. Carroll Smith, professor of education at Gardner-Webb and champion of the Mason movement, called the conference a resounding success. “For Mason, the bottom line is that education is about relationship,” Smith said. “I think this little old lady up in the Lake District of England figured out a heck of a lot.”

GARDNER-WEBB HOSTS NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR BAPTIST PROFESSORS OF RELIGION

Conference Brings Several Distinguished Alumni Back to Boiling Springs

Gardner-Webb University recently played host to nearly a hundred Baptist professors and graduate students of religion for the annual meeting of the National Association of Baptist Professors of Religion (NABPR). This was the University’s first time hosting the annual meeting.

The NABPR is a community of scholars who meet to sharpen teaching skills and encourage the continuation of meaningful scholarship in the fields of religious studies. According to Dr. Ron Williams, president of NABPR and professor of religious studies at Gardner-Webb, the annual meeting offers networking and career development opportunities for current professors and graduate students entering the field.

The NABPR members enjoyed three days of compelling presentations and conversations at Gardner-Webb, including breakout sessions in which dozens of scholars presented new research. In fact, 12 of the presenters were either current or previous Gardner-Webb students or faculty members, and four were recent graduates of the undergraduate religious studies program.

“As a graduate of Gardner-Webb,” said presenter and Brite Divinity School Ph.D. student Cody Sanders (’05), “I am pleased to know that the school is positioning itself in the center of emerging Baptist scholarship in religion by hosting NABPR. The conference helpfully brought into view the range of scholarship currently being undertaken by Baptist religious scholars.”

YOU GET A LINE, I’LL GET A POLE

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BRAGGING RIGHTS

Alpha Chi Honors Students Shine at National Conference

Twelve outstanding Gardner-Webb students recently participated in the bimannual national convention of the Alpha Chi College Honor Society in San Diego, Calif. They won more presentation prizes than any of the other 87 schools represented, giving Gardner-Webb what their chapter sponsor, English professor Dr. June Hobbs, calls “some serious bragging rights.”

Alpha Chi is a national honor society limited to the juniors and seniors whose grade point averages fall in the top 10 percent of their class. Though more than 250 students from around the nation gave scholarly papers, the Gardner-Webb students left with an armful of awards and accolades:

• Brittany Bounds won the psychology prize for her presentation, “Volunteerism in the Mirror: A Case for a Volunteer Personality.”
• Lila Hudak won the Health Science prize for “In Shape or in Denial: Perceived vs. Actual Fitness of Undergraduates.”
• Keith Menhinick won the American Literature prize for “Biblical Crossdressing: Unveiling the Masculine in the Woman of Valor in Proverbs 31.”
• Savanna Yount won the Region III scholarship for an essay on post-partum depression.
• Collyn Warner was named an alternate for the national Benedict Fellowship for graduate study.

“Each of our students gave outstanding presentations,” said Hobbs. “I am convinced that many of them would have won, too, had they not been competing in the same categories as other Gardner-Webb students.”
A Seed on Good Soil
Gardner-Webb Welcomes, Missionary in Residence, Mike Boone to Boiling Springs

When Gardner-Webb’s current Missionary in Residence, Mike Boone, first sensed a call to ministry, it never occurred to him that he could be something other than a preacher. “I’ve always loved working outside, working with people. I love to see things grow. But I didn’t know I could use that for ministry,” he says. God knew better.

Boone and his family (wife, Amy; son, Tim; daughter, Grace) spent the early ’90s pastoring a church in Salemburg, N.C., before God called them to full-time international missions. But more inclined to plant seeds than churches, Boone went back to college at N.C. State for a degree in agriculture, and they moved to Mozambique to use farming as a tool to share the gospel.

The Boones served in Mozambique from 1998-2003, until Mike’s repeated bouts of malaria forced them to leave that region of Africa. They settled in their current location—Cape Town, South Africa—where they teach Life Orientation classes in local schools and plant the seeds of the gospel in the lives of Cape Town’s children.

Now on furlough, the Boones are serving as Missionaries in Residence at Gardner-Webb, where Boone teaches Old Testament Survey courses and shares his perspective on God’s global mission with hundreds of students. Boone has also shared his agricultural expertise, helping to launch Gardner-Webb’s first community garden. “I have been deeply impressed with Mike’s hospitality,” said Dr. Tracy Jessup, vice president for Christian life and service at Gardner-Webb. “Whether it’s cultivating a garden, or as I’ve sensed, cultivating students’ spiritual lives, there is just a real gentleness about him, and a genuineness about him too.”

GWU President Dr. Frank Bonner Named Big South Conference Vice President

Gardner-Webb President Dr. Frank Bonner was elected vice president of the Big South Conference at the 2011 Big South Conference Council of Chief Executive Officers meeting. This is Bonner’s first year serving on the executive committee.

The Gardner-Webb faculty and staff can be proud that their president is leading this great athletic conference. The University’s football team recently advanced to the championship game, becoming the first team in GWU’s history to win a conference title.

The most pressing topics of conversation entering Bonner’s term of leadership include the Conference’s strategic planning, championship formats, academic criteria and digital initiatives.

Gardner-Webb Launches Operations at New Charlotte Center

Building Symbolizes University’s Commitment to Lasting Presence in Charlotte

As part of its commitment to establishing a greater presence in Charlotte, N.C., Gardner-Webb University recently launched classes at its new Charlotte Center, a two-story, 25,000 sq. foot facility conveniently located at the Arrowood Road exit off Interstate 77 in Charlotte. The University-owned facility will house undergraduate and graduate courses, as well as office and conference spaces for the University’s development efforts in Charlotte.

Gardner-Webb’s Greater Opportunities for Adult Learners (GOAL) program has been operating in Charlotte since 1983. But by purchasing its own facility, Gardner-Webb established a permanent presence in Charlotte and enabled the development of new academic programs geared specifically toward the Charlotte community.

“Our long-term goal is to design several graduate programs, particularly through the Godbold School of Business, that will address the particular needs of those living and working in Charlotte,” said Gardner-Webb President Dr. Frank Bonner. “For example, we’re investigating a trust and wealth management program, and possibly even a banking program. Charlotte is the nation’s second-largest financial center, so we hope the Charlotte Center will become a real hub of activity for professional and graduate education in that area.”

In addition to several GOAL and Godbold School of Business degree programs, the School of Education will also offer programs at the Charlotte location. For more information about the Charlotte Center, contact Charlotte Operations Manager Robert Melby at rmelby@gardner-webb.edu.

Gardner-Webb Honors Outstanding Faculty and Staff

Distinguished Awards Presented at Annual “Apples and Accolades” Ceremony

Every year, Gardner-Webb honors faculty and staff members for outstanding service to the University at the “Apples and Accolades” ceremony. People are recognized for excellence in full-time teaching, excellence in adjunct teaching, outstanding community engagement, staff dedication, and long service to the University.

The Gardner-Webb Excellence in Teaching Award was presented to Dr. Janet Land, professor of English and director of Gardner-Webb’s Center for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL). Land was praised for challenging students to think critically, for her faithful service as Faculty Chair, and for helping other Gardner-Webb teachers achieve their full potential through CETL’s resources for teaching development.

The University also created a new “Adjunct Faculty Award,” celebrating adjuncts’ vital role in helping to achieve the University’s academic mission. This year’s winner was Nan Francis Gregg, an adjunct instructor in the music department since 1975. The Adjunct Award will be named in her honor.

Community Engagement Awards were given in keeping with Gardner-Webb’s motto, “For God and Humanity.” Recipients are recognized for their civic responsibility through active participation and service to the community at large. This year’s award went to Teresa Davis, secretary in the Office of Christian Life and Service. The faculty winner was Dr. Tom Jones, professor of Biology and Dean of the Honors Program.

Staff Member of the Year Awards were presented for outstanding dedication to the University and its students. Annette Simmons, office manager for student activities, was named the female recipient; and Scott Hull, network technician, was the male recipient.

Faith, Service, and Leadership Hall of Fame

President Dr. Frank Bonner also inaugurated the “Gardner-Webb Faith, Service, and Leadership Hall of Fame,” which recognizes faculty who have served the University for 40 years or more. The inaugural class of the “Hall of Fame” included four members:

- Professor Hubert Dixon began teaching mathematics at Boiling Springs Junior College in 1935. “By the time of his death in 1976,” Bonner said, “Gardner-Webb College was an established four-year institution, and it was the leadership of professors like Hubert Dixon who solidified the school’s values and Christian commitment during those times of dramatic transition.” Professor Dixon’s wife, Katy Ruth Dixon, was on hand to accept Dixon’s plaque.
- Dr. Les Brown, Professor Emeritus of Biology, taught biology at Gardner-Webb from 1966 until 2006. Bonner praised Brown for his commitment to interdisciplinary creativity, his passion for his students’ success, and his volunteerism in the community.
- Dr. Tony Eastman guided Gardner-Webb students in their exploration of American history and culture from 1966 until his retirement in 2011. “No subject has been more cherished by students than history,” said Bonner, “not only for what he has taught them in the classroom but for his example of integrity outside it.”
- Dr. Barry Hambright was professor of history and political science at Gardner-Webb from 1969 until his death in 2010. He is remembered for his empathy, his passion for students, and his role in establishing GWU’s Greater Opportunities for Adult Learners (GOAL) program. “We lost an excellent professor and a dear friend last November,” said Bonner, “and when he passed, a significant part of our University’s history passed with him. But his memory lives on in those who knew and loved him.

Faculty and staff members were also honored for their milestones of service to the University. Glenda Crotts, senior assistant to the President, was recognized for 30 years of service. Three employees were also presented 25-year service awards: Barry Hambright, professor of art; Dr. Cindy Miller, professor of nursing; and Stephen Sain, associate registrar.

Fourteen employees received 10-year service awards: Brian Baker, head coach, track and field and cross country; Brian Com, head coach, women’s tennis; Dr. Chris Davis, professor of English; Beth Davis, data coordinator for undergraduate admissions; Dr. Sterka Eddins, professor of biology; Dr. Paul Eter, professor of music; Dr. Linda Greene, professor of psychology and counseling; Dr. David Judge, professor of biology; Dr. Jim Lawrence, professor of communications; Wayne Merritt, manager of campus shop and post office; Dr. Teresa Phillips, professor of Spanish; Mary Roby, dean of libraries; Amanda Smith, assistant director of GOAL admissions; Dr. Carroll Smith, professor of education.

10 Year Service Award Winners
In Emotional Ceremony, University Grants 273 Degrees and First-Ever Posthumous Honorary Bachelor’s Degree

The University awarded degrees this summer to 273 graduates, who closed their journeys at Gardner-Webb and launched into a variety of new adventures. The day was particularly special for two students who were honored for maintaining the highest cumulative scholastic averages in their programs. Julian Lee, from Statesville, N.C., won the GOAL (Greater Opportunities for Adult Learning) Senior Scholastic Award for maintaining a 4.0 grade point average (GPA) on route to his Bachelor of Science in Accounting. Jamie Lee Brown, from Taylorsville, N.C., won the Senior Scholastic Award for the traditional undergraduate Day Program with a GPA of 3.93 while earning her Bachelor of Science in Health and Wellness.

Dealing his commencement address, David K. Wells, who received his Master of Science in Nursing, reflected on the ways his educational experience at Gardner-Webb bolstered his practice as a nurse educator. “My education was applicable to the work setting. It wasn’t just some esoteric concept being bestowed upon me. It was tangible,” he said. Wells insisted that he now has a “road map” for success, and he challenged his classmates to let their own similar road maps guide them.

But for one family, this commencement wasn’t supposed to be their destination. In an emotional ceremony, Gardner-Webb awarded its first-ever posthumous bachelor’s degree to the family of Jeanna Brown Ayers, of Lexington, N.C., who passed away this spring only hours after giving birth to her first child, Cameron. Ayers had completed 33 hours toward her B.S. in Business Administration, and was in good academic standing, when she tragically passed away. Her husband, Matt Ayers, carrying Cameron, and Jeanna’s father, Mark Brown, accepted the degree in her honor. “Jeanna truly valued education,” said Judy Badgett, Matt’s mother. “She was very happy to be attending Gardner-Webb, and she especially loved her religion classes.”

Badgett insists that while the family mourns the loss of Jeanna, they feel tremendously blessed to have Cameron. “He has already brought such joy and blessings to our family, and we are sure God has a special plan for that baby. We see Jeanna’s spirit in him.”

“Every new beginning comes from some other beginning’s end.” So says the band Semisonic in its song “Closing Time,” cutting to the emotional heart of college commencement ceremonies. Commencement is a time both of great joy and anticipation, but also of reluctant sadness, as one experience ends and another begins. The true depth of that emotional duality was on display at Gardner-Webb University’s 2011 summer commencement.

One of Bridges’s goals when he started the Gardner-Webb Pastors’ School four years ago was to offer ministers the chance to learn, converse, and reflect about themes related to church ministry, and to hear from leading thinkers like Sweet, who is an accomplished author and church historian and the E. Stanley Jones Professor of Evangelism at Drew University in Madison, N.J. The school also features some of Gardner-Webb’s leading scholars in religious studies.

“We invite one outside speaker and one person from our own staff who has an expertise in the year’s theme, and piece those two together as primary speakers,” Bridges says. Since the 2011 theme was “Jesus Manifesto: Focusing on Jesus Christ in the Twenty-First Century,” Bridges asked Dr. Ron Williams, Pauline scholar and professor of religious studies at Gardner-Webb, to share the podium with Sweet.

“Dr. Leonard Sweet, Dr. Ron Williams Lead Gardner-Webb University’s 2011 Pastors’ School

In every age, the church faces the challenge of communicating the good news of Jesus in a culturally relevant way. But at Gardner-Webb University’s 2011 Pastors’ School, keynote speaker Dr. Leonard Sweet insisted that the church now finds itself in a transitional moment “as significant as the Protestant Reformation,” and that the current challenge—and the opportunity—to reach a new generation has never been greater.

A self-admitted “Gutenberger,” Sweet suggested that the initial Protestant Reformation was galvanized by the Gutenberg printing press, which ushered in an age of “words and points” that lasted five centuries. Sweet said that “Gutenbergers,” or members of his generation, process information by dividing texts into chunks—verses, or even words—and executing those individual chunks for meaning. But according to Sweet, Martin Luther’s invention of the printing press is but one in a new age, which he calls the “TGIF age”—Twitter, Google, iPhone, Facebook. The TGIF generation is an age not of “words and points” but of “metaphor and narrative,” in which people communicate and process information via images and stories built around central metaphors—a style Sweet insists is more similar to Jesus’s own first-century paradigm than the Gutenberg world.

“TGIFers don’t hear points, and they don’t process information in chunks and verses. They communicate in images and stories. The TGIF world is in the language, and the church in our time has shown almost a willful refusal to learn the language of this TGIF culture,” Sweet said. He insisted that if the church fails to communicate the gospel and elevate Jesus in the language of the TGIF generation, we will “miss our moment.” But if the church will study the new language, like missionaries training to reach a new culture, then we will discover a means of communicating the gospel that may reach an entire new generation.

According to Rev. John Bridges, director of church relations at Gardner-Webb and coordinator of the Pastors’ School, Sweet’s message was “of historic nature. It felt like we were sitting on the front row of a worldwide paradigm shift in faith.”

The university has sponsored the Pastors’ School at Gardner-Webb since 2007. The school is geared towards ministers from the south, as pastors from several denominations and multiple states have attended. The Pastors’ School has featured 20 speakers to date in its history, and next year’s Pastors’ School is planned for May 28-30, 2012. The theme for next year will be “Jesus Manifesto: Focusing on Jesus Christ in the Twenty-First Century.”

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One of our goals is to provide something very practical for our ministers, something they can hear and put into practice in their own churches and communities,” Bridges said. To that end, Williams offered an insightful discussion of Paul’s Christology, on Paul’s conception of Jesus and his ministry. He then introduced practical strategies for studying and teaching Paul Christologically, hinting toward several sermon series about the centrality of Jesus in Pauline writings.

The 71 ministers in attendance also participated in morning devotions led by Dr. Tracy Jessup, Gardner-Webb’s senior minister to the University, and breakout sessions related to Sweet’s and Williams’s presentations. Bridges insists that the School is not solely for Baptist ministers from the south, as pastors from several denominations and multiple states have attended.

We have been seeing more women participate, and plans to line up a woman as a feature speaker in the coming years. Next year’s school will also feature breakout sessions geared toward specific topics in ministry, like youth ministry, led by experts in those areas.

Next year’s Pastors’ School, scheduled for May 28-30, 2012, will feature Dr. Walter Brueggemann as keynote speaker. As a teaser, Bridges also shared that the University has made contact with the likes of Richard Foster and Dallas Willard about possibly leading future Schools. Whatever’s certain, though, is that the Pastors’ School will continue to deliver programs that are enriching and worthwhile for ministers of the gospel.
Scenic Impressions

“All the great things are simple, and many can be expressed in a single word: freedom, justice, honor, duty, mercy, hope.” —Winston Churchill
GWU Participates in President’s Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge
By Noel T. Manning, II

Gardner-Webb University gets a lot of phone calls, but it’s not very often that the voice on the other line says, “This is the White House.” But that’s exactly what happened when, this summer, the White House invited the President’s Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge to colleges and universities across the country. To no one’s surprise, Gardner-Webb answered the challenge.

Since his inauguration, President Obama has emphasized the importance of interfaith service as a way for different communities and faiths to come together for the common cause of human service. “The White House recognized that many American colleges, universities and seminaries were already heeding the call to serve, as they launched the President’s Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge to spur on that commitment.” In response, each participating campus will enter a yearlong commitment to specific community service programs.

To be able to go through the application process and to have the proposal scrutinized by the White House, and then to be selected and invited to be a part of this is, I think, a great accomplishment for Gardner-Webb,” said Dr. Tracy Jessup, vice president for Christian Life and service at Gardner-Webb. “At Gardner-Webb, we support community service in the broadest sense of the term—local, state, national and then global service. Since this is an interfaith campus challenge regarding community service, we can work alongside people of different faiths and exercise our common goals of service, without compromising our beliefs as a Christian university,” Jessup added.

As part of the challenge, Gardner-Webb will continue and expand its partnership with the Cleveland County Potato Project, and Jessup says the University will also work with the Cleveland County Inter-faith Alliance to fight local homelessness. GWU will also team up with Rachel’s Challenge, a national outreach designed to assist middle and high schools with campaigns focusing on anti-violence and anti-bullying through compassion and random acts of kindness.

To kick off the President’s Challenge, a Gardner-Webb delegation including President Frank Bonner, Community Engagement Coordinator Stephanie Richey, and Service Learning Program Coordinator Susan Manahan, joined 193 other institutions in Washington, D.C. for two days of workshops and lectures focusing on community service. The U.S. Department of Education’s Brenda Girton-Mitchell, Coordinator Stephanie Richey, and Service Learning Program Coordinator Susan Manahan, joined 193 other institutions in Washington, D.C. for two days of workshops and lectures focusing on community service. The U.S. Department of Education’s Brenda Girton-Mitchell, was one of the coordinators of the event. “It’s a thrill just to know that the President of the United States of America is saying, ‘Good work, keep it up.’ Ours is a global world, and we can’t be in boxes just talking to people who we already understand. Our job is to expand those boundaries,” Girton-Mitchell said.

Rachel’s Challenge, a national outreach designed to assist middle and high schools with campaigns focusing on anti-violence and anti-bullying through compassion and random acts of kindness.

Joshua DuBois, executive director for the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships applauded schools like Gardner-Webb. “This is truly a historic occasion. Never before in the history of our nation have colleges, universities, community colleges and theology schools come together around the goal of interfaith cooperation for service around the nation. You are a key part in forming the bed that builds our country together.”

Bonner said he gained a tremendous amount of perspective during his two days in the Capitol. “It’s been inspiring to realize that so many schools across the country are doing this, all to figure out what a real impact it can have across the country. This is a nationwide undertaking, but it’s very much focused on the particular communities where the colleges are located,” he said. The fact that national results will be achieved through local dedication and commitment is, according to Bonner, “a very special aspect of this whole initiative.”

Rachel’s Challenge is a perfect fit for Gardner-Webb. “One of the biggest benefits we got from this event was the sharing of ideas. We were able to listen and see what other colleges and universities are doing, and to share our resources with them, and best of all, the White House has insisted that they will provide whatever resources we need to help us in this endeavor. It’s great to have that support,” said Bonner.

Gardner-Webb has already started the process of collaborating with other colleges and universities throughout the Carolinas on service-related issues that may provide mutual benefit for all involved.

Manahan feels that since GWU is a Christian university, we have a unique niche in aiding humanity. “Christian universities have a big part in helping others, and the White House realizes that. Schools like Gardner-Webb are on the forefront of this challenge because we are already assisting those in need,” Manahan said.

Most importantly, the President’s Campus Challenge offers just one more opportunity for Gardner-Webb to exercise the commitment to service that is inherent in its motto, “Pro Deo et Humanitate” (for God and Humanity). As Jessup puts it, “Faith, Service and Leadership is not just something that we like to put on a logo or on advertisements. It’s something that’s instilled and embedded in the life of this University.”

Frank Bonner, Susan Manahan and Stephanie Richey
Glenda Crotts, Assistant to the President, insists that much of Gardner-Webb’s success over the last six years is due to the leadership of President Dr. Frank Bonner. “You’ve heard the old expression, ‘behind every good man is a good woman.’” Crotts says with a smile. “Well, Dr. Bonner definitely has someone who helps him.” That someone is Flossie Bonner, Dr. Bonner’s wife of 45 years and the woman Crotts calls “a small package of pleasant dynamite.”

When asked about Flossie Bonner, almost everyone mentions her genuine sincerity, a quality GWU Director of Donor Stewardship Dawn Anthony calls “a true gift. Ever since I’ve known Flossie, she has motivated me through her graciousness, her kindess, and her professionalism. She is a wonderful role model for our students and a great asset to our community,” Anthony said.

Above all, Flossie Bonner is a listener. “Whether she’s speaking to dignitaries or old friends, her humility puts people at ease,” Crotts says. “Like most humble people, she would rather listen to others than talk about herself. Recently, though, Mrs. Bonner shared a bit of her story with the Gardner-Webb Magazine, discussing her faith, her roles as wife, mother and teacher, and her passion for the Gardner-Webb community.

GW: You grew up in Chester, S.C., and your parents were both teachers. Would you talk about how your childhood influenced the person you are today?

FB: Well, my father taught textiles at the vocational school in Chester County, and my mother taught fifth grade and then junior high English. Growing up with two teachers as parents was a wonderful life. My parents were very supportive of everything my brother and I wanted to accomplish academically. Of course, they didn’t have a lot of money, but they sacrificed and worked very hard to make sure that we could go to school where we wanted and have the opportunities we wanted.

FB: I was a pretty strict disciplinarian. I felt that you just can’t learn if you’re not paying attention, so I was very strict. I also believed in a lot of homework, because to learn math you’ve got to do it and do it and do it. Sometimes, students didn’t understand why I was making them do the things we did in class. Many times now, though, former students will come up and give me a hug, and tell me, ‘Now I understand why you made us do all those math problems.’ I hope they realize I was trying to teach them more than just math, but I was trying to build relationships with them and teach them character. When they come up and give me those hugs, those are the most rewarding parts of it.

GW: Your daughters, Alison and Florence, were still children when you began teaching. How did you balance the demands of being a full-time wife and mother, while still pursuing your own career as a teacher?

FB: I just had to get organized. I would wake up early and get homework done before we left for school, and then Frank and I had to work together in the afternoons to make sure the girls did each of their activities. We cooked meals and ate well, and I don’t really remember a lot of the busyness of the time anymore. As you parent knows, those years just fly by. I just had to stay organized, and get things done when I could get them done, and not at my family’s expense, because they came first.

GW: You’re quite the fitness guru, and last fall, you ran your first half-marathon and finished 3rd in your age group! When did fitness become such a vital part of your life?

FB: I think it’s actually the other way around. My family was very active, so I grew up running and swimming, but I swear I wouldn’t do it anymore. But I ended up taking a class at the YMCA that helped gradually get me started, and that’s all it took. Now, I exercise every morning; it’s just the first thing I do. There’s not a question of whether I’ll exercise today. It’s just something I have to do for myself.

GW: You’ve been involved with Gardner-Webb in several capacities now for nearly 35 years, and now you’re the First Lady. What have been some of the rewarding aspects of being a part of this community?

FB: It sounds like a generalization, but the people are what it’s all about. You can’t meet a better student body anywhere. You look at what the student body here does, without being told—the things they achieve and the ways they support one another—I just can’t imagine that there isn’t a better group of students. There is also a real genuineness about the spirituality and sincerity of Gardner-Webb employees. They truly care about one another. I hope Gardner-Webb never loses that personal touch, because you just don’t get that everywhere.

GW: The title “First Lady” doesn’t come with a job description, but how do you envision your role as Gardner-Webb’s First Lady, and how do you try to fulfill that vision?

FB: More than anything, I feel like I need to support Frank in what he’s doing, and enjoy it because of how much he enjoys it. And he truly does. I love getting to be involved in planning events, and I especially love talking with people and giving them to know, but I don’t feel like it’s my job to run Gardner-Webb. I’m open to help in any way I can, and I just want to be a supporter.

GW: When you’re gone, how do you want to be remembered? What do you hope your legacy will be?

FB: I hope people say I was a good person, and that I treated people well. Maybe I was a little fun to be with sometimes. I just feel like you need to value your friendships. We need to value relationships with each other, with family and friends, and with God. Things come and go, but those relationships are just too important to miss.
When asked about her group of housekeeping employees, Ann Dellinger, director of facilities services at Gardner-Webb, can hardly contain her admiration. “They are just the most giving people I’ve ever met,” she says. “You let them know there’s a need and they meet it. That’s just their nature.”

Members of the GWU community probably don’t think of the housekeepers enough for their giving nature. “It’s tough to quantify generosity, but in the average month the GWU housekeeping staff replaces 3,600 rolls of toilet paper, changes 3,000 trash bags, installs 500 rolls of paper towels, and picks up countless scraps of litter around campus. Still, it’s what the housekeepers give beyond their everyday jobs that is the best representation of their generous spirit. Earlier this year, Dellinger saw an ad in The Shelby Star in which the shelter asked for specific toiletry items. Dellinger, who is responsible for ordering the University’s toiletry supplies, thought, ‘I can get all of these in bulk at prices we can afford.’ She knew reimbursing the University for the toiletries would be cheaper than purchasing them on her own. Though she wanted to ask her staff of housekeepers if they would like to contribute, she didn’t want to put pressure on them. That’s just their nature.”

The day after sending the note to her staff, Dellinger arrived in her office to find a surprise. “There was a pile of money on my desk,” she said. “And not just ones, but fives and tens!” Though she had anticipated receiving money for several months before making the first purchase, the staff had donated such a large sum that she was immediately able to deliver 200 trash bags and 96 rolls of toilet paper, and the staff has continued to give generously toward the homeless shelter cause.

Dellinger insists that the group’s compassion for others, and for each other, characterizes everything they do. “We had one individual who was recovering from cancer, and they immediately got a prayer chain going for him. That’s just who they are,” she said. Scottie Campbell, a longtime member of the housekeeping staff, agreed with Dellinger. “I’ll get caught up and someone needs help, I’ll go and help them out so they can get to whatever else they need to do,” he says. “It’s been such a wonderful experience.” Campbell says he works diligently because of his pride for his job, and for Gardner-Webb. “To me,” he says, “picking up the trash is just showing kindness and love and letting people know that you care. How much is that caring worth? Just ask the Shelby Homeless Shelter.”

Jackie Jarvis and Alesha Shorts never met each other along the winding sidewalks or inside a chemistry classroom at Gardner-Webb University. The science scholars’ paths finally crossed this summer in Tallahassee, Fla., at a prestigious internship program at the National High Magnetic Field Laboratory, where Jarvis recruited Shorts for in-depth exposure to world-class research techniques. But the pair has more in common than a love for science.

Jarvis, 25, grew up in Kings Mountain, N.C., and graduated from GWU in 2008 with a degree in chemistry and biology. Now a graduate student at Florida State University, Jarvis wanted to recruit up-and-coming scientists from her alma mater into the magnet lab for a chance to be part of research that could change the world. Mentor Jarvis found a protégé in Shorts, a Cherryville, N.C., native and a rising senior at Gardner-Webb.

“There’s actually a world outside of where I came from,” 21-year-old Shorts said, laughing. “It’s been such a wonderful experience.” Shorts, an environmental sciences major, was one of only 19 college students selected from 180 applicants from across the country to participate in the magnet laboratory, sponsored by the National Science Foundation and the state of Florida. During the eight-week program, Shorts and the other intern worked with their mentors, scientists and engineers in the labs, and attended weekly conferences about science concepts.

Jarvis and Shorts used unique ion cyclotron resonance (ICR) instruments to analyze petroleum samples taken from the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The ICR instruments help scientists analyze complex mixtures like petroleum. Jarvis said once they learn more about what comprises petroleum, they can help companies understand how to make more efficient fuels. Even as the program helped Jarvis expand her research knowledge, she also learned more about herself as a mentor and teacher. “It helps me learn what I know well and what I don’t really know well,” Jarvis said. “Seeing Alesha’s face, and seeing what she understands and what she doesn’t, helps me know how well I’m communicating and understanding things myself.”

The pair also bonded outside the laboratory through activities such as a sailing lesson and a trip to the beach in Panama City, Fla. Their Cleveland County connection has also helped bridge the sometimes overwhelming gap between the hills of North Carolina and a research lab in Florida.

“We could talk about the classes we liked at Gardner-Webb, what’s changed at the school, and the professors,” Shorts said. Shorts insists that the research experience won’t end now that the internship is finished. After graduating from Gardner-Webb, she plans to follow in her mentor Jarvis’s footsteps and attend graduate school.
GWU’s Roots in the Emerging Community Garden Movement
By Matt Renfer

A close eye on the landscape in Boiling Springs, N.C. reveals a number of freshly sprouted community gardens.

Perhaps less apparent, but equally important, is that each project’s origins are inherently rooted in Gardner-Webb University. No less than four individual gardens and one farmer’s market, all closely tied to the University, have come to fruition in the span of two years—the culmination of invigorated community involvement through volunteered growth.

The first seeds of the movement can be traced to 2009, when the Foothills Farmer’s Market came to Boiling Springs. Current Gardner-Webb Coordinator of Community Engagement, Stephanie Richey (’10), and current senior Brittany Mote were instrumental in launching the market as a satellite campus at the Ruby Hunt YMCA.

Then, during the spring 2010 semester, one of the more notable gardens fulfilled GWU’s commitment to community service by becoming a hub for volunteers looking to feed the hungry with harvested potatoes. The story of the Cleveland County Potato Project (see “Giving From the Ground Up,” Winter/Spring 2010 Issue) has caused a widespread ripple effect, eventually gaining the attention of the White House and prompting the University’s participation in the President’s Interfaith and Community Service Campus Challenge (“Accepting the Challenge,” page 12).

But arguably the most tangible proof of University support for the local foods movement came during the Spring 2011 semester, when Richey and Mote were granted permission to start the University’s official community garden. Fuelled entirely by volunteers, the support of GWU faculty, and funded by the SGA, the garden’s produce will be donated to feed the Children’s Homes of Cleveland County.

“Because of the classes I took and the education I received,” said Richey, “the local foods movement is something I learned a lot about—something I’m personally passionate about as a result of being a graduate of Gardner-Webb.”

The University’s official garden wasn’t the only one to sprout this year, as another came to bear fruit with the backing of the Ruby Hunt YMCA and the local Broad River Community Church.

“Ultimately, the goal of our garden is to bring people together and provide for the community,” said Joseph Hamby, coordinator of the garden and ’09 GWU alumnus. “We want to facilitate a way that different people, different cultures can all come together.” With a number of youth groups involved, the goal is to donate all grown produce to fight local hunger.

In the summer of 2011, yet another community garden was launched by a member of the Gardner-Webb community. Kelly Brame, coordinator of leadership and volunteerism, started a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) garden to sell weekly shares of fresh produce. While each of the gardens and farmer’s market share a common theme of service to the community, the bloom in recent months can be attributed to a number of varying factors.

“I think food has been an issue—a growing issue in the last decade, and probably the last couple of decades,” said Brame. “But it’s intensified with each year, especially with media exposure like Jamie Oliver’s Food Revolution”—the 2010-premiered television show whose aim is to combat obesity by offering healthier school meals.

“We want children to be healthier,” said Mote, a health and wellness major, referring to vegetable donations to the Cleveland County Children’s homes. “The GWU community garden could be their complete food source as far as vegetables go. We’re just trying to get them as much as we can.”

Hunger is another factor—currently compounded with rising food prices, high unemployment, and a weakened U.S. dollar. “Once you start taking away the hunger aspect of poverty,” said Hamby, “you can start focusing on other issues like literacy.”

Still, the prevailing motivators for launching the gardens may be less a question of "why?" and more a question of "why not?"

“It’s a lot about doing what you can for where you are,” Hamby said, elaborating on his project’s mission.

“We realized we have all these incredible resources around us taken for granted for so long that we can be using to combat a lot of the issues that we have.”

The new wave of community gardens in Boiling Springs have arrived, but will they dig in and take root—providing practical needs for Boiling Springs and the surrounding community?

Brame, for one, hopes his CSA garden does. “I think it’s a good thing. Can we keep it going? That’s a good question, whether we can make the growing of it sustainable.”

And if the Gardner-Webb community garden is to thrive, Mote insists it will be because of the effort of not only “Gardner-Webb students and faculty but also people from the community.”

“It’s so much more than planting a seed,” says Richey. “We have learned so much through this process, so I think it’s just going to continue to grow.”
Any new NCAA Division I head football coach feels the pressure to build a winning program. But ask new Gardner-Webb Head Coach Ron Dickerson, Jr., how he spells “win,” and he’ll always say the same thing: F-A-M-I-L-Y.

“The thing I look for this season—our number one goal—is how we’re going to come together as a family,” Dickerson said before the start of the 2011 season. “Whether we’re talking about the coaching staff, or our players, or even the relationship between this football program, this University and this community—special things are going to happen around here if we pick each other up, if we respect and support each other, and if we truly become a family.”

As soon as he arrived in Boiling Springs, Dickerson plunged into all the activities one might expect to occupy a head coach: watching film, game-planning, and burning up the recruiting trail. But he and his staff have also dedicated themselves to community service. Dickerson has given motivational speeches, his team has participated in service opportunities around campus, and they even kicked off the 2011 season not with a special practice, but with a day of fun with children at the local YMCA.

“—We want people all over Cleveland County, and the surrounding counties, too, to be able to say, ‘Gardner-Webb is our football team. Gardner-Webb is our home.’ For this program to be all it can be,” Dickerson said, “we’ve got to put an exciting product on the field. We’ve got to win football games, and that’s my job. But we also need this community to embrace our team, to come out and be excited on Saturdays.” And then there’s that word again: “It’s got to be like everyone coming out to a big family reunion.”

As a family man himself, Dickerson began transforming his staff into a family by literally hiring his father, the accomplished player and coach Ron Dickerson, Sr., to coach the defensive line. But Dickerson’s ultimate vision for the Gardner-Webb football family is much larger than his own flesh and blood.

“There are some great people at this University. I’ve been encouraged by how grateful, how compassionate and kind people are around here. My football players will be in that category,” Dickerson said. “We are going to win football games in the years to come, but even more important, our men will be men of character and integrity. I’m going to hold them to a high standard, because that’s what families do.”

Dickerson says integrity and character are the “backbone” of Gardner-Webb. “The values this University stands for are the values I stand for,” he said. “I am blessed to be the head coach here, and one of the things I tell my players is to never take anything for granted. Always honor God first in everything you do, and great things will happen. We’ve got to humble ourselves, honor God, and respect each other if we want to be winners, and that’s what we plan to do around this program.”

So what can fans expect to see from their ‘Dogs on the field in 2011, beyond the tenacious defense and electrifying offense Dickerson promised when he was hired? “Here’s how I’m going to answer that: If you want to see what the Runnin’ Bulldogs are all about in 2011, come out to Spangler Stadium,” said Dickerson. “And don’t just come and watch—cheer! Have a good time! There’s no need to feel embarrassed to act a little crazy,” he said, smiling. “We’re all family.”

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By Matt Walters

“It’s tough. It’s about sacrificing. It’s that combination of practice and preparation. Often that ultimate dream would be, “If somebody gives me an opportunity, I’ll play.”

Whether it’s on the baseball diamond or in a physical therapy program, Quattlebaum’s track record proves he’ll be successful. For now, Runnin’ Bulldog fans are just glad to have one more season to watch that sweet left-handed stroke.

Since he was four years old, Dusty Quattlebaum, of Boiling Springs, N.C., has lived and breathed baseball. A strong kid with a powerful left-handed stroke, Quattlebaum started for his local Crest High Chargers and anchored the Shelby Post 82 American Legion baseball team’s lineup for several seasons. No one was surprised when Quattlebaum signed to play college ball for ACC (Atlantic Coast Conference) member N.C. State University.

But Quattlebaum never felt at home with the Wolfpack, and after his sophomore year, he transferred to Gardner-Webb—a move he says has made all the difference. “I’m a local, so I grew up being familiar with Gardner-Webb. It’s just a big change from where I started school at N.C. State. The class sizes are smaller, which I like. The teachers actually know who I am, and I can have real conversations with them. And I’m excited to be a part of an up-and-coming baseball program,” said Quattlebaum.

After transferring, NCAA rules stipulated that Quattlebaum had to redshirt the 2010 season, but he stormed onto the national scene in 2011 like a man with something to prove—and not just on the baseball diamond.

Quattlebaum was a two-time Big South Player of the Week in 2011, and was named National Hitter of the Week by the National College Baseball Writers Association (NCBWA) in March. He hit .320 with six homers and 49 RBI (runs batted in) in 2011, and led the Big South Conference and finished 13th nationally with 25 doubles—only three away from tying the conference’s single-season doubles record.

He also led the Runnin’ Bulldogs in home runs and two-out RBI, and was fourth on the team in hitting.

But equally impressive were Quattlebaum’s stats in the classroom. The sports management major maintained a perfect 4.0 GPA (grade point average) for the year, earning a spot on the Capital One/CoSIDA First-Team Academic All-America.

To cap it all off, Quattlebaum was named the Big South Conference Male Scholar-Athlete of the Year.

The always-humble Quattlebaum downplays the Herculean effort it took to achieve such success, but he did admit, “It’s tough. It’s about sacrificing. It’s that combination of practice and preparation. Often that meant staying up late to study. Whatever it takes.”

Quattlebaum says he was “surprised” to receive all the awards he racked up, and that since he takes pride in his academic work, the recognition “made all the sacrifice feel worth it.”

Quattlebaum will return for his senior season with the “Dogs in 2012, and he plans to attend graduate school for physical therapy after leaving Gardner-Webb. But the passion for the game still courses through his veins. “My ultimate dream would be to still play baseball,” he says. “As long as somebody gives me an opportunity, I’ll play.”

Whether it’s on the baseball diamond or in a physical therapy program, Quattlebaum’s track record proves he’ll be successful. For now, Runnin’ Bulldog fans are just glad to have one more season to watch that sweet left-handed stroke.
Are you good with puzzles? How about, say, a difficult jigsaw puzzle where the pieces have to be matched just right in order to create the finished product? That’s how Emily Dotson describes accounting. “I love the feeling of accomplishment that comes when you put all the pieces together. Bank examinations are like that too. You have to look for the clues or pieces to find the big picture or the status of the bank,” said Dotson.

You don’t have to talk to Dotson for long before realizing she’s a true puzzle master. Just ask the FDIC (Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation), who hired Dotson only days after she graduated from Gardner-Webb in May 2011.

Dotson, a native of Charlotte, N.C., graduated with a double major in accounting and finance, and earned a perfect 4.0 cumulative GPA (grade point average). Today, she works as a Financial Institution Specialist with the FDIC in their field office in Charlotte.

The FDIC was created in 1933 after thousands of bank failures. Its purpose is to preserve and promote public confidence in the U.S. financial system by insuring deposits in banks and thrift institutions of at least $250,000. Dotson explains, “Unlike many Government agencies, the FDIC is not supported by taxpayers. The FDIC is supported by insurance premiums paid by the banks.” The FDIC also directly examines and supervises over 4,900 banks for operational safety and soundness. It employs more than 7,000 individuals and is headquartered in Washington, D.C. with regional and field offices throughout the country.

Dotson has had her eye on the FDIC for quite some time. “As a freshman, I found out about an internship with the FDIC. I tried to apply several times over the next two years, but they wanted to hire someone closer to graduation. As a junior I got the internship,” said Dotson. This provided her with hands on experience and as a result, she was offered a full time job.

Dotson says she was interested in accounting even before coming to GWU, but during her studies it grew into a passion. Dotson said, “I learned a lot about ways I could take advantage of the opportunities presented in the business world from my professors in the Godbold School of Business. Their teaching and mentoring was inspiring and is probably the biggest force behind my passion for business.”

Dotson plans to become a licensed bank examiner within the next four years and also hopes to get her CPA (Certified Public Accountant). One thing’s for sure. No matter what, Dotson will make all the pieces and numbers fit.
He was trapped. His B-24 bomber was hit, spinning and plummeting toward the German soil below, and Cecil "Cotton" Bolick was pinned to the side of the plane by the sheer force of the spin. When the blow occurred, he had pulled the cable beneath his seat, freeing him from the plane's top turret where he was stationed as a gunner. But the plane's hydraulics systems had been hit, and the doors on his side of the fuselage wouldn't open. Unable to pull himself to the catwalk and out the other side's doors, Bolick must have known he was doomed.

It wasn't supposed to end like this. A native of Cramerton, N.C., and a four-sport star in high school, Bolick had enlisted at 19 in the Army Air Corps and had been trained as a top turret gunner. He had escaped numerous close calls, including a few in his very first mission, "Operation Tidal Wave" over Ploesti, Romania, on August 1, 1943—the day that has come to be called "Black Sunday."

He went on to fly 24 more missions over the next nine months, completing his required tour of duty. But his pilot, who’d been wounded and temporarily grounded, still had six missions to fly, and Bolick’s desire to finish with his crew outweighed his longing for home. "We were just like a family," Bolick remembers, "so of course we all volunteered to fly the six more together." And now, during the second of those six extra missions in March 1944, Bolick’s plane was burning over Friedrichshafen, and he was trapped.

What started next was a string of events straight out of a Steven Spielberg movie script. The plane reversed its spin, hurling him across the fuselage and out the open doors, only seconds before exploding in the skies above him. Bolick and three others managed to escape the plane; six of his friends were killed in the blast.

As he Pointed to the ground, unsure of what awaited him below, Bolick realized his right foot was badly wounded, dangling by only a few tendons. He was found first by a German farmer and his daughters, who insisted they were not Nazis. They stuffed his leg with straw to stop the bleeding, and held off another German civilian who wanted to attack Bolick with a pitchfork.

Bolick was then shuffled from prison to prison, escaping several angry mobs of German civilians and always refusing to answer interrogators’ questions. "We had been trained, so we knew exactly what they were going to ask in those prisons," Bolick says. "They told me my crew had already been there and given them everything, so I might as well just tell them what I knew. So I said, ‘If you already got it from them, you don’t need it from me.’" To coerce him to speak, the Germans began threatening to amputate his mangled foot, but he maintained his resolve until they finally sent him to a regular prison hospital in Obersalzberg.

There, Bolick met a Polish surgeon who was also a prisoner of war. Bolick remembers him as "a big strong man, a really compassionate person. He truly cared for everybody, and it worried him to death because he couldn’t get any anesthetics to work with." With nothing to dull the pain—and with four people holding Bolick—the doctor conducted a series of skin and muscle grafting operations to repair Bolick’s leg, and miraculously, the operations worked. Bolick regained the use of his foot, and after finally being shipped to Stalag Luft I, a prison camp in Barth, he was liberated by the Soviets on April 30, 1945.

Bolick began his life of freedom in 1946 at Gardner-Webb College where, only months after having had his foot nearly amputated, he starred in football, basketball and tennis. In fact, he single-handedly revived the tennis program, pushing the student body to build new tennis courts and coaching the team himself. He also edited the school newspaper and served as vice president of the International Relations Club. "Those two years at Gardner-Webb were the best two of my single life," Bolick remembers. "It was wonderful."

Bolick went on to earn his bachelor’s degree from Catawba College, and he would teach, coach, and serve as Athletic Director at West Mecklenburg High School and Charlotte Country Day School for the next 33 years. He has been inducted into Charlotte halls of fame for both high school baseball coaches and athletic directors, and he has coached numerous players who went on to be Major Leaguers. As he says it, his life has been one string of awesome adventures.

The word "miraculous" sometimes gets thrown around too freely, and Bolick is hesitant to say "miracle" about that day over Friedrichshafen, when so many of his "family" were lost. But given all that he has accomplished, all that he has meant to so many people throughout his 87 years, it seems more than just luck that Bolick’s burning B-24 reversed its spin that day. "I tell you," says Bolick, "I’ve been very fortunate. The Lord’s been good to me, and I just feel like everything’s happened for a reason."
Those outside the sport of Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) might suggest any number of ways to finish the sentence, “MMA is a lot like…” A demolition derby. Watching two trains collide. The most painful thing imaginable. But for Brandon Beach ’07, GWU graduate admissions counselor and professional fighter, MMA is a lot like—chess?

At first glance, the analogy might seem like a stretch. But Beach insists that what is challenging and ultimately beautiful about Mixed Martial Arts is not violence and force, but strategy and precision. “MMA is more about what you know mentally, and how quickly you can make strategic moves, than what you can do physically,” he says. “You see guys trying to learn these elaborate moves, and they get in the ring and throw 200 punches in one round. They’re just flailing around.”

Beach says his style is much more calculated, and more controlled. “I try to focus on getting to certain positions instead of on particular strikes and submissions. I approach slowly, and then move quickly to certain positions that will give me an advantage.”

The drama of the match, then, is like the drama of the chessboard. Just as certain pieces can only strike from certain spots on the board, certain of his opponent’s moves and submissions can’t touch him if Beach is in the right position. If he masters the mind game, he wins the fight, no matter how strong the other fighter is physically. “If I can put him in a position where certain strikes won’t work, then I can predict what move he’ll try, and I know how to counter it, and I’m three moves ahead of him. Then I’ve got him.”

Beach has been developing this strategy since he began practicing martial arts at age 7, and his background as a wrestler gives him a decided advantage on the mat. Beach had a strong collegiate wrestling career at Gardner-Webb, winning 58 total matches and 20 in his senior year alone.

After graduating, Beach decided to combine his interest in martial arts with his skills as a wrestler, and stormed onto the Charlotte MMA scene. In five amateur fights, Beach posted a 4-1 record and won the Fight Lab Heavyweight Championship. Beach then decided to jump to the pro ranks, crushing Adam Dematteo by Technical Knockout (TKO) in the first round of his pro debut in July.

“The next step,” Beach says, “is just to continue working hard and lining up good professional fights, and hopefully fighting my way into the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) ranks.” There is no hesitation when you ask Beach about his ultimate goal. “I know it sounds big, but I want to be considered the best fighter of my era.”

But Beach hasn’t forgotten what the heart of martial arts culture is really all about. “I am passionate about MMA, but the core of martial arts for me is still about self-defense. It’s about teaching people who aren’t the strongest or fastest to defend themselves and their families.” Determined to share that passion with others, the black-belt Beach opened his own martial arts dojo in Shelby, N.C., called Complete Martial Arts, which won “The Shelby Star’s” Best of Cleveland County 2010 Award for “Best Martial Arts Studio.”

There, Beach shares the principles and culture of martial arts with students from age 4 to 54. “I’ve seen other people teaching martial arts, and they’re really turning it into more of a business than anything. We’re getting back to the true essence of what martial arts is all about—learning discipline, learning to defend ourselves, and having fun.”

For more information about Beach’s dojo, or to follow his MMA career, visit cmartialarts.com.
The 1940s
ALUMNA PASSING
DOROTHY MITCHELL PITTMAN ’46 A.A.
passed away on June 8, 2010, at the McCall Hospice House in Simpsonville, S.C. She retired from the Pickens County School District as a third grade teacher. She later became a guidance counselor for Ben Haggard, Hollis Springs, and Pickens Elementary Schools. Dorothy was an active member of First Baptist Church, Pickens. She was a member of Alpha Delta Kappa Teacher’s Sorority, the YMCA Silver Sneakers, and the Pickens County Historical Society. She is survived by her son, daughter, sister and three grandchildren.

ALUMNUS PASSING
BEDFORD JACKSON “BUCK” PAGE, SR. ’48 A.A.
died on May 22, 2011, at his home. He served in the United States Navy on the USS Block Island. He was athletic director, coach and teacher at several schools including Ellerbe High School in Richmond County, N.C., as well as Cobb Memorial and Bartlett-Vance High Schools in Cassville County. He was a member of First Baptist Church, Yanceyville, where he was a deacon and taught Sunday School. Buck served as Scoutmaster for Troop 390 at First Baptist Church for many years. He was also an officer of the Order of the Arrow, and served on the Board of Review for Eagle Scouts. Buck was a member and past Commander of American Legion Post 89, as well as the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7316. He was a 50 year member and Past Master of Cassville Brotherhood Lodge #11, member and past Associate Patron of Cassville’s Order of the Eastern Star 239. He was a charter member and past President of Caswell County’s first Lion’s Club. He is survived by his wife, six children and several grandchildren and great grandchildren.

The 1960s
ALUMNUS PASSING
LESTER I. MURPHY ’66 A.A.
died on March 29, 2011, at the Madison Health and Rehabilitation Center in Mars Hill, N.C. He served as pastor to several churches including Hot Springs, Middle Fork, Madison Seminary, and Mt. Pleasant Baptist Churches. He was also a teacher for 23 years at Weaverville Elementary School. His wife, two daughters, and three grandchildren survive him.

ALUMNUS PASSING
RICHARD “DICK” LAWRENCE ’67 A.A.
passed away on Jan. 16, 2011. He is survived by his wife, Sheila England Lawrence ’67, one daughter and three grandchildren.

ARTIS GILMORE ’69
was recently inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame. He enjoyed an 18-year professional career that included 12 seasons in the NBA, where he was a six-time All-Star. He was also a five-time ABA All-Star with the Kentucky Colonels, Chicago Bulls, San Antonio Spurs and Boston Celtics.

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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?

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The 1970s

ALUMNI PASSING
JOSEPH MICHAEL RECKWIT '73
passed away on May 8, 2011. He was a retired computer analyst. He is survived by his wife Marilyn, Alexander Beckwith '73, as well as three children and two grandchildren.

ROBIN HALL COGAN '78 B.A.
is a 2010-2011 Council Scholar sponsored by the World Affairs Council of Charlotte, N.C. Council Scholars are Charlotte-area educators who have shown outstanding commitment to promoting international education in their schools, education communities and the greater Charlotte region. Scholars receive individual grants to participate in international education opportunities. Robin used her grant to collaborate with educators in Finland and participate in the XI Youth Song and Dance Celebration in Estonia in July, and participate in the XI Youth Song and Dance Celebration in Estonia in July, and "Black Ball: A Negro Leagues Journal." He has been working to strengthen the community of Shelby, N.C. Since earning her Master of Divinity degree from Gardner-Webb University in 2008, Beck has continued that type of ministry in Shelby. She has partnered with a local church plant, City of Hope, which provides a feeding ministry twice a week as well as several children's programs and activities. "The children are enjoying it and inviting their friends," Beck says. "I look forward to the day when I can provide full-time chaplaincy as a Chaplain for Hospice of Rutherford County." Beck is classified by the CBM as "self-funded personnel," so she works to support herself financially. She is currently renovating a home for herself, and is grateful for the help she has received from area churches and a group of Gardner-Webb student-athletes. She hopes to have the house finished soon, so she can become a more permanent, integral part of her neighborhood, and continue living out the vision of ministry God has given her.

The 1980s

ALUMNI PASSING
DAVID R. JOHNSON, JR. '82 B.A.
passed away on Jan. 16, 2011. He served as director and missioner to the deaf for the North American Mission Board in Louisiana and North Carolina for 26 years, the last 15 of which were at Forest Hills Baptist Church in Wilson, N.C. He also served as director and adjunct professor for the TriState Deaf School of Theology, and was a contract editor of Sunday School Literature for the Deaf for Lifeway Christian Resources.

STEPHEN CHARLES SUMMERS '86 B.A.
was promoted to senior vice president and manager, systems manager for First Baptist Church of The Woodlands, Texas.

The 1990s

ALUMNI PASSING
MICHAEL D. JOHNSON, JR. '92 B.A.
passed away on 11 June, 1992. He was minister and missionary to the deaf for the North American Mission Board in Louisiana and North Carolina for 26 years, the last 15 of which were at Forest Hills Baptist Church in Wilson, N.C. He also served as director and adjunct professor for the TriState Deaf School of Theology, and was a contract editor of Sunday School Literature for the Deaf for Lifeway Christian Resources.

GARY TODD MITCHEM '95 B.A.
was recently promoted to principal. She and her husband, Bob, have two children and are active members of First Baptist Church of The Woodlands, Texas.

More than a Neighbor

Ministry and evangelism can come in many forms. For Cecelia Beck '08, ministry means befriending those around her, sharing the love of Christ with her neighbors, and working to build a strong community. Since earning her Master of Divinity degree from Gardner-Webb University in 2008, Beck has been working to strengthen the community of Shelby, N.C. In 2002, Beck began working with the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) and was asked to serve for two years in Toronto, Canada. She lived in an urban area with an average of one buildings and thousands of immigrants and refugees. "My apartment ministry involved befriending those whom God placed in my path," Beck says. By fostering hospitality within her apartment complex and babysitting her neighbors' children, she was able to form relationships that went deeper than a passing hello. Those bonds allowed her to minister to her neighbors more effectively. Beck has continued that type of ministry in Shelby. She has partnered with a local church plant, City of Hope, which provides a feeding ministry twice a week as well as several children's programs and activities. "The children are enjoying it and inviting their friends," Beck says. "I look forward to the day when I can provide full-time chaplaincy as a Chaplain for Hospice of Rutherford County." Beck is classified by the CBM as "self-funded personnel," so she works to support herself financially. She is currently renovating a home for herself, and is grateful for the help she has received from area churches and a group of Gardner-Webb student-athletes. She hopes to have the house finished soon, so she can become a more permanent, integral part of her neighborhood, and continue living out the vision of ministry God has given her.

The 2000s

TONY LEE WARLEY '00 M.A.
has been selected as the 2011 Wachovia Principal of the Year for Lincoln County Schools in a program sponsored by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction and Wachovia, a Wells Fargo Company. He is principal of Lincolnton High School.

KELLY CAPE STEVENS '01 B.S.
completed her doctoral degree in Teacher Leadership from Walden University in April 2010. She and her husband, Phillip, welcomed their first son, Colson MacArthur Stevens, in March 2011.

JOSEPH DEWAYNE RAMEY '02 M.B.A.
was recently named assistant chief of the Gaston County Police Department. Captain Ramay began his law enforcement in 1994 and has since served the GCPD as patrol officer, community police officer, plainclothes detective, criminal investigations sergeant, support services sergeant and commander in several areas.

Share your news if you have a personal or professional accomplishment to share, such as a new job, birth announcement, or a wedding, we would like to hear from you. Submit your class news to klovelace@gardner-webb.edu.
Until recently, Gardner-Webb alumni Kelvin and Mary Katherine Monteith and Teresa Grigg had difficulty finding a church in their hometown, Gastonia, N.C. “Our goal is to provide an excellent Christian education to local families who would otherwise be unable to afford it, equipping the next generation to rise above poverty level and be leaders in their community,” Winters explains. “About 90% of our students come from churched families, so sharing the love of Christ is the center of everything we do.”

El Puente faces numerous challenges, including limited access to materials and extremely limited funding. Most of the students’ families cannot afford books, so the need for scholarships and for educational materials is great. Winters teaches 1st-5th graders in a single classroom, which includes both English and Spanish speaking students.

As an Alumna of Gardner-Webb University, Winters has a special connection to the institution. She grew up in Gastonia and was a member of the first graduating class of Gardner-Webb University in 1983. After graduating, Winters returned to Costa Rica after graduation and, nearly four years ago, helped found El Puente Christian School in Quepos, Costa Rica.

At El Puente, Winters serves as the Lead Teacher and Trainer at El Puente Christian School in Quepos, Costa Rica. She has been working in education for over ten years and has a passion for serving and teaching in underdeveloped countries. Her goal is to provide an excellent Christian education to local families who would otherwise be unable to afford it, equipping the next generation to rise above poverty level and be leaders in their community.

Alumna Alesha Winters ('03) Helps Launch Christian School in Quepos, Costa Rica

LARISSA BIXLER ’03 B.A. and Andy Stein were united in marriage on Sept. 20, 2010 in Sonoma, Calif. Larissa recently completed the firm of Sodoma Law, P.C. in Charlotte as lead attorney for the firm’s estate planning practice group. She and Andy enjoy life in Charlotte with their dog, Charlie. Email Larissa at lstein@sodomalaw.com.

JENNIE JONES MARKS ’03 B.A. and her husband, Pete, are pleased to announce the birth of their first child, Ella Elizabeth Marks, on July 27, 2011.

LARISSA BIXLER ’03 B.A.

SOMMER JONES ’04 M.A. is now the assistant principal for Banks Trail Middle School. She previously served as eighth grade assistant principal at Castle Heights Middle School for the past six years.

JENNIFER LEIGH GOODIN ’05 B.S. and Joshua Franklin Minton were married on Oct. 3, 2010 at The Centennial Oak Tree, Tanglwood Park in Clemmons, N.C. Jennifer is a service center coordinator with Carolina Farm Credit and Joshua is a senior design manager for Lowe’s Companies.

CHRISTA SIMMONS DIBONAVENTURA ’06 M.A. was recently appointed principal at Churchland Elementary School in Lexington, N.C. She has previously served as assistant principal for Reeds and Tyro Elementary Schools. She previously served as teacher at Reeds from 2002-2007 and later as assistant principal at Davis-Townd Elementary.

LEAH LEONARD ’06 M.A. was recently named assistant principal for Reeds and Tyro Elementary Schools. She previously served as teacher at Reeds from 2002-2007 and later as assistant principal at Davis-Townd Elementary.

ANSWERING THE CALL IN QUEPOS

Alumna Alesha Winters ('03) Helps Launch Christian School in Quepos, Costa Rica

Many people’s careers quickly take them outside the realm of their major field of study. But Alesha Winters (’03) is using both her Religious Studies and Spanish majors on the daily basis as the Lead Teacher and Trainer at El Puente Christian School in Quepos, Costa Rica.

“I always felt there was a calling on my life to draw closer to God and help others do the same,” says Winters, but after a study abroad stint in Costa Rica in 2001, God expanded that calling. “I always felt that God was calling me to draw closer to Him, but I didn’t realize I’d be doing it in another country,” Winters explains. “Almost 90% of our students come from churched families, so sharing the love of Christ is the center of everything we do.”

El Puente faces numerous challenges, including limited access to materials and extremely limited funding. Most of the students’ families cannot afford books, so the need for scholarships and for educational materials is great. Winters teaches 1st-5th graders in a single room each day, teaching for 5 hours in Spanish and 2 hours in English.

But despite the challenges, El Puente is making a positive impact for Christ in Quepos. “As our students develop relationships with God, our hope is that they will become leaders, parents, employees, and neighbors in the future,” Winters says. For more information about El Puente School, visit www.elpuenteschool.wordpress.com.
He conceptualized the “Frozen Food, Warm Hearts” Project to benefit Group Homes of Women of Color. He is named assistant principal at Southwood Elementary School in Lexington, N.C. She began her career with Davidson county Schools in 1996, and in 2009, she was named assistant principal at Friendship and Pilot Elementary Schools.

The 2010s

PAIGE LENORA BROWN ’10 B.S. and Micah Aubrey Evans were married on Feb. 26, 2010, at First Baptist Church in Robbins, N.C. Paige works for Tar Heel Drug and Micah is employed with Evergreen Landscaping. The couple resides in Robbins, N.C. PAIGE LENORA BROWN ’10 B.S. and Micah Aubrey Evans were married on Feb. 26, 2010, at First Baptist Church in Robbins, N.C. Paige works for Tar Heel Drug and Micah is employed with Evergreen Landscaping. The couple resides in Robbins, N.C.

JONATHAN BROWN ’11 M.A. is now the assistant principal at North Davidson High School in Lexington, N.C. Since 1997, Brown has served as a business teacher at Central Davidson High School until his appointment as assistant principal in 2010.

CLINTON LESLIE HARRISON ’11 B.S. and Whitney Elizabeth McSwain were married on Dec. 18, 2010. Clinton is the manager at the Village Inn Pizza in Morganton, N.C. and Whitney is employed by Cleveland County Schools.

DEBBIE HEGE ’09 M.A. was named assistant principal at Southwood Elementary School in Lexington, N.C. She began her career with Davidson county Schools in 1996, and in 2009, she was named assistant principal at Friendship and Pilot Elementary Schools.

ERIC BOYD PROCTOR ’07 B.A. is the compensation and benefits enrollment and communication specialist and assistant vice president for BB&T. Recently, he has been honored with the following awards: Social Media Award, West Virginia University INTEGRATE Conference (2011), League of American Communications Professionals Spotlight Award (2010), Communicator Awards: Award of Distinction (2009). Eric has published in The Business Journal (2010) and Women of Color Magazine (2010). Eric at ebproctor@yahoo.com.

JONATHAN MICHAEL CROCKETT ’08 B.S. was recently named assistant vice president at BB&T. He joined the bank in 2008 and is a financial center leader at BB&T in Summerville, S.C.

KENNY RAY BENTLEY ’99 B.S. and Kayla Nicole Williams were married on June 25, 2011, at Union Cross Friends Meeting in Yadkinville, N.C.

JEREMY MATTHEW BOLER ’09 B.S. and ADRIENNE TAYLOR SMITH ’09 B.S. were married on April 30, 2011, in Greenville, S.C. Jeremy is the general manager of the Forest City Owls Baseball Club and Adrienne is a fourth grade teacher at Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy. The couple resides in Forest City, N.C. DEBBIE HEGE ’09 M.A. was named assistant principal at Southwood Elementary School in Lexington, N.C. She began her career with Davidson county Schools in 1996, and in 2009, she was named assistant principal at Friendship and Pilot Elementary Schools.

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Dr. Drew Bridges wanted to invest in the future of Gardner-Webb and acknowledge the contribution Gardner-Webb made in his life. “Although Gardner-Webb is located only 42 miles from where I grew up,” Bridges says, “I found it to be a remarkably broadening experience. I found a place to explore new ideas, and teachers who valued my point of view.”

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For more information, call Greg Pee at 704-406-2157.
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